

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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TRUMP CAN BE DEFEATED

PROTEST THE
INAUGURATION

BUILD THE
RESISTANCE

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WHAT WE STAND FOR

Fighting for the 99%

- ✦ Raise the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour, as a step toward a living wage for all.
- ✦ Free, high quality public education for all from pre-school through college. Full funding for schools to dramatically lower student-teacher ratios. Stop the focus on high stakes testing and the drive to privatize public education.
- ✦ Free, high quality health care for all. Replace the failed for-profit insurance companies with a publicly funded single-payer system as a step towards fully socialized medicine.
- ✦ No budget cuts to education and social services! Full funding for all community needs. A major increase in taxes on the rich and big business, not working people.
- ✦ Create living-wage union jobs for all the unemployed through public works programs to develop mass transit, renewable energy, infrastructure, healthcare, education, and affordable housing.
- ✦ For rent control combined with massive public investment in affordable housing.
- ✦ A guaranteed decent pension for all. No cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid!
- ✦ A minimum guaranteed weekly income of \$600/week for the unemployed, disabled, stay-at-home parents, the elderly, and others unable to work.
- ✦ Repeal all anti-union laws like Taft-Hartley. For democratic unions run by the rank-and-file to fight for better pay, working conditions, and social services. Full-time union officials should be regularly elected and receive the average wage of those they represent.
- ✦ No more layoffs! Take bankrupt and failing companies into public ownership.
- ✦ Break the power of Wall Street! For public ownership and democratic control of the major banks.
- ✦ Shorten the workweek with no loss in pay and benefits; share out the work with the unemployed and create new jobs.

Environmental Sustainability

- ✦ Fight climate change. Massive public investment in renewable energy and energy-efficient technologies to rapidly replace fossil fuels.
- ✦ A major expansion of public transportation to provide low fare, high-speed, and accessible transit.
- ✦ Democratic public ownership of the big energy companies, retooling them for socially necessary green production. A "Just Transition" for all workers in polluting industries with guaranteed re-training and new living-wage jobs.

Equal Rights for All

- ✦ Fight discrimination based on race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, and all other forms of prejudice. Equal pay for equal work.
- ✦ Black Lives Matter! Build a mass movement against police brutality and the institutional

racism of the criminal justice system. Invest in rehabilitation, job training, and living-wage jobs, not prisons! Abolish the death penalty.

- ✦ Defend immigrant rights! Immediate, unconditional legalization and equal rights for all undocumented immigrants.
- ✦ Fight sexual harassment, violence against women, and all forms of sexism.
- ✦ Defend a woman's right to choose whether and when to have children. For a publicly funded, single-payer health care system with free reproductive services, including all forms of birth control and safe, accessible abortions. Comprehensive sex education. At least 12 weeks of paid family leave for all. For universal, high quality, affordable and publicly run child care.
- ✦ Fight discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ community, and all forms of homophobia and transphobia.

Money for Jobs and Education, Not War

- ✦ End the occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq. Bring all the troops home now!
- ✦ Slash the military budget. No drones. Shut down Guantanamo.
- ✦ Repeal the Patriot Act, NDAA, and all other attacks on democratic rights.

Break with the Two Parties of Big Business

- ✦ For a mass workers party drawing together workers, young people and activists from environmental, civil rights, and women's campaigns, to provide a fighting, political alternative to the corporate parties.
- ✦ Unions and other social movement organizations should stop funding and supporting the Democratic and Republican Parties and instead organize independent left-wing, anti-corporate candidates and coalitions as a first step toward building a workers' party.

Socialism and Internationalism

- ✦ Capitalism produces poverty, inequality, environmental destruction, and war. We need an international struggle against this failed system. No to corporate "free trade" agreements, which mean job losses and a race to the bottom for workers and the environment.
- ✦ Solidarity with the struggles of workers and oppressed peoples internationally: An injury to one is an injury to all.
- ✦ Take into public ownership the top 500 corporations and banks that dominate the U.S. economy. Run them under the democratic management of elected representatives of the workers and the broader public. Compensation to be paid on the basis of proven need to small investors, not millionaires.
- ✦ A democratic socialist plan for the economy based on the interests of the overwhelming majority of people and the environment. For a socialist United States and a socialist world. ✦

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WHY I AM A SOCIALIST

Andrea Mazón Student Boston, MA

Growing up in Ecuador, where society is more conservative and based on the Catholic Church, people close to me always talked about "the harder you work, the better you will do in life." It was also a society, where talking about LGBTQ people, women's right, racism, or indeed anything that contradicts the Church's doctrine is seen as a sin.

Life in Ecuador and in the U.S. taught me how wrong this is. On a daily basis, looking at people on the streets, black young single mothers, indigenous people, and children asking for food or money, made me ask myself why they don't have the same baseline in life as I had when I was born.

I started doing social work high school. I thought that my actions could be "band aids" that would help people improve their lives. I taught literacy classes to adults, young adults, and elderly people. After a while of doing this, I felt exhausted. I realized that my help was just a small contribution, the system is way too big for me to fix with a "band aid."

I was pissed off at my life for a while. I asked why I could not attain what I desired, even when I "worked hard for it" but other people did because they have a financial advantage

over me, which they were born into. I realized capitalism is not working. I was looking for answers and ways to tackle the root of the problem. After finding out about Socialist Alternative and agreeing with the party platform, I found a way to fight against this racist, oppressive, and exploitative system. Hard work doesn't always mean success, we all are oppressed in capitalism.

Capitalism takes advantage of us since we have to sell our labor for income and we do that because we need to survive. People back home don't understand why I joined Socialist Alternative, but my question is "why not?" The growing poverty and environmental catastrophe worldwide are a byproduct of corporate greed and politicians representing the interests of the 1%. We need a mass movement demanding a systematic change which will challenge the elite forces, currently dominating not only the world but our lives and decisions. ✦



New Publication from Socialist Alternative

Marxism and the Fight for Black Freedom

Get your copy from your closest Socialist Alternative branch
— see p. 11

This pamphlet by Socialist Alternative looks at the role of Marxist ideas and socialist organizations in the black freedom movement from a critical perspective. It outlines a materialist view of the origins and development of racist ideology and structural racism. Finally it explains the Marxist view of the tasks confronting the movement today.



Read More at SocialistAlternative.org

SocialistAlternative.org in the weeks ahead will carry ongoing coverage of the developing struggle against Trump's agenda. We will also carry analysis of key issues including:

- ✦ How can we build the most effective defense of immigrant communities?
- ✦ How can we rebuild the women's movement into a key force for change as Trump has galvanized a new generation of young women into action?
- ✦ How does Black Lives Matter and the black freedom movement respond to the challenge posed by the most reactionary administration since Reagan?
- ✦ How can the labor movement fight back and stop the multiple threats posed by the Trump administration?
- ✦ How can we stop the Republicans' threatened attacks on health care including Obamacare, Medicare, and

Medicaid while fighting for what we actually need, a single-payer system?

- ✦ How can we defeat the coming onslaught on environmental protections and build on the victory against the Dakota Access Pipeline?
- ✦ Is protectionism the answer to the massive loss of well-paying unionized manufacturing jobs? What is the socialist plan for massive investment in rebuilding our nation's infrastructure and shifting the economy away from dependence on fossil fuels, thereby creating millions of good jobs?

We will also carry debates with others on the left about how to build a mass movement to defeat the right, whether we can or should try to "win back" the Democratic Party and how socialists should organize themselves. ✦



The Case for a United and Ongoing Mass Mobilization

Inaugurate the Resistance

Patrick Ayers

Inauguration protests can serve as a launching pad for a massive grassroots resistance to Donald Trump's new administration which can push back his agenda. But this will require an active ongoing mobilization linked to a strategy of independent grassroots struggle.

Donald Trump is on a collision course with millions of people. He's threatened to deport 2-3 million immigrants and to target Muslim immigrants for "extreme vetting." Women's reproductive health, democratic rights, and workers rights are all under threat. People are understandably afraid. But also, huge numbers of people are prepared to resist.

