

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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ESCALATE ^{THE} RESISTANCE

TOWARD A NATIONWIDE STRIKE ON MAY 1

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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. ✦

Socialist Alternative Editor Tom Crean • Editorial Board Calvin Priest, Eljeer Hawkins, Tony Wilsdon, Joshua Koritz, George Brown, Bryan Watson
Editors@SocialistAlternative.org

info@SocialistAlternative.org

 @SocialistAlt

WHY I AM A SOCIALIST

Bob Trombley Cincinnati, OH



As I write this, I have just turned seventy years old. I began to self-identify as a socialist only in the last year, so my political maturity came late.

About fifteen years ago, I began to pay more attention to our political, economic, and societal ills. Many of us did, after 9/11.

I learned about the unfolding crises, Bush's wars, the 2008 economic collapse, the wars on drugs and crime that really were wars on our working-class people. I was haunted and disturbed by the prevailing lack of social and economic justice and I began to look for root causes. I read about neoliberal capitalism and I came to see it as a syndrome of lethal exploitation. It has become an octopus with its tentacles constricting our economics, our civic life, our government, our valued institutions like public education, and even our very psyches.

There had to be something better. I came to understand that we need real democracy that serves the people, and socialism is the path to it.

I continue to learn more about socialism, largely through involvement with Socialist

Alternative Cincinnati, and I am increasingly encouraged that revolutionary socialism is the only system of political organization that will provide for universal justice, human dignity, preservation of our island planet, and true sister and brotherhood.

What I've seen from Socialist Alternative in action gives me hope that we can stay on the right path of empowering working class people.

Now I look around and wonder where are my fellow radicals from the '60s? There are a few but I would certainly welcome more. In the meanwhile, I take heart in working with Socialist Alternative. They are the hope of the world and they make me proud to be a Socialist. ✦

#FreeDaniel Protest in Seattle

Just two days after finding out that ICE detained Seattle resident Daniel Ramirez Medina as collateral damage during a raid on his father's home, a powerful coalition of immigrant rights organizations came together to say Free Daniel! As a DREAMer and DACA recipient, Daniel is essentially a test case for Trump's full on attack against our immigrant brothers and sisters.

At very short notice, Kshama Sawant and the Resist Trump Coalition called for a protest at the Federal Courthouse on February 17 which brought out 500 people; a rally of a similar size had gathered in New York City the night before. Local immigrant activists were in attendance at the protest, as well as delegations from various labor unions and other organizers. Representatives of SEIU, Washington DREAMers, One America, Socialist Students, and others addressed the crowd. Many spoke powerfully both to the immediate need to protect Daniel, but also how our fight needs to go much further.

Seattle City Councilmember Kshama Sawant, an immigrant and member of Socialist Alternative, spoke about the need for Seattle to be a sanctuary city, not just in words but in actions.

A Tacoma DACA recipient, restaurant worker and mother of two said, "Thanks to DACA, I was able to have a home, to give my kids a better life. So, when I found out about Daniel, It just confirmed for me what I've been afraid of for the past



Kshama Sawant speaks at a #FreeDaniel rally.

month... And last night I made the decision to come today and talk, because I'm not afraid anymore!" Michael Ramos of the church council denounced the detention on behalf of Seattle faith leaders: "People of faith see it as a moral duty to uphold the rights and dignity of every person ... our houses of worship require no documents."

The march returned to the courthouse to hear a press conference from Daniel's lawyers and to learn that our fight must continue. A judge delayed making a decision on Daniel's detention – showing that we need to make our powerful movement of the 99% heard even louder.

This protest is a small but important example of the type of sustained and determined struggle that will be necessary to defeat Trump's attacks on working people, citizens and non-citizens. It also shows again that thousands and indeed millions are prepared to stand up and be part of this struggle. ✦

Making Sense of the Chaos

Resistance in the Era of Trump

Tom Crean and Philip Locker

The following is a shortened and adapted version of a document approved by Socialist Alternative's National Committee on Monday, February 20. The full document can be read on SocialistAlternative.org.

Since this document was drafted the Trump regime has become less stable and more chaotic. At the same time, Trump is on the offensive on immigration and at Standing Rock. A majority of the ruling class still supports Trump and they will be very cautious about bringing down a president given the damage it would inflict on their political system. Trump's position can also be strengthened based on new events. While the movement against Trump is correctly emboldened we should warn against any complacency. Trump remains a very serious threat and to defeat him will require a far stronger movement, including decisive working-class action which major strikes on May Day would point towards.

On January 22, Trump and his cabinet of billionaires launched their blitzkrieg issuing 20 executive orders in 10 days. Trump's early actions targeted immigrants, Muslims, women's reproductive rights, health care, the environment and regulation of the financial sector. And there is a lot more to come.

But Trump has also sparked a wave of mass protest, completely unprecedented for any newly elected president. This is the biggest revolt in U.S. society since the Vietnam War. Besides the millions who participated in the women's marches on January 21, tens of thousands went to airports across the country on January 28 to protest the ban on allowing people from seven majority Muslim nations into the U.S. Tens of thousands more participated in protests against the ban in subsequent days.

Record numbers also flooded the Senate with messages against the nomination of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education and Republican congress members have been forced to flee their local town hall meetings by angry protesters denouncing them because of the threatened attack on health care.

Of huge importance for the reemergence of a fighting left, there is now a layer of tens of thousands of people subscribing to socialist magazines, joining socialist organizations and stepping up to regularly attend protests and political events. This phase of mass struggle, interest in socialist ideas and determined direct action will likely continue, with ups and downs, through the coming months.

What is clear is that sections of society, particularly youth and women at this stage,



Trump and Bannon.

are being radicalized by the Trump presidency. This radicalization, is now laying the basis for a full-blown "Tea Party of the Left" which is forcing the Democratic Party leadership to take a more aggressive, oppositional stance to maintain their credibility. This is an extension of the trends we pointed to in the Sanders campaign last year. It confirms our view that society is not shifting to the right but there is a very deep polarization. The other side of this polarization is that the Trump presidency is opening the door for the development of a more serious and virulent far right than we have seen in decades.

In the medium term the Trump presidency could deeply damage the right and lay the basis for sweeping electoral defeats for the Republicans. His administration could even implode. But without a bold program that mobilizes the broadest forces against Trump and unless that movement is centered on the social power of working people there remains a real danger of this regime inflicting serious defeats that temporarily demoralize the movement. We must not conclude that even with the weaknesses already exposed, including the chaos inside the administration, that Trump will inevitably be defeated. We must also bear in mind that Trump can make use of terrorist attacks that occur and possibly initiate foreign military conflicts to distract from his domestic difficulties.

Characterizing the New Regime

This is a deeply reactionary regime with real authoritarian tendencies. It has threatened to purge the state apparatus of any

dissent, promoted "alternative facts" and declared that it's at "war" with the mainstream corporate media. Trump tweets about a "so-called judge" and "outrageous, political" judicial rulings. Lurking in the background of the administration's most provocative acts is the far right nationalist Steve Bannon.

It is clear that there are serious divisions in the ruling class. Some of Trump's actions – including setting out to rip up the limited regulation of the financial sector brought in by Obama and promising to lower taxes for the rich – are making Wall Street happy. The energy sector is salivating at the prospect of ripping up environmental regulation. But on many fronts – like his threats to start a trade war or to pull apart the institutions of the postwar political order – Trump is deeply disquieting to key sections of the ruling class here and internationally. They have no desire to further undermine the authority of their institutions by turning to "strongman" rule. On the other hand, even those most opposed to Trump are not necessarily ready to push for impeachment – yet.

The possibility of a full blown constitutional crisis if, for example, Trump at some stage decides to ignore the rulings of federal judges certainly cannot be ruled out. This combined with an ongoing mass movement could create truly explosive conditions in society. Of course events like terrorist attacks can aid Trump in justifying authoritarian measures, but a full blown power grab would face popular resistance on a scale possibly never seen in U.S. history as well as moves

by sections of the ruling class to block him.

Trump Facing Setbacks on Several Fronts

The botched launch of the Muslim ban is a real setback for Trump but this should in no way lead us to conclude that he will inevitably fail on all other fronts. For one thing, Trump has pledged to issue a new executive order less liable to successful legal challenge.

But Trump and the Republicans are now in trouble of their own making on another key front: healthcare. Having made the "repeal and replacement" of Obamacare such a central plank, the Republicans are facing the predictable problem of delivering on their promise without millions losing health care coverage. The biggest issue is the extension of Medicaid which brought healthcare to millions of working people and which Republicans want to repeal. This benefits many in rural areas where Trump won big so he needs to tread very carefully.

