

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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SUGGESTED DONATION \$2

BUILD A MOVEMENT TO

BRING DOWN TRUMP



ALSO INSIDE

GINGER JENTZEN CAMPAIGN

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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

Hannah Rooth Houston, TX



Since childhood, I've been deeply troubled by issues of economic disparity. I was raised in conservative churches and tried mobilizing people to work on changing the massive poverty epidemic we often spoke about. I found this struggle to be a dead end, and myself quite alone in it.

At fourteen, I stumbled upon a comic book, "Introducing Marxism," in the library of my private Christian high school. I vividly remember crying cathartically while reading it on the schoolbus home.

Basic Marxist theory, I think, is easily understood. Like all things profound, it is based on the knowledge we already have about the system that subjugates and dehumanizes us. To approach it openly, I had to remove the blinders of brainwashing and fear-mongering put on me by society and evangelicalism. I was able to do this through my experience coming out to my homophobic family.

I was prompted to begin this "thinking through" process when I found the Houston Socialist Alternative branch. Surrounded by a group of committed activists who believe in

fighting for a system that puts humanity first, I've been recovering from lifelong depression.

The beautiful thing about the socialist struggle is hangs on radical hope, and faith in the collective capacity of humanity to create a system that benefits everyone. It asserts the individual's power to rise up and claim the life deserved, while emphasizing the equivalent importance of others doing so: an attitude which lends itself to the noble human potential of making personal sacrifice for the good of all. It embodies love for one's neighbor: one that affirms her material and social entitlements and her right to rise up and seize them.

This is the "faith, hope, and love" preached in my childhood, turned on its head and made real. This is "my" Marxism, and my will to get out of bed each morning and fight the dog-eat-dog system that ceaselessly beats me and my loved ones down. ✦

Pats Fans Against Racism Takes Off in Boston

Boston Socialist Alternative

Since Trump's vitriolic words about NFL players taking a knee against racism and NFL fans are still watching weekly to see which players stand, sit, and kneel. Inspired by players, members of Boston Socialist Alternative recently launched a new initiative called [Pats Fans Against Racism](#) (PFAR). PFAR's goal is to bring together Patriots fans who stand against racial injustice and police brutality while defending athletes' right to protest.

NFL: Whose Football is it Anyways?

For a few hours every week, people get to disengage from the stress of working to pay the bills and watch world-class athletes play football. Millions of people treasure this part of their week, but nobody loves the \$12 stadium beers, \$6 bottled waters, billion dollar TV contracts, and the corporate sponsorships and advertisements that increasingly dominate the sport.

The NFL, a corporation whose primary concern is profit, tries to appear apolitical. But a closer look reveals a substantial number of NFL owners maxed out individual donations to political candidates and made \$100,000+ contributions to PACs supporting both Democrats and Republicans. They also contributed at least [\\$7.75 million](#) to Trump's inauguration ceremony.

Though many of these same owners initially condemned Trump's abhorrent

remarks, [recent attempts](#) to suppress the players' peaceful protests shows which side they are really on.

Building Fan Support

PFAR believes there are many NFL fans who want to take a stand against racism, police brutality, and improve their communities. To capture this untapped energy, Boston Socialist Alternative and PFAR hosted our first ever game watch party at a family-friendly bar in Cambridge. Everybody was excited about future events and we plan to host another watch party in the coming month.

Spread "Fans Against Racism"

Players need to know they have fan support as pressure increases from corporate sponsors and NFL owners, scared to lose profit. We need to build the pressure to oppose the conservative weight of big business on our sports. PFAR was easy and quick to get together. We created a Facebook page and flyered near the bar where we planned to watch the game. Then we showed up, watched football, and discussed how to build the #TakeAKnee movement.

Building social movements and getting organized is the most effective way to demand and enact change. PFAR challenges you to make a _FAR group in your community. ✦

Join

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Demand for Impeachment Grows

One Year is Enough!

As we go to press, Trump is under increased pressure from special counsel Mueller's investigation. The call to impeach him is gaining wider support with nearly two million signing a petition calling for Congress to take this step.

However, the road to impeaching Trump is at the moment firmly blocked by the Republican Party, which is frightened of the Bannon right wing but also the threat of electoral meltdown in 2018. It is also blocked by the leadership of the Democratic Party who fear destabilizing the system more than anything. Socialist Alternative is for driving out Trump whether through impeachment or forced resignation but the question which **Bryan Koulouris** addresses below is how to build a mass movement that can actually make this happen.

Large sections of society have been radicalized by the Bernie Sanders campaign and the threat of the reactionary Trump regime. Over the past few months, the movement on the streets has ebbed, but in this highly volatile situation, could reemerge rapidly. People could come on the streets if Trump decides to fire Mueller provoking a constitutional crisis or if Bernie Sanders and others were to issue a call to defend Dreamers combined with a threat to shut down the government if DACA is not given legal effect.

Trump's regime is unpredictable and deeply reactionary. In just a few months, he's threatened disastrous war against



Demonstration against Trump in Miami, FL.

North Korea while carrying out attacks on immigrants, LGBTQ people, the environment, women's rights, and health care – just to name a few parts of his vicious agenda. In response, we've seen big protests that have played a role in pushing back many of Trump's policies. Trump has the lowest popularity ratings of any president this early in their term and there is a mood among tens of millions of ordinary people that Trump should be removed from office.

Trump is hated for his racist, sexist, predatory policies, and the ruling establishment

is embarrassed and worried about his presence in the highest position of world power. The billionaire class, political establishment, and military generals that are so used to controlling U.S. politics are now dealing with an unstable maverick that undermines their ability to rule. Flowing from a system in crisis, both parties are deeply divided, and Trump is constantly shifting his collaboration partners and his enemies in Washington.

The Democratic Party leadership tells us that the main way to fight against the Trump agenda is to vote for Democrats in the 2018

We Say:

- ✦ Build a movement, against all the attacks of the right, strong enough to drive out Trump and his billionaire-backed administration.
- ✦ Unions, immigrant rights groups, women's and civil rights organizations, Bernie Sanders and Our Revolution should commit serious resources to organizing this movement.
- ✦ Congress should take immediate action to remove Trump from office, whether through impeachment or resignation.

midterm elections. However, we need to fight now against the profound threat to millions that Trump and the Republicans' policies represent. We need mass protests with bold demands that can inspire people to get active.

We can't depend on the Democratic Party leadership to fight for us, and we can't limit our demands to what's acceptable to them and their corporate backers. They appear to prefer a weak Trump in power to rhetorically run against in 2018, rather than building mass protests against his agenda or introducing articles of impeachment. They didn't mobilize against Trumpcare with mass rallies,

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Trump/GOP Tax Plan

Robin Hood in Reverse

Teddy Shibabaw

To hear Donald Trump talk, you'd think the biggest corporations in the US are cash strapped and in need of a massive shot in the arm. Trump promised his new proposed tax cut "will be the biggest in the history of our country!" at a price tag of \$2.4 trillion. Up to two-thirds of the cuts will go to the top 1%.

Now "tax reform" is moving through Congress. The current House proposal will reduce the corporate tax rate from 35% to 20%. It will eliminate the estate tax, which only applies to the richest households. Further, the top tax rate on partnerships and limited liability companies would fall from 39.6% to 25%.

Another major piece is a massive reduction in the repatriation tax, the rate at which capital previously sheltered overseas is taxed

when brought back into the U.S., from 35% to 12%. A look at how much money is hidden in these shelters, based on the expose of the "Paradise Papers", shows you how much of a theft from the working class and poor this is.

There is no way to interpret what the GOP and Trump are proposing other than naked, arrogant and shameless class warfare from the top. It's another massive transfer of wealth from the poor and working people to the wealthiest, especially the few hundred families that will gain the lion's share of loot from this tax bill.

U.S. corporate profits are at historic highs. CNBC reported on May 12 this year that "about 72 percent (of S&P 500 firms) have topped Wall Street estimates" in profits earnings. Moreover, some 20 top US companies made \$3.2 trillion in total revenue in 2016 and only paid \$108 billion in federal taxes

– just a little over 3%. So why do they need more?

How About Taxing The Rich?

Instead of Trump's tax plan, there should be massive increases in taxes on the super rich, the banks and the Fortune 500 companies. We've spent years bailing them out for no real return on investment for the vast majority of ordinary people. We can use the increased revenue for a massive new green jobs program and to pay for free high quality public higher education and childcare services.

Any party worth its salt as defender of the 99% would be fighting loud and clear for these demands. Yet all the corporate controlled Democratic Party leadership can manage to do is say how bad the GOP tax

plan is and commit to voting against it. That's not enough. They could mobilize mass public opinion against it, but they refuse to do that because those mobilized will likely go beyond the program the Democratic leadership will accept and it would also bite the hand of the donor class that feeds the Democratic Party establishment as well.

While taxing the rich is a first step, it is not enough. As long as the wealth is controlled by the top 1%, they will find ways to hoard as much as possible. We need to fight for a socialist society in which the top banks and corporations are taken into public ownership under direct democratic control of workers, consumers and broader public. Only then can we guarantee that the world's wealth is used for full public investment in jobs and social services. ✦

Defend DACA and All Immigrants

Elan Axelbank

Attacking immigrants was a central part of Trump's campaign and has been a hallmark of his administration. In the wake of his inauguration, hundreds of thousands of people got active in fights for sanctuary cities and schools, and the Muslim Ban was met with mass opposition and protest.

Now, Trump's threat to rescind DACA through executive action - due to take effect on March 5 if Congress doesn't act - is one of his fiercest attacks yet. 800,000 immigrant youth are under threat of losing their jobs, student loans, and health care, as well as deportation.

Meanwhile, for hundreds of thousands of Caribbean and Central American immigrants here on Temporary Protected Status (TPS), who are fleeing violence and poverty caused by U.S. imperialism, the expiration for their protected status is rapidly approaching. Trump seems happy to let it expire, but Trump's agenda has been beaten back before.

With mass mobilizations of immigrants, native-born working people, and youth - united in defense of immigrants and in opposition to Trump - DACA can be saved and TPS status extended.

Trump Under Pressure From Both Sides

Trump's September 5 announcement ending DACA has been followed by a series

of twists and turns. On September 13, news broke that Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, the top Democratic Party leaders in the House and Senate, had struck a deal with Trump to restore DACA protections in exchange for beefed up "border security."

Anti-immigrant groups and the far-right Republicans in Congress were furious. The top headline on Steve Bannon's Breitbart read "Amnesty Don." Caving to this pressure, and in a swing back toward appeasing the anti-immigrant section of his base, Trump came out with new demands regarding the deal. In order to restore DACA protections, he demanded funding for the infamous border wall and 10,000 new immigration agents, as well as cutting off federal grants to "sanctuary cities."