Trump's agenda of hate and greed can be defeated by a strong enough movement centered on the social power of working people (as we explain on pages 6 and 7). Let's not forget that previous generations have faced down and defeated war-mongers, hate-mongers, slave-owners, and billionaires, and they won.

Trump's administration already faces a crisis of legitimacy. His election victory was anything but resounding. Clinton won the popular vote by 2.9 million votes and barely 25% of eligible voters actually voted for Trump. On top of this, Trump is notoriously thin skinned, erratic, and he is not a hardened ideologue. He can be rattled and forced off course.

Trump is gearing up for a 100-day agenda that is intended to deliver a demoralizing blow to his opposition. We can't wait until the 2018 elections, and we can't rely on the out-of-touch corporate Democratic establishment. That's why, on January 20 and 21, we need to inaugurate a powerful resistance from the grassroots and make visible that Trump has no mandate for his agenda of hate.

Do Protests Matter?

Mass protests have been an indispensable part of every progressive struggle in history, from winning the eight-hour day to smashing Jim Crow. Mass protests provide an easy entry point into activity for

thousands of people and raise the confidence and fighting spirit of movements by visibly demonstrating the depth, scope, and size of opposition.

Mass protests can also send a warning to the new administration. We want Trump to worry that if he proceeds with his agenda against immigrants, women, Muslims, and workers rights that he will provoke even further struggle. Moreover, we want him and the entire establishment to worry that working people are gaining the confidence to take even further independent and radical action.

When movements are strong enough, even the Republicans have been known to cave under pressure of protests. Under Richard Nixon, movements mushroomed and the Vietnam War was ended, abortion rights were won, environmental regulations, and more were conceded. At the time, the ruling class feared a deeper radicalization – or even revolution – could take place if they didn't make concessions to the protests.

Of course, protests aren't enough on their own, and there is a long history of using mass protests as a mere safety valve for discontent, but not really connected to a strategy of mass grassroots struggle.

Past successful social movements didn't rely on the Democrats or elections, but on applying the social power of millions of people through radical tactics that involved large numbers of people like mass direct action, boycotts, occupations, walkouts and strikes. The refusal of soldiers to carry out orders in Vietnam, combined with the resistance of the Vietnamese themselves, widespread student strikes in the U.S. and mass protests, made the war impossible to continue. Jim Crow was smashed through active mass boycotts, sit-down protests, and other mass direct actions. The labor movement won major gains through strikes, factory occupations, and solidarity



action in the 1930s and '40s.

If Trump's administration is determined to pass its agenda, then we will need a mass movement prepared to take similar radical measures to build as determined a resistance today.

Socialist Students is calling for a student walkout on January 20 as a step in that direction. For more information about the student walkout, go to *SocialistStudents.net*. There will also be protests all over the world in solidarity with the protests in the U.S. (see page 5). Mobilizing as many people together in a visible show of opposition with clear demands on January 20 and 21 will be a valuable starting point for building a new force that can defeat Trump, the right, and the entire corporate establishment.

Join the Socialists!

Socialist Alternative is the organization of Kshama Sawant who was elected to Seattle City Council in 2013 as an open socialist. Kshama and Socialist Alternative went on to build the grassroots campaign that won the first local \$15 an hour minimum wage in the U.S. which helped spark further minimum wage victories across the country.

Within hours of Trump's victory

on November 8, Socialist Alternative branches around the county helped initiate protests that saw as many as 40,000 people come out on the streets on November 9.

Many people have asked us how to get involved beyond protesting. Inevitably, this question poses larger strategic issues about how to build movements – and about what kind of organization we need.

Socialist Alternative seeks to bring together working people and young people who agree we need fundamental change into a common organization.

We seek to raise the confidence of working people by helping to win victories that make a difference in people's lives. We also elaborate a program that starts from the immediate issues facing working people and points to the need to get rid of capitalism which breeds Trumps. We seek maximum unity of all forces who want to fight the right while continuing the debate about how to win victories and change society.

Concretely, everyone who opposes Trump's agenda of hate and greed should stand shoulder to shoulder on January 20 and 21 in solidarity. But to develop unity even further, the anti-Trump resistance needs democratic structures

at the local, regional and national levels to work out the most effective approaches for building resistance through organized discussion, debate and decision making.

We argue that movements against the right are strongest when they rely on the independent power of working people and are independent of corporate politics, and particularly the Democratic Party.

We welcome the support of genuine progressive Democrats who offer real support in building the widest possible unity in action in defense of immigrants, Muslims, women, and workers. But we disagree with directing the energy of movements into building the Democratic Party.

The Democratic Party was never a party of working people. It has always been a party representing the interests of big business. We believe the power of movements resides in our numbers and social power, particularly the social power of working people, not our ability to morally persuade corporate politicians. We campaign for a new party of the 99% to help build our struggles, and to run our own candidates that our accountable to our movement, not the donations of big business.

Defeating Trump's agenda would massively raise the confidence of working people to fight for other demands including a \$15 federal minimum wage, single-payer health care, an end to mass incarceration, and tuition-free college. But victories under capitalism, as in the past, can be reversed. Globally, capitalism faces a historic crisis that the U.S. cannot escape. The world economy faces an epoch of sluggish growth, while wars, social conflict and environmental catastrophe threaten to engulf the planet. We believe the fight against the right must be part of building an independent movement of working people to fundamentally transform society along socialist lines.

If you agree that we need an active campaign to fight Trump along with independent mass movements, a new party of the 99%, and a socialist transformation of society, then you should join Socialist Alternative today. ✪



Victory at Standing Rock

Kshama Sawant
Seattle City Councilmember

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For the last eight months, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has led a historic campaign against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), uniting hundreds of tribes, environmentalists, veterans, and other activists inspired by their bold stand in defense of native treaty rights and the environment.

At the start of December, millions of people around the world celebrated news that the Army Corps of Engineers had rejected an easement to allow DAPL to go forward. This was an enormous victory for the movement and for ordinary people everywhere in the struggle against Big Oil and naked corporate greed.

I congratulate and thank these courageous indigenous people and all others who rallied behind their cause, including the activist veterans who came to strengthen the camp in the days preceding the Army Corps' ruling. It is these thousands of ordinary people, not the Obama administration, who deserve praise for this victory. Standing Rock has demonstrated the power of organized mass action for a new generation, as well as the vital need to unite our movements.

The activists on the ground faced down brutal violence at the hands of police and private contractors, including the use of attack dogs, rubber bullets, pepper spray, tear

gas, concussion grenades, and water cannons fired in below-freezing weather. Hundreds were arrested and hundreds more injured. Yet the movement would not stand down.

But we must remember: the struggle may not be over. It took Energy Transfer Partners and Sunoco Logistics Partners mere hours after the Army Corps of Engineers' announcement to release a statement asserting that they are "fully committed to ensuring that this vital project is brought to completion and fully expect to complete construction of the pipeline without any additional rerouting" (*Business-Wire.com*, 12/4/2016). This could indicate a possible legal challenge or plans to continue after Trump's inauguration. A Trump spokesperson has told reporters, "we support construction of [DAPL] and we'll review the full situation when we're in the White House and make the appropriate determination at that time" (*Wall Street Journal*, 12/5/2016).

The Obama administration, on the other hand, has spent the last eight months looking the other way, ignoring both ongoing violence against activists and the environmental impact of the pipeline itself. Unfortunately, this is nothing new. While a national campaign against Keystone XL ultimately led Obama



A Socialist Students delegation to Standing Rock.

to veto its construction, it took five years of protest to force his hand. Meanwhile, we have seen the equivalent of 10 Keystone pipelines built in the U.S. since 2010!

While the Republican Party has a long track record of championing the interests of Big Oil, Obama and the Democrats have shown themselves thoroughly beholden, as well.