Somewhere between now and the mid-term elections the Republicans will have to unveil, pass, and defend their alternative which is very likely to please almost no-one and may in fact be simply a watered down, worse version of Obamacare.

How the Anti-Trump Movement Will Develop

We obviously welcome the difficulties the Republicans are facing. But we need to ask: what is likely to be the main focus of resistance to the Trump administration in the coming weeks?

We are likely to see massive mobilizations against the ramping up of mass deportations, against a right wing appointee to the Supreme Court and against Trump's shredding of environmental regulations. The organizers of the Women's March have called for a "general strike"/ "day without a woman" on International Women's Day, March 8. April 15, tax day, will see actions across the country. There will be a march for science on Earth Day, April 22 and a likely massive environmental march on April 29. All of this activity could culminate in May Day protests and strike actions on a scale not seen since the "day without an immigrant," May 1, 2006.

Socialist Alternative has from the start called for 100 days of resistance and pointing to the key role of mass non-violent civil disobedience and strike action as well as mass demonstrations.

But it is the attacks on immigrants that

continued on p. 10



Why We Should Strike on May Day

Kshama Sawant
Seattle City Councilmember

@cmkshama facebook.com/cmshama

Article first published at Jacobinmag.com, 2/21/17.

Since Inauguration Day, millions of people have taken to the streets to fight against Donald Trump's right-wing agenda. Yet the president is continuing his attacks.

In the one week alone, more than six hundred immigrants have been rounded up by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This is only a small taste of what's likely to come with Trump promising to deport millions. ICE is likely at some stage to start full-scale workplace raids.

It will not be enough to play defense. As millions ask "what will it take to stop Trump?", a discussion about strike action has been rapidly developing. The "chaos" we created at the nation's airports gives a hint of what's possible. The rapidly organized protests won the immediate release of detained immigrants and even pushed sections of big business into coming out against Trump and his Muslim ban.

But we need to think deeply about where our strength lies and how to create disruption on an even greater scale. Working people have enormous potential power to shut down the profits of big business by taking actions in their workplaces like slowdowns, sickouts, and strikes.

Many organizers of the January women's marches, joined by Angela Davis and others, are calling for a women's strike on March 8 (International Women's Day), to escalate the fight against Trump.

If the big women's organizations, like Planned Parenthood, were to join in this call it could bring hundreds of thousands to the streets and this time tapping into the strategic potential of mass workplace action. Unfortunately, the leadership of many of these organizations are too timid due to their political outlook and ties to the Democratic Party establishment.

March 8 can be a springboard to even larger protests and strike action across the country on May 1, International Workers' Day. Historically "May Day" has been a global day of mass working-class action. Immigrants restored the tradition of May Day to the United States in 2006, when they organized rallies of millions and hundreds of thousands went on strike as part of the "Day



Many businesses closed down for the "Day Without Immigrants" on February 16.

Without an Immigrant" in response to brutal Republican attacks.

We will need the time up to May 1 to organize a huge nationwide action which unites immigrants, women, union members, the Black Lives Matter movement, environmentalists, and all those threatened by Trump.

Let's use the coming weeks to begin planning for workplace actions as well as a mass peaceful civil disobedience that shuts down highways, airports, and other key infrastructure. Students can organize walkouts in their schools to send a powerful message that youth reject Trump's racism and misogyny.

The participation of the labor movement would need to be central to this effort. With a clear lead from the union leadership millions of workers would eagerly respond. One day public-sector general strikes in key urban centers around the nation would be possible. Unfortunately, despite the attacks Trump is preparing against unions including national "right to work" (for less) legislation, some labor leaders will do anything besides building resistance in the streets.

But May Day actions have more potential to change the parameters of U.S. politics than decades of insider lobbying. Talk of strike action is already bubbling up within the labor movement. The Seattle Education Association, Minnesota Nurses Association, and a Philadelphia nurses union all passed resolutions supporting a one-day nationwide strike on May 1 (see accompanying article).

Rank-and-file union members and left labor leaders should rapidly move to bring resolutions and make the case within their own unions for May 1 strike action.

Where there is no formal strike or any union, other forms of workplace action can include using individual sick days or vacation days, organizing for a lunchtime meeting of your co-workers, or possibly leaving work early to join protests (as happened in the women's strike in Poland last October). We want the largest possible show of force, while keeping in mind that such actions would be too risky for some workers to take part in.

This is a long battle and we are just starting to get organized. Let's use March 8 and May 1 to build our strength and lay the basis for even stronger actions that allow for larger numbers of workers to strike.

Our strength is in numbers and organization. We can protect each other best against retaliation from our bosses by organizing our co-workers to join with us and building widespread support in our communities.

We will not defeat Trump in one day alone. But a nationwide strike on May Day would, without a doubt, represent an enormous step forward for our movement.

Let's seize the time and make this May Day a turning point in the struggle to bring down this dangerous administration and put forward the type of politics that can challenge the rule of the billionaire class. 🗳️

Union Locals Pass Resolutions Supporting a May 1 Nationwide Strike Call

Stephan Kimmerle

The time is ripe for an escalation of the resistance against Trump and his attacks on immigrants, women and workers' rights. A few union locals have waded into the debate by passing resolutions for actions on May 1.

The board of directors of the Minnesota Nurses Association, "calls upon the NNU [the National Nurses Union], the AFL-CIO ... to start an intense discussion about ... protest action on May Day, May 1, 2017, including a discussion within the AFL-CIO about a call for a nationwide strike that day."

The teachers union in Seattle, the Seattle Education Association (SEA), took it a step further and now call on the statewide Washington Education Association and on the three million strong National Education Association, "to call upon their affiliates to go on a one day strike on May Day, May 1st 2017 should other labor unions put out the call for a strike that day."

If you can move a motion in your trade union or any other activist group, we publish below a resolution that can be used as a model (there are more online). It was passed by the Representatives Assembly of the SEA on February 13.

Seattle Education Association, Representative Assembly, February 13

Accepted unanimously at the Representatives Assembly of the Seattle Educators Association (SEA), February 13, 2017:

WHEREAS national right-to-work legislation has been proposed in US Congress, threatening our union's very existence, and

WHEREAS the WA state senate proposed an education budget that trades our union rights for a sub par increase in funding not nearly meeting the demands set forth by the McCleary decision, and

WHEREAS unions have been at the forefront of defending workers against corporate erosion of wages and benefits and a weakening of labor's ability to stand up for workers' rights comes with a concomitant loss of the community's rights as well,

THEREFORE be it resolved that the SEA will propose in writing to the WEA and the NEA, that they call upon their affiliates to go on a one day strike in order to strengthen our ability to take a stand for both worker rights and the paramount needs of our students on May Day, May 1st, 2017 should other AFL-CIO labor unions put out a call for a strike that day or another deemed more appropriate by the labor movement,

THEREFORE be it further resolved that the SEA ask the WEA and NEA to notify all their affiliates in writing of this conditional call, and when the time comes prominently display the call on its websites. 🗳️

Socialist Challenges Minneapolis Establishment



Socialist Alternative interviewed **Ginger Jentzen**, a leading activist in Minneapolis 15 Now and member of Socialist Alternative who is running for Minneapolis City Council in Ward 3. Visit her website at GingerJentzen.org to follow her campaign.

Why are you running this campaign?

I worked for years as a tipped restaurant worker and a home health care worker, and I joined Socialist Alternative in 2012. I've fought against foreclosures with Occupy Homes Minneapolis and against police violence with #BlackLivesMatter Minneapolis. I've spent two years fighting to win \$15 an hour in Minneapolis, for a proposal supported by 68% of Minneapolis residents and confirmed viable by the City of Minneapolis' own study.

We need political representatives who will fight unambiguously for working people and oppressed communities. We need political leaders who refuse corporate donations, who have proven themselves as uncompromising fighters, and who come out of our movements. Like Bernie Sanders and Kshama Sawant in Seattle, my campaign takes no money from big businesses

so working people know I'm unambiguously in their corner.

What are the main goals of your campaign?

We need to change the priorities in Minneapolis' City Hall. Minneapolis residents paid \$825 million for the construction of US Bank football stadium and refurbishing the Target Center arena for a billionaire and a bank invested in the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Imagine if we used that money to fix the broken for-profit housing system that's pricing working-class residents and students out of Minneapolis. It's enough money to build over 4,000 affordable, high-quality, city-owned housing units, providing thousands of union jobs and reducing rents.