Now, a number of Democratic Senators and Bernie Sanders are threatening to withhold their vote for a December bill to fund the government if DACA is not addressed. If every Democrat does this, the government would shut down, raising the stakes and pressuring Trump and the Republicans to concede. We cannot, however, wait for them to take this stand; they will need to be forced into it.

Mass Resistance, Not a Rotten Deal

Socialist Alternative and the more radical immigrant rights groups have argued against a deal done at the expense of more repression of immigrants generally. With the Republican



Party deeply divided and DACA having overwhelming popular support, a mass movement that puts pressure on the Republican establishment is a much stronger guarantee than relying on Democrats' backroom deals in which the masses have no say.

The overwhelming majority of people support keeping DACA in place, even including 69% of Republicans. 84% of Democrats support keeping DACA, yet Pelosi and Schumer insist on limiting their strategy to making closed-door deals instead of mobilizing millions. The unfortunate truth is that the Democratic Party cannot be counted on to fight for immigrant rights. For the past decade, Congress has not been able to enact any element of "immigration reform" including the DREAM Act. The Democrats couldn't even manage to pass the DREAM Act when they controlled both Houses of Congress which is why Obama had to enact DACA by executive order.

But Congress has managed to massively increase repression. Between 1992 and 2009 the U.S. Border Patrol's annual budget increased by over 700 percent, from \$362 million to \$2.7 billion. ICE's budget has nearly doubled since its inception in 2002. And of

course, more immigrants were deported under Obama than under any other president in U.S. history.

The right-wing media constructs the false narrative that immigrants are taking all the jobs, to try and prevent immigrant and native-born workers from uniting in opposition to our common enemy, the divide-and-rule bosses and capitalists. Socialist Alternative believes that all undocumented immigrants should immediately be granted full citizenship. Immigrant workers should be allowed to vote and given democratic rights in the country they help make run. The deportation machine should be completely shut down, with that money going toward jobs programs and social services.

If the Republicans succeed in ending DACA, it would be a major blow to the immigrant rights movement and the movement against Trump and the Republicans. This shows the urgency for unions, civil rights organizations, Bernie Sanders, and the most prominent immigrant rights groups, such as Cosecha, to immediately call for mass demonstrations in cities across the country. If a movement is built, DACA can be saved. ✪

Democrats Make Gains But Crisis Continues

Eljeer Hawkins and Tom Crean

The results of November's elections point in the direction of a shift toward the Democrats ahead of the coming 2018 midterms.

The Republicans have been put in an even deeper squeeze. On the one hand they are running scared from the right wing of the party, including the Christian right, the NRA, anti-immigrant forces, and Steve Bannon who are all firmly behind Trump and threatening to primary anyone who is disloyal.

On the other hand many Republican congressmen - especially those representing more middle-class, suburban areas where the support for Trump has dropped significantly - are in fear of 2018. Some are announcing their retirement and others are trying to put distance

between themselves and Trump.

Though the results of the elections are cheering to Schumer and Pelosi - with their narrative that being the "anti-Trump" party, while advocating the mildest reforms, will be enough to defeat the Republicans - a number of downticket races point to the growing strength of the left inside the party. A large number of candidates endorsed by Our Revolution were elected. A number of election campaigns endorsed by the Democratic Socialists of America also won. An example of the shift is Larry Krasner, elected as Philadelphia's District Attorney on a strong platform of reforming policing.

It is clear that there is still far more energy being put into the project of trying to turn the Democrats into a "People's Party." But there is also a growing current pointing

beyond the Democrats to independent left politics. Foremost was the remarkable campaign of Socialist Alternative's Ginger Jentzen in Minneapolis. But DSA members Jon Grant in Seattle and Jabari Brisport in New York who ran as independents also did very well.

Disunity and Purges

Now there is talk about Democratic "unity" heading into 2018. But the reality beneath the happy talk is shown by Democratic National Committee (DNC) chair and former Labor Secretary, Tom Perez's purge of four longstanding DNC members and supporters of Sanders and Ellison off of the committee in the name of "diversity." It is clear the move was aimed at consolidating the power of the corporate wing over the party's agenda,

messaging and influence as the Democratic Party prepares for the midterm elections.

Also in a stunning new book by former DNC interim chair and political commentator Donna Brazile, exposes the dirty truth of the Democratic Party and its leadership. Brazile confirms what many suspected in 2016. The Democratic primary race between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders was rigged from the outset in favor of Clinton. The DNC was all but a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hillary, Inc.

We Need a Party for the 99%!

Many genuine activists still believe that the Democratic Party can be reformed. Unfortunately, the corrosive culture, ideas, and dominance of corporate politics



Donna Brazile's book has revealed the collusion between Hillary and the DNC.

are on full display and many will learn some hard lessons going forward. Today, we are in the midst of a resurgence of anti-capitalist and socialist ideas, with the demand for independent working-class candidates and a party for the 99% urgently on the agenda to challenge the dictatorship of Wall Street and its two parties. ✪

Socialist Campaign for Affordable Housing Echoes Through Minneapolis



Seraphina Cobeen

Every day for months volunteers for the Ginger Jentzen campaign knocked on doors throughout Minneapolis' Ward 3 neighborhoods, where working people and youth are facing skyrocketing rents and were looking for an alternative to the developer-driven agenda that has long dominated City Hall. These volunteers heard stories of displacement and low-wage jobs, along with the fear of Trump's right-wing agenda affecting the city and ward.

One volunteer met someone who was moving boxes as she approached their door. They told her that they were moving out of the duplex they had been renting because rents kept rising. Unable to afford the rent in Minneapolis, they had decided to move out of the city. "They told me they had moved every year recently, trying to avoid the rising rents," said the volunteer, "but they were glad to see that Ginger was fighting back so that hopefully their friends would be able to avoid their fate."

The establishment was fearful of the positive reception our campaign received and poured corporate PAC money into the race to try to fight against us. One resident spoke to Tyler, a volunteer, a few days after she voted early. She had voted for Ginger but after having read an article that day in the paper that attacked the Ginger Jentzen campaign she was doubting her decision. She told Tyler that she was worried Ginger wouldn't be able to work well with other members of council.

Tyler explained that the victory of passing the \$15 an hour minimum wage that summer showed how Ginger and movements of working people could get things done. "Once I told her how the establishment was scared of our movement, and that it was movement building that got \$15 passed she started to agree again. It was movement building, working with other activist groups, that pressured city council into almost unanimously passing \$15 despite them being against it at first," Tyler

said. At the end she donated to the campaign, like hundreds of other Minneapolis voters, knowing that those donations were one of the best way to fight back against the developers and establishment that were trying to scare voters away from fighting back.

Minneapolis is known for affordable housing but developers want to turn it into another San Francisco in order to make huge profits. Residents are noticing the rising rents and many point to recent luxury apartments or nearby planned developments as the cause. Talking to voters in the Sheridan neighborhood, Carrie, a local volunteer, witnessed that every voter they talked to that day pointed to the planned development one block away. "The voters I talk to know that the big developers are the problem, and when they hear about how much money those developers are putting into the election, they're angry" said Carrie.

This is why Ginger's slogan of "Not For Sale" drew in so many volunteers and donors from Minneapolis. Her refusal to take corporate or developer money, and only take donations from ordinary people inspired voters across the ward. They were excited to see another socialist who refused to take corporate money running for office. The developers tried to buy the election with huge PAC's, flooding money into races across the city, and against Ginger's campaign. Instead of being scared, voters donated money to Ginger, because they want to donate to the socialist who's fighting back against the big developers.

Students make up a big portion of the ward and are also ready to fight back. They see the connection between the fights against the developers, and the resistance against Trump. These students were inspired by Bernie's political revolution and were excited that Ginger is another socialist who's "Not For Sale."

On campus many students took polaroid whiteboard photos with their own reasons for supporting Ginger. Some say that they're on

Minnesota Metro Transit Union Readies For Battle

New Rank and File President Elected

Kip Hedges

Faced with potential attacks on employee health insurance, increasing safety concerns, and attacks on funding for mass transit, members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005 – with a new rank and file president – are preparing for a contract battle with the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council.

Leaders of Minnesota-based ATU Local 1005 are planning a series of actions to mobilize union members. This could culminate with a strike during the 2018 Super Bowl, which will be held at the new U.S. Bank stadium in downtown Minneapolis. Due to the location and lack of nearby parking, extra bus and train service will be key to a successful Super Bowl.

According to activist ATU member Alec Johnson, his coworkers at the Nicollet Garage have a serious and determined attitude toward winning a good contract. "We take a strike vote on December 17. If Metro Transit and the Met Council haven't put a serious offer on the table by then, I would be surprised if we don't approve a strike. No real offer would be a sign they will attack us after the Super Bowl, when we have less leverage."

Local 1005's new president Ryan Timlin, a Socialist Alternative member, who ran unopposed, will take office just in time to bring the full weight of the 2,600 members of the Local into this battle. Timlin promises to change union by-laws

to cut the president's salary to that of the average bus driver. He plans to dramatically increase communication between leaders and members through a regular newsletter, work site meetings, and a significant increase in the number of union reps for garages and other sites.

Timlin is part of a slate of union activists that want to "build escalating actions to mobilize members to put pressure on the Met Council to negotiate and give us a fair contract."

Members of the slate have already launched the ATU Local 1005 Action Team to mobilize members to reach out to the rest of the labor movement, community groups, and public transit riders. Timlin says, "We fully expect [the Met Council] will try to isolate us from public support, portray us as unreasonable. We won't let that happen."

Recently, transit fares were raised and routes were cut by the Met Council, placing an even larger burden on working class riders already struggling to get by. Timlin sees riders as natural allies.

Alec Johnson, also running on Timlin's slate, and member of Socialist Alternative, says, "The ATU local in Phoenix, Arizona used the threat of a strike during the 2015 Super Bowl as leverage to gain a good contract. But, that leverage is only as good as the solidarity of our members and the support we have from other unions, the community and our riders. We plan to make sure we have that." 🗳️

#TeamGinger because "She is not a corporate puppet" or "We need rent control."

"Students feel the impact of the housing affordability crisis and are excited to hear about a candidate who has actual, tangible solutions for this very real problem they're facing," said Emerson, a student volunteer on the campaign. One such student took a photo with a whiteboard saying that she's on #TeamGinger because "I want affordable housing to finish college." Lack of affordable housing and rising tuition costs are common worries of students, and they saw Ginger's campaign as the way to fight back.

