



SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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SHUT DOWN TRUMP'S AGENDA

BUILD FOR STRIKES AND PROTESTS 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. ✦

WHY I AM A SOCIALIST

Katie Tyler Houston, TX

Ever since I can remember, I have longed for a just world. It started with animal rights when I was just seven when I realized that the farm animals I learned about in picture books were being exploited for human gain. My search for justice evolved as I grew older. The more I learned about the world, the more upset I became. If we tell our children that greed is bad, why do perfectly good people value money over life? If we tell our children that violence is not the answer, why are we so quick to resort to war? We tell our children to be respectful of their environment, why can't we do the same? These questions ate at my soul throughout most of my life. I knew that our system was unjust, but I had never been taught about possible alternatives to it. I just knew that something was awry.

Two days before I graduated high school, my mom told me she had been diagnosed with breast cancer. At that point she had been working at her company for 22 years. After months of treatments and surgeries, she was fired because she couldn't work the hours she once did and because her insurance rates were going up – her employer didn't want to pay for it. After dedicating half of her life to this company, she was fired. I couldn't believe that something like that could happen, especially to my own family. How would she afford her treatment? Why



was cancer treatment so expensive to begin with? Couldn't it be possible for everyone in America to have guaranteed health care?

That is when I really began to dig deeper into politics and economics. I had known my whole life that our system was unjust, but this situation I found my family in just alerted me to the fact that the entire working class was being exploited. In that moment to her employer, my mother wasn't a human being, she was a commodity. She was expendable.

That is when I discovered socialism. Immediately it clicked. Capitalism allows the wealthy to take advantage of those who can't defend themselves. Socialism values life, it values workers. Socialism is the moral answer to the immorality that is capitalism. If the working-class majority unites, organizes, and fights, we can take control of society out of the hands of the corporate elite and create a new society that provides healthcare and other basic services to all. ✦

Coming Soon on SocialistAlternative.org

Fighting the Far Right

Trump's election has emboldened the far right. This has opened up a discussion about how these forces can be prevented from gaining a wider base. Our material draws from the historical experience of the workers movement here and internationally in fighting fascism and the far right.

Trump's Budget

Trump's savage budget proposal has shown his true colors and on top of the Trump/Ryan Care fiasco can help to undermine his support. This could be the next key battle for the anti-Trump movement.

Left Electoral Campaigns in 2017

A number of left electoral campaigns at city and state level have been or will soon be announced. Socialist Alternative member Ginger Jentzen's campaign for Minneapolis City Council is heating up. We will be covering these campaigns and the wider discussion about how we build a left political force in U.S. society based on the mass anti-Trump movement.

Russian Revolution 100th Anniversary

During the course of 2017, the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, our paper and website are carrying monthly articles on different aspects and themes related to the revolution and its relevance today. ✦



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Democratic Leadership Under Pressure

Which Way Forward for the Left?

Tom Crean and Pat Ayers

In the last two months, millions have made it clear they are prepared to stand up and fight back against a president they do not see as legitimate. The key question being asked by progressive workers and youth is how to defeat Trump's agenda.

The stalling of Trump's travel bans in the courts as well as the huge difficulties the Republicans are encountering in repealing Obamacare show that they are vulnerable. Trump's support for a "repeal and replace" that would lead to 24 million losing health care and his viciously anti-working class budget proposal are exposing his lying claim to represent working people. Trump's approval ratings are now down to 37%.

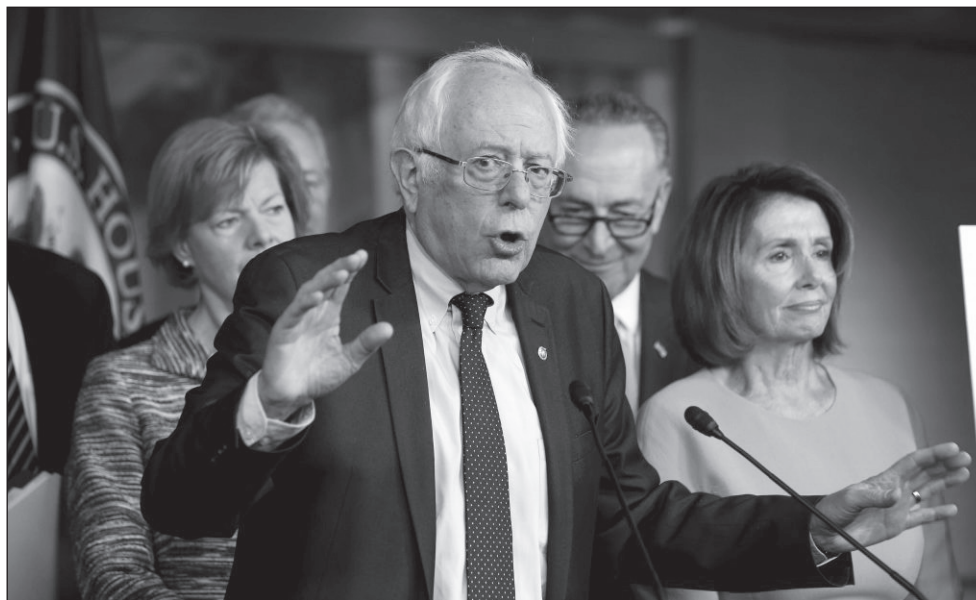
But decisively defeating Trump and the Republicans will require that the movement keeps up the pressure in the streets and goes further. Socialist Alternative has argued for bringing the social power of the working class to bear in a more decisive way through strike action. On May 1, we are likely to see massive demonstrations of immigrant workers and significant political strike action.

But the movement also needs a clear fighting program and determined leadership. It is natural that large numbers will look first to the Democratic Party leadership to use their positions to stand up and fight back. There has been intense pressure on the leadership of the party to hold the line against Trump by opposing all of Trump's reactionary cabinet appointees and filibustering his Supreme Court nominee, Neil Gorsuch. In coming weeks, there will be demands that the Democrats make good on Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer's threat to shut down the government if the Republicans go along with Trump's budget proposals.

Meanwhile thousands have gone to Republican representatives' townhalls around the country to rail against them about health care and other issues. It is clear that a "Tea Party of the left" is emerging and there are various groups discussing standing candidates in the 2018 Congressional primaries against Democrats not prepared to fight Trump down the line.

Lessons Learned?

We agree completely that the Democrats should be put under pressure to resist Trump. And up to a point, this pressure can work. But the question is, how far can the party's leadership – which is deeply beholden to corporate interests – actually be



Democratic leadership has felt compelled to hide behind Bernie Sanders.

pushed?

Have they learned from their loss to Trump after rigging the primary to stop Bernie Sander whose call for a "political revolution against the billionaire class" inspired millions? In the general election, the Democrats and Hillary Clinton chose to focus on Trump as an existential "threat to the Republic" rather than campaigning on demands that would speak to the needs of working people like a \$15 minimum wage or free college. This allowed Trump to demagogically portray himself as the defender of the "forgotten men and women" against a corrupt establishment.

The Democrats are continuing with the same type of approach that lost them the election with their obsession about Trump's alleged ties to Russia. They hope that the Trump administration will either implode or be so damaged by scandal that they will sweep back in 2018 to take back the House. This could work but it is a dangerous game.

Trying to Contain the Left

The revolt against Trump and the experience of the mass movement is leading many people to the conclusion that struggle can defeat Trump and we don't need to wait until 2018.