Lessons for Next Period

The victory at Standing Rock demonstrates the fighting spirit and solidarity that will be needed in coming months to defeat Trump's

attacks. The unity achieved by the tribes to maintain this determined struggle was historic and crucial. It allowed their message to reach all areas of the country, and eventually the globe. The support shown by Black Lives Matter, environmental activists, a section of more radical unions, and other activists broke down the corporate media's blackout. When thousands of veterans also volunteered to put their bodies on the line, a very powerful force with broad public support had been assembled, forcing the Obama administration to finally act.

In the coming period, we can

expect Trump to try to push through his right-wing agenda by isolating and defeating sections of the population. This will certainly be the case with immigrants, Muslims, and other potential targets. Attacks on women and workers, including against reproductive rights and the right to organize unions, are clearly coming. Only by pledging to support each other and linking up our struggles can Trump's attacks be defeated. The traditional watchword of the labor movement, "an injury to one is an injury to all," needs to become our rallying cry in the battles to come. The determination and willingness to sacrifice demonstrated at Standing Rock will be an essential ingredient.

This victory should also serve as a reminder that, in the face of continued pipeline development and attacks on the environment, we can't rely on either major party to act in our interests. To really defeat the agenda of Big Oil and Wall Street, we'll need to build powerful movements and a new party of the 99%, completely free of corporate cash and corporate influence. We must remain vigilant, in Standing Rock and across the U.S., as we build our resistance against the incoming Trump administration and continue our struggles for a socially just and sustainable world. ✪

Seattle Housing Activists Win \$29 Million for Affordable Housing

Adam Ziemkowski

Housing activists in Seattle, organized into the Coalition to Build 1,000 Homes, scored a major victory, winning \$29 million for affordable housing in the 2017-2018 budget. They pushed through a final unanimous vote in the City Council on November 21, despite fierce opposition from the city's Democratic establishment.

Seattle City Councilmember and Socialist Alternative activist, Kshama Sawant, who spearheaded the effort, celebrated the movement's victory and explained, "Let's be clear: We won this because we built our coalition and a movement. We made it impossible for corporate Democratic politicians to ignore our proposal" (*Sawant.Seattle.gov*, 11/17/2016).

The additional \$29 million will allow the city to build nearly 200 homes for low-income residents, and it sets an important precedent for using city bonding authority to build desperately needed affordable housing.

For working people in Seattle, especially communities of color, this is a big deal. Seattle is experiencing an economic boom and an unprecedented wave of development, but as luxury condos and office space are built, they often replace older, more affordable units. Rents are rising faster in Seattle than anywhere else in the country, and more than 4,500 people are living on the streets without shelter. Seattle family doctor and coalition member Libby Loft observed, "If I could write a prescription for housing, it would be far more powerful than any medicine at my fingertips."

The 1,000 Homes movement emerged out of a victory by Black Lives Matter and other activists, who successfully blocked construction of a new \$160 million police precinct. Sawant's office then reached out broadly to service providers, activists, unions, faith communities, housing advocates, and social justice organizations to fight to use that same funding to instead benefit ordinary

people and communities of color.

In the end, hundreds of activists and more than 70 organizations joined the coalition, including three dozen religious congregations and 60-plus faith leaders. Many also saw spending the money on housing as the best way to permanently block the new police "bunker."

1,000 Homes coalition members again and again packed City Hall for budget meetings and public hearings. Hundreds of people made phone calls, sent emails, and signed petitions to Councilmembers. We plastered the town with posters, and progressive Democrats from Seattle legislative districts passed resolutions supporting the 1,000 Homes demand. Coalition activists also organized "stand-outs" on street corners and attended events to demand other Councilmembers vote yes on Sawant's 1,000 homes amendment.

We forced the issue front-and-center on Seattle's agenda and compelled the Mayor and City Councilmembers to respond to

our demand, which they had so desperately wanted to ignore.

First, they said it was impossible to build housing with the the police precinct money. After Councilmember Sawant presented a detailed report from city staff explaining exactly how the money could be reallocated, the Democratic establishment changed its tune and instead claimed the proposal was "fiscally irresponsible." But community members kept hammering them with a simple question: why did the bonds make fiscal sense when proposed for the most expensive police precinct on the continent, but not for affordable housing?

Ultimately, the City Council rejected the full \$160 million proposal, voting instead for a much smaller \$29 million package and leaving funding available for a new police precinct in the future. While celebrating their victory, coalition activists were understandably

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Why We're Walking Out Against Trump



Tyler Vasseur, Minneapolis, MN

Socialist Students is calling on students everywhere to walk out of classes on January 20, Trump's Inauguration Day. Mass protests and disruptions on his first day in office will begin the process of building a powerful resistance movement against Donald Trump's racist, sexist, and altogether right-wing agenda. Along with other student groups across the country, our goal is to get hundreds of thousands of people in high schools and on college campuses to take part in the nationwide walkout to disrupt "business as usual" and to make clear that young people reject Trump's agenda.

A Trump presidency represents a serious danger for millions of women, immigrants, LGBTQ people, Muslims, and all working people. His administration is preparing to further defund and dismantle our public education system. Like we have in the past, students will need to play a major role in building the fight-back against Trump's attacks.

Many young people have grown up surrounded by a failing capitalist system. We've seen how the 1% gets bailed out while our families remain in hardship. We are told there is not enough money to fund education, community services, or affordable housing, yet we have been in wars for oil for 15 years, wasting trillions of dollars. Now, we

have a billionaire bigot as president who has absolutely nothing in common with ordinary people.

We have already seen the incredible power of movements in the last few years, such as Black Lives Matter, the Fight for \$15, the Bernie Sanders campaign, and most recently at Standing Rock. The night after the election, Socialist Students helped to organize the mass protests in cities across the country, from Philadelphia and New York to Oakland and Seattle, drawing over 50,000 into the streets. We have the power and the numbers to organize an effective fight-back to the

Trump agenda, but that will require getting organized for determined mass actions on a huge scale.

Trump's agenda specifically targets immigrants, women, and Muslims as well as attacking public education and promising further environmental destruction. Struggles against these attacks cannot be built independently of each other. We need a united mass movement of everybody who wants to fight against Trump's attacks, and this starts on day one of Trump's presidency. ✪



How to Join a Walkout Near You!

www.SocialistStudents.net
facebook.com/SocialistStudentsUSA

This movement against Trump isn't going to build itself. The Democratic Party failed to defeat Donald Trump, which puts the responsibility on our social movements. Already, students in dozens of cities are organizing walkouts, both in high schools and on college campuses. The only way to stop Trump's agenda is with a mass movement of millions of people, and this starts on January 20, day one of Trump's presidency.

Go to SocialistStudents.org and find the list of already declared walkouts to see if there's one planned on your campus or in your city. If there's not one already called in your area, call one yourself! All you have to do is make a Facebook event and send the link to contact@socialiststudents.org, and we'll send you templates for flyers, posters and sign up sheets, and we'll post the event and help you start the organizing process.

Young people have been at the forefront of virtually every movement in the past five years, from Occupy Wall Street to Black Lives Matter to the Bernie Sanders campaign. Students played a key role in the Civil Rights Movement, and we're going to play a key role in fighting back against Trump's hatred and bigotry. Go to SocialistStudents.org and join the nationwide student walkout! ✪

Seattle Housing Victory

continued from p.4

outraged by the Council's serious weakening of the measure, given the gravity and urgency of Seattle's housing crisis.

Still, even before the struggle had ended, many were excited about using their momentum and experience to keep the fight going. In mid-December, coalition members helped Councilmember Sawant pass groundbreaking tenant rights legislation, capping move-in fees and requiring landlords to offer payment plans over howls of opposition from the real estate lobby.

Now, the coalition is building on the momentum created by this victory to help mobilize to the biggest possible protests against Donald Trump and his right-wing, bigoted administration on Inauguration Day. ✪

Global Days of Protest to #ResistTrump

On Trump's Inauguration, January 20 and 21

The election of Donald Trump to the office of President of the United States represents an unprecedented danger to workers, young people, and the oppressed, not only the U.S. but around the world. A ruthless billionaire businessman himself, Trump promises to carry out racist and sexist social policies aimed at women, people of color, immigrants, and Muslims. Trump is preparing to escalate attacks on the environment, unions, and workers' rights, as well as vital social services like public education.