"Students are in a desperate position, are feeling the immediate effects of the Trump administration, and want to make

Minneapolis a city of resistance against Trump," Emerson continued. These students recognize Trump as the "Developer-in-Chief" and make the connection between the billionaire-backed administration in the White House and the profit-driven agenda of big developers in Minneapolis that is raising rents for them. They're tired of the status-quo, of politics as usual, and were excited by the idea of an activist in office, a socialist like Bernie who rejects corporate money, and can actually fight back against the establishment. They saw Ginger's campaign as pointing in that direction, and the enthusiasm we saw from tables and at the doors shows that working people and students in Minneapolis are ready to fight back. 🗳️

#MeToo - Millions of Women Speak Up

Erin Brightwell

Angelina Jolie. Gwyneth Paltrow. Lupita Nyong'o. Ashley Judd. Did any women who worked under Harvey Weinstein not get attacked? Many of the millions or possibly tens of millions of women posting #MeToo on social media, asked the same question; which of us hasn't been assaulted? Such has been the unanimity of women coming forward online. An unending torrent of revelations and discussion of sexual harassment and sexual assault has been thrown open, initially prompted by *The New York Times'* exposure of star movie producer Harvey Weinstein as a serial sexual predator.

Over 50 women have now accused Weinstein of sexual harassment and/or sexual assault, widely exposing what was an open secret in Hollywood, with accusations going back to the 1970s. Many of us outside of Hollywood are also not shocked that one of the industries most responsible for the objectification of women is rife with sexual abuse. The exposé on Weinstein's behavior and subsequent stream of accusations of sexual misconduct follows similar scandals around other powerful men in Hollywood and TV: Bill Cosby, Roger Ailes, and Bill O'Reilly. In an economic system based on inequality and economic exploitation, these attacks are first and foremost expressions of power over women's lives.

The #MeToo campaign, originated by Tarana Burke, a black activist working to stop sexual violence, has become the vehicle for millions of women to express their rage at the horrific normalcy of sexual abuse and their solidarity with the victims. We are tired of not being believed, particularly when the perpetrator is rich and powerful. Women are beginning to move into struggle on women's specific oppression in the era where a known sexual predator has been elected to the highest office in the land. Millions, outraged at Trump's misogyny and bigotry, made the Women's March in January the biggest day of protest in U.S. history.

It's not accidental that the exposure of Weinstein as a sexual predator happened as the backlash opened up under Trump. Everything from women's rights to health care and abortion face new threats from a far-right Trump administration, and women are ready to forge a social movement to fight for our rights. In the 1960s and 1970s, a powerful women's movement organized campaigns of mass action to win important advances for women. Legal victories like the right to an abortion were achieved, alongside



a profound shift in how women were seen in society. We need this kind of an upsurge today.

The Deafening Silence of the Establishment

More than 40 years after the heights of the second wave women's movement, we are angry and disgusted that women still face pervasive sexual abuse and violence, and that an environment of sexualization and objectification of women has continued unabated.

While Trump is generally unapologetic, the top of the hypocrisy heap is reserved for the Democratic Party establishment and its politicians who have taken Weinstein's money for decades. Could it possibly be credible that no one connected to the Hillary Clinton campaign – for which Weinstein bundled \$1.42 million in donations – or the DNC heard about Weinstein's treatment of women? At least one politically connected Hollywood insider is alleging that [she did raise the alarm](#) within the Democratic Party about Weinstein's behavior, but evidently that wasn't enough to stop them from taking the cash.

Parallel to the Weinstein scandal, a frat-house culture has been exposed within the California capitol building in Sacramento where the Democrats have a supermajority in both houses of the legislature. 140 women lawmakers, staff, and lobbyists signed onto [a letter printed in the LA Times](#) describing rampant sexual harassment and abuse, including a female lawmaker [who was told that none of her bills would pass if she didn't have sex with a powerful Democratic](#)

[assemblyman](#). A new women's movement, if it's going to be a source of inspiration for youth and working-class people, can't afford leaders who only oppose gender-based violence when it is politically expedient to do so. Gender-based violence must be fought in words and deeds.

Waitresses, Hotel Maids, Janitors

While headlines focus on highly paid women in Hollywood, there are millions of working-class women who face persistent daily sexual harassment. In restaurants, particularly for workers that are dependent on tips for their wages, any customer can have his own personal Weinstein moment, harassing women servers who typically can't escape the situation if they want to keep their jobs.

Those low-paid workers whose working conditions make them physically isolated – such as janitors, hotel maids, and farm workers – are particularly at risk of sexual harassment and abuse. In one study from 2010, 80% of women farm workers said they'd been sexually harassed on the job, and a 2015 PBS documentary called "Rape on the Night Shift" dealt with women janitors who were routinely targeted for sexual assault while at work. Sexual assault on the job is under-reported, particularly for low-wage workers who may be undocumented and fear losing their jobs and facing deportation if they go to authorities.

The union movement could potentially play a great role in a generalized women's movement. We need stronger unions that have workers' backs and are willing to fight on each and every report of sexual

harassment, alongside an offensive approach on wages, benefits, and working conditions. The unions, because they are organizations of and for working people, should be leading the attack on workplace sexual harassment. Unions should have campaigns educating all workers, both union members and unorganized workers, on what constitutes sexual harassment.

A workforce which is unified in opposing and standing up to discrimination based on gender and race will be able to fight the boss more effectively on all issues. The union movement could gain popular support in general by taking decisive action on sexual harassment, including the use of militant tactics. For example, unions should be prepared to call immediate strikes at hotels who refuse to deal with guests' abuse of workers, or shut down Hollywood movie sets.

The Coming Women's Movement

The mass outrage expressed in the #MeToo campaign is an empowering moment for the still brewing new women's movement. We need to move to the next step and have a self-organized women's movement fighting with disruptive tactics to win victories. With the millions who came out into the streets the day after Trump's inauguration, there should be no doubt that there is a powerful mood to fight gender inequality. And the anger extends to millions of men. #MeToo is the latest mass women's action in a string of events globally from Argentina to Poland that point toward an explosive mood against sexism and the billionaire-dominated political establishment.

A new women's movement must take on the issues of sexual harassment, gender-based violence, reproductive rights, parental leave, childcare, and the pay gap. Working-class women's needs should be at the center of a rebuilt women's movement. Safe, decent affordable housing, higher wages, and Medicare for all are also critical demands for women – and are diametrically opposed to the interests of the big business, the corporations, and the political establishment. And while sections of the political establishment may pay lip service to women's equality, they represent an economic system whose foundations are built on class, race, and gender exploitation, just like the world of big Hollywood movies. Only a socialist society based on radical egalitarianism can bring an end once and for all to the reign of all the Harvey Weinsteins. 🇸



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Legacy of October Today

Calvin Priest

In a world dominated by billionaires and big business, with widespread poverty, racism, sexism and environmental destruction, the question of who runs society is a vital one.

One hundred years ago, in October 1917 in Russia, that question was answered decisively when ordinary working people took power and held onto it for the first time in history.

Beginning in the nation's capital of Petrograd on October 24 (November 6 by our calendar), and then spreading city by city across the former Czarist empire, workers and peasants took over the factories, government offices and soldiers' barracks in the most powerful democratic act in human history.

In doing so, unprecedented gains were won for workers, peasants, women, LGBTQ people, and oppressed nationalities. This socially and economically backward country became the first to decriminalize same-sex relationships, make abortion both legal and free, provide the right to a job, give the full right of oppressed nationalities to self determination, and bring large sections of the economy into democratic public ownership to be run by the workers themselves.

Today with global capitalism in a prolonged crisis and a huge growth in interest in socialist ideas, particularly among young people, these experiences of the Russian working class are more relevant than ever.

How Can We Win Fundamental Change?

The world is wracked by social crisis. Capitalism has failed to fully recover from the Great Recession and even in the United States – the richest country in human history – inequality grows apace while workers face a future of low wage jobs, unaffordable housing, and already inadequate health care that is under continual attack. Meanwhile the planet is threatened by catastrophic climate change while the American ruling class wallows in denial.

Millions of Americans were inspired by Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign last year and his demands for far reaching change in the interests of working people. The already resurgent interest in left ideas was catapulted into an even broader discussion of "democratic socialism" and rapid growth of socialist organizations like Socialist Alternative and the Democratic Socialists of America.



Speeches in St. Petersburg in October 1917.

But alongside the widespread anger at the status quo there are also major political differences in the movement about how to win fundamental and lasting change in the interests of ordinary people. The key difference boils down to whether we believe that the change we need can be made within the framework of capitalism or whether capitalism itself is a fundamental obstacle to lasting change.

With President Trump in the White House, the main challenge facing us at present is how to defeat his bigoted, billionaire-backed agenda and drive him out of power. The movement must mobilize people against Republican attacks but it must also put forward a bold program speaking to the interests of working people including demands Sanders popularized: single-payer health care, free college education, a federal \$15 minimum wage, ending mass incarceration and a trillion dollar investment in green infrastructure and jobs.

Fighting to win these essential reforms points to the limits of capitalism today. To take one example, just to pass Medicare for All we have to face down the combined might of the private health insurance and pharmaceutical industries who currently control more than one fifth of the U.S. economy.

The passing of Bernie's entire program would take a mobilized working class, prepared to use its social power, to force big business to concede – particularly in the

present period of economic stagnation where there is much less space for serious reforms.

Tragically there are also countless recent examples of left populist leaders, unprepared to lead the masses toward revolutionary change, who instead capitulated to the ruling class and betrayed the working class movements which put them in power. For example, in Greece in 2015 a left government – despite overwhelming support from the working class – capitulated to the European Union and the banks trying to enforce even more austerity on a population already bled dry.

Reform and Revolution

For genuine Marxists, reform and revolution are intertwined. We fight for every reform that can be won under capitalism, but we do not see reform as an end unto itself. Capitalism can never be reformed to meet the needs of working people or to be environmentally sustainable. The fight for far-reaching demands based on the needs of working people helps raise their confidence to fight for more, but it also helps to clarify the limits of capitalism. However, ending the dictatorship of the market will not happen automatically. A mass party with clear Marxist leadership, strategies and tactics is vital to seeing this struggle through to its conclusion.

In the final analysis, the presence of such an organization, the Bolshevik Party, is what

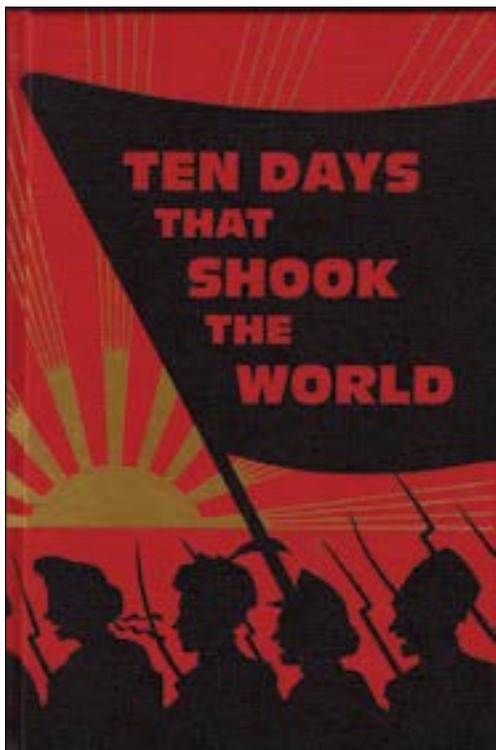
was fundamentally different about Russia in 1917. In the absence of the Bolsheviks, the reformist leadership of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries would have certainly led the revolution to defeat.

