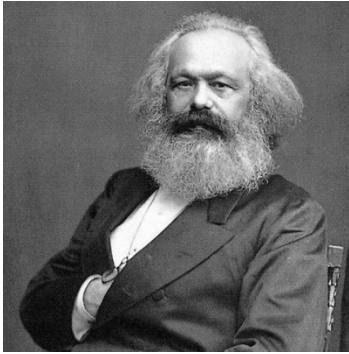


Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity



A Journal of Discussion and Debate



Vol. 1, No. 2
July, 2019

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*Articles represent the positions of the authors and not necessarily those of Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity.
Further, not all authors have agreed to participate in TMLU.*

To see the reasoning for publication of TMLU, please see the article “Why ‘Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity’” in the first issue on the web-site below.

Readers will note that this issue contains a several controversial articles. Comments, criticisms and articles are welcome. The next issue of TMLU is scheduled for late September, so articles should be sent in by early September.

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On the Latest Developments in the U.S. Working Class Movement

Ekim Kiliç

Excerpted from *Revolutionary Democracy*, Vol. 24, No. 2

The 2016 Presidential Elections were a turning point for the U.S. labour and popular movements. Since then, provocative statements and decisions by the Trump government have been threatening millions of working peoples' lives. However, the actions of the current U.S. government are not independent of its predecessors and their economic applications that also carried out the needs of U.S. capital and its forces. Today, precarious employment and life conditions, a declining social safety net, and not being able to resonate their voice politically are headlines of the U.S. workers' current problems as a result of long-standing neoliberal policies and the 2008 financial crisis.

In the midst of these issues, the U.S. working class experienced a revival the likes of which that has not been seen in a long time. According to an opinion article that was written for CNN by Richard Trumka¹, the president of AFL-CIO, *"In the year since, working people have been doing just that. From airports and hospitals to newsrooms and college campuses, workers are organising on a scale that I haven't seen in decades. More than a quarter-million Americans joined unions² last year — three-quarters of them under 35. Half of the non-union workers say they would vote to do the same³ if given the chance, and Gallup has even pegged unions' popularity at a 15-year high."*⁴

As a side note, the unions organised Labor Day 2018 at a time when the workers' struggle was accelerating: the successful state-wide strikes of elementary school and high school teachers, the struggle of the Chicago hotel workers, which then inspired several others in the sector across the country, the strike authorisation of the United Metal Workers' Union (USW) on the collective bargaining agreement with the metal bosses, 27% wage increase of window cleaners as a result of their struggle, 260,000 UPS postal workers authorizing a strike and struggling against the union bureaucracy, struggle for unionisation from New York construction workers, and the university assistants' struggles for unionisation. The US labour forces celebrated Labor Day in an unusual and special atmosphere. On the other side, one should note that the U.S. labour movement saw several struggles for unionising and wage increases against weak work conditions in prisons and main sectors, such as cable, automotive, packaging, arms, and agriculture in last 2 years.

Despite the recent upsurge in labour struggles, current demands and problems of U.S. labour are rooted in the past as we mentioned before. A short account of

the history of U.S. labour may be helpful to make sense of the significance and characters of today's labour actions. Because the dominant narrative on labour comes from liberal or social-democratic accounts, which have avoided representing the U.S. labour as a working class force for a long time. Instead, their accounts consistently blur the line between working class and middle class through using income and level of education as almost the only metrics. Besides that, the story of U.S. labour remained either one-sided and descriptive academic sources on the U.S. labour or narrating the labour history as if it was only a cultural motif.

An Overview of the U.S. Working Class

Based on 2016 data from "employment by major industry sector" chart of the U.S. Department of Labor, distributions of the labour force are in mining, construction, manufacturing, 12.6%; in service industry, 80.3%; agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting, 1.5%; and non-agricultural self-employed 5.6%.⁵ Another important finding from the statistics is that although union membership is more likely to experience a revival, the general situation remains stagnant....

[A]lthough the popularity of the unions has an upward trend, according to a Gallup poll referred to before, union membership and representation capability still remain steady.⁶ However, this recent situation is not independent of national and international conditions for the U.S. labour movement. The Taft-Hartley act of 1947, which strengthened the right to work law, the witch-hunt operations of the McCarthyist era against American communists after the World War Two throughout the 1950s, the removal of communists from union leadership as a result of the Communist Control Act of 1954,⁷ then Nixon's dirty war against Black and Anti-War activists through the "war on drugs" after Lyndon Johnson's acceptance of "civil rights act of 1964" as an adjustment of the American social contract, then trickle-down economics of Reagan era, which sought to decrease taxes on the companies that they may encourage growth in the short run and benefit society in the long run, all weakened the labour unions politically, economically and socially. Even though some of the honest unionists maintain their struggle to some extent, most unions are stuck with an extremely legalist approach, which directly or indirectly broke the workers' initiative.