His erratic and nationalist "America First" foreign policy will further destabilize global politics, and it risks provoking more bloody catastrophes and encourages far-right forces around the world. International solidarity and coordinated global action by workers and youth will be a vital ingredient to combat Trump's divisive racism and nationalism. We

must demonstrate mass global resistance from day one, starting on Trump's Inauguration Day.

On January 20 and 21, we are joining with others to call for millions across the United States and worldwide to come out in mass demonstrations and student strikes to begin building a powerful grassroots resistance against Trump. The protests on Inauguration Day could be the biggest demonstrations against the inauguration of a U.S. president in history, and the student strikes could be the biggest since the Vietnam War.

While the biggest fight-back will come from workers, women, immigrants, and young people in the United States, Trump's threat is global. His election provided fresh confidence to far-right demagogues everywhere, and his attacks on Muslims and refugees from war-torn areas like Syria will encourage similar

persecution around the world. Trump's promise of further deregulation and attacks on workers is part of an international campaign of the ruling class for further austerity. But if mass protests can inflict a defeat on Trump in the U.S., it will inspire workers around the globe to fight back.

Socialist Students (U.S.), Socialist Students (U.K.), Sindicato de Estudiantes (Spain), and Sindicato de Estudiantes (Mexico) are joining together to call for Global Days of Action on January 20 and 21 to #ResistTrump in cities across the world. Worldwide demonstrations are an important factor in resisting Trump in the U.S. but also show the necessity of international solidarity among working people and youth across the world in fighting back against the austerity and attacks of the global elite. Please look to join a demonstration in your city! ✪

Trump Prepares Vicious Attacks We Must Prepare Resistance

Tom Crean and Philip Locker

Trump's victory in the presidential election was a profound shock to tens of millions of progressive workers, young people, immigrants, women, people of color, Muslims, and LGBTQ people across the U.S. The target list of Trump's administration has become clearer. This is compounded by a rise in hate crimes around the country since the election. The enormous fear and anger in many communities is only increasing.

Trump's reckless and undisciplined nature has also opened up real divisions in the ruling class itself, with a large section fearing that he could damage their interests domestically and internationally. This division was seen most recently in Trump's dismissal of the CIA announcement that the Russian government was behind the hacking of the Democratic National Committee. This brought a sharp rebuke from key Republican leaders.

Many are waiting to see how events unfold or hoping against hope that Trump will see reason and moderate his positions. But the plans to deport three million people, target Muslim immigrants for "extreme vetting," criminalize dissent, and nominate a Supreme Court justice who will vote to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and shred union rights in the public sector are not idle threats.

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets across the country in the weeks after the election. Socialist Alternative called many of the first protests, which were dominated by young people. But now we are seeing wider forces preparing for what will be truly massive protests around Trump's inauguration, particularly the Women's March on Washington, D.C. on January 21. We and Socialist Students are also focusing on building student walkouts across the country linked to actions around the world on the actual day of the inauguration, January 20, which could become the biggest coordinated student actions since the Vietnam War (see page 5).

No Mandate

The truth is that Trump's racist, misogynist agenda does not have a popular mandate. Despite winning in the undemocratic Electoral

College, Trump received only 46% of the popular vote and 2.9 million fewer votes than Clinton.

The huge political and social polarization in the U.S. remains. Big sections of society moved to the left in recent years. This was expressed in Occupy, the fight for \$15, Black Lives Matter, mass support for marriage equality and, more recently, for the struggle of Native people against the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Without doubt, the most dramatic expression of this trend was the support for Bernie Sanders. Millions, especially young people, supported Sanders' call for a political revolution against the billionaire class. At the end of the day, Clinton's status quo campaign had no appeal to those hostile to the ruling elite and failed to energize and mobilize progressive Americans in sufficient numbers, despite the fear of Trump. As the roughly 54% election turnout showed, tens of millions of Americans simply saw no point in choosing between the two most unpopular presidential candidates in the country's history.

This has led to the situation where the right now controls the White House, as well as both houses of Congress. In 23 states, the Republicans have control of all three branches of government. This gives the right enormous institutional power. There is also the real danger of an energized hard right sinking roots. But there is huge potential strength in the opposition to Trump, especially if the social power of the working class can be brought to bear. Trump's agenda is beatable, but it will require the most profound social struggle since the Civil Rights and antiwar movements of the '60s and '70s.

Trump's Appointments

Despite Trump's talk of "healing divisions" from the campaign, his emerging agenda and his appointments to cabinet and adviser positions in the White House point to the most reactionary administration since at least Ronald Reagan. Among his closest advisers are Steve Bannon from *Breitbart News*, which has provided cover for the "white nationalist" far right, while his key security adviser, General Michael Kelly, is a crackpot who believes Islam is a "cancer."

For Secretary of Education, he has appointed an enemy of public education; for



Secretary of Labor, he appointed a fast-food executive and enemy of raising the minimum wage; for Secretary of the Interior, he appointed a sworn enemy of emissions controls on coal-fired plants.

He said he would "drain the swamp" of Washington insiders and corporate hacks and then brought in a Goldman Sachs executive to be Treasury Secretary. Besides swamp monsters he has stuffed the cabinet with billionaires. The *Daily Mail* (12/16/16) reports that his cabinet will have a higher net worth than the bottom third of American households combined! This from a guy who said he was going to represent the "forgotten men and women" of the working class!

Trump's Agenda Becomes Clearer

We need to be clear about the multiple threats a Trump administration poses to working people and minorities.

He intends to deliver on his promise to rapidly deport three million immigrants. If successful, Trump will do in months what it took the Obama administration eight years to accomplish, as it deported 2.7 million people. There will also be a special focus on Muslim immigrants under the cover of "fighting ISIS,"

with "extreme vetting" for all people from a list of "Muslim" countries.

Trump will nominate a right-wing justice to the Supreme Court who will be committed to going after *Roe v. Wade*, and he may be in a position to make a further appointment in the next four years. This comes after years of relentless attacks on women's reproductive rights by Republican-dominated Southern state legislatures, which is now spreading to the Midwest.

Unions and union rights will be targeted, especially in the public sector. Trump's team sees Scott Walker's successful campaign to eviscerate public-sector unions in Wisconsin as a model. But the administration's more immediate target will probably be the unions representing federal employees and those workers' rights and benefits. They undoubtedly see the federal workforce as a "soft target" that will not elicit much sympathy. If they succeed, it will allow them to ramp up the anti-union campaign more broadly.

Trump will gut environmental protection in the name of "bringing back jobs" in the energy sector and beyond. This will effectively be a huge handout to the world's largest oil companies. Despite campaign rhetoric, the coal industry actually collapsed due to market factors, especially the extremely low price of oil

cks

oare Massive

and natural gas, not “over-regulation.” Trump will seek to reverse the victory against DAPL.

Trump will support the rollback of Obamacare, which will deprive millions of health insurance – especially if the Republicans succeed in reversing the extension of Medicaid. They may try to privatize Medicare. We must oppose all these attacks while pointing toward a single-payer system that can provide health care for all.

Trump knows he will face massive opposition, and he will seek to criminalize dissent. This is part of what’s behind his ominous talk about a “law and order” offensive. He will go after the Black Lives Matter movement specifically. Former Mayor of New York Rudy Giuliani, a key Trump ally, has described BLM as “inherently racist” and “un-American.”

But in addition to his reactionary agenda, Trump will also push populist measures like infrastructure spending and paid parental leave. He will halt negotiation of further trade deals as part of a protectionist shift. At this point, the Trans Pacific Partnership, which represented a serious threat to workers rights and the environment, is dead in the water. A section of the working class and middle class has real expectations based on Trump’s promises to bring back manufacturing and good jobs. They will be severely disappointed – but perhaps not immediately.