The job description of our elected officials must be expanded. We need elected officials who are equally comfortable with the immediate tasks in City Hall as they are with the grassroots movement-building necessary to stop these attacks on Minneapolis residents. We need elected officials who are not afraid to stand up to big business and the Chamber of Commerce and who are

not compromised by corporate campaign contributions.

Imagine what we can do with an unapologetic working-class fighter in City Council. Look at what Kshama Sawant and Socialist Alternative in Seattle achieved: victories against slumlords and the first major city to pass \$15 an hour. We can do that in Minneapolis, too! With my campaign, I want to show that an alternative to Trump's anti-worker agenda is possible.

What are the main issues in your campaign?

Ward 3, where I am running for City Council, is an area of northeast and downtown Minneapolis where students and working-class families are rapidly being priced out by gentrification. We need to invest in high-quality public housing, and to do this, we can't rely on politicians who say they're against gentrification but take money from the profit-driven big developers that are making this city unaffordable for low-income communities. I pledge to refuse any donations from business interests, and as a city council member, I'd only take the average wage of a worker in the ward, donating half of my \$80,000 salary to social movements.

Minneapolis has a vibrant immigrant and Muslim community, which will be disproportionately impacted by Trump and the right-wing attacks. Tens of thousands of Minneapolis workers would be affected by anti-union laws and state level pre-emption of a \$15 an hour minimum

wage.

Our communities have been rocked by police killings like those of Jamar Clark and Philando Castile. Black Lives Matter has exposed the deep structural racism in the U.S. Let's be clear that here in Minneapolis, at a minimum, we need an elected civilian review board with real teeth, with hiring and firing power, with actual powers over the police budget and priorities.

How does your campaign relate to the fight-back against Trump?

From Ward 3, to all of the Twin Cities, to the state level, our communities and public services are threatened by the anti-immigrant, anti-union billionaire agenda of President Trump. How can we translate the mass opposition we've seen in the last month into an ongoing, powerful movement to actually block Trump's billionaire agenda? I think the temporary reversal of Trump's Muslim ban by the #NoBanNoWall shows that Trump and the billionaire class can be defeated by powerful social movements.

We learned an important lesson from the efforts of 15 Now, Centro de Trabajadores Unidos en Lucha (CTUL), and Neighborhoods Organizing for Change (NOC) to put \$15 an hour on the ballot in Minneapolis. The majority of the city Democratic Party, with a few notable exceptions, bent to the pressure of big business. They did everything they could to keep \$15 off the ballot. By failing to challenge corporate-politics-as-usual,

the Democratic Party has opened the door to right-wing, anti-worker attacks. This is why I'm running independently of the two-party system.

How can people support your campaign?

I can promise you this: We will run the boldest grassroots campaign this year, based on donations from ordinary working people, knocking on every door, building the resistance movement that stops Trump's agenda in its tracks. My campaign will take no corporate money and be built on our own independent power.

In the last election, over \$100,000 from real-estate interests poured into Ward 3, with dozens of maxed-out donations from big developers, to elect a business-friendly candidate. Working people need our own candidates with campaigns run by us. You can help by volunteering or donating to my campaign today.

Now, more than ever, we need to get organized to defend our communities. That's why I'm a member of Socialist Alternative. In Minneapolis and nationally, we are building a strong socialist backbone within the wider mass movements erupting against Trump and the billionaire class. Bernie Sanders proved that our call for a political revolution, for socialist policies, for a society that meets everyone's needs, not just the profits of the few - that is a vision capable of inspiring the mass participation needed to win. ✪

Seattle Divests from Wells Fargo Over DAPL

Bryan Watson

In early February, Seattle Socialist Alternative City Councilmember Kshama Sawant worked with a coalition of indigenous and environmental groups to successfully compel the City Council to divest Seattle from doing business with Wells Fargo because of the bank's funding of the pipeline and discriminatory banking practices. This is a \$3 billion dollar boycott by the City of Seattle!

It is a stunning rebuke to the power of the billionaire class and Wall Street that points to what's needed to defeat Trump: united mass movements willing to engage in nonviolent

civil disobedience to disrupt business as usual.

To win in Seattle, the movement packed city council meetings and organized rallies and marches of thousands. This pressure exposed the corporate Democrats on City Council who had dragged their feet for months.

What follows are excerpts from the speech that Sawant delivered at the ratification vote in the council chambers.

"The example that we have set can be a beacon of hope to activists all around the country looking to change the economic calculus of corporations who think that investing in the Dakota Access Pipeline will be good for

their bottom line.

"The real power of this ordinance is that it can be used as a tool by movements to put real financial pressure on big business by first putting pressure on politicians.

"And the last point I'll make is that we live in what I feel is an irrational world. Oxfam reported that eight people own the same wealth as the bottom half of the world's population - that's 3.5 billion people - combined. It's irrational that we are so divided in wealth that wealth buys the power to write laws that benefit the rule of a few at the top - and no one else. And nowhere is that more starkly visible than with the big banks and oil

companies.

"In any rational world, the trillions that are in the hands of multinational oil companies would not be used to lobby for wars in Iraq and pipelines poisoning our water and climate. If we had any democracy over our economy, those trillions would be used to transform the energy infrastructure into renewables and to create decent living standards for all human beings.

"But it is not a rational world under capitalism. So our fight today is very much linked to our larger fight against big business, against Wall Street, against Trump and the billionaire class, and against capitalism itself." ✪

Build a Movement to Defend and Extend Reproductive Rights

Erin Brightwell

The powerful and immediate show of mass resistance to Trump, along with his slump in the polls, has left no doubt that the new administration's sexist and racist agenda has no mandate.

It was no accident that the women's marches on January 21 became the largest single day of protest in U.S. history, as the massive anger against the incoming Predator in Chief found expression with millions of women and men taking the streets. Trump's infamous leaked video where he bragged about sexually assaulting women, the subsequent coming forward of over a dozen women who have been assaulted by him, and his attack on Megyn Kelly during the campaign all reveal the same thing: Trump is a thoroughly misogynistic individual whose sexism harkens back to a bygone era when women were expected to submit to men and society had no place in "private affairs" between them. Immediately upon taking office, Trump and the Republicans moved to attack reproductive rights, restoring and broadening the "global gag rule," blocking funding for organizations providing abortion counseling or referrals; threatening to defund Planned Parenthood, which would have a drastic effect on health care for millions of women; and fulfilling his campaign promise to nominate an anti-abortion Supreme Court justice. Trump is the complete anti-woman president.

While Trump continues to maintain his base of support among right-wing Republicans of both sexes, millions of women see him as illegitimate and intolerable. The popular base exists to build a new, fighting mass women's movement as part of a broader resistance to Trump.

In recent years, women had already begun to move into struggle against sexual assault and in defense of reproductive rights. Younger women in particular have fought back against the epidemic of campus sexual assault and the refusal of university administrations to hold perpetrators accountable.

Wave of Attacks

The attack on women's reproductive rights



The organizers of the Women's March on Washington are calling for International Women's Day, March 8, to be a "Day Without a Woman."



Women's March on Washington protesting Trump's agenda, January 21, 2017.

did not, of course, begin with Donald Trump's inauguration. Literally hundreds of restrictions on abortion rights have been passed by state governments in the past five years, and in many states abortion is increasingly inaccessible.

Oklahoma lawmakers are currently debating HB 1441, legislation that would require any woman seeking an abortion to present written permission from her sexual partner. Chillingly, in an interview, the author of HB 1441 referred to pregnant women as "hosts."

While this wave of attacks has been focused in the South, it has also been spreading to Midwestern states controlled by Republicans. The GOP has been using the abortion issue to mobilize the evangelical vote for years, with women – and especially poor women – paying the price. The horrific specter of criminal prosecution and incarceration of women for having abortions – or possibly miscarriages – has become reality in Indiana under Vice President Mike Pence's reactionary governorship, as well as in other states. While Republicans have spearheaded the attacks, the Democrats' defensive approach to reproductive rights has failed to stem the decades-long assault. Our task is not just to defend *Roe v. Wade* but also to win back the ground we've lost and fight to extend reproductive rights.

Mass Mobilizations

The massive women's marches were a tremendous starting point, but we will need to go much farther to defeat Trump, the Republicans, and the billionaire class.

One lesson to be drawn from the airport occupations that exploded in response to Trump's Muslim ban is that disruptive mass civil disobedience can be a powerful, winning tactic. But to stop Trump, it will be necessary to shut down

"business as usual" on a much broader scale: to occupy highways, airports, and other key infrastructure – and, crucially, to build towards strike action of the wider working class.