Instead, in spite of the devastation of the subsequent Civil War and real limits of the backward economy, we saw the beginnings of a flowering of culture and human development, much of which has still not been fully realized even in advanced capitalist countries today. The Russian Revolution also shows how the working class is the only force which can deal decisive blows to all forms of oppression because a world free of oppression is in their collective interests. While many of the great gains of the revolution were partially or fully dismantled after the rise of Stalin and the bureaucracy, that in no way undermines their historic significance or continued relevance.

The task of rebuilding the socialist movement here and globally is a crucial one, and certainly we have no time to waste. While there is a lower class consciousness today than in Petrograd a century ago, we nonetheless have many advantages over the Russian working class, whose revolution inspired millions around the world, but who faced all the disadvantages of an economically backward and isolated country.

A socialist world is more possible today than ever. And as in 1917, we have nothing to lose but our chains. ✪

When Russia Shook THE WORLD



The most famous firsthand account of the events in Russia in October 1917 was *Ten Days that Shook the World* written by American socialist John Reed. To mark the centenary of the Russian revolution, our Spanish sister organization, [Izquierda Revolucionaria](#), translated Reed's classic. In this introduction to the book, **PETER TAAFFE**, general secretary of the Socialist Party of England and Wales, explains the significance of Reed's account, the importance of the revolution, and its relevance today.

The Spanish publication of the great John Reed's *Ten Days that Shook the World* could not come at a more fitting time than the 100th anniversary of the Russian revolution. From the first to the last page it gives a gripping and pulsating account of the revolution, up to now the greatest single event in human history.

Although written 100 years ago, it answers all the lies and misinformation spewed out by capitalist commentators and historians about the events, and about the Bolshevik party and

the revolution's main leaders, in particular Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. Without them the revolution would not have been carried through, as John Reed makes clear.

In the very first line of the preface, Reed writes: "This book is a slice of intensified history – history as I saw it. It does not pretend to be anything but a detailed account of the November [October in the old-style calendar] revolution, when the Bolsheviks, at the head of the workers and soldiers, seized the state power of Russia and placed it in the hands of the Soviet [workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils]".

He points out that in the early stages the Bolshevik party was a "small political sect" with only 8,000 members after the February 1917 revolution. The Bolsheviks were so slandered – Lenin was a spy in the pay of the German high command, it was falsely claimed – that sailors threatened to bayonet Lenin on sight! The soviets were initially dominated by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries.

The workers and peasants, particularly the ten million soldiers exhausted by the first world war, yearned for an end to the slaughter. In fact, war can often be the midwife of revolution, enormously speeding up events. Without this the Russian revolution may have developed over a more protracted period, similar to the Spanish revolution of 1931-37. The demands of the Russian masses were very simple: land, bread and freedom. But to the peasant in the fetid battlefield trenches what use was the promise of future land or freedom if he was to perish in the war? It was therefore necessary to put an end to the slaughter immediately. The same with the worker.

The mass disappointment and anger at the refusal of the 'socialist' ministers in the coalition governments after February to end the war

– and with the reintroduction of capital punishment – was reflected in the revolt of the Petrograd workers in the "July days." Similar events take place in all revolutions. The working class feels power falling from its grasp and comes onto the streets to force the leadership to complete the revolution.

The Bolsheviks opposed a premature uprising. Nevertheless, they put themselves at the head of the July movement in order to mitigate the damage and conserve their forces for the more decisive struggle to come. Leaders like Trotsky were imprisoned, and Lenin was forced into exile in Finland. Unbelievably, some bourgeois "historians" today, from the safety of their studies, accuse Lenin of cowardice for this. But if he had remained in Petrograd there is no question that he would have been murdered by counter-revolutionary forces, just as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were following the failure of the Spartacus uprising in Germany in 1919.

Farsighted Leadership

This would have beheaded the Russian revolution. In fact, just by recounting the events, John Reed's book hammers home the crucial importance of the Bolshevik party and its politically astute and farsighted leadership. This was crystallised in the political role of Lenin and Trotsky. It was their policies and tactics at each turn which made the victory of the Russian workers possible.

Even during the February revolution, it was only Lenin in Switzerland and Trotsky in New York who saw it as the beginning of "the world socialist revolution." Lenin's erstwhile followers, the so-called old Bolsheviks of Lev Kamenev and Joseph Stalin – who were in Petrograd from early March 1917 – gave "critical support" to the new provisional liberal-capitalist government. Subsequently, a coalition between the leaders of the workers and peasants at that stage – the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries – was formed. Lenin demanded an absolute break with this policy: "No confidence, particularly in Kerensky" (Kerensky went on to head the Provisional Government up to the October revolution).

The masses were arriving at the same conclusions as Lenin, as John Reed makes clear when he quotes a Russian soldier: "We are at war with Germany. Would we invite German generals to serve on our staff? Well, we are at war with the capitalists and yet we invite them into our government... Show me what I'm fighting for. Is it Constantinople or a free Russia? Is it for democracy, or is it the capitalist plunderers? If you can prove to me that I am defending the revolution then I'll go out and fight without capital punishment to force me". In these simple words is the instinctive class opposition to all capitalist coalitions – yesterday and today – with the political

representatives of the propertied classes.

After months, which seemed like years, of consistent capitalist sabotage, the prolongation of the war, attacks on the gains of the revolution, and threats against the Bolsheviks and the working class – all graphically described by John Reed – the Bolsheviks' influence grew spectacularly among the working class, peasants and troops. This was particularly the case after the defeat of an attempted military coup by General Kornilov in August – the whip of counter-revolution which gave an enormous push to the process of revolution: "There must be no more Kornilovs... The Bolsheviks demanded that the All-Russia Congress of the Soviets take over power... Almost immediately the Bolsheviks won a majority in the Petrograd Soviet; the soviets of Moscow, Kyiv [Kiev], Odessa, and other cities followed suit."

Then the compromisers (Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries) together with the ruling class "decided that, after all, they feared the dangers of Kornilov a lot less than the danger of Lenin." They pursued a policy of procrastination and sabotage aimed at weakening and disarming the masses. But, as John Reed writes: "Meanwhile, the Congress of Soviets loomed over Russia like a thundercloud, shot through with lightning... A groundswell of revolt heaved and cracked the crust which had been slowly hardening on the surface of revolutionary fires dormant all those months before."

Mass Support for Revolution

Then the Bolshevik Central Committee considered the question of carrying through a revolution, with the overwhelming majority of the masses behind them. John Reed gives numerous examples of that support for revolution, which readers will see for themselves was a genuine mass expression – not the conspiratorial "coup" beloved of superficial bourgeois commentators.

The working class, peasantry and soldiers, who began to vote with their feet, embraced the revolution. However, as Reed reports: "The right wing of the Bolsheviks led by Riazanov, Kamenev and Zinoviev continued to campaign against an armed uprising." Reed also reports that Lenin, taking up their objections, declared: "Either we must abandon our slogan, all power to the soviets, or else we must make an insurrection. There is no middle course." Reed adds: "Alone of the intellectuals, Lenin and Trotsky stood for insurrection."

The masses made their agreement with Lenin and Trotsky clear. A workman, "his face convulsed with rage, said: 'I speak for the Petrograd proletariat... We are in favour of insurrection. Have it your own way, but I tell you now that if you allow the soviets to be destroyed, we're through with you.' Some soldiers joined in



Portugal in 1974 was just one of the many times the working class posed the question of taking power in the 20th century.

RLD

and, after, the vote for insurrection won.”

Once the revolution was secured in Petrograd it spread, with some delay, to Moscow and elsewhere. John Reed describes in unforgettable language the taking of power: “Now Lenin, gripping the edge of the reading stand, letting his eyes travel over the crowd as he stood there waiting, apparently oblivious to the long rolling ovation which lasted several minutes. When it finished, he simply said: ‘We shall now proceed to construct the socialist order!’ Again that overwhelming human roar.”

Similar scenes of wild excitement and celebration broke out in the trenches as the masses hailed the end of the hated war – and in the factories where the workers were now the masters. Similarly, the peasants greeted the decision of the Soviet, which invited them to occupy and establish their ownership of the land.

John Reed relates a telling incident when a delegation of Cossacks, who in the past acted as a praetorian guard for the old regime, “came to the Smolny, the headquarters of the Petrograd Soviet, to see Trotsky and Lenin, and asked them: ‘Does the Soviet government intend to confiscate the estates of the great Cossack landowners and divide them among the working Cossacks?’ To which Lenin replied: ‘That is for you to do. We shall support the working Cossacks in all their actions.’ They asked [General] Kaledin from the other side the same question about handing over the land to the working Cossacks, and he replied: ‘Only over my dead body’... A month later, seeing his army melt away before his eyes, Kaledin then blew out his brains.”

Through deeds, not just words, in this way the new democratic workers’ state cemented the ardent support of the overwhelming majority of the masses: “Army after army, fleet after fleet, sent deputations, ‘joyfully to greet the new government of the people.’ In front of the Smolny one day I saw a ragged regiment just come from the trenches. The soldiers were drawn up before the great gates, thin and grey-faced, looking up at the building as if God was in it.”

From Internationalism to Isolation

So opened up a new glorious chapter for the working class and humanity worldwide. The Russian revolution detonated a series of revolutions in western Europe – Germany, Italy, Hungary – with reverberations in practically every country of Europe and on every continent.

In the midst of the upheavals in Russia, Trotsky took time out to discuss with John Reed about the international implications of the Russian revolution: “At the end of this war I see Europe recreated, not by the diplomats but by the proletariat. The Federated Republic of



The Bolshevik, 1920 by Boris Mikailovich Kustodiev.

Europe – the (socialist) United States – that is what must be”. The Bolsheviks never perceived that ‘economically undeveloped’ Russia was ready for socialism by itself or in isolation.

From Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 19th century, the beginning of socialism implied a higher productivity of labour than that reached by any country or continent under capitalism. This meant a higher level of production even than the U.S., the most developed capitalist country at the time. This was only possible on the basis of the world revolution – with Russia seen as the start, and as the weakest link in the chain of capitalism.

The revolution gave a mighty heave, with the working class of Europe, and to some extent the U.S., pushing in the direction of their Russian brothers and sisters – inspired by the ten days that shook the world. They were checked not primarily by the strength of capitalism but by the betrayals of their own “social democratic” misleaders who refused to follow in the footsteps of the Bolsheviks and the policies of Lenin and Trotsky. The isolation of the Russian revolution was the product of their cowardice.