As a matter of fact, the historical processes considered above also grew U.S. capital's capacity for

outsourcing and movement overseas. NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) and TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership) increased the mobilisation of the U.S. capital, and reduced tariffs, which caused loss of many manufacturing jobs, and increased the competition to the detriment of small producers. Seeking markets that have lower labour prices left American workers jobless eventually. On the other hand, weak healthcare services, precarious employment conditions, weak access to education, affordable day-care, safe housing, healthy and reasonably priced food, gender wage inequality in non-unionised workplaces, open-shop practices, and politicians who ignore workers' concerns are the main challenges that the U.S. working class currently has.

All in all, this overview may draw attention to the background of the current situation of the U.S. working class. The escalating problems of the working class generated a discussion around the 2016 presidential elections among the media, pollsters, and academics. Despite the imposition of the caricatured idea that *“president Trump was supported by the white working class”* it is becoming clear that the radicalising right-wing anxiety of petty- bourgeois classes as a result of losing their class positions, unemployment, and years of years of nationalist and religious propaganda were other main reasons. This caricatured idea is utilised as a scapegoating attempt by the Democrats to avoid their responsibility in the current political, economic and social atmosphere in the U.S. While Charles Post explains why white workers supported Trump, he underlines that casting no vote as white workers could be more effective than casting a vote for Republicans, while Christine J. Walley and Claudine M. Pied make similar points.⁸ In other words, the loss of trust in the electoral democracy that may fundamentally shift the tides of U.S. politics can be read as another reaction to neoliberalism. As a result of analysing three workers' cases, their resentment and voting behaviours/rationalities, Pied concludes that *“there is... not one white working-class reaction to neoliberalism.”*⁹ That is, one may say that the US working class has been seeking different solutions instead of just supporting right wing nationalist candidates. Yet, we have to acknowledge the considerable impact of right-wing nationalism on white workers.

Character of Current Working Class Actions 2017-2018

Since the 2016 presidential elections, new Trump anti-labour appointees to NLRB (National Labor Relations Board),¹⁰ recent restrictions by the NLRB to unions' right to picket, and demoralising decisions in the cases *“Epic Systems Corp. vs. Lewis”*¹¹ and *“AFSCME vs. Janus”*¹² have been unrelenting, successive defeats for the labour movement.

In April 2018, the U.S. Senate confirmed pro-business lawyer John Ring to the National Labor Relations Board. The senate handed control of the board over Republicans. Ring is a partner at Morgan Lewis & Bockius, and was appointed to a five-year term. The board now has three Republicans appointed by President Donald Trump and two Democrats.

An October ruling of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) declared that janitors who were picketing for better working conditions were not protected from unfair labour practices committed by their employer. The Board ruled that the janitors, who were being contracted by a building management company, were engaged in secondary picketing.¹³

In May 2018, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the bosses could hinder workers' rights to collective and legal action for better wages and working conditions in the *“Epic Systems Corp. vs. Lewis”* case. Another case, which was concluded in June and known as *“AFSCME vs. Janus,”* was again decided against the unions. Even if the U.S. unions manage a majority in the workplace, not all workers in that workplace are required to become members of that union. However, workers who are not members of that union paid a certain amount of contribution to the union, because they still benefited from the collective bargaining in the same workplace. In June 2018, such a necessity has now been eliminated in unionised workplaces of the public sector by the Janus ruling.

However, tides are still turning for the U.S. working class. Even if the labour movement received significant counter-attacks, these are not likely to end this new and energetic tide. Because patterns of today's strikes for wage increases and betterment of working conditions and unionizing struggles in non-unionised workplaces appear as radical, contagious, and encouraging worker and labourer actions.

Radicalisation of workers for their economic demands are important as future opportunities for the political transformation of the unions and boldness of the labour movement. For a long time, U.S. unions have relied on collective bargaining processes with bosses, in which the most union leaderships would seek were ways of compromising with bosses. On the other hand, except a few labour occasions, one may find union presences mostly through their political action committees, which run election campaigns for a candidate that union endorsed. And those candidates are mostly from the Democratic Party. Additionally, union representatives run their campaign through the motto *“more middle class jobs”* as if they already acknowledged that being a part of the working class is unsustainable. Hence, these unions are more likely to avoid even from the strike authorisations since they can negotiate with bosses

through union lawyers and court cases.