Rather than seeing the politicization and radicalization of sections of their base as an opportunity to build a movement to defeat Trump's agenda, the Democrats see it as a serious headache. A leading House Democrat, Adam Schiff, put it this way: "The

radical nature of this government is radicalizing Democrats, and that's going to pose a real challenge to the Democratic Party, which is to draw on the energy and the activism and the passion that is out there, but not let it turn us into what we despised about the tea party" (*Los Angeles Times*, 1/31/17). By this, he means they want to ride the wave without being forced to the left.

Indeed, the energy and activism is reinforcing the support for the left, centered around Bernie Sanders and to a lesser degree Elizabeth Warren. Sanders is the most popular politician in the country but after supporting Clinton he finds himself in a contradictory position. The discredited Democratic leadership which used every means available to stop him last year now needs him to provide badly needed cover.

Nevertheless, Sanders continues to show what a fighting left could do if we had our own political party. He has led the charge in bringing the fight against the Republican effort to repeal Obamacare into the "red" areas of the country. He is effective because he links his opposition to the Republicans' attacks to the call for Medicare for all - to a real solution to the health care crisis. He directly addresses the concerns and fears of working people while making bold proposals for pushing back against corporate power. This is what the Democratic leadership is unwilling and incapable of doing.

A People's Party?

The recent election for Democratic

National Committee chairperson brought this internal conflict to a head. Keith Ellison was backed by Sanders as well as a section of the establishment seeking to co-opt the left while Tom Perez, who eventually won, was backed by the Obama wing. In the wake of losing a rigged vote, Ellison promptly agreed to the offer of vice chairman in the name of unity but the issues will not go away.

The left, following Sanders, seeks to turn the Democrats into a "People's Party." They want a political force that can give voice to and help galvanize the movement. We totally agree. But what would this actually require? First of all, that the party and its candidates refuse all corporate money. Second, that they adopt a platform that truly speaks to the interests of the 99% and, critically, that the party's elected representatives must adhere to this platform. Finally, a People's Party would have have to build a mass membership with the democratic participation of members.

The corporate "centrists" will resist this to the death. Even if the left were to overcome all the institutional obstacles and somehow take over, the outcome would be a split with most of the existing leadership leaving. One way or another a new mass, membership-based left party will have to be formed.

What is different now is that hundreds of thousands of radicalized workers and youth are on a collision course with the corporate leadership of the Democratic Party. Many are already drawing further conclusions reflected in the growth of socialist organizations like Socialist Alternative and the Democratic Socialists of America.

Even in 2017, further steps can be taken towards a new party. Ginger Jentzen of Socialist Alternative is running for Minneapolis city council and her campaign is catching fire. There is evidence of others on the left preparing to run in local races. Unfortunately, most of these campaigns will take the path of trying to use the Democratic Party as a platform. But, if these campaigns were to run independently, on a bold platform, rallying the thousands of energized activists, it could help lay the basis for a new party in this country that could be a powerful lever in the fight against the right and the billionaire class.

An immediate step would be if socialists came together to run ten or more strong independent socialist candidates across the country in 2017. These campaigns could galvanize the left on the road to building a much bigger socialist force that will contribute to even bigger developments in the next period. ☺

Ryan and Trump Care

A Frontal Attack on Working People and the Poor

Katie Quarles, RN
Member of Board of Directors,
Minnesota Nurses Association
(personal capacity)

After campaigning for years on repealing Obamacare, Republicans are faced with the stark reality of the impossibility of finding a market-based health insurance law that meets both the profit needs of the insurance companies, and provides quality, affordable coverage plans to consumers.

As Trump said in February: “Nobody knew that health care could be so complicated.” Well at least he didn’t!

What the AHCA Would Mean

The new Republican plan to replace Obamacare – the American Health Care Act (AHCA), would result in 24 million less people being insured by 2026, according to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO.) The CBO study also showed that insurance premiums would go up in the short term (15 to 20% in 2018 and 2019), and that premiums for some older, poorer people could go up by at least 750%!

The AHCA, already dubbed Trumpcare or Ryancare (after House Speaker Paul Ryan) would also end the individual mandate to carry coverage, replacing it with a penalty for a lapse in coverage of over two months, resulting in an increase in premiums of 30% for the first year upon re-enrolling. This would make it more difficult for people who already may have missed a premium payment for financial reasons to ever re-enroll.

Additionally, insurance companies would be able to charge older people up to five times as much for coverage as younger people. Currently, they can only charge three times the rate. Tax credits would be based primarily on age. Cost-sharing subsidies for low-income people would be repealed in 2020.

At the same time, the bill would mean that the richest 400 households in America would each receive an average annual tax cut of \$7 million (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities). Those who will be hit hardest will be the poor working class, as up to 20 million will face a health care catastrophe. This is a massive upward redistribution of wealth to the 0.01% brought in under the guise of health care “reform.”

Brutal Attack on Poorer, Older Americans

At present, Medicaid, the health program for low-income people, is a mandate where the federal government is required to fund states for all “essential benefits,” including



Speaker of the House Paul Ryan is championing the AHCA.

things like substance abuse and mental health care. The AHCA would end this mandate and slash federal subsidies, resulting in some states discontinuing the recent expansion of eligibility. This is not to mention the devastating impact of defunding Planned Parenthood, particularly for poorer women.

Now the Republicans are talking about making work an eligibility requirement for Medicaid and turning Federal funding for Medicaid into block grants to the states which will almost inevitably be cut further over time. Degrading Medicaid is a precedent for privatizing Medicare and Social Security, a goal of right-wing Republicans.

Overall this is a brutal attack on the health care available to poor and working people. It is clear that many people in rural areas and white working class communities represented by the Republicans will be among those hardest hit. The Republican Party is apparently willing to take the calculated risk that most of these poor people don’t and won’t vote. But this could explode in their faces as even better off working-class people will know or be related to people who have benefited from the Medicaid expansion or other aspects of Obamacare.

Trump has also issued a federal budget proposal full of savage attacks to domestic programs – many of which are critical to poor and working Americans – while adding \$54 billion to the already bloated military budget. The wholesale cuts of programs like Meals on Wheels has shocked even Republican Congresspeople. All of this is the beginning of many people realizing that they are going to be betrayed on every level by Trump.

Republican Contradictions

The Republican plan is receiving a

backlash not only from physicians groups, nurses unions, and the AARP, but even from some hospitals as well, who would likely see more patients who are unable to pay!

Within the Republican party, there is far from unanimous support. Many Tea Party Republicans like Ted Cruz feel the bill doesn’t go far enough in cutting government spending by ending tax credits. More mainstream Republicans are concerned about anger from voters when it becomes clear that the plan isn’t really “improving” the ACA. Getting this through the Senate is by no means guaranteed.

Many Republicans fear that a backlash among working-class voters could lead many to desert the party in 2018 and 2020.

Build the Resistance!

The large meetings on health care organized by Our Revolution and the massive turnouts at Republican lawmakers’ town hall meetings where they have been relentlessly and correctly attacked show the widespread anger and fear of millions of people of losing their health insurance.

Bernie Sanders and others helped organize these protests, which are a great start and show the potential to defeat the Republicans. The protests need to continue and ramp up to even bigger mass protests, occupations of targeted lawmakers’ offices, etc. Unions need to play a key role in leading this up.

What Kind of Insurance Do We Need?