Stalinist Betrayal

Thrown back largely onto its own resources, Russia became a beleaguered outpost, necessitating the rationing of scarce goods. This ultimately led to the development of a bureaucratic stratum, reflected in the victory of Stalin whose rise personified this process. The growth of the bureaucracy was a conservative drag on Russia and the planned economy which had issued from the revolution. It also meant the loss of a series of favourable opportunities for the working class to take power, including the potential for successful revolution in Germany in 1923. It led to the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27.

By the early 1930s this bureaucratic caste feared that the hot flames – for instance, from the Spanish revolution – would not only threaten capitalism but the grip of Stalinism in Russia itself. If the Spanish revolution had succeeded – and the immortal working class initially defeated General Franco’s fascist coup and conquered four-fifths of the country – the European and world revolution would have been back on the agenda.

Almost to a man and woman, the Spanish capitalists fled to the side of Franco leaving behind their political shadows. It was the false policies of the leaderships of the different workers’ organisations – above all, the Communist Party – which allowed this shadow to acquire substance: the reconstruction of the shattered capitalist state and the defeat of the magnificent Spanish proletariat.

It was not the only revolution to be derailed in the 20th century. In 1968, the French workers staged the greatest general strike in history with ten million workers coming out and occupying the factories. The Portuguese revolution in 1974 saw the taking over of the banks and put 70% of industry in the hands of the state. The London Times concluded that in Portugal “capitalism is dead.” This was premature, however, because the Socialist Party, the radical army officers and the Communist Party were unable to cement this victory through democratic workers’ control and management.

New Movements

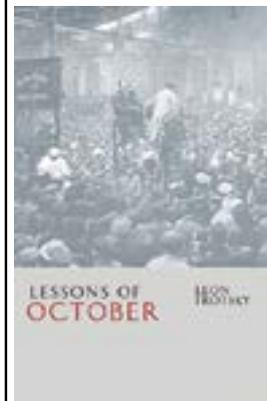
The onset of a deep-going world economic crisis, beginning in 2007/08 – which capitalism has not fully recovered from – has opened up a new

period of social and political instability as the opposition of the working class and the youth has grown. A new language for the mass movement has taken shape, with Bernie Sanders in the U.S. in favour of a “political revolution.”

Unfortunately, he did not extend this to social and economic revolution without which real change is not possible. But the attacks of Donald Trump have spurred a new series of mass movements, particularly of the working class and young people who are once more searching for a socialist and revolutionary road in the U.S. and worldwide.

The heat lightning flashes of the upheavals to come in Europe and the U.S. were shown by the North African and Middle East revolutions in 2011. They failed because of the absence of the one ingredient that was present and vital for the success of the Russian revolution: a mass Marxist party with a farsighted leadership, basing itself on the movement of the working class and able to lead it to power. ☸

New publication from SocialistBooks.co.uk



The Lessons of October
by Leon Trotsky

Leon Trotsky draws out why the Russian Revolution succeeded, while other revolutionary moments had been missed. Trotsky looks at the role of the Bolshevik party and offers an insightful and frank examination of the difficulties and successes of offering a way forward in the midst of the tumultuous and fast-moving events of 1917.

Writing to aid the fight for international socialism, *Lessons of October* provoked a series of attacks from the developing bureaucracy around Stalin.

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

The Impact of the Russian Revolution in the USA

Tom Crean

Even before the Russian Revolution, the United States had a vibrant socialist left and radical labor movement. The Socialist Party had 100,000 members and many members elected to public office across the country. Eugene Debs, the most outstanding American socialist of his generation, had received 6% of the vote as the party's presidential candidate in 1912. Unlike most European socialist parties, the SP consistently opposed World War I. Debs was jailed for his opposition to the war and ran for president again in 1920 from jail. Meanwhile the Industrial Workers of the World, formed in 1905, led a series of pitched battle strikes against the bosses in the mining and lumber industries in the west and the textile mills of the northeast.

But there was also a sharp division within the labor movement between conservative union leaders in the American Federation of Labor and the radical wing, including the IWW. There was also a clear division within the socialist movement itself between those who believed in piecemeal reform of capitalism and those who saw that fundamental,

revolutionary change was needed. The left wing of the Socialist Party responded to the Russian Revolution with enormous enthusiasm.

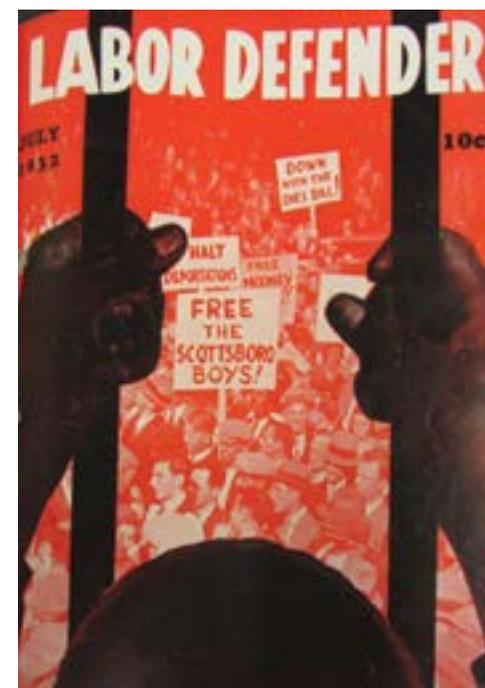
The pro-Bolshevik left wing of the Socialist Party had the support of the overwhelming majority of the membership. But bureaucratic manoeuvres by the party's right wing prevented the left from taking over in 1919. This led to the formation of two parties which affiliated to the Communist International and subsequently merged. At its inception it is estimated that the communist movement in the U.S. had 70,000 supporters.

1919 was also a year of very significant class battles including the Seattle general strike and the national strike of steelworkers led by William Z Foster who went on to be a leading communist. But the defeat of the steel strike opened the door to serious state repression including the notorious Palmer Raids when 6,000 communists were rounded up by the government and hundreds deported.

Repression and the rebound of capitalism after the war (the "roaring twenties") led to big challenges for the early American

Communist Party which survived and rooted itself successfully in sections of the working class. It was in the 1930s and 40s that the CP achieved its greatest influence, growing to 100,000 members. The Great Depression led to a massive rejection of capitalism among sections of the population. Lines of working people even formed outside Soviet embassies looking to move to Russia.

The CP played a major role in the development of the industrial unions in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the strike waves of the late '30s. They also played a leading role in the fight against racism and Jim Crow, helping to lay the basis for the civil rights movement. But by the 30s Stalinism had led to degeneration of Soviet Union and the Comintern and this also had a profoundly negative effect on the politics of the American CP. In the name of the false policy of the "popular front" with "progressive" capitalists, the CP played a key role in preventing the development of a broader workers party and propping up the Democratic Party in this period of profound radicalization. This lost opportunity had a profoundly negative effect on the subsequent development of the U.S.



In the 1930s, the Communist Party played a leading role in the fight against racism including defeding the Scottsboro Boys.

left.

But a section of the CP which was expelled from the party for supporting Trotsky continued the authentic tradition of the Russian Revolution and the CP's early years. These pioneering Trotskyists who, among other things, led the Minneapolis Teamster strike in 1934, one of the three citywide general strikes which helped lay the basis for the CIO, were the antecedents of Socialist Alternative today. ✪

Building an International - Then and Now



George Martin Fell Brown

The Bolsheviks had no illusions that socialism could be built in a single country, especially a war-torn, semi-feudal country like Russia. From their point of view October 1917 was the beginning of a world revolution. And the success of the Russian Revolution did herald a revolutionary wave across Europe. Revolutions and revolutionary situations broke out in Germany and Finland in 1918, Hungary in 1919, Italy in 1920, and Germany again in 1923. And an intensification of class struggle spread all across the world, even reaching the United States.

Organizing the working class on an international basis has long been a key aim of Marxists, going back to the First International in Marx's time. The Bolsheviks came of age as part of the Second International. But that International degenerated when most of its sections supported their own ruling class in World War I. After the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks immediately put out the call for a new, Third International. This

international, also called the Comintern, was founded in 1919 in the middle of the European revolutionary wave.

Unfortunately, the revolutionary wave was defeated, leaving the Soviet Union isolated. This defeat played a key role in the emergence of the conservative, parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy. This bureaucracy spread its control throughout the Comintern. It lost its role as a mass revolutionary international and was converted into an instrument of the Kremlin's foreign policy which prioritized the interests of the bureaucracy over workers' struggles. The Comintern supported Chiang Kai-Shek in China in the late 1920s even as he had Chinese communists massacred; it stood by as Hitler came to power in Germany; and it actively sabotaged the Spanish revolution in the late



The LSR is the Brazilian section of the Committee for a Workers International.

1930s.

In response to this, the followers of Russian Revolutionary Leon Trotsky strove to build a new Fourth International which could organize the revolutionary, anti-Stalinist wing of the working class.

The Committee for a Workers' International

The Committee for a Workers International was founded in 1974 as a continuation of the politics of Lenin and Trotsky. Socialist Alternative in the U.S. stands in political

solidarity with the CWI. The founding conference had representatives from 12 countries, the largest section being the Militant Tendency in Britain. The Militant Tendency, then part of the British Labour Party, now the Socialist Party in England and Wales, went on to lead mass struggles including the struggle against the hated poll tax which forced Margaret Thatcher to resign in 1990.

The CWI was born in the middle of a new wave of revolutionary upheavals, including in Portugal and Greece in 1974, and Spain in 1975. The CWI grew out of these movements first primarily in Europe and later built a base in a number of countries outside Europe including South Africa under apartheid, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Chile and Brazil.

Today the CWI is active in over 40 countries. We played a leading role in organizing the wave of strikes in South Africa following the massacre of miners in Marikana in 2012. We recently played a leading role in the successful mass struggle against water charges in Ireland where we also have three members

of parliament and numerous councillors. We are in the midst of a struggle in defense of democratic rights in Hong Kong. In the current struggle for Catalan self-determination, our sister organization in the Spanish state has been organizing massive student strikes against the crack-downs of the Rajoy government.

Internationalism isn't just a matter of solidarity with struggles in other countries. Many American activists in the past period have rightly taken inspiration from the Arab spring, and the movement around Hugo Chavez in Venezuela and Syriza in Greece. But all of these movements have faced defeats and setbacks as well, which have also had international repercussions. This is why it's necessary, not just to cheer on the international struggles, but to organize the working class and its revolutionary wing on an international basis, to assure these movements success. That is what the Bolsheviks stood for after the Russian Revolution. And it's what Socialist Alternative and the CWI stand for today. ✪

People Are Not Garbage

Hundreds Occupy Seattle City Hall to Stop Homeless Sweeps

Manuel Carrillo and
Whitney James Kahn

“Rather than spending millions on the ineffective and inhumane practice of sweeping homeless people, who are not trash,” Kshama Sawant, Socialist Alternative City Councilmember, demanded on November 1, “use those millions to provide services of every kind to help people transition quickly to permanent housing.”