Worker and labourer struggles in the aftermath of the 2016 elections reveal radical characteristics in many aspects. Pending strike authorisation of UPS workers, whose union has tended to compromise with bosses, state-wide wildcat strikes of teachers, early morning protests of New York construction workers once every week, hunger strikes, and occupations of grad students are several examples of this radical turn. In addition to that, labourers in the same sector, but from different states, follow each other's example. Hence, this proactive pattern may spark a fire easily in the same sector, such as in teachers, grad students, prison complex, and hotel workers.

Therefore, it shows that emergent radical union members will not necessarily tolerate waiting for legalist solutions as it has always been; because these are generally long-lasting court cases, which may break workers' initiative. On the other hand, workers' reactions to the Democratic Party became apparent in the 2016 presidential elections. Rising support for the Trump's Republican Party, not casting a vote at all, or voting for third parties instead of for both grand parties were different reactions against the neoliberal policies that are being supported by former labour Democrats, especially in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Wildcat teachers' strikes had an encouraging effect on the labour struggle. On February 22, starting with West Virginia, wildcat strikes spread out among 8 states, Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Virginia, and West Virginia with reactions to low wages for teachers and support staff, inadequate school budgets, overcrowded classrooms, and other problems. Following this wave, workers at 26 hotels of Chicago went on strike as members of UNITE HERE Local 1 on September 7, which was then followed by Marriott hotels workers' strike in 8 cities, in Detroit, Boston, San Diego, San Jose, Oakland, San Francisco, Maui, and Oahu. Wages, workloads, and health insurance are among the issues at play.¹⁴

Although grad students are the most vulnerable one because of their recent recognition of employee status, their strikes and unionising struggles are still ongoing. Cafeteria strikes, occupations, hunger strikes and ongoing strikes take place at the country's most privileged schools, such as the New School, Columbia University, and Yale University. They are also faced with weak working conditions, precarious insurance-pay, and lack of resources for their livelihoods. Additionally, the CUNY adjuncts' struggle arose from precarious work conditions. Full time lecturer positions are difficult to come by. As academic labourers say, more than half of CUNY classes are taught by CUNY adjuncts, their salaries make 5% of the budget. As another type of

precarious work, seasonal farm workers, who are mostly Central American immigrants, from Sakuma Brothers and Driscoll's (the world's largest distributor of berries) were successful in their struggle for unionising and obtaining their rights for minimum wage. In a statement from their website, the union claims that Sakuma Brothers is guilty of "*systematic wage theft, poverty wages, hostile working conditions, and unattainable production standards.*"¹⁵

On the other hand, since December 2017, New York construction workers, who work in the Hudson Yards redevelopment project, have been fighting against the union-busting tactics of the bosses, who impose the open shop model. The Hudson Yards redevelopment project is the largest construction project in North America and the largest private real estate project in U.S. history. The open shop agenda pushed by Related Co. may create a precedent for the expansion of the already growing open shop work model. The struggle of workers against the open shop model is crucial for future labour struggles that will take place in the city. Since December 2017, workers have been regularly doing protests in front of the construction site every Thursday morning at 6 a.m near their workplace. That can also be counted another radical characteristic of the recent labour struggle.

Last spring, negotiations between the Teamsters, UPS, and UPS Freight started over the union's proposals, which would address a range of critical issues facing UPSers – ending forced overtime for package car drivers, raising part-timers' wages, imposing monetary penalties for management harassment, and protecting jobs from automation, among others. This negotiation included about 260,000 workers. Even though an overwhelming majority of workers voted yes for strike authorisation last summer, and no for UPS contract in this fall, union leadership ignored the decisions of workers, creating a wave of reactions to union leadership from rank-and-file union members and workers.

In another important development, the U.S. prisons saw the largest strike in their history. Beginning at the end of last summer, prisoner workers were on strike for voting rights of millions of American prisoners and better prison conditions against slavery-like work conditions. In the U.S., the anti-slavery law includes all citizens except prisoners. According to 13th Amendment, it abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime.