There are good reasons why the ACA was disliked by many. While it gave health

insurance to millions who didn’t have access previously, those plans were often quite expensive and didn’t have great coverage. Not to mention the difficulty of signing up for plans online – a new career, ACA navigator, was born to help people through the process!

American health care is a disaster. But Trumpcare/Ryancare is not a solution; it will make things far worse. Many Republican voters will be some of the hardest hit. As much as possible, activists need to reach out to them, to convince them that the AHCA is not in their best interests. This is an issue that can force big cracks into the Republican coalition and help us push back Trump’s reactionary agenda.

In order to reach out to a broader audience and inspire millions more into action, it will be necessary to offer a real alternative to both the ACA and AHCA.

Expanding Medicare to cover everyone, regardless of age is that alternative. The problem is that the Democratic Party leadership is so wed to donations from the huge medical corporations that they refuse to put it forward. This also reflects that even the liberal wing of the establishment is not today pretending to offer real progress in the standard of living and quality of life of ordinary people. Capitalism has less and less to offer and health care is under attack in many countries.

But resistance will grow. In Britain, 250,000 recently came on the streets of London to oppose the privatization of the National Health Service. If this disastrous plan passes, it will give new momentum to the push for single payer, Medicare for All, at state level. As Seattle Socialist city councilmember Kshama Sawant recently pointed out:

“Many Democratic Governors have been denouncing Trump’s attacks on the Affordable Care Act. But why don’t these Democratic Governors immediately move to implement single-payer systems in their own states?”

“California is already discussing such a plan. Our own state of Washington, along with Oregon, could come together in this effort. Along this “blue” West Coast we can develop a joint, single-payer alternative to the dysfunctional private health insurance system.”

This is the type of bold approach needed in the coming months and years that would begin to lay the basis for real national reform of health care in the interests of working people. But this will only be achieved if we build a mass movement fighting all along the line in the interests of working people and the poor. ✪

Socialist Students Build for May 1

Keely Mullen

Students have played a critical role in the developing anti-Trump movement. From the women's marches to the airport occupations, we have been front and center in the fight against Trump's attacks. With the growing burden of student debt and the lack of quality jobs upon graduation, Trump's billionaire agenda poses a greater threat now than ever before. There is a critical need for a mass, united, and organized student movement and we are already seeing the beginnings of this movement developing. Already, the call for May 1 nationwide protest and strike action is gaining steam. Beyond just going to protests, young people are organizing campaigns and joining groups on their campuses to fight back.

May 1 - International Workers Day - presents us with an exciting opportunity to build the national student movement and link the struggles on campus to a broader fight back! Socialist Students supports the call for nationwide strike action on May 1 and calls on students to organize campus-wide shut downs in solidarity with nationwide May Day actions. It would be a huge display of power if, in solidarity with workers shutting down their workplaces, students forced campuses to shut down for the day. The potential for such a shut down exists at the University of Washington where UAW Local 4121 representing the school's graduate student teaching staff is planning strike action. If taken up by broad forces on campus, the potential exists for a campus wide shut down at UW on May 1! Shut downs like these would enable students not only to join May Day demonstrations in

their cities, but would lay the ground for solidarity organizing between students and workers on campuses across the country.

Socialist Students will be hosting public meetings on campuses nationwide to discuss the significance of May 1 demonstrations, and, in some areas, we will be hosting direct action trainings to enable students to take further action on their campuses where possible.

We are calling on national progressive youth organizations like the Young Democratic Socialists, the United States Student Association, and United Students Against Sweatshops to support the call for May Day campus shut downs. There is a tremendous amount of potential to build a fighting student movement in the U.S. that is capable of challenging Trump's racist, sexist, billionaire's agenda. If progressive youth organizations unite on the basis of a common program to fight Trump, we could be on the brink of a new mass student movement in the U.S. ✪

socialist students



A STUDENT MOVEMENT FOR THE 99%

www.SocialistStudents.net
facebook.com/SocialistStudentsUSA



UCLA Fights for a Sanctuary Campus

Socialist Students at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) are involved in the sanctuary campus campaign that has gained national attention. They are demonstrating what an organized fight back should look like by uniting with other student groups and the labor movement on campus. The sanctuary movement is planning to unite with the recent Service Employees International Union United Service Workers West (SEIU-USWW) announcement that they plan to strike on May 1.

In the sanctuary campus campaign, Socialist Students at UCLA are currently organizing with AFSCME Local 3299, UAW Local 2865, and a number of student activist groups. In mid-March, 200 people attended a town hall to organize the UCLA sanctuary campus movement was called by the Student Labor Action Project, a coalition in which Socialist Students plays a leading role. The town hall made national news and

was featured on Fusion, Telesur, and the local ABC station. Following the town hall, the students and workers organized a rally and letter delivery to the Chancellor of the University, Gene Block. The students delivered a series of demands to the chancellor and his office responded with an email to the school stating his intention to protect UCLA's undocumented community.

Some of the key demands are that UCLA end collaboration with ICE, protect private data, denounce Muslim registries, combat sexual violence, and expand resources for targeted communities. The Chancellor's response shows that the pressure of a developing movement can force people in positions of power to publicly make promises. Students and workers plan to pressure the Chancellor to keep his promise by meeting their demands. They aim to spread the struggle across the whole UC system! ✪

MNA Endorses Ginger Jentzen for Minneapolis City Council

The Minnesota Nurses Association (MNA), a union of 20,000, consisting mostly of Registered Nurses, is the first major union endorsement for Ginger Jentzen's campaign for Minneapolis City Council. Last year, the MNA went out on a historic six-week strike of almost 5,000 RNs across the Twin Cities.

This endorsement is based on years of common work. MNA endorsed the attempt to put \$15 minimum wage on the ballot in Minneapolis this past year, a campaign that Jentzen helped lead as director of the local 15 Now chapter. Jentzen is a long-time member of Socialist Alternative and formerly an organizer with Occupy Homes MN which helped fight evictions in the Twin Cities during the massive foreclosure crisis caused by the 2008-2009 crash.

In 2013, Socialist Alternative member Ty Moore only

narrowly missed out on winning a City Council seat by around 200 votes. This year, Ginger's campaign is broadly viewed as a viable campaign with a real chance of winning.

This history, combined with the successes of Kshama Sawant in Seattle, shows that it is possible to get socialists elected to office on the basis of movements.

A Step Toward a New Party

The repeated failure of the Democrats to fulfill promises made to unions shows the need for unions to be willing to support independent candidates outside of the two-party system.

The MNA has shown the way forward by not only endorsing a socialist candidate, but by doing so early - before the Democratic primary. The labor movement needs to learn from the role of Minneapolis Democratic Party establishment which



fought tooth and nail to prevent \$15 from appearing on the ballot. It is the big business nature of that leadership that causes the repeated failure of the Democrats to fulfill promises made to unions.

Endorsing independent candidates is important, but in order to build real political power for working people in this country, we will need to build a party of the 99%! One that doesn't take corporate cash and is beholden to working people - not the bosses! ✪

TRUMP WAGES WAR C



Toya Chester

2016 marked the hottest year on record following the three consecutive year streak of hottest years. Ice caps are melting at faster rates and super storms, earthquakes, and ecosystem destruction are becoming the norm. Scientists have been pleading with world leaders to take action, to divest from fossil fuels, and invest in green, sustainable energy. The question of human impact on the environment is no longer something that needs to be debated since 97% of scientists agree that global climate change is due to human impact. But science is clearly not enough for President Donald Trump as he has said that global climate change is a hoax. The man that is leading the country that produces around 25% of the world's CO2 emissions does not think that those poisonous gases negatively impact our climate.