Seattle’s annual ritual of passing a business-as-usual budget, prioritizing the greed of big developers and corporations over the need of ordinary people, got disrupted not just with 500 attending a council hearing on next year’s budget, but then hundreds staying for an illegal campout. Activists occupied City Hall and stayed over night to demand a fundamental change of the city’s priorities.

Socialist Alternative and Kshama Sawant’s city council office played a critical role in organizing the campout and building the movement to stop the sweeps and fund affordable housing. Working with activists in the Housing for All coalition, the People’s Party,

Neighborhood Action Councils, the Affordable Housing Alliance, and many other organizations, we built energetic and broad support for Kshama’s budget amendments to stop the sweeps and tax big business to fund housing and services.

Ryan Whitney, an activist from a local Democratic Legislative District (LD), spoke about the unanimous votes to Stop the Sweeps in the LDs. “601. That’s the number of sweeps from last year. A ridiculous number. An expensive number as well. We introduced the resolution in our Legislative District. Everyone agreed that we need to stop the sweeps. Everybody agreed that we need to fund affordable housing, and that we need to fund services for the homeless.”

As hundreds rallied inside, a tent encampment was constructed in the outdoor City Hall plaza as a protest against the sweeps, and a hub for the hundreds of blankets, tarps, tents, and other donated supplies. Local musicians and performers put on a free concert as part of the demonstration. Andy Ribaldo, a veteran and activist who led the supplies drive announced to the crowd, “We’ve given out

over 150 sleeping bags and tents, we’ve raised over \$4,000 ... We are doing the job the city is supposed to be doing and providing basic supplies and services to our unhoused neighbors.”

The demonstration took place on the two-year anniversary of a declaration by the city of a homeless state of emergency. Over 130 people have died from homelessness since then. “These are our brothers and sisters out there. I have lost so many friends,” said Susan Russell, a formerly homeless Seattle resident.

“People are not garbage. You do not sweep human beings. You build affordable housing,” said Violet Lavantai, an organizer with the Tenants Union of Washington State.

In the morning, before ending the occupation, activists gathered for a final demonstration in the lobby of City Hall for city employees to see as they came into work: a “die-in” protest of 66 activists, each one bearing the name of someone who had died this year from being unsheltered. As their names were read from a poem titled “Fallen Silent,” the activists would fall to the ground as if dead. ☘



Fighting for a People’s Budget

On *SocialistAlternative.org* you will find updates on the protests and votes around Seattle’s budget. Socialist council member Kshama Sawant is again organizing a movement for a people’s budget. The huge momentum to stop the sweeps has been openly supported by three councilmembers. As of this writing, a majority of the council is trying to get away with lip service to support homeless people while allowing the mayor and the administration to continue the sweeps – accompanied by a further study. We don’t need to study sweeps, we want to end them and build homes. We’ll report online about the votes in the council. ☘

Stop Richard Spencer in Cincinnati

Community Coalition to Defeat White Supremacists on Campus

Robert Shields and
Griffin Ritze

Richard Spencer, a white supremacist and leading activist of the “alt-right” is on a national speaking tour and plans to come to the University of Cincinnati, likely in January. His rallies are spreading hateful messages and organizing the far right on college campuses across the U.S.

Drawing confidence from the 40,000 working people and young people who mobilized in Boston against white supremacists in August, Socialist Alternative and Socialist Students have taken a leading role in a broad coalition to oppose Richard Spencer’s planned speaking event at the University of Cincinnati. On October 19, more than 200 people came together

to plan a counter demonstration against Spencer’s planned appearance. This immediately opened up a discussion about the methods and tactics needed to oppose Spencer’s message and his movement’s agenda.

Socialist Alternative, Cincinnati Socialist Students, Black Lives Matter Cincinnati, the Cincinnati branch of the NAACP, and many others have joined together in a coalition to build the largest possible counter demonstration to show that there is no base for the far right’s ideas in our city. In parallel, University of Cincinnati administration and sections of the student body are organizing a “Choose Love” concert to deter students from joining the coalition’s counter demonstration. “While affirming the university’s commitment to “love” is great,

planning a concert at the same time as Spencer’s appearance is a move to deliberately undermine the counter protest,” pointed out Cole Weirich from Socialist Students. “We need to be clear in this moment that responding to Spencer by ignoring him will only allow white nationalists to organize in our community unopposed.”

To effectively combat the “alt right” it will take the largest possible mobilization of students, people of color, women, LGBTQ people, and working people generally to outnumber their forces 1,000 to 1 as demonstrated in Boston in August. This approach is often complicated by those committed to “black bloc” tactics based on individual acts of protest which have produced acts of vandalism as we saw earlier in the year at anti-Milo protests in



40,000 people rallied in Boston against the alt right.

Berkeley. These types of actions are performed spontaneously by a few protesters without the organized participation of the majority and are then exploited by media and establishment politicians to alienate the mass of working people from supporting protests against the far right.

Since Trump’s election, the far right has felt emboldened to enter the public sphere with their hateful ideas. We have seen “alt right” rallies emerge all over the United States as white supremacists groups attempt to recruit to their movement.

But after Charlottesville, they were pushed back. We need to keep them on the run! While Trump defends the white nationalists and pushes the billionaires’ agenda, Socialist Alternative links the struggle against the right and the far right to the fight for Medicare for all, free education, immigrants’, women’s and workers’ rights.

We want all those willing to take a stand against Richard Spencer to come out *en masse* and show that we will not allow this far right movement to grow. ☘

Hurricanes and Wildfires Are A Warning

A Socialist Plan to Address Climate Change

Tony Wilsdon

This summer the Gulf region and the Caribbean were pummeled by a record-breaking series of hurricanes knocking out infrastructure and devastating the lives of thousands. Wildfires have ripped through the western United States, incinerating homes and creating hazardous air quality in countless cities. This is a horrific warning of the coming human and environmental catastrophe we face if we don't seriously address climate change.

The warming oceans are leading to more violent storms. Warming air and land are creating tinderboxes in regions of the country. The broader issue of melting ice in both polar regions and shifts in the seasons are harbingers of a much more violent shift in weather and climate as we get closer to a fast-approaching climate tipping point.

Yet, incredibly, we face a Republican administration that rejects a scientific view of climate change and instead is subservient to the interests of the coal, gas and oil industries. The Clean Air Act is being dismantled, there has been a doubling down on support for carbon-based extraction industries, and the administration is seeking to open up the Alaskan wilderness to oil extraction.

Future generations will need to prosecute the key players in this deliberate ravaging of our planet, and the hundreds of thousands of lives, mainly working class and poor people, that will be lost due to the poisoning of the air and water, and starvation resulting from destruction of crops due to fires, an inhospitable growing climate, and flooding.

Building a Powerful Movement

The election of Trump has been a lightning rod to bring millions of people into the streets and into political activity. Socialists seek to point towards real solutions to climate change but also a strategy that can mobilize the broader working class into political activity to fight for these solutions.

In his presidential campaign last year, Bernie Sanders argued for popular policies that would be a huge step in the right direction including:

- ⊕ A massive investments in energy efficiency and clean, sustainable energy such as wind and solar power.
- ⊕ Create a Clean-Energy Workforce of 10 million good-paying jobs by creating a 100% clean energy system.
- ⊕ End the huge subsidies that benefit fossil fuel companies; to tax polluters causing the climate crisis.
- ⊕ Create clean, domestic energy alternatives to power our cars and trucks;



Devastation in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria.

support workers in their transition into clean energy jobs. (bernieanders.com/issues/climate-change)

The burning question is how to fight for and win these policies.

While Sanders has played an important role publicizing these green energy policies, unfortunately, he is pointing to the Democratic Party as a vehicle to achieve them. Is this possible? Can the Democrats really deliver such policies? If not, how can we create a force that can do that?

Where's the Democratic Party?

The signs are not at all good. Surely, at a time when the attention of the country has been riveted by the devastating consequences of hurricanes and wildfires, the Democratic Party should be connecting the dots to climate change and using this opportunity to build support for transformative policies. However, this hasn't happened. Incredibly, Senator Sheldon Whitehouse, a "hawk" on climate change, recently commented "We have a lot of time to make that point." A fantastic opportunity to build support for addressing climate change has been squandered.

There has been almost total silence from the Democrats on climate change since Trump was elected. Rather than expose the Republican agenda, they have been looking to build bipartisan support for the most mediocre bill: the American Opportunity Carbon Fee Act. This Act offers market-based solutions, including a mild carbon tax alongside a sizeable reduction in the corporate income tax, despite the fact that carbon taxes have proved totally ineffective. Yet even this has only been signed onto by one Republican.

It is because climate change demands transformative policies that the Democrats

are paralyzed to act. The Democratic Party establishment is desperately courting corporate money for the 2018 election. But their corporate backers are demanding a doubling down on policies that maximize their profits! This is why the Democratic Party establishment is desperately trying to demonstrate that they are not beholden to the Sanders agenda. This again shows why working people and the poor need their own political party accountable to them only and based on their interests.

The Limits of Capitalism

Are the owners of the major corporations interested in addressing climate change? As any economics textbook will confirm, corporate CEOs are mandated to maximize their shareholders' dividends. It is this profit motive that drives capitalism. It is also the driving force behind neo-liberalism - to get government off the back of big business and win business-friendly policies. This is why corporate America broadly supports Trump's relentless drive to eliminate environmental regulation.

Some people will point to the development of the market in solar energy, wind energy, and electric cars as evidence that capitalism can respond to the climate crisis. However, this actually confirms the limits of solutions based on the capitalist market since these investments are based on the potential making profit in certain niche markets. While this can help bring solar power and some electric cars to the marketplace, this is not a model to retool the heart of the economy.

A National Plan for Energy and the Climate Our economy and society needs to be re-organized around green energy. But, this come directly into conflict with profits of the fossil fuel corporations and other sections

of the ruling class who ferociously resist any such policies. Another major problem is that individual capitalist governments are often unwilling to take decisive steps because this would create a competitive disadvantage with other countries. The corporate-friendly policies of governments explain the repeated failure of earlier climate change conferences to reverse climate change at a time when the problems were not so advanced.

This conflict between profit maximization and the necessary overhaul of the economy poses the need for bold and extensive direct government intervention through public ownership of key sectors of the economy, in particular the big energy companies. This would allow the development of national and international plans to mobilize and direct resources to address climate change. It will mean standing up to and trampling on the interests of corporate owners. It will also mean putting aside national interests to focus on an overall international solution.