Moreover, in heavy industry, USW's (United Steel Workers) pending strike authorisation, IBEW's (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) struggle against Spectrum Cable Company last year, and UAW's (United Automobile Workers) unsuccessful attempt to organise union in a Nissan factory of Mississippi in summer 2016 have been other headlines of

the U.S. workers' struggle. Unfortunately, the struggle is relatively weak while comparing with other sectors. Considering that terrific and racist anti-union campaign in Nissan plant, especially against African-American workers, the union's inability to build a strong organising committee, and the fear of losing their jobs at Nissan, underlines how the U.S. represses their workers while hiding it from public eye. However, as one of Nissan workers mentioned, those are educative processes that may prepare workers for future struggles.

As a last note on the current struggles, Amazon workers' voices are still up for a union in the U.S. A month ago, McDonalds' workers led by Fight For \$15 went on strike for better wages, against weak working conditions, and harassment. For Chicago teachers, strikes are on their agenda....

Conclusion

Some of the struggles considered here are still

Endnotes:

- [1] <https://www.cnn.com/2018/09/03/opinions/labor-day-working-people-deserve-our-fair-share/index.html>
- [2] <https://www.epi.org/publication/biggest-gains-in-union-membership-in-2017-were-for-younger-workers/>
- [3] <https://aflcio.org/2018/6/22/study-popularity-joining-unions-surges>
- [4] <https://news.gallup.com/poll/241679/labor-union-approval-steady-year-high.aspx>
- [5] <https://www.bls.gov/emp/tables/employment-by-major-industry-sector.htm>
- [6] <https://news.gallup.com/poll/241679/labor-union-approval-steady-year-high.aspx>
- [7] "The Communist Control Act of 1954", The Yale Law Journal 64, no. 5 (1955): 712-65. doi:10.2307/793898.
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- [9] Pied, C. (2018). Conservative populist politics and the remaking of the "white working class" in the USA. Dialectical Anthropology, 42(2), 193-206, sf. 204.
- [10] <https://www.reuters.com/article/labor-nlrb/senate-confirms-trump-nlrb-nominee-handing-control-to-republicans-idUSL1N1RO28L>
- [11] <https://theredphoenixapl.org/2018/05/22/a-blow-to-the-working-class-reveals-capitalist-ruthlessness-and-fear/>
- [12] <https://www.afscme.org/now/janus-for-leaders>
- [13] <http://www.fightbacknews.org/department/labor>
- [14] <http://www.fightbacknews.org/department/labor>
- [15] https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-07-18/workers-who-pick-your-summer-berries-are-asking-you-not-buy-them?fbclid=IwAR03gjveysa610ss2nzGxqiaGe_H56hpBjtqtUh8Y_LLerArll_20On14nk