Not even Trump's pick to head up the very governmental agency that was made to protect the environment believes these 97% of scientists! As Oklahoma Attorney General, Scott Pruitt sued the Environmental Protection Agency numerous times. Throughout Pruitt's career he has fought on behalf of the interests of the fossil fuel industry. Not only is it a huge conflict of interest when this man has pending lawsuits against the agency, but he has also received campaign contributions from the very companies he will be in charge of regulating.

As we go to press it is being reported that Trump will soon announce the abandonment of any pretense of trying to reach the goals which the U.S. committed to in the 2015 Paris

climate talks of reducing carbon emissions by 26% from 2005 levels by 2025. Even these cuts were far below what is needed to prevent catastrophic climate change. Trump will order Pruitt to abandon the Clean Power Plan which aimed to shut down hundreds of heavily polluting coal-fired plants and freeze construction of new plants. While proposing to cut the EPA budget by 31% Trump and Pruitt will also seek to abandon Obama's tailpipe emissions standards (*New York Times*, 3/23/17). While many of these proposals can and will be challenged in the federal courts the overall effect on even the half-hearted effort of capitalist governments to address climate change will be devastating.

Trump Era Begins

Trump and the Republicans have demonstrated in the past couple months that they are prepared to directly attack the well-being of sections of their own base. Trumpcare, as we explain on page 4, is an onslaught on working people and the poor, including the rural poor. It is a massive transfer of wealth to the rich with more to come in the Republicans' proposed "tax reform". Trump's budget also attacks programs that benefit ordinary people in communities across the country.

Likewise Trump's threat to rip up regulations made to protect the environment will also be detrimental to the working people he is claiming to represent. For example, in the name of allowing the coal industry to create more jobs, Trump is proposing to get rid of Obama's Clean Water Rule which helped to extend protection of the Clean Water Act to smaller bodies of water such as streams and wetlands. Under Trump's proposed new regulations, coal mining companies still would not be able to dump waste in large bodies of water but they would be able to dump in streams (which run through many of the rural areas that former coal miners are from) that may be dry for portions of the year and wetlands that are

extremely important for our ecosystems.

The coal industry has become highly automated (like many jobs these days) and needs less and less workers to run the mines and processing plants. Therefore it is not environmental regulation that has eliminated the tens of thousands of coal mining jobs but it is overwhelmingly the advances in technology that have put people out of work. Many states and countries are moving away from coal use as well, with the availability of cheap natural gas and the push to more sustainable energy. Donald Trump will not be able to change that dynamic and he is lying to the millions of people living in coal country.

From the Frying Pan into the Fire

Trump the climate denier is making the Obama administration look good. The perception is that Obama worked hard to address climate change but the reality is rather different. People generally do not think of oil production when thinking of the Obama years, but during his time in office, the U.S. increased its daily number of barrels pumped by more than 70% with fracking accounting for half of the output increase.

Obama claimed that this would produce jobs and help the U.S. become an energy independent country. But at what cost? This method of oil and gas extraction forces farmers to compete with the oil companies for water supplies just to have this water poisoned and made unusable. Not only does fracking toxify around 14 billion gallons of water per year, but it ruins the earth's natural water cycles making drought more prevalent. Fracking also releases methane gas which is more than 80 times more efficient at trapping heat than CO2. Talk about global warming! This will inevitably speed up that process.

There were small attempts during Obama's presidency to try to lessen the release of CO2 into the atmosphere including the non-binding Paris accord. Obama canceled the Keystone XL pipeline and in the last days of his administration also blocked construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline but only after an extremely determined struggle involving thousands of native Americans and others. Tragically this is now being overturned by Trump.

The Continued Resistance

In 2014, we saw the largest demonstration in decades in New York City with almost half a million people marching in the People's Climate March. This gathering showed the growing awareness of the American people, especially young people, have in regards to the sense of the urgent need to wean ourselves off of fossil fuels. They know this means a fight to the end against entrenched corporate interests.

This year there are plans for a mass March for Science on Earth Day, April 22 (see page 8) and an even bigger People's Climate March on April 29. Hitting the streets is absolutely necessary if we want to fight against Trump's backwards agenda. But it cannot stop there. The environmental movement needs the support of the labor movement to fight the fossil fuel industry's efforts to pit jobs against the environment. The battle must be won within the labor movement to support the call for a massive green infrastructure program to rapidly transition the economy to renewable energy and provide good union jobs to all current fossil fuel workers.

As we have seen millions of people are ready to fight against Trump's racist and sexist agenda. Trump's attack on health care is provoking mass outrage and could split his base. But millions are also prepared to fight to defend the environment. It affects us everyday and is essential to our future. Fighting to protect the planet isn't something cannot be postponed. It is part and parcel of the fight for a new world free of Trump and corporate domination.

Socialist Alternative Says:

- ✱ Stop Trump's attacks on environmental regulations and his threatened cuts of funding for mass transit.
- ✱ For a multi-trillion dollar program to rebuild the nation's infrastructure on the basis of renewable energy and to massively expand mass transit and energy conservation paid for by taxing the rich.
- ✱ For a just transition for all fossil fuel workers with free retraining.
- ✱ Build a mass movement to shut down Trump's entire anti-working class agenda. ✱



ON THE ENVIRONMENT

A SOCIALIST PLAN FOR JOBS & A GREEN ECONOMY

Calvin Priest

Trump vowed he would bring good jobs back to the U.S. Perhaps more than any other part of his campaign, this cynical promise tapped into the real anger and desperation felt by millions of working people, after watching their living standards stagnate and fall over decades.

But the new president's first months in office, along with his recent pro-corporate budget proposals, give few hints as to where those jobs will come from.

Instead, the administration's planned attacks on the public sector, including deep cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency, clean energy, and mass transit funding, will lead to the loss of tens of thousands of federal jobs. At the same time, these cuts and the gutting of environmental regulation promise to further exacerbate the crisis of climate change.

Infrastructure and Jobs

Trump's job promises were linked to his signature pledge of a trillion dollar infrastructure plan.

But instead of including an infrastructure plan in his current budget outline, Trump's administration has postponed it, with reports that it may be pushed back until 2018 (*MarketWatch.com*, 3/20/2017). While Trump will almost certainly at some point present details of his infrastructure proposals, there is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of his plan. With major tax cuts for the rich and corporations built into his budget and overall agenda, the net effect is less revenue. Where will the trillion in funding come from to create jobs rebuilding crumbling infrastructure?

Trump has so far skirted this question, insisting projects will be "profitable." Certainly we have no reason to doubt that big corporations will profit under Trump's plan. But the question remains: who will pay? "There is no transit system in the world that makes money," said Rep. Peter DeFazio, ranking Democrat on the House transportation committee (*CNN.com*, 3/16/2017).

Meanwhile, Trump's budget makes deep cuts to transportation spending, from Amtrak to state mass-transit plans, and jeopardizes 56 public transit projects in their early development stages.

Certainly a major program of infrastructure repair and transit expansion is needed. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates \$4.59 trillion in costs just to repair existing infrastructure and bring it from its current D+ grade to a B grade (*Time.com*, 3/9/2017). On top of this, a major expansion of bus and light-rail services is critical



An aerial view of the Interstate 35W bridge that collapsed over the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Aug. 3, 2007.

to move away from the disastrous car-based transportation system.