Last October, women in Poland went on strike against the right-wing government that was pushing a law which would have made abortion next to impossible to obtain. Rallies and marches were called across the country, thousands of women took the day off from work or left early to support the strike, and the right wing was forced to withdraw the new law. A women's organization in Argentina that has organized massive protests opposing violence against women has put out a call for a global strike of women on International Women's Day.

Now, the organizers of the March on Washington, along with Angela Davis and other activists, have joined in and are calling for a women's strike in the U.S. on March 8.

This is an important development. If the big women's organizations like Planned Parenthood and NOW were to join the call for strike action and help build for it, hundreds of thousands of women would again take to the streets, but this time moving beyond symbolic protest. Unfortunately, many of these traditional organizations have become timid, in part due to their links with the corporate Democratic Party establishment. It would be necessary to build real bottom-up pressure to bring these organizations to build around International Women's Day and other radical mass action.

Strike Action

We should use mass action on March 8 to mobilize for strike action where possible, as well as organizing mass civil disobedience to shut down key infrastructure. It can be a key building block in both escalating the resistance to Trump and

rapidly rebuilding a fighting women's movement. March 8 can also be key in building toward other upcoming actions – and particularly toward the call for a nationwide day of strike action on May 1, International Worker's Day and a day of mass action for immigrant rights.

The strike is the most powerful tool that workers have. When we withhold our labor in mass numbers, we can paralyze business and shut down corporate profits. For successful strike action, we will need the active participation of the labor movement, and a discussion is already under way in some unions, particularly around May 1. Rank-and-file union members and left labor leaders should make the case for strike action within their unions and bring resolutions like those recently passed in the Seattle Education Association (SEA) and Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA) (see page 4). Majority women's unions like SEA, MNA, National Nurses United (NNU) and the Chicago Teacher's Union (CTU) are playing a vital role in rebuilding a left wing in the labor movement.

We can learn from the lessons of past struggles. The right to abortion in the U.S. was won by a radicalized women's movement, influenced by the social movements of the 1960s: above all the Civil Rights Movement. A conservative Supreme Court, under arch-conservative president Richard Nixon, ruled on *Roe v. Wade* to give women the right to choose an abortion. This was not because the court suddenly turned in a progressive direction, but because the women's movement, through hundreds of mass actions, forced the ruling class to make a concession. To stop the Trump assault on abortion rights will take a new mass women's movement that is willing to disrupt the status quo and go beyond what the corporate Democratic Party leadership is comfortable with. Step one is building a unified mass resistance to the threat to defund Planned Parenthood and to arch-conservative Neil Gorsuch's nomination to the Supreme Court, including demanding that Democratic Party representatives filibuster his appointment.

A new women's movement is coming to its feet. For it to be successful in the fight against Trump and for reproductive rights, it will need to unite in action on March 8 and May 1 with the immigrants' movement, the LGBTQ movement, the workers' movement, and others on a bold program that unapologetically demands full abortion rights and accessibility as well as reforms that will improve the lives of working-class women in general, like a \$15 minimum wage, free health care, free child care, and paid parental leave, all paid for by taxing the profits of the billionaire class. This would be a huge step forward, but it will only be achieved through mass struggle, and it points to the need to move beyond capitalism and toward a democratic socialist society if we are to root out sexism once and for all. ✪

Women in Revolutionary Russia

Emma Quinn (adapted from article published by the Socialist Party, Ireland)

No other event in history has been more distorted by the capitalist establishment than the Russian Revolution. In most narratives, the role of women is scarcely mentioned, and the massive gains for women won through the revolution even less so.

The overthrow of capitalism and landlordism by the Bolshevik Party and the Russian working class in 1917 spurred a radical progressive change in society, the likes of which have not been seen before or since.

The Bolsheviks, while stressing the role of the working class as a whole in changing society, recognised that women suffered a double oppression that was rooted in capitalism and rural patriarchy. They saw the liberation of women as pivotal to the fight for a socialist society. Lenin declared that “the proletariat cannot achieve liberty until it has won complete liberty for women.” Women played leading roles in the Bolshevik Party, and the impact of the revolution transformed the consciousness and lives of working-class women on a broad scale.

Women and the February Revolution

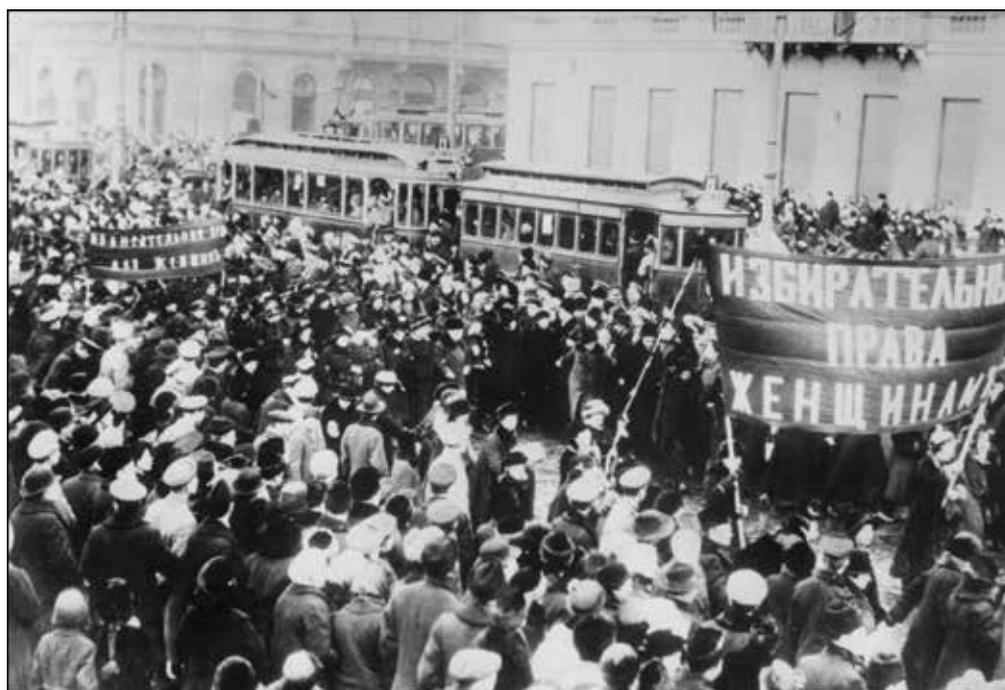
Tens of thousands of women took to the streets on February 23, 1917, in the events that triggered the February Revolution. The protest erupted on International Women’s Day, and Bolshevik women were central in building it.

“The women were in a very militant mood – not only the women workers, but the masses of women queuing for bread and kerosene. They held political meetings, they dominated the streets, they moved to the city duma [council] with a demand for bread, they stopped trams. ‘Comrades, come out!’ they shouted enthusiastically. They went to factories and plants and summoned workers to down tools,” wrote Anna and Mariia Ul’ianov in *Pravda* on March 5, 1917.

Most Progressive Laws in History

In December 1917, just seven weeks after forming the world’s first workers’ state in the October Revolution, divorce was legalised and made easily accessible. Shortly thereafter, legal equality for women was enshrined in law and the “illegitimacy” of children born outside of marriage was abolished.

From its earliest days, the Bolsheviks argued



Protesters gathered in front of a banner that read, “The right to vote to women,” in 1917 in Petrograd during the February Revolution that led to the collapse of the tsarist government.

for equality for women, but the keystone was seen as freeing women from enslavement in the traditional family. Before the revolution, a woman’s life was strictly mapped out: get married, be monogamous, have children, and be tied to “the eternal drudgery of the kitchen and the nursery.” The Bolsheviks immediately set about challenging this and, with it, the role of the Russian Orthodox Church and patriarchy.

The revolution began to implement plans for a system of social care that included maternity houses, clinics, schools, crèches and kindergartens, social dining rooms and laundries, all aimed to relieve women from the constraints of the home. Paid maternity leave both before and after birth was introduced for women workers, and access to nursing rooms in workplaces to allow breastfeeding, with breaks every three hours for new mothers, were written into employment laws.

Abortion was legalised and made free in 1920, and was described by Leon Trotsky as being one of a woman’s “most important civil, political and cultural rights.”

A Women’s Bureau was established with the aim to reach out to women, bring them into political activity and education, and inform them of their new rights. It ran literary classes, political discussions, and workshops on how to organise facilities needed in the workplace, such as day care centers. It was successful in raising consciousness on a range of issues, including child-care, housing, and public health and it broadened the horizons of thousands of women.