The Right Is Beatable

There are several factors that can help the movement against Trump. First of all, right-wing ideology is weaker in society today than in the 1980s when neoliberalism had a real base of social support, including within sections of the working and middle classes. The far right is emboldened by Trump’s victory, but their social base is still very weak.

Also, as pointed out earlier, the

ruling class remains, on the whole, deeply unhappy about Trump’s accession to power. They see him as potentially highly damaging to their global and domestic interests. It is true that Wall Street is enthused about his proposals to further cut taxes for the super-rich and to repeal financial regulation. But there is a real possibility of global and domestic recession in the next period, which would throw a Trump administration into deep crisis.

With or without a recession, sections of the ruling class could begin to exert real pressure against Trump, especially if he overreaches and provokes effective mass resistance. They would do this in the wider interest of the system and precisely to cut across a mass movement from below. In this context, it is significant that a number of Democratic big city mayors are promising to resist attempts to ban “sanctuary cities” for immigrants, despite Trump’s threats to cut federal funding. Governor Cuomo of New York, a reliable ally of Wall Street, even declared that he, as the grandson of immigrants, should be deported first.

But where was Cuomo as the Obama administration ramped up deportations to record levels? We cannot rely on corporate Democrats, whose anti-working-class policies have driven so many into the arms of the right. Instead, a mass movement against Trump must be centered on the social power of working people mobilized to fight for their own independent class interests.

Working-Class Unity Against the Right

The liberal media has written a lot lately about the “white working class,” either vilifying it as one reactionary mass in lockstep behind Trump, or trying to “understand”

continued on p.11

Lessons of History

The stakes now are extremely high. Trump will seek to inflict severe and demoralizing defeats by picking off one target at a time. All sections of society targeted by Trump must therefore unite their forces from the start.

The old slogan of the labor movement – “an injury to one is an injury to all” – was never more relevant. And the labor movement has a key role to play in this situation. Despite its long retreat, the unions still represent 16 million workers and retain strength in some industrial sectors – but especially the public sector and in key cities that will be central to the resistance against Trump.

The social power of working people uniting to build a mass movement must be counterposed to the institutional power of the right. The mass protests around the inauguration are a crucial first step. But we must draw critical lessons from previous battles against the right wing to prepare for the situation after January 20.

In 1981, the air traffic controllers’ union PATCO went on strike for better working conditions. President Ronald Reagan turned this conflict into a showdown with the labor movement as a whole by firing all PATCO members – despite their endorsement of him in the 1980 election!

There was an enormous willingness in the still-strong labor movement to fight back. Labor Day in 1981 saw 250,000 workers march in Washington, D.C. with the PATCO workers at their head. But the union leadership criminally refused to extend the strike and PATCO was smashed, putting the labor movement decisively on the defensive. The defeat is what is remembered, but what is equally important is that Reagan could have been beaten. A



Workers protest during the PATCO strike against Reagan in 1981.

PATCO victory would have changed the entire dynamic and encouraged the development of a mass movement to defeat the rest of Reagan’s neoliberal agenda.

In 2006, the Republican-dominated House passed the Sensenbrenner Bill, which threatened mass deportations of all undocumented workers in the U.S. and made it a crime to help them. This sparked the biggest mass demonstrations in U.S. history, including the May 1 “Day Without an Immigrant,” which had elements of a general strike of Latino immigrant workers. The movement beat back the bill and also pushed back anti-immigrant attitudes for a period. Although many were sympathetic with the stand of millions of immigrants demanding citizenship rights and “equal rights for all workers,” the native-born working class largely stood on the sidelines. This allowed the Bush administration to eventually savagely repress the movement, especially those immigrant workers who were actively moving to unionize.

In 2011, in Wisconsin, Governor Scott Walker and the

Republican-controlled legislature moved to impose savage cutbacks in education and also cripple public-sector unions by stripping their right to collectively bargain over anything besides wages. This was the most serious frontal attack on the labor movement since the PATCO strike. In early 2011, tens of thousands marched in Madison, the state capitol, on a weekly basis, and the capitol building itself was occupied for weeks on end.

Beating Walker required escalating the movement. Socialist Alternative argued for a one-day public-sector general strike as a first step in this direction. There was an enormous positive response to this idea from workers, but the national leadership of the AFL-CIO, as in 1981, put on the brakes. Rather than escalate, they de-escalated and campaigned to recall Walker to get a Democrat elected. This strategy failed comprehensively and Walker is still in office today.

As in 1981, 2006, and 2011, the right can be beaten but only with an effective strategy and an utterly determined leadership. ☛

Growing Push to “Take Back” the Democratic Party

Calvin Priest

A huge debate is opening up among workers and youth about how to defeat Trump and fight for genuinely progressive politics. Packed meetings of hundreds of people, including many organized by Socialist Alternative, are being held around the country.

One common idea is that we must combine the building of a movement against Trump with a determined effort to “take back” the Democratic Party and make it an instrument that represents the interests of ordinary people rather than Wall Street. This is the argument of Bernie Sanders and his Our Revolution group, as well as the dominant elements in the Democratic Socialists of America.

Given the divisions that have opened up in the Democratic Party due to their incredible failure to defeat the odious Trump, it is understandable why many would be attracted to this perspective. More than at any time in the past 40 years, the “centrist” neoliberal leadership of the party is on the defensive. The position of Sanders and Senator Elizabeth Warren has been strengthened. Democratic Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer has even responded to growing demands for change by backing the candidacy of Congressional Progressive Caucus Co-Chair Keith Ellison to lead the Democratic National Committee and by giving long-time independent Sanders a junior role in the party leadership.

But at the same time, the dominant wing of the party is pushing back hard against any idea of drawing lessons or responding to the massive anger at corporate politics. This is exemplified by Democratic House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi’s stunning denial of any need to take stock: “I don’t think people want a new direction” (*RealClearPolitics.com*, 12/4/2016).

Ellison’s campaign is running into fierce push-back from the Obama White House and key Democratic leaders. The race has now been upended, with Labor Secretary Tom Perez being brought in as a safe establishment alternative, and he is likely to become the new favorite. If Ellison is defeated, all three of the key leading positions in the party will continue to be filled by establishment Democrats.

The question of the character of the



Democratic Party was sharply posed by Sanders’ historic campaign earlier this year, which was met by ferocious resistance. A total of 40 Democratic Senators opposed Sanders, while only 1 endorsed him. The lengths to which party leaders were prepared to go to stop Sanders’ pro-working-class campaign was revealed by Wikileaks.

We believe in the unity of the widest possible forces in common action against Trump’s attacks. But we strongly disagree with the view that the corporate Democratic Party can be turned into an instrument for working people. There is a mistaken idea promoted by some on the left that the Democrats once represented the interests of working people. This was never the case. The progressive policies often attributed to leaders like Franklin Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson were, in fact, concessions to the demands of powerful labor and social movements. FDR famously defended his New Deal policies to business leaders as necessary to forestall greater rebellions by workers, saying he was “the greatest friend American capitalism ever had.” LBJ, concerned about the growing revolt on his watch, bent to the enormous pressures of the Civil Rights Movement.

It is true that the party moved further to the right in the ‘80s and ‘90s, but this reflected the needs of capitalism in a new period, which had shifted to neoliberal policies in order to restore corporate profitability.

The Democratic Party is tied by a thousand threads to big business and Wall Street. While many reason that the existing framework of the party is valuable and makes reforming it easier than

launching a new party, the opposite is true. The Democrats’ existing structures will be used as weapons against Our Revolution and other progressive reformers, as was already on display during the elections. To even have a chance at seriously challenging the Democratic leadership, Our Revolution and groups like it would themselves need to have a grassroots activist character, with local groups and democratic decision-making instead of the current top-down model. But this would actually point toward the outline of a new party.