None of these problems are new under Trump of course. Failing infrastructure and grossly underfunded public transit are the result of bipartisan policies carried out over many decades.

A Renewable Energy Based Economy

As Socialist Alternative has long argued, a massive expansion of renewable energy, mass transit, and energy conservation programs is urgently needed.

The kind of large-scale projects required to end the use of fossil fuels could create millions of family-wage, union jobs. Further, renewables generate "more jobs per dollar invested—more than double the jobs created from investing in fossil fuels" (*IEEE Spectrum*, 1/27/2017).

But this desperately needed transition to a renewable energy economy must not and does not need to be based on abandoning the hundreds of thousands of workers in coal, oil, or other fossil fuel industries. We need to build working-class unity around a program rooted in the needs of both workers and the environment. A just transition for all fossil-fuel energy workers with free retraining programs will be essential in this process, or else the ruling class will continue to play divide-and-rule politics between workers and environmentalists.

Renewable energy technology has improved dramatically in recent years, with

solar in particular becoming far more affordable (*Renewable Energy World*, 9/27/2016).

But affordability improvements will not be enough because the market will never make a rapid transition away from fossil fuels on its own. Oil corporations make up 4 of the top 10 wealthiest corporations in the world, and they have a vested interest in drilling every last drop from the ground. Meanwhile, the urgency of the environmental crisis is underscored by every new climate report.

While new innovations can assist the transition to renewables, technology is not the problem. Studies show that renewables can provide the energy needed to fuel the global economy.

There are precedents for the kind of rapid retooling needed for a renewable energy economy. In the run up to World War II, the U.S. economy was transformed to rapidly produce armaments and supplies needed for the war.

A massive public intervention will be needed for a sustainable economy, but the political will is completely lacking, with corporate politicians joined at the hip to Big Oil. Further, the conflict of interests between corporations based in different countries under capitalism undermines the global cooperation needed to accomplish the transition.

Socialist Policies Needed

The stagnation of living standards and loss of middle class jobs is the result of a process drawn out over many decades since the end of the post-World War II economic expansion

in the 1970s. Capitalism since then has been unable to restore the levels of growth generated by post-war reconstruction. Wages, benefits, and public services have been continuously undermined, as corporate parties around the world have sought to restore profitability through neoliberal policies.

Trump's protectionist "America First" approach also offers no way out for the loss of jobs which is largely linked to these global economic factors along with increased automation.

Capitalism is a crisis-ridden system that has reached its limits and is unable to provide decent living standards for all, or a sustainable economy.

While Trump and many Republican leaders openly reject climate change, the Democratic Party also has deep ties to the fossil fuel industry. Federal subsidies for fossil fuels have long far exceeded those spent on renewables. This includes Obama, even during his first two years in office when he had Democratic majorities in both the House and Senate.

Moving rapidly toward renewable energy will require that we get organized. Hundreds of thousands of young people are being radicalized in the fight against Trump, and there is growing interest in socialist ideas. We must build on this to create powerful movements and a new mass party independent of corporate money that will fight to carry out democratic socialist policies.

We can't control what we don't own. The Big Oil corporations and big banks have the resources necessary to make a clean energy transformation. But they will need to be taken into democratic public ownership to retool for clean energy, mass transit, and a sustainable economy.

On top of the jobs created by a clean energy expansion and mass transit, a socialist plan for jobs would include providing high quality health care for all including free reproductive care, fully funded public services, and well maintained infrastructure - paid for by taxing the rich.

The capitalist system is unable to fully harness technology, resources, or human creativity. Improvements in agricultural production under capitalism lead to food rotting in granaries and rural poverty for farmers, while under socialism they would mean abundant healthy food. Under capitalism, the boom in automation exacerbates unemployment and low wages. Under socialism it would be used to shorten the workweek, while providing full employment.

The struggle for a society based on human needs and environmental sustainability is inseparable from the struggle for socialism. ☪

April: A Turning Point for the 1917 Russian Revolution

Rob Rooke

The world was shaken in February 1917 when, in the midst of World War One, a popular uprising overthrew the Czar of Russia. The revolution captured the imagination of the entire world.

The war had rolled on for three long years, with devastating losses for Russia. Its cruel hardships fuelled the revolution. As the Czar left the scene, the Constitutional Democratic party, representing the liberal capitalists, appointed themselves as a Provisional Government. Lacking credibility they invited the socialist Menshevik Party into a coalition with them.

While draping themselves in revolutionary phrases, this landlord and capitalist dominated government continued the onslaught of the war. The old slogan of “Defend your country” was replaced with the new one, “Defend the revolution.”

The opening of the revolution ushered in a colossal wave of debate at all levels of society. Opinions and ideas flowed. How to end the war? Should we have capitalism or socialism? Workers joined political parties, busily read political programs, created local committees, and began organizing themselves into citywide and regional councils,

know in Russian as “soviets.”

These soviets were the most highly developed form of democracy yet devised. Assembly delegates were regularly elected and easily recalled. The soviets emerged alongside the Provisional Government as its grassroots alternative and represented, in outline, the framework for a future workers’ democratically organized state.

In April, the Bolshevik Party, the left wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party, held a convention to discuss the way forward for the revolution. Lenin, returning from exile, proposed his “April Theses,” arguing that any support for the employer-dominated Provisional Government would only disarm the movement. Echoing the analysis of Leon Trotsky, another Russian socialist leader, he also argued that the first phase of the revolution had passed and that the task for the working class must be to overthrow capitalism, establish a workers democracy, and end the war.

Capitalism in Russia arrived late on the world scene. Dominated and massively in debt to the big imperialist nations, Russia’s development into a prosperous and stable parliamentary democracy was not likely. The way forward for the working



A painting portraying Lenin’s arrival at Finland Station in Petrograd in April 1917.

class and the poor peasantry was to establish a workers’ democracy through the soviets taking power. This would be a step to help spark socialist revolutions in the richer nations, where the war had undermined the ruling classes’ credibility. The working class of Europe, once in power, could then come to the aid of the new workers state in Russia with the material resources required for Russia to move forward toward socialism.

At the April convention, the Bolsheviks adopted the slogan “All power to the soviets” and party activists adopted other key demands: distribute all land to the peasants, end the war, and bring

industry under democratic workers’ control. “Land, peace, and bread.” The police and army would be abolished in favor of elected bodies accountable to the working people they serve.

Throughout the summer of 1917 the Provisional Government continued to drive forward with the war and the Mensheviks’ support for the war and status quo saw their popularity plummet. The Bolsheviks, on the other hand, steadily won over millions to their program, their demands, and their strategy for taking the revolution forward.

Lenin’s April Theses helped the party develop a clear analysis of the character of the revolution and the

tasks facing working-class people. Without the theses and without the presence of a revolutionary party the Russian Revolution would have been defeated.

The adoption of the approach of the April Theses prepared the best activists in the spring for the eventual victory in October. However, the defeat of the German Revolution, in particular, over the next several years, increasingly ruled out the material support that the new Soviet Union hoped for. The young workers’ democracy, after some years, was overthrown and replaced, not by capitalism, but by the bureaucratic dictatorial regime of Stalinism. Nonetheless, the Bolsheviks and the Russian workers and peasants ended the bloody destruction of World War One and pointed the road towards the democratic socialist future of humanity. The adoption of the April Theses was a key event in laying the basis for that world-historic victory.