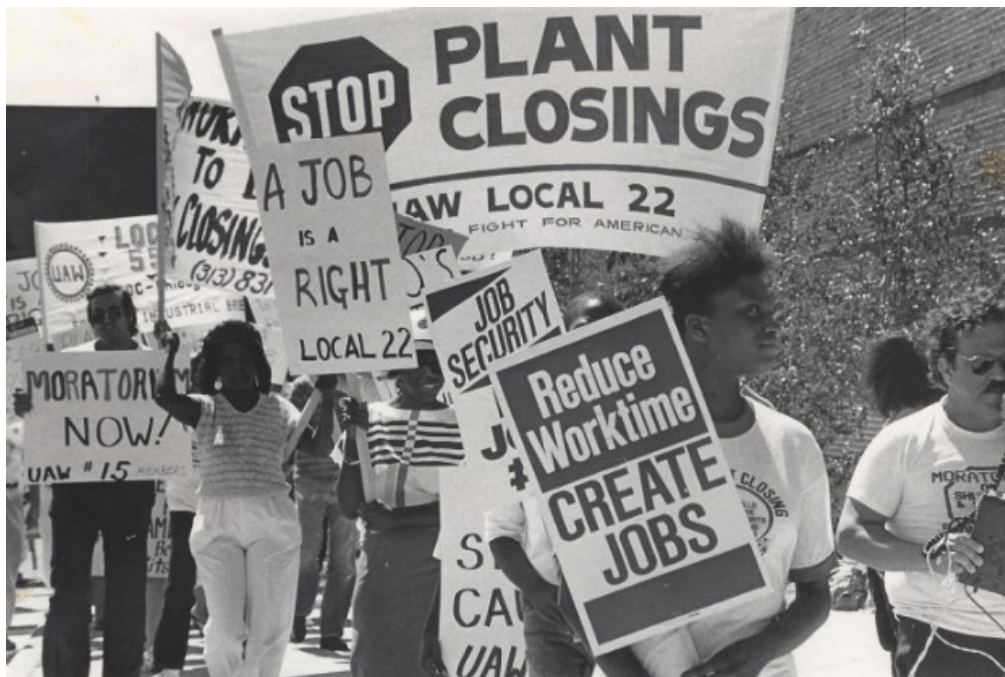
March 22, 2019

ongoing among the workers. The most important characteristics that may be extracted from these examples are the radical, contagious and encouraging actions. In addition, a majority of these actions ended with relative victory. This new accumulative process as for workers' experiences may provide future opportunities to transform unions politically towards unions which are strongly tied with workers and their class interests. On the other hand, the awakening sections of the youth, and an increase in sympathy to socialism are turning towards to the working class and the organizational problems they face. Although it might be early to make a guess about what may happen, one may definitely say that the U.S. working class is seeking ways to escape from this recent, oppressive and extremely exploitative situation, while organizing politically and economically.

Revolutionary Approach to the Workers' Struggle – Reviving the Transitional Program

From <https://fighting-words.net/2018/11/16/revolutionary-approach-to-the-workers-struggle-reviving-the-transitional-program/>

Jerry Goldberg



Workers disrupt the National Conference of Governors in Traverse City, MI, to demand a moratorium on plant closings. Author Jerry Goldberg at right. (1987)

The current period of capitalist development is characterized by the imposition of austerity by the capitalist class against the working class worldwide. Austerity means the direct rule by finance capital over cities, states and even countries, where the banks impose drastic cutbacks in services, wage cuts, destruction of pensions and privatization to ensure the payment of debt service on fraudulent and usurious loans. Austerity in the U.S. means 41 million people struggling with hunger, 15 million households suffering water shutoffs in 2016 alone, 38.1 million people living in unaffordable housing (based on a 30% of household guideline), roughly a half million people experiencing homelessness and 58 percent of adults with less than \$1000 in savings.

When the attacks on the basic rights to survival, water, shelter, food, jobs, freedom from police and ICE terror, etc. manifest themselves constantly, the necessity to revive the transitional program within the communist movement and to apply transitional demands to the struggles of our class presents itself every day.

The transitional program

Leon Trotsky described the substance and importance of the transitional program as follows:

“The strategic task of the next period — pre-revolutionary period of agitation, propaganda and organization — consists in overcoming the contradiction between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard (the confusion and disappointment of the older generation, the inexperience of the younger generation). It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demands and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of transitional demands, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class and unalterably leading to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.”

In the book “High Tech Low Pay,” Sam Marcy discussed the application of the transitional program to the conditions of the U.S. working class. Marcy emphasized the need to frame transitional demands in legal language where possible, because of the belief in “legal rights” that permeates large sections of our class. Of course, while framing demands in such a way, we always emphasize that it is the struggle that is the only way to win these “legal rights.”

The essence of all transitional demands is to move the workers in the direction of confronting capitalist property relations, through occupations of the worksite, home, hospital or whatever institution is involved. That is what distinguishes transitional demands from social democratic demands to “reform the system.” Most importantly, raising transitional demands that truly speak to the workers’ needs and capture their attention and imagination, allows us as communists to make up for our small numbers with the boldness of our program.

Application of transitional program in Detroit

Detroit has been the epicenter of the imposition of austerity against the working class for many years. Auto industry restructuring, especially by Chrysler and General Motors, eliminated tens of thousands of union jobs in the city beginning in 1979. The economic attack on Detroit further intensified from the early 2000s through the present with the housing crisis precipitated by the banks’ subprime predatory lending practices against Detroit’s homeowners, and ultimately against the city government itself.

In 1982, when the recession hit Detroit particularly hard, the All-Peoples Congress (APC) launched the “Food is a Right Campaign.” The APC sued the federal government in Detroit for the release of surplus food during the recession of 1982. At that time, the federal government was paying agribusiness over \$30 billion a year to store “surplus food” in warehouses to keep food prices high. We held mass rallies in Detroit preparing our class to locate the warehouses and to liberate the food in them. The campaign succeeded in forcing the federal government to institute monthly free commodity food distributions that lasted for 17 years in Detroit.