Sexual Freedom

Throughout the post-revolutionary period, the Bolsheviks ensured there was wide and free ranging debate on sexuality – a sea change from the previous regime.

Many completely changed how they approached relationships. In 1921, a survey in *Communist Youth* showed 21% of men and 14% of women found marriage ideal. 66% of women preferred long-term relationships based on love, and 10% preferred relationships with different partners.

Alexandra Kollontai defended the radical changes and explained, “The old family in which the man was everything and the woman was nothing, typical family where the woman had no will of her own, no time of her own and no money of her own is changing before our very eyes” (“Communism and the Family,” 1920).

The Bolsheviks believed that relationships should be based on choice and personal compatibility, not financial dependence.

Sex debates, explorations, and experiments spread across the country. Young people, in particular were keen to explore their sexuality. A young woman named Berakova wrote in the *Red Student* in 1927:

“The Cinderellas are all gone. Our girls know what they want from a man, without any worries many of them sleep with men because of a healthy attraction. We are not objects or simpletons that men should court, girls know who they choose and with whom they sleep.”

This was written in a country where, only a decade before, abortion, divorce, and same-sex



I, liberated woman – build up socialism!, 1926.

relationships were outlawed.

Stalinist Counter-Revolution

Years of war against supporters of the Tsar, with the invasion of 21 imperialist armies intent on smashing the new workers’ state – and, crucially, the inordinate isolation of the revolution in the context of defeats for the German Revolution and other working-class uprisings – created the conditions for a bureaucracy to come to power under Stalin. Stalin and the bureaucracy used authoritarian measures to smash working-class consciousness, activism, and democracy at home, as well as using their authority to prevent victories for the socialist movement abroad, all in the interests of consolidating the privilege of a bureaucracy. This counter-revolution not only moved sharply away from the workers’ democracy of the revolutionary period, but also consciously attacked the gains of women. Progressive laws were retracted. The patriarchal family was again encouraged as a means of social control.

Inspiring Legacy

The rise of the bureaucracy and Stalin’s betrayal does not diminish the significance of the revolutionary gains in the years after 1917. Never before had women had such a stake in politics. Never before had the quality of life and happiness of women been prioritized. Some of the achievements gained by the Russian Revolution almost a century ago still do not exist even in many of the most “progressive” countries today. The October Revolution remains an undeniable and inspirational testament to the inextricable connection between the fight against all forms of oppression, and the working-class struggle for a socialist change.

The Russian Revolution shows that the working class is the most powerful force in society. It is only the conscious building of a movement for the 99% that can seriously push back against the massive inequality facing women and other oppressed groups. And, like the Bolsheviks did, we must realise that capitalism simply cannot be defeated without women – and, in particular, working-class women – coming to the fore in the struggle for a better world. ☺



Visit 1917revolution.org for more on the Russian Revolution from Socialist Alternative and the Committee for a Workers International.

Trump, BLM, and the Struggle Against Racism

The Dark World of Trump's America

Eljeer Hawkins

Today, we have a naked expression of authoritarianism, hate, bigotry, and racism in the form of Donald Trump in the White House. He reiterated his “law and order” agenda with the appointment of the racist Jeff Sessions as attorney general heading the Department of Justice. The Trump administration is made up of millionaires and billionaires who will advance the agenda of Wall Street and racist demagoguery with such figures like Steve Bannon. Trump’s rhetoric has emboldened the forces of the ultra-right-wing conservative movement, alt-right white nationalist groups, and historic white domestic terror organizations like the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

This is a major threat to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) banner, anti-racist activists, and people of color generally, particularly black workers and youth. The Trump administration and a segment of the ruling elite would like retribution for the protests, raised consciousness, and life-affirming power of BLM over the course of the last three years. The minor reforms passed to stem the tide of law enforcement terror in our communities have been important to increase the activism, fighting spirit, and morale of the banner, but not on the level of the reforms won by the black freedom movement in the 1950s and 1960s, during post-World War II economic upswing. BLM has spread to every corner of the world with solidarity actions everywhere from sports to the workplace.

Clear and Present Danger

As Spencer Woodman recently reported on *TheIntercept.com*, “In Minnesota, Washington state, Michigan, and Iowa, Republican lawmakers have proposed an array of anti-protesting laws that center on stiffening penalties for demonstrators who block traffic; in North Dakota, conservatives are even pushing a bill that would allow motorists to run over and kill protesters so long as the collision was accidental” (1/23/2017). These measures are an apparent attempt to keep BLM, social justice activists, and workers on a defensive footing, criminalizing the resistance movement against Trump and Wall Street’s agenda. Trump’s threat to send in federal troops allegedly to quell the gut-wrenching violence in Chicago - which would mean martial law - is another indication of the danger this administration poses to the black population..

Trump’s Racism Can Be Defeated

In the aftermath of Trump’s victory, a



Protesters take to the streets to demand justice for Trayvon Martin as they take over Rodeo Drive on July 17, 2013 in Beverly Hills, California. (Photo by Jose Lopez)

segment of workers, youth, and people of color are – not surprisingly – nostalgic for the presidency and legacy of Barack Obama. Without question, his election was a historic moment, but for the mass of workers, youth, and people of color, particularly black workers and youth, little was achieved as his policies primarily benefitted and advanced the agenda of Wall Street for eight years.

But the key question we face now is how to defeat Trump. Many BLM activists will be at the forefront of the resistance to attacks on immigrants, women, and labor. We must also turn the defensive struggle against the Trump administration into an offensive struggle for jobs, health care, education, and environmental sustainability.

Last summer, the Movement for Black Lives (M4BL), a coalition of more than 50 organizations, released a comprehensive program, “A Vision For Black Lives: Policy Demands For Black Power, Freedom, and Justice” (*Policy.M4BL.org*), taking on the issues of economic injustice, reparations, police violence, and political power. We believe that adopting a clear set of demands is a very important step forward for the BLM banner, and Socialist Alternative broadly supports the platform. There is much that is positive in this material, but there are also significant political shortcomings, particularly the failure to point the movement toward the necessity of ending capitalism, which is the bedrock of racist oppression. The key question is how this platform will be discussed, debated, and amended by the wider movement and struggle so that it becomes a driving focus for struggle by the black working class under Trump.

Despite the very radical character and broad scope of the platform, there are some

striking omissions, including the lack of a call for a \$15 minimum wage. The fight for \$15 has mobilized tens of thousands of black and Latino workers around the country into action, and there is mass support for the demand in the black community.

It’s important to point out the limits of reform under capitalism and the urgent task to fight for a democratic socialist change of society to cement any gains and concessions wrested from the ruling elite. We must also end the abusive relationship with corporate-dominated political parties of war, racism, poverty, and environmental destruction.

In this new era of Trumpism, the Movement for Black Lives must urgently organize a new conference to take into account the new political and social situation, including democratically elected delegates from around the country, to debate the platform, amend it, and adopt it. This would be a huge step forward. But this process would need to be linked to the question of building a broader organization, rooted in black working-class communities, with democratic and accountable structures.

The rise and threat of Trump’s administration presents the urgent task of uniting our developing social movements like the BLM banner alongside the labor movement, social justice organizations, and socialists. We must build a powerful, united mass movement in our schools, communities, and workplaces. As the example of the long, historical black freedom movement showed, only a bold, determined, centralized, and grassroots struggle with clear demands can beat back the agenda of Wall Street and racism that is etched in the DNA of U.S. capitalism and democracy. ✪

Betsy DeVos: Billionaire Privatizer Sparks Mass Opposition

Genevieve Morse

Public education will continue to see tough times under recently appointed Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. DeVos’s corporate right-wing agenda will be disastrous for public education. Unfortunately, the corporate takeover of public education has been happening for decades.

As DeVos and Trump move to put forward their vision for public education, we’ll continue to hear that our educational system is broken and that an overhaul is needed to restore it. No one would disagree that public education has major problems, but this is rooted in the long-term impacts of funding cut-backs, racial and income disparity, underpayment of teachers, and education “de-form” policies supported by both Republicans and Democrats that utilize high-stakes testing. But the solution offered by Trump and DeVos – the partial or complete dismantling of public education – will make the situation far worse, particularly for poor working-class communities.

Betsy DeVos is the most clearly reactionary choice for Secretary of Education that Trump could have made. For the last 20 years, DeVos has been pushing for “school choice” – in other words, for the creation of charter schools to replace public schools. This is, to a significant degree, driven by a right-wing Christian agenda that demands schools be used to build “God’s kingdom,” putting an end to secular public education as we know it.