During the course of 2017, the hundredth anniversary of the Russian Revolution, Socialist Alternative is carrying monthly articles on different aspects and themes related to the revolution and its relevance today. Go to SocialistAlternative.org to see more of this material. ☛

Scientists Fight Back

George Martin Fell Brown

April 22 is Earth Day, an international holiday dedicated to the environment. This year, Earth Day is kicking off an “Earth Week” culminating in the People’s Climate March on April 29. And, on Earth Day itself, scientists will take to the street in the March for Science.

Trump’s attacks on the environment have been closely entwined with attacks on science itself. Trump himself believes climate change is a hoax and has picked a climate change denier, Scott Pruitt, to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). William Happer, Trump’s proposed science adviser has deemed that climate science, as a whole, is “really more like a cult.” The Trump administration has moved to freeze grants for scientific research and has placed

gag orders on scientists working for the EPA and USDA. The conflict between Trump and the scientific community intensified when Trump temporarily banned the National Park Service from Twitter.

But scientists are fighting back. In December of last year, 400 scientists at the American Geophysical Union meeting in San Francisco demonstrated against Trump’s attacks on science. Scientists working for government agency have been moving to save the climate data currently on federal sites, before Trump has a chance to take it down. And, with the March for Science, things are getting bigger. Starting as a Facebook group of 200 members, it ballooned to 300,000 members in the span of a week. Invigorated by other anti-Trump protests around women’s rights and immigrant rights, we could be seeing the biggest fightback

among scientists in decades.

Under capitalism, scientists are trained to see themselves as passive observers of nature. Political engagement is seen as ideological interference in the scientific process. The mere fact that scientists feel compelled to take to the streets is forcing scientists to challenge that incorrect notion. And it has provoked debate within the scientific community itself. Sylvester James Gates, the theoretical physicist and former science advisor to the Obama administration, has attacked the March for Science on the grounds that “such a politically charged event might send a message to the public that scientists are driven by ideology more than by evidence” (*Bloomberg.com*, 3/7/2017).

But science is, and has always been, political. For example, Galileo was persecuted by the Catholic Church in the Middle

Ages for challenging church doctrine. He was charged with “heresy” for declaring that the Earth revolved around the Sun. Science isn’t simply about studying nature and accumulating knowledge, but about using that knowledge for the betterment of humanity. While science has been used to build the atomic bomb, radical scientists also played a leading role in the anti-nuclear movement. And with our very climate in danger, scientists are forced to be political to help find a way out.

☛ Defend scientists and climate change science from attacks from the oil industry, Trump and Republicans.

☛ Hands off the EPA. Use climate-change science to guide policy not right-wing ideologies. No funding cuts for climate research. ☛

March for Science, April 22, 2017

Ireland

Defend the Right to Protest: Solidarity with Jobstown



SocialistWorld.net

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

Jess Spear, Ireland

When the Jobstown community heard that Joan Burton, Labour Party leader and Deputy Prime Minister, was attending a graduation ceremony on November 15, 2014, a protest was quickly organized and word spread. The community was outraged over cuts to social welfare and Burton's comments demonizing workers on welfare benefits and betraying her promise to not implement water charges.

As the Socialist Party in Ireland reported at the time:

"[Burton] came out of the church and got into an unmarked [police] car. Protesters then surrounded the car in the carpark ... including local [Socialist Party and Solidarity Member of Parliament] Paul Murphy, [and] held a sit down protest behind the car. Then, the police with little regard for people, tried to violently drag protesters away, targeting Paul Murphy in particular. They had pulled all the clothes off the top of his body and only stopped the extremely rough treatment because more of the public joined the sit down in order to safeguard and help those on the ground."

Though the protesters were engaging in a non-violent slow march, with community banners against water charges at the head, riot police were brought in to assist Burton's exit. The whole protest lasted a couple hours. The police transferred Burton to another car and left the area.

Redefining Peaceful Protest

A media storm ensued with pundits saying the protesters were "violent" and insinuating that Burton was kidnapped. Two months later, dozens of protesters were arrested and questioned. Six months after that, charges were leaked to the press before the defendants were even informed!

One of the protesters, 15 years old at the time, has already been tried and found guilty of false imprisonment. Some of the reasons the judge cited for his verdict include: using a bullhorn and chanting, walking around, sitting down and



The Socialist Party conference shows solidarity with #JobstownNotGuilty.

encouraging others to do the same, and waving his arms. Clearly, he was protesting, not kidnapping.

And though he was given no sentence, the verdict sets a dangerous precedent that can impact the remaining 18 defendants. The first seven, which includes three elected representatives of Solidarity (formerly the Anti-Austerity Alliance), Member of Parliament Paul Murphy and Councillors Kieron Mahon and Brian Leech, are also charged with false imprisonment and face a potential sentence of life in prison.

It's outrageous anyone would be charged with serious criminal offenses for participating in a peaceful protest. But behind the Irish state's attempt to go after a working class community and, importantly, its elected representatives, is a desire to both punish and push back a working-class movement that dared to stand up to the government, elect socialist fighters to represent them, and won.

No Way, We Won't Pay

To pay for the 2007-2008 economic recession, the Irish establishment parties forced through a whole slew of taxes and cuts, including a universal social charge, cuts to single parents, cuts to the minimum wage, and cuts to education and health care. While these attacks on living standards were met with some

resistance, the last straw came when the Fine Gael-Labour Party government brazenly attempted to implement water charges.

Unlike in the U.S., there is no water metering in Ireland. Basic utilities like water are paid for through general taxation. To meter and tax water usage was seen in effect as double taxation. Community opposition groups sprung up across the country, using social media to get out the word and organize blockades of water meter installation.

When a by-election was called in October 2014 for the Dublin-South-West parliamentary seat, the Socialist Party (part of the Committee for a Workers International with which Socialist Alternative is in political solidarity) ran activist Paul Murphy and turned the election campaign into a referendum on water charges, advocating mass non-payment to defeat them. We argued that water charges could be defeated as they were in the late 1990s, by a majority of people refusing to pay.

No other candidate in the race was offering a fighting strategy to defeat the charges. For the Dublin-Southwest community, which includes Jobstown, it was clear that only Murphy would use his position to build the anti-water charges movement. On the day he was elected, 100,000 people (the equivalent percentage of the population as 10 million in the U.S.) were

marching in the streets against the water charges. The protest in Jobstown occurred just a few weeks later.

The general election held in February 2016 registered the rising support for socialists and other parties and candidates opposing water charges. Paul Murphy was re-elected along with two other Socialist Party members. For the establishment parties, however, the elections dealt a major blow. The Labour Party was reduced from 33 members in Parliament to seven, and the two major big business parties – forced to form a coalition government together for the first time in history and facing 73% nonpayment on the most recent water bills – were pressured into suspending water charges indefinitely.

An Injury to One is an Injury to All

As capitalism continues to deliver precarious jobs and declining living standards, movements against austerity, oppression, and inequality are growing. For the global elite and their political parties, stopping the growth of these movements is paramount.

When official propaganda through the mass media won't suffice and working-class anger threatens to boil over, governments look to curtail the right to protest. Here in

the U.S., there are already 10 states where bills have been recently introduced attacking our right to protest. Said one Republican, "If you block a freeway, you ought to go to jail and ... you ought to get the bill" (*The Intercept*, 01/23/2017).