As Sanders correctly said in the debates, you can’t serve the interests of both Wall Street and working people. A party that stands for the 99 percent must advance a bold anti-corporate, working-class agenda and be prepared to welcome the contempt of the billionaire class. It would need to require its elected representatives to refuse all corporate donations and accept only the average income of their constituents, like socialist Councilmember Kshama Sawant in Seattle. Most Democratic elected officials would choose to leave the party rather than accept this situation.

This is why we will continue to argue for a new party of the 99%. While there is no doubt that many good people will fight to reform the Democratic Party in the coming period, the corrupt party leadership will block any and all such attempts by whatever means necessary, in order to defend the interests of their big business allies. This will lead the best workers and activists to see the need for their own party, independent of all corporate cash and influence. ☪

Rise of Mass Incarceration State

A Review of the Film *13th*

Eljeer Hawkins

As *13th* begins, the screen is black with the voice of President Obama explaining that the United States has five percent of the world’s population, but 25 percent of the world’s prison population, amounting to 2.3 million prisoners, the highest in the industrialized capitalist world.

Ava DuVernay’s new documentary chronicles the rise of mass incarceration in America. The film’s title and starting point are the Thirteenth amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which states, “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, *except as a punishment for crime* whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction” (italics added). This “loophole” retained for servitude of prisoners came to be prophetic in pointing toward the future development of a mass incarceration state, particularly for black Americans.

13th’s release takes place at a crucial stage for American capitalism and in the re-emergence of social movements. As Donald Trump enters the White House, there are ongoing crises within both parties of big business, a radicalization in society. *13th* introduces workers, youth, and people of color to the effects of mass incarceration on our communities, telling its stories in a clear and graphic manner in the long march of daily capitalist oppression and violence.

13th brings an understanding of mass incarceration to a wider audience, providing a visual narrative of the enormous human costs of this feature of modern American capitalism. Unfortunately, *13th* also uncritically includes enemies of the BLM movement like Gingrich, as well as Democratic Party liberals and apologists like Rangel and Booker. It fails to expose the complicity of the Democratic Party in the history of institutionalized racism. It is time to gather the forces required to fight back against Trumpism and Wall Street, bringing together the wider working class. We need to run our own independent working-class and BLM candidates on a program that put workers, youth, and oppressed people’s needs first rather than catering to the super-profits of Wall Street.

Ending racism and incarceration demands a new vision of society based on human need, cooperation, and solidarity. A new generation of young people, inspired by Black Lives Matter, are increasingly questioning capitalism and the rule of Wall Street, searching for an alternative to this racist system. ☪

Read the full review at [SocialistAlternative.org](https://socialistalternative.org).

Government Rocked by Historic Mobilizations

Spain: Students' Union Beats Right-Wing Government

Statement by Sindicato de Estudiantes (Students Union), Spain

Just days after the last student general strike that was called by the Sindicato de Estudiantes against the “*reválidas franquistas*” (college entrance exams), we have been proven correct in what we always said: struggle works.

These exams were first introduced under General Franco's dictatorship and were used as a sort of filter to stop working-class young people from reaching university.

The right-wing government wanted to impose this filter again, which could have resulted in hundreds of thousands of fourteen- to sixteen-year-old young people being prematurely expelled from school, with no academic qualifications. This is in a society with mass youth unemployment which, in 2013, reached 56% and has now declined to only 43%!

Following a meeting between the Ministry of Education and the representatives of the Autonomous Communities, the *reválidas* – proposed by Wert, the former education minister – have been abandoned.

The exams, which were to be held at the end of the final year of secondary school as well as primary school, will no longer be

obligatory and will have no academic bearing. The tests will merely be indicative. In other words, they will only be introduced in some schools and as indicative tests.

This agreement means we have succeeded in defeating the *reválidas franquistas* and, in so doing, have prevented hundreds of thousands of youth from being thrown out of the classroom.

This victory is the fruit of struggle conducted by millions of students over the last few years and is due in particular to the historic mass strikes of October 24 and November 25 called by the Sindicato de Estudiantes.

These strikes emptied the classrooms and filled the streets in protest against the unjust and reactionary exams. The victory was also achieved by the battle fought by parents and teachers alongside us – although some might be tempted to claim victory themselves, such as those from PSOE (the social democratic party), who supported the formation of the new right-wing People's Party (PP) government of Mariano Rajoy.

In reality, the only reason the PP government gave in on this issue of strategic importance to them was due to the mobilisations and struggles on the streets.

This is the first victory. Now



Spanish students on strike against high-stakes testing.

the battle continues, with the aim of finishing off the neo-liberal LOMCE (education reform) and ensuring that not one comma of this Francoist counter-reform remains.

We told the government and their cronies – Ciudadanos (right-wing Citizens party) and leaders of the PSOE – that we are aware of the significance of this victory. We will not allow them to continue down the road of cuts and attacks on state education with their latest manoeuvres in the form of the “education pact.”

We told them that they would not cheat us and that there would be no pact should they refuse

to recognize and implement the demands of those millions who have tirelessly struggled as part of the Marea Verde, (the “Green Wave,” a campaign involving education workers against cuts).

Their demands are the return of 7,000 million euro stolen from the state education budget, the re-hiring of 32,000 sacked teachers, the repeal of the LOMCE and the 3+2 exams, and no more state funds to support religious and private education.

Furthermore, if the government decides to continue down the road that they have taken in the last few years, they should be aware: We will again take to the streets. ✪

Italy Shaken by Referendum Defeat

Based on Report from ControCorrente

The Italian political establishment was dealt a major blow on December 4, when Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's proposed constitutional reform – on abolishing the elected Senate and centralizing decision-making on key issues in the hands of the government – was voted down by almost 60% to just over 40%. Millions of Italians used the referendum to send a clear and strong message of their profound dissatisfaction with the social and economic situation not only to the government and the prime minister, but also to the entire political class, including those who were on the “No” side.

Italian capitalism is in the midst of a 20-year economic stagnation and a banking crisis with potentially catastrophic consequences not only for Italy but for the entire EU. Italian banks are

sitting on 330 billion euro of “nonperforming” debt. Meanwhile, 29% of the population is at risk of poverty.

Renzi was forced to resign and his replacement, Paolo Gentiloni, is now Italy's third unelected prime minister in three years.

As *Il Sole 24 Ore*, newspaper of the industrialists and financiers, wrote on the day after the vote, those who voted “Yes” were mainly pensioners and from the upper and middle layers of society – while low-paid workers and youth, precisely those to whom the government had addressed its rhetoric for three years, dealt the government a solemn blow. Eighty-one percent of those aged 18 to 35 voted “No.” The idea that it would be possible to ride the wave of social anger by simply winning TV head-to-heads, promising a few euro to the poorer sections of society, and predicting an apocalypse if the “No” side won, proved to be a total

illusion.

Renzi's massive defeat and his resignation represent a positive development and an opportunity for workers and youth who want to fight for a better future. But, for an opportunity to become a step forward, it must be grasped with a realistic analysis of the political and social situation. There is not a single political force in the “No” camp which could be a reference point for those who really want to change Italian society. The enthusiasm for the “No” vote could be used to begin a serious discussion about a political alternative capable of filling the streets rather than the polling stations. Alternatively, it could be used to sow illusions in the Five Star Movement, led by comedian Beppe Grillo, which was the public face of the “No” campaign. ControCorrente, Socialist Alternative's Italian sister organization, is campaigning for a clear fighting alternative. ✪



SocialistWorld.net

Opportunities to Build Socialist Forces Worldwide

Judy Beishon

An excellent and inspiring six-day meeting of the International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Committee for a Workers International (CWI) ended on December 3.

Attending were 90 CWI members and co-thinkers from over 35 countries on every continent. Socialist Alternative, which stands in political solidarity with the CWI, participated, representing the United States. The meeting discussed, amended, and agreed documents on the world situation, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America.

Particularly welcomed and applauded at the meeting were excellent contributions from two participating visitors from the Spanish organization Revolutionary Left (Izquierda Revolucionaria - IR), Juan Ignacio Ramos and Victor Taibo. IR has been at the forefront of the magnificent mass student movement across Spain that has achieved a significant victory over the Spanish government.