At a time when the consequences of the 2008 crisis are still shaking the political establishment and with another crisis on the way, with the rise of nationalist candidates and political parties, governments around the world are growing increasingly inward-looking. This exposes the complete failure of capitalism in this period of crisis to deal with deep structural problems of society like growing inequality, poverty, lack of affordable housing, access to affordable health care, etc., as well as climate change. This poses the urgent necessity to build a political movement and a political party which takes no corporate cash and represents the interests of working people. This movement will fight for all possible reforms now on the road to ending capitalism on a global basis, and building a new society based on democratic socialist planning. ⊕

Researcher Glen Peterstold explains that to reach the 1.5 degree Celsius warming cap mandated by the Paris Climate Agreement "You would have to shut down every coal and gas plant in the U.S. in the next 10 years. You couldn't have a single petrol car in the U.S., and the same for India, for China, and for every country in the world. While you remove those, you have to build up new infrastructure, wind turbines, solar panels ... a completely new car fleet, and so on" (theintercept.com, 10/23/2017).

Will Catalonia Win Independence?

A Socialist Analysis

Danny Byrne
Committee for a Workers' International

As we go to press, the Spanish state has massively stepped up the repression directed against the Catalan Republic. It has dissolved the Catalan regional government, brought charges of "rebellion" and "sedition" against its leaders which could lead to 30 year jail sentences and placed its civil service and police under direct control from Madrid. For ongoing analysis of developments and a strategy to mobilize the working people against repression and for a workers republic go to SocialistWorld.net.

The Parliament of Catalonia voted to declare an independent republic on October 27. This historic event, a moment in the history of the Spanish state and Europe, will have lasting consequences. First and foremost, it is a conquest of a mass revolutionary movement of the Catalan people - the youth and working class - which has heroically resisted the Francoist repression of the Spanish state and right-wing PP government.

However, revolutionary socialists must always delve deeper, see further, and give a perspective on the tasks and challenges facing the working class of Catalonia and the Spanish state in consolidating this historic step, to carry out a real revolution in Catalonia and beyond.

Why Francoist? Catalonia's History

Lenin spoke of the Russian Empire before the 1917 revolution as a "prison house of nations." While far from the scale and level of oppression of those times, the Spanish state has shades of this description. Since its formation, it has been based on the subjugation of oppressed nationalities - Catalonia, the Basque country, and Galicia - within its borders.

In periods of revolutionary upheaval throughout Spanish history, the demands of these peoples for their rights have intertwined with the needs of the working class throughout Spain. The Catalan Republic was last declared in 1934 in the midst of such a revolutionary period, which culminated in a working-class socialist revolution against General Franco's military coup.

The revolution was defeated and Franco's military dictatorship, with the support of the ruling class, unleashed a long night of national oppression. The Catalan and Basque nations were written out of history, their languages were banned, and thousands



were tortured and murdered. In the 1970s, another revolutionary period brought down Franco's regime, but the revolutionary aspirations of the working class and oppressed nations were again betrayed by the reformist leaders of the left and the labor movement, who feared a real break with capitalism. Spanish capitalism and national oppression were preserved throughout the "transition" to capitalist "democracy," which granted limited autonomy to the Catalan and Basque people.

Now the Spanish government, led by the political children of Franco, has used thousands of military police to beat and repress millions of people for the crime of wanting to vote in the October 1 "illegal" independence referendum in Barcelona. In doing this, Spanish capitalism was showing its Francoist DNA. As in the 1930s and 1970s, defeating national oppression will mean challenging the power of the corrupt, rotten Spanish ruling class, as well as its capitalist lackeys in Catalonia and the Basque country.

Socialists and the National Question

For some, the relevance of the struggle of nations for their rights - the "national question" - to socialists and internationalists can be unclear. Aren't we interested in uniting over borders rather than creating new ones? In the Spanish state today, many leaders of the left, including the Communist Party and Podemos, make similar, confused arguments against the proclamation of the Catalan Republic.

The approach of Marxists, most clearly set out by Lenin before the Russian Revolution, is that real and lasting unity of workers and the oppressed can be achieved only by the respect for the rights of all. Only by

defending the rights of oppressed nations to separate from Russia were Lenin and the Bolsheviks able to unite the oppressed of all nations against the Tsarist and capitalist system.

The defense of Catalonia's right to decide its own future is also a fundamental democratic issue. As with all forms of oppression, Marxists seek to emphasize the role of the working class as the only social force capable of ending national oppression as well as the need to link the fight against oppression to eliminating its cause: capitalist domination. The billionaire capitalist class in an oppressed nation cannot be relied upon to defend the interests of its people. Socialists fight for the liberation of all peoples while at the same time defending the maximum unity in the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

The Committee for a Workers' International has a proud history of elaborating the Marxist approach to the national question - In Scotland, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Palestine/Israel and many other areas - combining the fight for the rights of all nations with the need for a united international struggle for socialist unity on a world scale.

The Way Forward - A Socialist Republic of Catalonia

In the past weeks and months, the power of the movement in Catalonia, which has led to the proclamation of a republic, has been in the mass mobilization and action of workers and young people. It is they who have provoked the ire of the Spanish ruling class, who defeated repression on October 1, and won the sympathy of workers and the oppressed around the world. The high point of this struggle was the enormous general strike on October 3 which paralyzed Catalonia.



Read more on international news at SocialistWorld.net, website of the Committee for a Workers International.

Conversely, the thorn in the movement's side at every stage has been its official "leadership." Led by the capitalist nationalist party, PdeCAT, the Catalan government has at every stage delayed, diluted, and betrayed the mass movement. Their leadership alienates working-class people who have been victims of their austerity from the movement for national liberation.

Catalan big business, who they represent, fearful of their profits, are engaged in open sabotage of the Catalan Republic, moving billions of dollars and thousands of firms outside Catalonia as blackmail against independence.

This question of leadership is the burning question which must be resolved if Catalan freedom is to be achieved. The Catalan working-class movement and left must challenge these capitalist politicians for the leadership of the movement. Our co-thinkers in the Spanish state, Izquierda Revolucionaria, who lead the Sindicato de Estudiantes, which has organized two student general strikes, have emphasized this point throughout the movement.

The Catalan Republic can only win the solid support of the working class in Catalonia, and an echo from the working class in the rest of the Spanish state, if it means a real change in the lives of the majority. It needs to be based on a program not only to achieve Catalan independence but to end poverty, unemployment, and discrimination. The failure of the leadership of the movement to put such a program forward can allow the forces of reaction and Spanish nationalism to appeal to the working class in Catalonia who may have genuine fears about the consequences of independence for their jobs and livelihoods.

A combative socialist program can also be the basis for unity in struggle of the Catalan working class with the workers of the Spanish state, against the common enemy - capitalism and the PP government. A Socialist Republic of Catalonia, far from provoking hostility from workers in the rest of Spain, would inspire workers to fight for similar change at home. It could be a lever for the Spanish revolution and open up the possibility of real and lasting unity between the workers of the Spanish state, in a free and voluntary socialist federation.

The Spanish capitalists and their Catalan colleagues will throw everything they have at this mass movement. Only a working-class-led struggle for a socialist republic, linked to the fight for international socialist change, can face up to this repression and open up a new revolutionary chapter in European and world history. ☪

Supreme Court Considers Janus: Unions Need to Fight Back

Jeff Booth,
member, AFSCME Local 3650

The U.S. Supreme Court has chosen to consider a lawsuit known as “Janus V. AFSCME.” Through hearing this case, and most likely ruling in favor of it, the Supreme Court will use its power to attack union rights, to defund and weaken unions, particularly public sector unions. A favorable ruling on Janus will make it much more difficult for unions to collect dues or “fair share” agency fee payments from non-members in unionized public sector workplaces. This means that people can gain the benefits of a union contract without contributing to the union, thus reducing the income of the union.

The Janus lawsuit is part a big business and right-wing anti-union campaign which includes many misnamed “Right to Work” (RTW) labor laws. These laws are designed to weaken and limit union power and are funded by big corporations and corporate-backed, anti-union groups like the State Policy Network. While state governments try to pass RTW laws, right-wing and other anti-union groups use courts to back up their general anti-union politics and propaganda.

States that were seen as union strongholds, like Wisconsin and Michigan, have recently gone RTW. Twenty-eight states now have these anti-union laws, with five of these states passing RTW within the last six years. The momentum for anti-union schemes like RTW laws is growing.

The Janus lawsuit is directed at public sector unions. However, the same forces that attack private sector unions are backing Janus. An injury to one, is an injury to all! Private and public sector unions should be leading a fight together, against Janus and the probable Supreme Court ruling. The public sector still has a union density of 34.4%, more than five times higher than that in the private-sector (6.4%). Janus is an attack on the strongest section of the U.S. labor movement.

The backers of Janus hope that the weaker unions become financially, with a smaller dues and fee base, the less they can spend on contract campaigns, organizing new members, paying for organizing staff or strike funds, political and community organizing, legal representation, etc. There are many other reasons, other than RTW laws, that union density is so low and that organizing and contract campaigns don't succeed much of the time. But anti-union forces hope the Janus case permanently cripples key public sector unions like AFSCME, NEA and AFT, and prevent the labor movement generally from recovering its lost strength.

Other anti-union measures are often thrown in with RTW laws. These include limits to what a public sector union can legally negotiate for and even limits to how much a public sector union

can ask for in wage increases.

RTW laws hurt workers generally, not just unionized workers. A study by the Economic Policy Institute in February 2011 reported that wages in “Right to Work” states are at least 3.2% lower than in non-RTW states. Workers in RTW states make at least \$1,500 less per year. Benefits are worse in RTW states with less employer paid health insurance and fewer pension plans. Most RTW states have the lowest union membership rates.

A fighting labor movement could prevent the Supreme Court from ruling in favor of the Janus lawsuit. Mass movements in the past have forced conservative courts to back down from right-wing positions or even let some progressive rulings go through. A good example of this is the passing of progressive decisions like *Roe v. Wade* under the pressure of the mass protest movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and the recent decision on marriage equality.

Internally, unions, especially public sector unions, are well aware of the threat Janus poses. It's not just the decline in union dues and agency fees, it's also anti-union groups being emboldened and conducting more decertification (union busting) campaigns if Janus is upheld by the Court. Corporations and their anti-union front organizations will spend millions to spread their anti-union propaganda, including enticing workers to not pay voluntary union dues.

Unfortunately, however, the unions are not adopting a fighting strategy. The four biggest public sector unions – AFSCME, the Service Employees International Union, the National Education Association, and the American Federation of Teachers – have thus far responded to Janus with internal organizing and are also preparing to support Democratic Party candidates in 2018. The leaders of these big unions seem to have already given up on stopping the Supreme Court ruling in favor of Janus.

The Janus ruling by the Supreme Court is likely to happen in June, long before fall elections. There is no guarantee that Democrats, if elected, will pay any attention to reversing Janus-based RTW laws. The example of the 2011 labor movement in Wisconsin should be a warning. While a mass movement could have developed into a general strike, the union leaders instead focused on a recall election in



Labor protesters at the Wisconsin capitol in 2011.

which the Democrat they supported wouldn't even promise to repeal the RTW legislation!