While it remains to be seen whether these bills can be forced through, any attempt to limit or withdraw the democratic right to peacefully protest is serious, and wherever it occurs it must be vigilantly fought by workers and youth. The upcoming Jobstown trials in Ireland are an important test case in how far so-called democratic governments are willing to go to quell social unrest and force through austerity. A guilty verdict for the protesters would be injurious to all who are fighting for justice.

The Jobstown trials also show how the ruling elite will use the state machinery – the police, the judiciary, and the media – to fight back against mass movements that challenge their rule. With the water charges in Ireland, they lost. And now the cat's out of the bag.

The defeat of the water charges has emboldened the Irish working class. Workers in a whole range of industries have gone on strike and won significant pay increases. Marriage equality was won by popular referendum during the water charges movement and currently a growing movement demanding abortion rights is putting tremendous pressure on the government.

Every attack on the right to organize and fight for what we want and need is an attack on us all. If the ruling class in Ireland is able to convict peaceful protesters, the ruling class globally will feel confident to go after us. Trump will feel confident to go after Black Lives Matter, to go after airport occupiers, and to clamp down on our right to resist his attacks.

An injury to one is an injury to all. We stand in solidarity with the Jobstown defendants and urge all who are fighting for justice in the U.S. to do the same. Solidarity greetings can be sent to jngcampaign@gmail.com and we urge trade union activists to pass union resolutions in support and donate money to their defense fund. ☘

The Trump-Trumka Snuggle

Ryan Timlin, Minneapolis ATU

Since November 8, the heroic movement to stop the Immigration ban and the acts of communities to fight back against deportations, along with the historic women's march in defiance of Trump's Sexism has been inspiring. Workers and youth are realizing we can halt right-wing attacks and even win - if we fight back. The labor movement should be joining in the fightback against sexism, racism, and deportations while demanding medicare for all and massive investment to create millions of green jobs at union pay.

Unfortunately, the approach of most - but not all - union leaders has been disappointing. The building trades leadership has taken the worst position of all, getting friendly with Trump on the narrow question of jobs alone. As Sean McGarvey, President of North America's Building Trades Unions said, "We come from the same industry. He [Trump] understands the value of driving development, moving people to the middle class" (New York Times, 1/23/2017). These statements came as politicians are lining up to attack the Holy Grail of the building trades - the Prevailing Wage laws that protect wages on federal projects for skilled workers.

Infrastructure improvement is desperately needed, but the question is: Which infrastructure projects? In the same New York Times article McGarvey refers to working with Trump in Atlantic City in the '90s. Those short sighted plans for infrastructure and jobs have left Atlantic City a ghost town today (Business Insider, 1/31/2016).

We Need a Fighting Labor Movement

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has taken a confusing and mistaken approach as well. In the run up to the election and inauguration he was outspoken condemning



Trumka at Trump tower after meeting with Donald Trump.

Trump's racism and sexism along with calling out his cabinet selections and their horrendous view on minimum wages and working conditions. Trumka even wrote an op-ed for the New York Times "Don't Let Trump Speak for Workers" (12/27/2016). But then in January, after a private meeting in Trump Tower, Trumka posted on Twitter "A very honest and productive conversation this morning with @realDonaldTrump." Trumka then praised Trump's February 28 speech to congress saying that it was "probably his finest hour as President" (Fox Business News, 3/1/2017). Then, days later, Trumka came out attacking Trump's health care plan calling it a "massive transfer of wealth for working people to Wall Street" (CNN).

As the threat of national Right to Work looms, Trumka's wavering back and forth about how to approach Trump is not sending a clear message of what is necessary. Mobilization and organizing in the ranks is needed. With the anger towards Trump, and his slumping popularity, the labor movement has a massive opportunity to rebuild its own strength and authority by unambiguously joining the fight against Trump's anti-working class agenda.

It is only the workers and their organizations along with the broader community that

can actually help themselves. Trumka should be clear and, while continuing to question Trump, outline a clear fighting strategy.

There are unions showing what a fighting approach looks like. For example, on the issue of health care and the destruction of the ACA, National Nurses United (NNU) is saying "We don't need insurance we need medicare for all!" NNU, the Communication Workers of America, and the Amalgamated Transit Union are calling for the end of the DAPL and the Keystone XL pipelines and calling for green jobs. These demands need to be taken one step further and tied to a national green jobs program and linked with the building trades.

Unions should be looking to the past as well in how to fight back. The next time a plant closure is threatened, such as at Carrier in Indiana - where Trump swooped in falsely claiming he was saving jobs - Trumka should call for those workers to occupy it like the United Auto Workers occupied the Flint Factory GM plants in 1937. Occupy it and demand that it brought into public ownership and transformed into a plant for green technology.

We can no longer be divided in labor - in the era of Trump we must unite and fight together! ✪

Unions Under Attack in the Hawkeye State

Jeff Booth

On February 16, the House and Senate in Iowa passed a law aimed to bust public sector unions. Except for firefighters, transit workers, and police, all public workers are forbidden by the State to negotiate benefits, health care, vacations, and retirement; nearly all workplace issues outside of wages. The unions are also forbidden to negotiate grievance procedures. This legal shredding of union rights will directly affect 185,000 public workers.

Any attempt to negotiate wages will be extremely limited under the new law. Any disagreement on wages will result in binding arbitration. The arbitrator is not allowed to implement a pay increase of more than three percent or the percentage increase in the consumer price index, whichever is less.

Under Siege

To add insult to injury, Iowa was already a "Right to Work" state before this new reactionary law was rushed through. However, unions could still arrange voluntary deduction of dues from a public employee's paychecks.

Now, unions are forced to win a recertification vote one year before each contract expires. The majority of employees in the entire union, not just those voting, must vote to keep the union. Moreover, the union must pay the state in advance for the costs of the election process.

This new, union-busting law is worse than what Scott Walker and the capitalists in Wisconsin forced through in 2011.

Emboldened by winning vicious anti-union legislation on the State level, along with the election of Trump; anti-union forces are going all out. A bill for a nationwide "Right to Work" law was recently introduced in Congress.

The mass resistance to Trump must include defending union rights, extending worker solidarity to non-union workers. Labor leaders and pro-union activists need to organize strike actions and occupations to defeat unjust laws. ✪

Nissan Workers Organize in the Deep South

Jacob Florence

As the sun set on March 4, a new and important step was made in reestablishing an old, familiar working-class tradition - organizing a union. The recent March on Mississippi was a clear sign that many workers are realizing that in the age of Trump, they need to form strong unions.

Thousands of workers at the Nissan factory in Canton, Mississippi protested on March 4 against what they saw as intimidation tactics

against workers. Only 3 of 45 Nissan factories don't have union representation, and all three are in the southern United States.

Factory workers are worried about suppressed wages, abusive schedules, and unsafe working conditions. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has cited the Canton factory for multiple violations in the past that put worker safety at risk. Without union representation, the workers are deeply concerned that the status quo will eventually lead to someone being seriously hurt or killed.

Unbroken Thread: Workers' Rights and Civil Rights

Alongside the workers marching were public figures like actor Danny Glover, NAACP President Cornell William Brooks, and self-described "democratic socialist" Senator Bernie Sanders. Socialism is, at its very core, a fight for worker's rights, and unionization attempts, historically at least, have often been closely tied with various trends of socialism.