Originally, IR members were organized as a section of the CWI, but in 1992 the majority of them split to become a section of the International Marxist Tendency (IMT), led by Ted Grant.

In 2010, IR, together with the majority of the IMT's Mexican and Venezuelan sections, broke with the IMT due to political differences on a series of strategic political questions.

In recent months, IR comrades initiated a process of discussion, debate, and practical collaboration with the CWI, with a view to a historic unification during the course of 2017.

While not every section of the CWI has faced a highly favorable situation for growth over the last year, many important steps forward were referred to during the IEC. This includes electoral successes in Ireland and Germany and significant successful student campaigns in South Africa and Taiwan.

Above all, every section of the CWI will be going into 2017 with a determination to build its membership and influence, no matter what the starting point. ✪

Resistance and Resilience: Trans Struggle Today

Dan Kroop, New York City

Transgender people have made major strides in visibility and won important victories in recent years. Nevertheless, trans people continue to struggle with hate-based violence, economic marginalization, and social exclusion. The stakes have been raised further as the incoming Trump administration will likely target LGBTQ people – and particularly trans rights – building on the anti-LGBTQ attacks Vice President-Elect Mike Pence launched as Governor of Indiana.

At least 26 trans people were murdered in the United States in 2016, the highest number ever recorded. “There has been a great uptick in violence against trans women of color, in particular, and trans people more broadly,” said Danni Askini, Executive Director of the Gender Justice League. The increase in attacks is a stark reminder of the transphobia and racism endemic to capitalism.

At the same time, there has been a historic growth in trans rights organizing, with Trans Pride and Trans Day of Remembrance events being held in an increasing number of cities and more and more young people coming out of the closet as transgender.

The first Trans Day of Remembrance was memorialized in 1998 to draw attention to the hate violence directed at the trans community and to speak to its spirit of resilience and resistance. In addition, Trans Pride marches and rallies have been organized in many major American cities since the mid-2000s. These Trans Prides have brought together thousands of people, increasing trans visibility and raising confidence to struggle for trans rights.

Bathroom Bills and Gender Identity

Political attacks on the trans community have increased alongside the increase in trans visibility, with “bathroom bills” sprouting up across the country. House Bill 2 in North Carolina, passed in February 2016, requires trans people in government buildings and schools to

use restrooms corresponding to their gender at birth. But the passage of H.B. 2 was accompanied by a wave of national and international criticism, including high-profile boycotts and cancellations from celebrities and sports teams, showing solidarity against the bigoted attack on trans people.

H.B. 2 also showed that discrimination against one oppressed group can often be the tip of the spear for attacks on the entire working class. An underreported part of H.B. 2 goes after worker rights as a whole: it restricts localities from increasing the minimum wage, passing paid family leave, or implementing medical leave laws. Trans and gender-nonconforming communities are more likely to be job-insecure or in poverty, and they are attacked on all sides by this measure.

Trans activists have also led a number of successful fights against recent anti-trans bills. In Washington State, a discriminatory bathroom bill, Initiative 1515, was blocked by trans activists before it even reached the ballot, while New York City reaffirmed citywide protections for people to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity.

Trans and Working-Class Issues: Housing, Health Care, Jobs, Criminal Justice

Trans people remain four times more likely to live in poverty than the general population and face high rates of hate crimes, unemployment, underemployment, homelessness, mental health issues, and health care inequality



The fight for trans rights has become a mainstream issue due to the fight against the “bathroom bills.”

(“Understanding Issues Facing Transgender Americans,” *lgbtmap.org*, February 2015).

One in five transgender people has been discriminated against when seeking a home, and more than one in ten have been evicted from their homes because of their gender identity. Forty percent of homeless youth are LGBTQ, with family rejection the leading cause.

The current status of trans people as more marginalized and impoverished than the general population means that working-class issues are often closely interrelated with trans issues.

At a LGBTQ town hall meeting called by Socialist Alternative member and Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant, rent control, action on hate crimes, and a LGBTQ center were raised by activists as key demands in the fight for trans equality. These issues are also central to the struggles of trans and working-class people in other major cities. Unfortunately, the Democratic establishment in Seattle has not supported the calls for rent control or an LGBTQ center in spite of the movement’s ongoing demands.

The fight against mass incarceration and the inhumane prison system is also critical, as trans people are one of the fastest-growing segments of the prison population, and the Transgender Law Center published a notable report in 2007 stating that trans inmates

are 13 times more likely to be victims of sexual assault. Victims are overwhelmingly people of color, underscoring the connections between Black Lives Matter and trans issues. In 2012, Socialist Alternative reported on the case of CeCe McDonald, a trans woman of color in Minneapolis, Minnesota, who was unfairly jailed and forced into a men’s prison after defending herself during a violent transphobic attack.

With a high rate of unemployment and underemployment, trans people are deeply invested in the fight against low wages and have been on the front lines of the Fight for \$15 and 15 Now movements. Many have been radicalized in this and other struggles and have drawn more far-reaching and anti-capitalist conclusions.

Access to health care is now under imminent threat by Trump and the right wing. Trump campaigned on a promise to repeal Obamacare – which, in spite of its real limitations, has assisted many trans people in accessing primary care, hormone therapy, and sex reassignment surgery.

Threats to trans people and hate-based attacks have increased as the right wing has been emboldened by the election of Donald Trump. This underscores the need for LGBTQ people, people of color, and all working people to develop united movements and solidarity to fight back against Trump and the

right.

What Socialist Alternative Calls For

The trans community has fought hard to increase its visibility and transform the discussion around trans issues. Their struggle has raised the importance of class issues like affordable housing, wages, and health care. To win trans equality, we will need to build powerful transgender and LGBTQ movements and unite with the struggles of all oppressed and working people.

We will also need to build a new party of the 99%, independent of corporate cash and influence, to unambiguously fight for our interests. While the Republican Party has spearheaded many of the worst attacks against the trans community, the Democratic Party has been complicit in undermining the rights of LGBTQ and other working people, as it has sided again and again with the pro-corporate status quo. Our movements will need to be independent of the Democratic Party, with leadership from and responsibility to the trans and LGBTQ communities, to continue the struggle for full LGBTQ equality and human liberation.

One trans member of Socialist Alternative described her situation this way: “Even if most of my oppression comes from my gender identity, my power comes from my unity with all working-class people!”

Socialist Alternative calls for:

- ✪ United resistance to Trump’s plans to turn back the clock on LGBTQ rights.
- ✪ No to anti-trans bathroom bills and transmisogyny.
- ✪ Affordable housing, rent control, and a national \$15 minimum wage.
- ✪ Working-class unity to combat the rise in hate crimes against trans and other LGBTQ people, immigrants, Muslims, and all others under attack from the right.
- ✪ Medicare for all. Free access to hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery. ✪

Prepare Resistance to Trump's Attacks

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its concerns. We have consistently rejected the narrative that the support for Trump is simply motivated by racism and sexism, although that is a real factor for a section of his supporters. We have repeatedly pointed out that Trump, through a right-wing populist and nationalist appeal, tapped into the anger at the effects of neoliberalism and globalization, especially the massive loss of manufacturing jobs. This was partly the result of trade deals like NAFTA. According to the Economic Policy Institute, five million manufacturing jobs were lost in the U.S. between 2000 and 2014.

But neither are we blind to the fact that Trump's open racism, xenophobia, and misogyny resonated with a section of his supporters. This is not the first time in history that the accumulated failures of the left and the labor leadership have opened the door to dangerous right-wing ideas. This situation can be reversed with a determined mass movement that speaks directly to the common interests of all sections of the working class and firmly opposes racism and sexism.

The truth is that the Democratic Party establishment has lost the ability to even pretend to speak to working people's interests, whether white, black, or Latino. What was notable in this election was not just a limited – and frequently exaggerated – turn by white workers to the Republicans, but the lack of enthusiasm among young black workers for the Democrats and, incredibly, a nearly 30% vote for Trump among Latinos.