DeVos is a billionaire with no experience in public schools. Instead, she has worked tirelessly to privatize education in the state of Michigan, where deregulation of charters has led to worsening conditions in the state’s poorest communities. DeVos has consistently opposed any accountability for the largely for-profit charters in Michigan receiving public money.

Education “reformers” are constantly trying to cite the benefits of charters over public schools. But after following the massive privatization program supported by DeVos,

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Spain: Pablo Iglesias Wins Clear Victory in Podemos Congress

Izquierda Revolucionaria

The attempt to remove Pablo Iglesias from the leadership of Podemos (the left party formed in Spain out of the 2011 Indignados movement) has been a complete and utter failure. This was despite all of the resources poured into it, and the open support of the media for Errejón – leader of the “moderate” opposition to Iglesias.

There was a historic turnout of 155,000 members. Iglesias received almost 90% of the votes for the position of general secretary, more than 60% for his list of candidates for the “citizens’ council” (main leading body of Podemos) and more than 50% for the documents which his team put forward.

To understand the significance of this victory, it is enough to read the capitalist press or listen to the establishment TV media following the congress. Their anger comes across in every sentence. This is no accident. The ruling class made an attempt to control Podemos, to assimilate it as a “classic” social-democratic formation to strengthen social peace.

However, they came up against the will of tens of thousands of fighters. The defeat of Errejón is good news for all those who have been part of the huge social revolt of the last few years – in the Indignados’ movement, the general strikes, the education and health movements, student strikes, etc.

The struggle within Podemos is of great importance. The traditional capitalist party PP, the new illegitimate leadership of the ex-social democratic party PSOE, the right-wing, populist party Ciudadanos, and big business all know this very well.

Errejón is no mere “innocent.” He is very conscious of what he says and does. He and his followers want a Podemos which is outside of the mass movements in defense of health, education and the right for national self-determination. They want a Podemos which is closer to PSOE and to the program of social democracy in crisis. They defend a process which in reality would make Podemos a mere clone of the establishment parties, happy with comfortable positions in parliamentary offices and well-paid committees and the “respectability” of the institutions and the system.

Izquierda Revolucionaria supported Pablo Iglesias in this struggle against Errejón and his social democratic model. As well as supporting Iglesias, we also put forward some criticisms which we see as just and worthy



of consideration. We sincerely believe that Pablo Iglesias’ mistakes and vacillations have also allowed Errejón to get as far as he has.

They also contradicted the real reasons for the powerful eruption of Podemos, and reinforced the right wing of the party. Even after losing more than one million votes in June 2016, Iglesias continued to insist that parliamentary and institutional work was the priority.

In the last months, Iglesias has reacted to defend his leadership, and did so on the basis that his survival, and that of Podemos, depended on returning to his original position and basing himself on the sections of society which, through their struggle, had brought Podemos into being.

The atmosphere at the Podemos congress among the thousands of members there was clear: it is time to return to the streets, to go back to what made Podemos strong!

Right wing policies cannot be fought by embracing the PSOE or PP, which are firmly under the control of the capitalists. To defeat the cuts there is only one option: fill the streets with massive and sustained mobilization. The example of the strikes led by the Sindicato de Estudiantes, which brought down the Francoist “revalidation” exams, is useful. Precisely because we are under a weak government with a reduced social base, any strategy which leads to demobilization is a marvelous gift to the right. Now is the time to put Rajoy on the ropes.

Now, Pablo Iglesias and his collaborators have a great responsibility. They must listen to the rank and file of Podemos. Unity cannot be built at the cost of abandoning principles and turning ones back on millions who are suffering the dramatic effects of a devastating crisis. Unity must be built with those who struggle, those who suffer, those who can make real change possible. That means calling immediately for mobilization, to prepare now for a general strike against the increase in energy prices, the cuts to pensions, cuts to health and education and the antidemocratic laws against protesting, for decent housing, and for democratic rights including the right to national self-determination.

Now, Pablo Iglesias must live up to his word. ☺

SocialistWorld.net

For more in-depth coverage, see SocialistWorld.net, website of the Committee for a Workers International.



Socialists Gather in Brazil for CWI’s 9th Latin American School

Sandy Arias

At the end of January, members of Socialist Alternative joined over 200 socialists from Brazil, Venezuela, Chile, Sweden and Spain for a week-long school dedicated to discussing the political situation in Latin America and the strategy needed to fight for a socialist Latin America, and a socialist world. The event was organized by the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI) with which Socialist Alternative is in solidarity. The Brazilian section of the CWI, Liberty, Socialism and Revolution (LSR), hosted the school outside São Paulo.

Many lessons can be drawn from the political movements developing in South America against austerity and state violence. The meeting grappled with how the right has been able to seize electoral advantage in many countries because of the failures of the left although there is very little popular support for neo-liberal policies. In Brazil, the “Workers” Party (PT) government of Dilma disappointed workers with deeper and deeper cuts to hard won social services. Widespread political corruption that came to light last year led to Dilma’s impeachment and the establishment of the incredibly unpopular right-wing Temer government, provoking renewed struggle.

LSR has been active in organizing against cuts in education, including the occupation of a high school which lasted weeks. LSR is also working within the Party of Socialism and Liberation (PSOL), a left coalition which formed when the more radical elements of the PT broke away after the PT decided to implement initial cuts to retirement benefits while in power. The PT’s willingness to attack the working

class and carry out the agenda of big business shows the need for a genuine party of and by the 99% that’s truly accountable to the social movements and working class people. PSOL has had uneven success, with some candidates in local elections able to gain many votes on the basis of a pro-worker program.

In Chile, the small socialist forces of the CWI have had great success in the movement against the private system of pensions, which was established under the bloody Pinochet dictatorship. The CWI played a leading role in the coordinating committees and the July 24 marches in 2016 that saw one million people protesting in Chile.

In Venezuela, the contradictions of a government that calls itself socialist, but never did away with the capitalist economy nor dealt effectively with the bureaucracy and corruption in the government, has left the majority of Venezuelans facing food scarcity, mass employment, and no safety. The right wing in Venezuela has used the economic crisis to make gains and attempt to reverse the positive gains made during the Bolivarian revolution. The CWI in Venezuela argues that the only way to beat back the right and solve the current crisis is to fully realize the Bolivarian revolution, to freeze the prices of goods and to take decisive measures against capitalism.

The CWI Latin American School also served to go one step forward towards Izquierda Revolucionaria, present in Mexico, Venezuela, and Spain, unifying with the CWI. This fusion will lead to the strengthening of socialist forces everywhere, and deepen the political knowledge and experience of the CWI. ☺

Resistance in the Era of Trump

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will create the sharpest confrontations as has already been indicated by the resistance to the ban. This however is only the beginning of attacks on immigrant communities with the expansion of the ICE force and the border patrol and widening the net massively for who is targeted for deportation.

A key flashpoint in the struggle against the deportation juggernaut will be “sanctuary cities” but it could also spread beyond them if the administration orders widespread workplace raids. There are an estimated 300 sanctuary cities around the country and many of them are not on the coasts.

The most serious development, as we have raised, is if Trump orders ICE to return to workplace raids and neighborhoods sweeps, especially in major urban areas. This is actually the only way for the state to really ramp up deportations beyond the levels of the Obama administration. This could detonate strikes and more determined attempts to slow the deportation machine down with mass confrontations with the ICE forces.

Furthermore, real resistance by the immigrant working class to the deportation ramp-up, foreshadowed by the Taxi Workers Alliance’s brief strike in New York on January 28, would have a lot more support from native born people, including sections of the native-born working class, than in 2006.

Medium Term Developments

Obviously the current pace of demonstrations and mobilizations will not last indefinitely. In the second half of 2017, the question of ousting the Republicans in Congress in the midterms will begin to become a bigger point of discussion. When we come into 2018

this will be a central focus for the liberal left and progressive workers. But we need to be clear that there are a whole series of issues which can lead to very serious conflicts with the Republicans and if the movement is emboldened by even partial victories, it can come back even stronger after a lull and even in the midst of a midterm election campaign.

As we have seen in the past few weeks, a new women’s movement is being born, with a radical layer of younger women coming to the fore. The Democrats will of course seek to co-opt this movement but this will be a two-edged sword as they come under serious pressure from the movement to fight harder for the defense of women’s rights, first and foremost reproductive rights.