Mississippi has the highest African American population of any state, and over 80% of the Canton factory workers are African American. The March on Mississippi, where civil rights activists and union activists marched hand-in-hand, shows the important connection between these two movements. This is a testament to the growing working-class consciousness that is helping workers start to realize who their real enemies are, and that black workers and all workers in general can gain power by organizing a union and demanding their rights. ✪

All Out on May 1

continued from p. 12

May 1 action.

The president of United Teachers Los Angeles, Alex Caputo-Pearl, has called on superintendent Michelle King to shut down schools district-wide on May 1.

In the Bay Area, the San Francisco Labor Council issued a statement on March 7 endorsing worker solidarity actions on May 1 and asking that their be “no retaliation against any worker - union or non-union - who chooses to exercise their civil rights” by taking the day off.

Washington State

Momentum around May 1 has also been growing in Washington State.

In Martin Luther King County, which includes Seattle, the county labor council voted to urge its affiliate unions “to consider all forms of action on May 1, 2017, whether striking, walking out, taking sick days, extended lunch hours, exercising rights of conscience, organizing demonstrations or teach-ins, or any other acts of collective expression.”

This kind of flexibility has been stressed by organizers around the country who want to minimize retaliation against workers, while building for the broadest and most powerful possible May 1 actions.

A number of other unions in the Seattle area have also passed May Day resolutions, including WFSE Local 304, representing workers at Seattle community colleges, and IBEW Local 46, representing electrical workers.

At the University of Washington, the largest university in the Northwest, 6,000 graduate student workers represented by UAW Local 4121 will be soon voting whether to go on strike on May 1, following a strike resolution passed by the union’s Executive Board.

As a member of the City Council, I have



The 2006 Day Without an Immigrant saw millions of people skipping work and protesting around the U.S.

used my platform here in Seattle to call on the city’s mayor, Ed Murray, to allow all city workers to take May 1 off without retaliation (Washington State law already allows all public employees to take two days off each year for reasons of conscience or religion).

But the biggest developments in Seattle are with the Seattle Education Association (SEA), where 5,000 teachers will soon be voting on whether to shut down the city’s public schools for the day, in response to longtime unconstitutional underfunding of schools in Washington State. “We have tried the same thing for years,” said SEA educator Kit McCormick. “We’ve been writing our legislators and we’ve been going to Olympia and it’s time to take a bigger step.”

“We’re fed up,” said Socialist Alternative and SEA member Justin Vinson. “Educators have been fighting to defend our schools and now we have Trump and Betsy DeVos setting their sights on major education cuts. But there is a larger principle at stake here as well, with the administration going after our immigrant sisters and brothers, women, Muslims and LGBTQ people. An injury to one is an injury to all.”

It’s Not Just About Trump

In Illinois, SEA’s sister organization, the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), is also weighing whether to hold a one-day strike on May Day in protest against ongoing, brutal cuts to

the public education.

Other unions around the country, such as the Minnesota Nurses Association have also passed resolutions in favor of action on May Day.

It is still too early to say how much this momentum for strike action will continue to grow, but the need to fight back against Trump is a clear and present danger.

We must recognize that our movement will not continuously grow in a straight line that there will be setbacks also. And while we will not defeat Trump in one day, we should build for the broadest and most powerful possible actions on May 1 to take our struggle to another level.

Going forward, we need to engage broader and broader sections of working people and youth to resist Trump and the Billionaire Class. We can do so by fighting for positive changes that can make a real difference in people’s day to day lives. With health-care under attack, we must not only defend against the Republican plan, but fight boldly for Medicare for all. With workers and union rights under attack, we must not only oppose right-to-work-for-less legislation, but demand a federal \$15 minimum wage.

And it’s not only about one president or one political party. Trump was assisted in his election victory by the anger of working and middle class people at being sold out over decades by the brutal, bipartisan neoliberal policies. We need to build a new political party that will fight for socialist policies, and declare its independence from corporate money and power.

Because our fight is not only with Trump, it is with the broken system of capitalism, which is the underlying basis for this dangerous rise of right populism and vicious attacks on working people.

On May 1, we will strike back. ✊

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INTERNATIONAL (CWI)

Socialist Alternative is also in political solidarity with the Committee for a Workers International (CWI), a worldwide socialist organization in 47 countries, on every continent. Join us!

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SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

MAY 1: ALL OUT AGAINST TRUMP

MOMENTUM GROWS FOR MAY DAY STRIKES AND PROTESTS



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Millions have protested since Trump's inauguration, yet the Billionaire in Chief has relentlessly pursued his racist, sexist, anti-working class agenda. Now his latest budget and health care proposals declare war on everything from the Environmental Protection Agency to Medicaid to public schools, while handing out major tax cuts to corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

Trump can be defeated, but it is a question of social power. Whether or not the administration can carry out its agenda is linked to how broad and militant a movement can be built to oppose it. Many right wing governments throughout history have been forced to change course, or brought down altogether by revolts of ordinary people.

But symbolic protest alone will not be enough. We will need to engage the real power working people have through mass civil disobedience and strike action. If strike action is wide enough this will affect the profits of the corporate elite, large sections of which have

been happy to go along with Trump because of his agenda of deregulation and tax cuts for the rich. This will put real pressure on them to back away from Trump.

International Workers Day

May 1, also known as "May Day" or "International Workers Day," is historically a day of global mass action and major immigrant rights protests in the U.S. The time has never been more relevant to return to May Day's roots, and to launch a summer of resistance against this dangerous right wing administration.

Trump's brutal attacks on immigrants have been front-and-center in his first two months in office, and already they provoked immigrant protests and strike action on February 16, which while organized rapidly, involved thousand of immigrant workers in cities around the country.

The mass protests at the nation's airports in response to Trump's anti-immigrant ban dealt the president his first humiliating blow, as sections of the ruling class pushed back on him over growing concerns at the resulting

"chaos" of mass civil disobedience.

Now, immigrant workers around the country are preparing for what are likely to be the biggest May 1 demonstrations since hundreds of thousands walked off the job in 2006 on "The Day Without an Immigrant."

Strike Plans in California

The most important May Day developments so far are in California, where 340,000 service workers are preparing for strike action, led by a coalition including SEIU United Service Workers West (USWW) and immigrant workers centers.

"The president is attacking our community," said Tomas Mejia, a member of USWW's executive board. "Immigrants have helped form this country, we've contributed to its beauty, but the president is attacking us as criminal."

A "Caravan Against Fear" is also being organized by the coalition, to travel throughout the state of California during the month of April to build for

MAY 1 AND BEYOND: TOWARD A SUMMER OF RESISTANCE

We can defeat Trump's agenda. But to do so we will need to build a powerful movement that both stands up against his right wing policies, and fights for positive change for working people and all those under attack.

- ★ No ban, no wall, no raids! Not one more deportation. For real sanctuary cities.
- ★ Stop Trump and Ryan's assault on healthcare. Defend Medicaid and Planned Parenthood.
- ★ Defeat Trump's vicious anti-working class budget. No cuts to public education, mass transit, or affordable housing.
- ★ We need Medicare for all, with free and accessible reproductive care.
- ★ No to Trump's military build-up.
- ★ Stop the Republican war on the labor movement. No right-to-work-for-less legislation.
- ★ Stop the war on the environment! For a massive expansion of renewable energy.
- ★ Defend the right to protest.
- ★ Pass a federal \$15 minimum wage.
- ★ Tax the rich! Fully fund human services.
- ★ Free college for all. Cancel student debt.
- ★ Black Lives Matter! End the mass incarceration state. ★

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