While some will seek to dismiss Trump supporters as one reactionary mass, it is clear that if we are serious about building a movement to defeat the right, this will require articulating a program that speaks to the needs of working people generally, and through fighting for that program, winning over sections of Trump's base. Can this be done? Sanders' poll numbers against Trump – significantly higher than Clinton's – and the huge response he received for his



photo credit: David Calder

Seattle protest against Trump on November 9.

pro-working-class program shows it can.

Another section of Trump's base will not be reached. But it is possible to isolate and defeat the organized far-right forces, including the "alt-right" – which, though emboldened, at this point remain small and generally ineffectual.

Huge Challenges Ahead

The enormous determination to fight back already being shown by hundreds of thousands of young people, women, people of color, and LGBTQ people points to the potential for building the biggest mass movement in American history, which can inflict a decisive blow to the right.

But to win we have to clearly understand the tasks posed and who our friends and enemies are. We need a clear strategy based on the social power of working people. Some might despair, given the conservative leadership of the existing unions. But there have also been real signs of life: the Verizon strike earlier this year was the biggest strike in nearly 20 years.

At the end of the day, Trump's ascendancy is a reflection of the deep and

growing crisis of the capitalist system, whose institutions have been deeply discredited during the last historical period and even more during this election cycle. Trump himself, though distasteful to many in the elite, is actually the perfect embodiment of the thoroughly corrupt, predatory nature of this social order.

The ruling class is divided, not sure how to respond. The economic collapse of 2008 and 2009 led to millions of jobs lost and homes foreclosed while the rich got richer. Along with the looming climate catastrophe and the exposure of searing racial injustice, this has led to a serious questioning of the system by millions of people.

Trump's presidency will deepen the radicalization of sections of society. Poll after poll indicates growing support for socialism – especially among young people. Socialist Alternative is working toward forming a new socialist party, based on Marxist politics. The movement we are building will need a clear anti-capitalist, socialist force within it that argues for a working-class-centered struggle against Trump and the entire system, which has totally outlived its usefulness. If you agree, join us! ✪

Teamsters Election Shakes Union

Joshua Koritz

The recent International Brotherhood of Teamsters (the Teamsters) national election has delivered a slight victory to the incumbent, Teamsters' President James Hoffa, Jr. A slate of Teamsters United candidates, led by Fred Zuckerman, came within only 6,000 of unseating Hoffa. Importantly, six Teamsters United candidates won election as international vice presidents in the South and Central regions. Socialist Alternative spoke with **veteran Teamster Bob Commike** about the results.

The Teamsters claim 1.4 million members, primarily truck drivers in the U.S. and Canada, and they have major contracts at UPS, as well as branching out to represent other types of workplaces. The Teamsters union has been one of the strongest in the country, setting standards for wages, benefits, and generally strong contracts. The Teamsters still maintain the right to show solidarity with other union struggles by fighting to keep the contractual provision that they do not have to cross picket lines with deliveries.

Every five years, the Teamsters have a nationwide vote for president of the union and several "international vice presidents." Jimmy Hoffa, Jr. has ruled as president for 17 years. His administration is under investigation by the FBI for corruption, which was a constant cloud over his campaign. He continues the family tradition from his father, the notoriously corrupt Jimmy Hoffa. Commike explained that, this year, "Hoffa lost prestige; he almost lost the election. He also lost crucial allies on the executive board."

This has been the most serious challenge Hoffa and his supporters have faced in years. The opposition slate, Teamsters United, based itself on popular anger against concessionary contracts signed since 2011. "[Teamsters United] wanted a more democratic union, a fighting union. And one that roots out corruption," explained Commike. "The members are tired of concessions and losing their pensions piece by piece. Fred Zuckerman has stood up for members, fought for contract, led successful strikes against subcontracting." ✪

Read the full article at SocialistAlternative.org.

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SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

STOP TRUMP'S ANTI-WOMAN AGENDA



Kelly Bellin

The election of Donald Trump is a call to action for women. His glorification of sexual assault is an insult to the courageous struggles over the last years to combat violence against women. This is only matched by his generally despicable, sexist attitudes.

At the same time, the Republican sweep of the House and Senate puts attacks on women's rights squarely on the agenda in 2017. And Trump's early appointments confirm that we should expect a fiercely right-wing administration that we need to fight even more fiercely against.

No Mandate for Hate

Recent years have seen widespread recognition in the U.S. that violence against women is a serious and deadly problem – as well as a growing willingness to fight back.

For us to fight the oncoming attacks from the right, we need to build mass resistance. The Women's March on Washington the day after Trump's inauguration shows the immediate potential for this, with hundreds of thousands of people expected to attend.

Trump does not have a mandate for his sexism. In fact, he received

less than 47% of the ballots cast, and nearly half of America didn't vote at all. But he has already promised to nominate a Supreme Court justice who would vote to repeal *Roe v. Wade*. Rather than "giving Trump a chance," we need to build a mass movement to oppose a reactionary appointment. If the Democrats are serious about defending women, they should use every tool in Congress, including a filibuster, to stop him.

As history demonstrates, it is through mass struggle, organized resistance, and political independence from corporate politics that working-class women have forced politicians to make concessions. *Roe v. Wade* was won in the first place under the conservative Nixon administration based on the enormous pressure from mass movements.

The Republican Party has already proven its determination to rip apart reproductive rights, particularly in the Southern states they have controlled for many years. To defend and extend reproductive rights, we need determination.

Stand Up, Fight Back!

Women aren't the only group in the crosshairs of a Trump presidency. He has

given an explicit platform to all kinds of hate and bigotry – from targeting Muslims and immigrants to blatant hostility to the struggle against police violence.

The very same Supreme Court appointments who will attempt to repeal *Roe v. Wade* will also be at the forefront of attacks on labor. Women workers will be disproportionately affected if "right to work" measures are applied to the whole public sector. But many of the most fighting unions in the country are dominated by women, and unions have a key role in mobilizing against Trump's sexist agenda.

Young women want to fight back against inequality and the corporate control of politics. We've been at the forefront of all key movements of the last period, from fighting for a \$15 minimum wage to the ongoing struggle against racist police murders. This is also why a majority of young women supported Bernie Sanders and his campaign's call to fight the billionaire class. Despite Trump's platform for hateful ideas, fierce movements of working-class women are on the horizon. Through a united mass struggle, we can push back Trump's agenda.

To win this struggle, we must be politically

independent from the Democratic Party. In the election, the Democratic establishment forced through a nominee who openly represented Wall Street and the billionaire class. This is in complete contradiction to representing the interests of ordinary women.

This is not a new problem. The Democrats' loyalty to big business keeps them from squarely fighting against the profit-driven policies that consistently drive poverty deeper, slash social services, and reinforce income inequality.

The Democratic Party's defensive approach to women's struggles has allowed the right to define key issues like reproductive rights for decades.

End Systemic Sexism

Trump's despicable attitudes toward women are a reflection of the vicious sexism that capitalism ferments, which is constantly reinforced by systemic gender inequality. To truly end sexism, we need to take on the entire system that holds working people hostage under varying forms of oppression.

If you agree that to destroy sexism we need to destroy capitalism, consider joining Socialist Alternative. ✪

WOMEN'S MARCH ON WASHINGTON

STOP TRUMP'S SEXISM:

Build mass protests against the normalization and glorification of sexual assault. Defend and extend reproductive rights.

SOCIALIST POLICIES FOR WOMEN'S LIBERATION:

We need guaranteed quality health care, child care, and education. Equal pay for equal work.

FOR UNITED STRUGGLE AGAINST TRUMP:

Link up the fight for women's rights with protests to defend Muslims, immigrants, Black Lives Matter, and labor unions.

FOR A NEW PARTY TO FIGHT THE RIGHT:

We can't "give Trump a chance." We need to bring together working people, women, and the oppressed to organize independently against the right-wing assaults on our lives.