There is also a coming battle over union rights directed specifically at public sector unions. This could either take the form of legislation or the Supreme Court taking up another Friedrichs style case and creating right to work conditions in the public sector nationally.

With the current explosive mood, discussions around workplace action and even strikes can initially work their way around the union leaderships. We see this with the calls for strikes on March 8 and May 1.

One other area that needs to be highlighted is the coming attack on BLM and the left and the attempt to criminalize dissent. BLM activists are definitely in the cross hairs of this administration which intends at some point to unleash the state apparatus against them and probably other sections of the left using one excuse or another.

The Need for a Bold Program

We must stress at every stage

the vital importance of building the widest possible anti-Trump movement centered on the principle of “an injury to one is an injury to all.” The debate on strategy and tactics is already in full flow and socialists must energetically engage to stress the need for a bold program with not only defensive demands but also far reaching demands that can mobilize the broader working class like a \$15 minimum wage, abolishing college tuition, ending mass incarceration and a massive investment in green infrastructure to create millions of good paying union jobs.

There is the real danger of the movement or sections of it being subsumed into the Democrats’ timid electoral and legal strategy.

The social power of the working class in galvanizing the youth and all oppressed sections of society is crucial in fighting and defeating the right. This includes the strategic necessity of splitting the working class portion of Trump’s base and isolating the reactionary layers if we are to give the right a resounding defeat. Bernie Sanders’ campaign shows that this can be done but not if the leadership of the anti-Trump movement is controlled by the corporate wing of the Democratic Party.

The Crisis of the Democratic Party

The base of the Democratic Party is more inflamed than at any point since Watergate. They are looking to the party leadership to stand firm against Trump. A section, already radicalized by the Sanders campaign, is even less willing to compromise.

But while the pressure from the base is growing, Senate Democrats have had difficulty even maintaining a common front against Trump’s odious cabinet appointments with 14 of them voting for every single one of them up until they collectively held the line against Betsy DeVos. Key leaders like Chuck Schumer clearly understand the necessity for a firmer approach and to make some concessions to the



Photo Credit: Crimethink

SeaTac airport erupts in protest against Trump’s Muslim ban.

left of the party. It is a measure of the desperation of the Congressional Democrats that after almost overwhelmingly rejecting Sanders last year, they are now frequently hiding behind him as the most credible face of the party.

This points again to Sanders’ contradictory roles as the de facto leader of the left in the party leading the challenge to the pro-corporate leadership, but also providing the leadership political cover.

There is now increasingly open talk about emulating the Tea Party by creating a sustained grassroots campaign aimed at “stiffening spines” or preparing to oust Congressional Democrats in the primaries next year who are not prepared to fight. It is possible up to a point for this approach to have an effect. What is not possible is for the left to turn the Democrats into a “people’s party.” In the most extreme and still unlikely case, the party could split with a minority of its elected officials going to a new left party.

But the dynamic being created points clearly in the medium term to a serious clash where the most radical section of the movement, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, can spin out and away from the Democrats completely.

It is not possible to be precise about the timing of these developments but just as we said that Trump’s victory had in the short term narrowed the space for a new left party, the scale of the radicalization underway now points to that space opening up again in the next few years possibly in a very rapid and dramatic fashion.

But it should be underlined that

this is a medium term prospect and that at the moment the energy of the largest section of activists is pointed at fighting the corporate leadership of the party with a view to reforming it.

The Coming Storm

As we stated when Trump won, he is the living embodiment of decaying, predatory capitalism. His victory, far from inevitable, reflected the polarization in society, the effect of right wing populism in the absence of a real left alternative and the loss of control by the ruling class over their own political system.

With Trump in office and ruling class division on full display, the political crisis of the system is only deepening. To this political crisis an economic crisis could soon be added with a downturn in the world economy, possibly aided by protectionist policies, provoking a recession in the U.S.

Most importantly, a mass movement on a scale never seen this early in a presidency has rocked society and could trigger the revival of the class struggle and the long dormant labor movement.

There is the real danger of Trump’s administration going in an even more authoritarian direction or inflicting temporary defeats on the movement. But this will only lead to even more explosive eruptions at a later date. The role of socialists and the left in the movement will be decisive. The situation is ripe in the next period for the emergence of a mass or semi-mass left party and of a powerful Marxist current of thousands.



Democratic Party leadership hides behind Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren.

Defend Immigrant Rights

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pipeline by ending racist mass incarceration policies and “broken windows” policing. They need to fully commit to safeguarding personal information gathered by city agencies that can be used by ICE to identify targets, even up to destroying records if necessary. Social movements in cities could mobilize mass non-violent civil disobedience to block some of ICE’s activities and mayors could refuse to deploy their police to repress protesters.

Trump has threatened to cut off federal funding and lawsuits against sanctuary cities. Cities can fight back by expanding authority to drastically increase taxes on the super rich and big business. Any political figure who sincerely pushes in this direction can be backed up by mass grassroots action.

Little Support for Mass Deportations

Even exit polls after the November 2016 elections showed that 70% voters believed that “illegal immigrants working in the U.S. should be offered legal status” not deportation (*CNN.com*, 11/23/2016). We need to build on that and show that a united movement of all workers and youth regardless of legal status can bring down Trump. Millions of immigrants, if organized into unions, could provide a powerful boost that could revive an anemic labor movement.

A Trump defeat on immigration policy will be a blow he couldn’t easily recover from, as it’s the signature issue on which he built a notoriety he rode to the heights of politics. This means everyone who wants to stop Trump’s attacks on women’s rights, racial justice, LGBTQ rights, workers’ rights, and social services has a concrete collective reason to join with our immigrant sisters and brothers, beyond just altruistic solidarity alone. It starts by giving flesh and blood to the old working class battle cry: “An injury to one is an injury to all.”



February 17 #FreeDaniel protest in Seattle (see page 2).

All Out for May Day Strikes and Protests

Our own independent mass movements along with organized labor will need to create the firestorm of pressure by mass protests, mass direct actions including blockades and strikes. This May 1, International Workers Day, offers an excellent opportunity to organize for mass strikes wherever possible. We need to make sure our immigrant sisters and brothers do not stand alone. Nothing short of that will stop Trump. We cannot rely on the big-business-controlled Democratic Party.

We instead need to build a united, independent, and sustained mass movement against Trump, racism, sexism, homophobia, the billionaire class, and capitalism. This includes building a new party

of the 99% with a socialist program that unapologetically defends all those attacked by Trump and goes further to building an enduring mass movement to fight for gains for all working people.

- ✪ An injury to one is an injury to all! All out to defend Muslims, immigrants, women, black people, workers’ rights, and democratic rights.
- ✪ No cooperation with Trump’s deportation machine! For real Sanctuary Cities. End Broken Windows policing.
- ✪ For an escalation of mass protest including strike action on March 8 and May 1 to stop Trump. We call on all mass organizations, especially trade unions, to take the lead and systematically prepare a full mobilization of all people opposed to Trump. ✪

Trump, DeVos, and Education

continued from p. 3

the state of Michigan still is one of the lowest-ranking in the nation academically. The situation is so bad that even supporters of school choice are critical of the policies DeVos and others have implemented. Michigan State Board of Education President John Austin has stated that these reforms are “destroying learning outcomes ... and the DeVoses were a principal agent of that” (*Politico.com*, 12/9/2016).

Since Trump was sworn into office, there has been a wave of anger across the country and around the world. In the lead-up to the Senate vote on the DeVos appointment, teacher unions organized a major “get out and call your local representative” action. The National Education Association reported that more than one million people used a generated online form to send an email to their senator. Following DeVos’ appointment, a number of student walkouts have taken place across the country in places like New York, Idaho, and Pittsburgh.

In Washington, D.C., teachers, parents, and community members of Jefferson Middle School Academy blocked DeVos from entering their school. Unfortunately, rather than support this action, American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten tweeted, “We want her to go” to public schools (*CNN.com*, 2/10/2017). DeVos, however, will not be “won over” by visiting public schools. She knows her agenda. The issue, instead, is how to mount a massive opposition to make her policies unworkable.

The recent defeat of a ballot initiative to raise the charter school cap across the state of Massachusetts shows how victories can be won. Big business pumped millions of dollars into raising the cap. The “No on 2” campaign was a massive effort that both the Massachusetts Teachers Association and the Boston Teachers Union fully invested time, resources, and membership power to defeat. It included going out into communities and getting parents, students, and community members involved – and they won!