The labor movement is still strong enough to form a united front of AFL-CIO and other unions and launch a proactive, public campaign to pressure the Supreme Court to reject the Janus lawsuit. To do this, unions would have to prioritize building a movement over lobbying tactics.

The first step is to hold meetings in every unionized workplace in the country, followed by informational pickets outside public sector worksites like schools, building to a national day of action.

In addition, links need to be made by the labor movement by using the human and financial resources of the labor movement, to help working people and youth already in struggle as part of social justice struggles like Black Lives Matter or the immigrant rights movement. The struggle against racist police violence and mass incarceration impacts the working class as a whole, including the lives and work of many public sector union members who provide services to inner city communities. The Trump administration's crackdown on immigrant workers is part of the same anti-working-class offensive as the RTW laws and the Janus case.

Also, some of the best jobs still available in urban areas are union, public sector jobs. And some of the most energetic and growing unions, like SEIU, are organizing among large sections of immigrant workers who often bring traditions of socialist politics and progressive unionism from their countries of origin. Unions have direct needs to break out of their isolation and take a proactive, visible, social union approach to defeating Janus, opposing Trump's unpopular agenda, and re-energizing the labor movement.

It's not too late for unions to help link social justice struggles with demands like a nationwide \$15 an hour minimum wage, Medicare for All, and free public education, to a mass movement to stop Janus and the “Right to Work” assault against workers. ✪

The Fight to Defend Union Rights In Missouri

Tara Brown

In Missouri, where unions have long been on the defensive, there is a growing understanding of the role unions can play in defending their rights in the workplace. Missouri's right-to-work law passed as Senate Bill 19 (SB 19) was slated to go into effect on August 28, 2017, and would mandate that no person can be required to join a labor union or pay dues to a labor union as a condition of employment. SB 19 would make Missouri the 28th right-to-work state in the nation.

Labor union organizers, workers, and activists gathered 300,000 signatures, three times the number required to force the question to be decided through a referendum.

When We Organize, We Win!

Though this is a critical step forward, putting the choice to voters through a referendum is not a guarantee of a win for the labor movement. The thousands of collected signatures only put the anti-worker law on hold until next year. The campaign should continue to organize with a bold strategy or risk losing, despite mass support. Big business is willing to invest millions of dollars into campaigns attacking unions.

Missouri's labor movement has more power than they realized, revealing itself when they took on a grassroots and participatory approach to organizing. The fight in Missouri needs to be linked to a bold national campaign to defeat the Janus case in front of the Supreme Court.

We need to organize to maintain the union power we still have left, and just as importantly, to build for more. ✪

One Year is Enough

continued from p. 3

even though this was a big opportunity to cut across Trump's base in the "rust belt."

While Trump has been pushed back on a number of fronts, we can't be complacent. He is still ripping up environmental regulations, threatening immigrants and pushing for huge tax cuts for the rich.

We can't wait until 2018. We need to link up all the organizing against Trump's agenda – from Medicare for All actions to immigrant rights struggles and movements for economic justice – into a generalized struggle against Trump's administration and the billionaire class.

One Year is Enough!

While a huge part of the population sees the introduction of articles of impeachment as a way to dump Trump – Public Policy Polling in late October found that support for impeachment is at 49% – neither those Republicans who oppose Trump nor the Democratic Party leadership is willing to introduce articles of impeachment. We call on them to take this important step to give an opening for us to bring down the Trump regime and the billionaire class as a whole.

To those who worry that "Pence won't be any better," we say that while Pence's politics are just as reactionary as Trump, his coming to power in the wake of Trump's presidency being toppled by a mass movement would fundamentally alter the nature of his ability to rule. Still, working people would need to be ready to follow up successful impeachment with a movement to defeat the whole regime and its right-wing agenda.

But we also need to articulate a strategy to win in the "here and now" against deportations, racist policing, housing crises, and for bold demands to improve our lives. It is through these struggles that people will develop the confidence and organized power capable of toppling the president and ultimately the system he represents. We propose linking up these movements and calling for Medicare for All, free college tuition, an end to deportations and racist policing as well as a green unionized jobs program to develop



housing, social programs and infrastructure. A united movement is needed rather than isolated struggles.

Lessons from History

After being forced by movements to implement progressive legislation that he personally opposed, Richard Nixon was eventually driven from office in 1974. The Watergate scandal loomed over him for months in office before the ruling class finally pushed him to resign. The prestige of the presidency was undermined in a way that the billionaires never wanted to see, but they calculated that Nixon's continued presence in the White House would tarnish their system even further. But what really drove out Nixon was the threat of a wider revolt by radicalizing youth and workers, who were increasingly taking up broader anti-establishment and even anti-capitalist demands.

Before Nixon, Democrat Lyndon Johnson was effectively driven from office as well. In Johnson's case he simply didn't run for re-election, in recognition of the massive unpopularity flowing from the Vietnam War which

he had escalated and the growing movement against it.

The ruling class is willing to accept presidents leaving office through means other than an election, but only if they feel it's necessary to help them stabilize a serious crisis. Any attempt to remove Trump by the ruling class before his term is up in 2020 would at the same time try to obscure the real issues of naked billionaire rule, wars, deportations, and attacks on our living standards that the leaders of both parties fundamentally support. They would instead connect any calls for Trump to leave office with the need for "national unity" and patriotism.

Socialist Alternative doesn't want the end of Trump to mean a return to "stable" corporate domination, sexism, and racism. We want to build a movement that can challenge Trump's agenda and get him impeached while also developing our own power to change society. A decisive victory against Trump would only be one step, but an important step, on the road to breaking the power of the billionaires by building movements, unions and a new party of working people that can offer a socialist alternative to this rotten system. ✪



Ginger Jentzen Campaign

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necessary stop the more conservative Tim Bildsoe.

Across the country, many candidates backed by Our Revolution and the Democratic Socialists of America were elected. This is an extremely positive development, but it will also be a test to see if they can withstand the pressure of the corporations, Democratic Party, and political establishment to tone down their politics. In Seattle, we've shown how just one elected office for the socialist movement can transform city politics if connected to a clear program, mobilization of working people from below and building an independent organization.

The political impact of the Ginger Jentzen campaign will help lay the basis for a struggle for expanded mass transit and rent control in Minneapolis over the coming months. Transit workers, with Socialist Alternative member Ryan Timlin as the union's new local president, are going into a contract battle involving workers across Minneapolis. Our campaign showed the popular support for rent control, and this can be built upon to fight against the big developers and their attempts to turn Minneapolis into a playground for the rich. ✪

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

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SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE



HISTORIC VOTE FOR Ginger Jentzen IN MINNEAPOLIS

Calvin Priest and Bryan Koulouris

On November 7, the Ginger Jentzen campaign won a historic vote in the race for Minneapolis City Council in Ward 3. The initial six-point lead on election night was fitting for our powerful campaign which had defined the issues in this year's city elections from the start. We put a discussion about rent control back on the map and received widespread support from working people for our call to tax big developers and the rich to fund affordable housing, education, and mass transit. We mounted one of the strongest ground games in an election campaign that Minneapolis has ever seen.

And while the Socialist Alternative's campaign struck a powerful chord and won more first-choice votes than any other campaign, when the third and final round of the ranked choice voting was done the following day, we had lost by a thousand votes.

Nevertheless the result was a major victory for socialist politics. We won in every precinct except those in wealthy downtown Minneapolis. In working-class neighborhoods, there was a powerful dynamic as thousands of people were inspired by our bold demands and call for a political revolution in City Hall.

The high level of support was palpable. "Vote Ginger Jentzen" campaign signs were to be found on virtually every street in working-class areas, with "Not for Sale" written across them in bold letters, indicating that the Ginger campaign accepted no corporate

or developer donations. Nonetheless, we shattered all prior records for a Minneapolis City Council race, raising more than \$175,000 with a median donation of just \$25.

In neighborhoods around the University of Minnesota, our campaign tripled student turn-out and won by over 50% in the precinct overall.

But the vote was highly polarized, and the wealthy areas downtown went just as strongly for the DFL candidates (Democratic Farmer Labor Party, the Democratic Party in Minnesota). This was on the basis of class interests but also the deep roots of the DFL.

Our Impact and Corporate Opposition

The stage was set for a historic election campaign this summer when the Minneapolis City council was forced to pass a \$15 minimum wage under the leadership of Ginger and Socialist Alternative, who launched 15 Now and built a broad coalition of unions, progressive organizations, and activists.

Our campaign faced the united opposition of the political establishment, corporate media and a last minute rush of corporate PAC money into the race. The billionaire-owned *StarTribune's* editorial board spoke for big business leaders when it penned its "Anybody But Ginger" endorsement article in which it ranked and made the case for all three other candidates in the race.

But it was the efforts of big business to

buy the election that most clearly expressed its fear of our working-class campaign as well as left candidates targeting establishment incumbents in other races. Big business recognized that this left challenge, including by several Our-Revolution-endorsed candidates like mayoral candidate Ray Dehn, had to be fought off at all costs.

But without a doubt, big business was most threatened by our independent socialist campaign. Millionaire developer Steve Minn and his "Minneapolis Works" PAC singled out Ginger in their "call to action" in mid October, warning that she was a "leading candidate" in Ward 3. Corporate money quickly began to pour into the race. Three attack mailers went out calling Ginger "nuts" for wanting to tax the super rich and big business and advocating for rent control as well as lying by claiming that Ginger wanted to create "new taxes on working families."

It's Not Just Seattle

Our campaign's strong result showed that Seattle is in no way an aberration in supporting independent socialists, with City Councilmember Kshama Sawant. As Socialist Alternative has explained before, the hunger for bold working-class politics exists all across the country.

We won endorsements from several key

left unions like the Minneapolis Nurses Association, Communication Workers of America MN Council, and the United Transportation Union. Ginger was also endorsed locally and nationally by the Democratic Socialists of America, as well as the local Our Revolution. Prominent individual endorsements included Dr. Cornel West and Ray Dehn's campaign manager, left Democrat Joelle Stangler, along with several other left DFL activists.

Establishment Pushes Back

The Minneapolis establishment made use ranked choice voting against our independent socialist campaign. When the weaknesses of Fletcher's campaign became apparent it led to the late entry of Tim Bildsoe into the race.

The other candidates ultimately delivered the second and third choice votes that the DFL needed to win for Steve Fletcher, including Green Party candidate Samantha Pree-Stinson. This shows not only that ranked choice voting is not a panacea, but that it can even be used as a tool by the establishment to attack independent campaigns. Of course, in the absence of ranked choice voting the race would have had a different dynamic. There is no doubt that "lesser evil" arguments would have been used to push voters toward Steve Fletcher saying it was

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