This is the type of organizing that will be necessary to start to defeat Trump and DeVos’ vision for education. We can’t wait for Randi Weingarten to give us the signal to do something. Instead, teachers, parents, and students must unite and help to lead the fight against privatization. In a number of cities, students have shown the way through walkouts against DeVos. We need to link this with other actions against Trump’s agenda of sexism, anti-immigrant deportations, racism, and anti-union laws. The provocation of the DeVos appointment could become the spark of a new movement to defend and regenerate public education in the U.S. ✪

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE In Your Area

NATIONAL

PO Box 150457
Brooklyn, NY 11215
info@SocialistAlternative.org
facebook.com/SocialistAlternativeUSA
Twitter: @SocialistAlt

NEW ENGLAND

BOSTON, MA
(910) 639-3948
WORCESTER, MA
(617) 285-9346
RHODE ISLAND
SocialistAlternativeRI@gmail.com
LOWELL, MA and NEW HAVEN, CT contact our national office

MID-ATLANTIC

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PITTSBURGH, PA
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NASHVILLE, TN
(931) 220-0427
CHARLOTTE, NC, and LOUISVILLE, KY contact our national office

MIDWEST

CHICAGO, IL
(773) 771-4617
CINCINNATI, OH
Cincinnati@SocialistAlternative.org
MADISON, WI
(608) 620-3901
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
(612) 760-1980
ST. LOUIS, MO
(952) 270-7676
COLUMBUS, OH, GRAND RAPIDS, MI, MILWAUKEE, WI, and TOPEKA, KS contact our national office

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AUSTIN, TX
(440) 339-9793
NW ARKANSAS
ArkansasSA@gmail.com
For DALLAS, TX, DENVER, CO, FORT COLLINS, CO, HOUSTON, TX, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK, PHOENIX, AZ, and SALT LAKE CITY, UT contact our national office

PACIFIC

BELLINGHAM, WA
(360) 510-7797
LOS ANGELES, CA
socialistalternative.la@gmail.com
OLYMPIA, WA
(360) 250-0943.

PORTLAND, OR

(503) 284-6036
OAKLAND / SAN FRANCISCO, CA
(510) 220-3047
SEATTLE, WA
(206) 639-9559
SPOKANE, WA
(509) 703-9915
TACOMA, WA
(253) 355-4211
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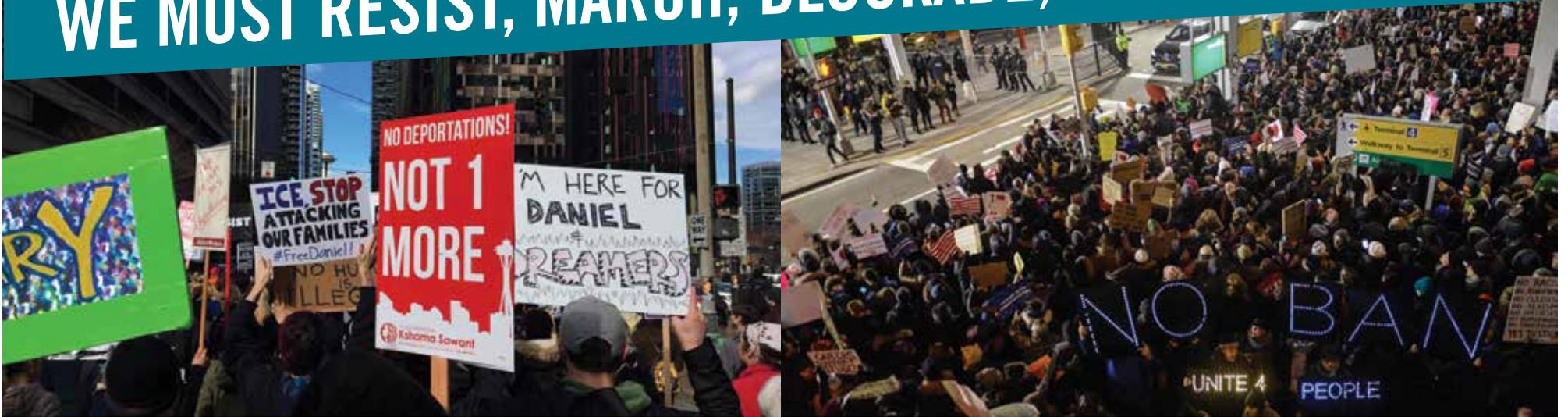
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CANADA
(604) 738-1653
contact@socialistalternative.ca
www.socialistalternative.ca
QUÉBEC
info@AlternativeSocialiste.org
www.AlternativeSocialiste.org

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

TRUMP PREPARES MASS DEPORTATIONS

WE MUST RESIST, MARCH, BLOCKADE, AND STRIKE!



Teddy Shibabaw, Madison

Just weeks into his inauguration, Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency carried out a multi-state sweep of over 700 undocumented immigrants in a matter of days.

Ominous Department of Homeland Security (DHS) memos have been released indicating a zealous drive to create a crushing momentum in ramping up the deportation machine. They plan to hire 10,000 Immigration officers and 5,000 border patrol agents. The administration seeks to "to publicize crimes by undocumented immigrants; strip such immigrants of privacy protections; enlist local police officers as enforcers; erect new detention facilities; discourage asylum seekers; and, ultimately, speed up deportations" (*NYTimes*, 2/21/2017).

The DHS memos further indicate dramatically expanding the definition of "removable aliens" and those subject to expedited deportation, including skipping the right to deportation hearings. This used to apply to immigrants in the country less than 14 days and now they want to expand it to two years. The memos set a directive to include not just serious crimes as a trigger for deportation, but even low level chargeable offenses like driving without a license and the very fact of being in the U.S. without documents. The memos suggest even going so far as targeting immigrants with green cards or other visas as well as prosecuting parents who arrange for their children to

be brought over.

Programs like Secure Communities, which force local jails to send fingerprint data of arrestees to ICE databases (*Washington Post*, 10/1/2010), as well as the 287(G) program, which deputizes local law enforcement agents in as immigration officers, are to be revived and expanded. This also includes the E-Verify program which is a rapid automated check of immigration status when workers apply for jobs.

Perhaps the most provocative of all is discussions around mobilizing 100,000 National Guard troops as deportation agents. The White House denies that this is settled policy but the leaked memo from DHS Secretary John Kelly leaves no doubt that it's at least getting serious consideration.

From Obama the Deporter-In-Chief to Trump's Scorched Earth

Much of this rapid escalation by the Trump administration is possible because the entire framework for it had already been set by the Bush and especially the Obama administrations. As Cesar Vargas, co-director of DREAM Action Coalition in NY said "we are seeing Donald Trump taking the keys of an aggressive deportation machine, that President Obama created, and taking it over 100 miles per hour," (*Democracy Now*, 2/22/2017).

The Obama administration had the awful record of deporting more immigrants than every other previous administration combined. Carried out under the guise of making "Comprehensive Immigration Reform" more palatable to Republicans who only cared about enforcement and border security, it accomplished nothing except to tear apart families and to return workers to the desolate economies and repressive regimes they escaped from. The scale of injustice this represents only acquires its true height when we realize that the very need for immigrating to the U.S. is created by decades of imperialist trade and economic policy that has ruined economies and democratic freedoms across the world so that U.S. multinational corporations could profit.

Sanctuary Cities and False Promises

The Trump administration's vicious mobilization of the deportation machine has created a highly combustible atmosphere of fear, anger, and determination to fight back. We have already seen mass protests against the Muslim ban and escalation to the "Day Without Immigrants and Refugees" on February 16, which, while relatively small in scale, involved many workplace shutdowns across the country and pointed to the potential for far wider actions. All the elements that will bring back struggle for

immigrant rights on the scale of the 2006 marches and strikes of millions are in motion.

Sensing the boiling flame of subterranean fire in support of immigrant rights and the realization that this time immigrant families will not be alone in the fight, quite a number of Democratic Party politicians are making defiant declarations that their localities will remain sanctuaries for immigrants. They include mayors and police chiefs in Los Angeles, Oakland, Chicago, Minneapolis, New York, San Francisco, and Seattle. Unfortunately, many of these mayors are responding to mass sentiment and making promises they are unprepared to back up.

The phrase Sanctuary City conjures up a place where immigrants can find refuge and physical protection from ICE agents. Instead, its narrow legal definition says that police and local law enforcement will not act as immigration agents and won't detain immigrants on behalf of federal authorities, but they will not actually stand in the way of ICE agents detaining and removing people for deportation.

If mayors are serious about declaring their cities as sanctuaries, then they need to do much more to create serious obstacles to ICE's attempts to carry out deportations. They need to choke off the deportation

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