Mass rally of autoworkers in Flint, MI calling for a moratorium on plant closings. (January 31, 1987)

In response to an announcement of massive plant closings by General Motors in December 1986, our comrades launched the “A Job is a Right Campaign.” We had one comrade in the Fisher Body Fleetwood Plant in Detroit that was closing, and sent one or two comrades to Flint, but with the support of our national organization at the time, we succeeded in building a national movement to challenge the plant closings by General

Motors and other corporations. We raised the demand that “A Job is a Right” and for an immediate moratorium to halt all plant and office closings. We articulated the idea that workers, who produce all the wealth, have a property right to their jobs. If the bosses refuse to keep the plants open, the workers have the right to take them over and maintain production for human needs, not profit. Our program took on a national life, while the leadership of the million-person UAW was paralyzed because of its acceptance of bourgeois property relations.



UAW Local 15, Fleetwood GM Plant organizes mass in-plant meetings to talk about stopping the plant closing. (1987)

The campaign carried out many actions around this program, including a workers’ demonstration that disrupted the National Governors’ Conference in Traverse City, Michigan, mass in-plant meetings (where workers discussed taking control of the factory), a national meeting on plant closings at the UAW local associated with the 1937 Flint sit-down strike and a tent city in June 1988 on the front lawn of the Michigan Capitol. While the movement was not strong enough to prevent the shutdowns, it helped generate language in the 1987 UAW contract for guaranteed lifetime jobs and a moratorium on future plant closings. (This language was unfortunately eliminated in subsequent concession agreements.)

Application of transitional program to banks’ war on Detroit from 2005 to present

In the mid-2000s, the banks launched their subprime predatory lending scheme that particularly targeted African-American and Latinx communities and led to the destruction of 53 percent of Black wealth and 66 percent of Latinx wealth across the U.S. Detroit, the city with the highest African-American homeownership rate in the U.S., was especially devastated. Sixty-five thousand families suffered bank foreclosures from 2005 to 2010. By 2017, one-third of the city’s 360,000 homes had been lost to bank or property tax foreclosures.

Every state has provisions for the governor (or sometimes local officials) to declare a state of emergency to avert a natural or “man-made” (corporate-made) crisis that can be utilized in advancing the

transitional program. The first step is to demand a proclamation of a state of emergency under the particular law in effect in the state. The next is to demand that the official implement whatever transitional demands are being raised to meet the emergency. Most importantly, activists begin implementing the program ourselves through direct action.

Our comrades utilized this approach in launching a campaign for a moratorium, or halt, on all foreclosures. This demand confronts capitalist property relations, asserting that the workers' right to their homes supersedes any claim the banks had on them.

As early as 2007, we demanded that Michigan's governor declare a state of emergency and implement a moratorium on foreclosures. We pointed out the legal precedent for such a demand, and the fact that 25 states had implemented foreclosure moratoriums in the 1930s. These were won as a result of the unemployed struggles in the Great Depression and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1934 in its decision in *Home Building & Loan Association v. Blaisdell*.

A bill for a two-year moratorium on foreclosures that we drafted was introduced into the Michigan state legislature by State Representative Hansen Clarke. Most importantly, we took the moratorium campaign to the community and stopped numerous foreclosures and evictions through direct actions such as move-ins, preventing the placement of dumpsters in front of homes slated for eviction as required by a Detroit ordinance, and by numerous pickets and occupations of the banks. The Occupy Detroit movement adopted the campaign and organized a Detroit Eviction Defense Committee, which still operates. This struggle kept hundreds of families in their homes and educated many Detroiters as to the nature of capitalism and the need for a direct struggle against the banks and finance capital.

Anti-capitalist intervention against emergency management and austerity

Under monopoly capitalism, the banks play a central role in every attack on the workers and oppressed. By examining their bond deals and studying the financial statements, we can become familiar with them, and point out their fraudulent, swindling character. This strengthens the demand for canceling the debt and positions us communists as the anti-capitalist voice in the larger struggle. Raising a transitional demand means going beyond just raising a slogan. Rather, it means putting forth the demand in a serious manner both in substance and tactics, so the workers perceive the demand as winnable even as its essence is a direct challenge to capitalist property relations.

After one-quarter of Detroit's population was driven out of the city through 65,000 mortgage foreclosures

based on racist, predatory, fraudulent mortgage loans between 2005 and 2010, the city was placed into a financial crisis. An emergency financial manager, appointed by the governor, was placed over the city. Detroit became the epicenter within the U.S. of the struggle against the destructive forces of finance capital.

There was a large movement that developed challenging this usurpation of democratic rights and self-determination for this African-American city. Our comrades, while completely supporting the anti-racist aspect of the struggle against emergency management, studied the emergency manager bill and noted that while he was empowered to break contracts and privatize city services, the emergency manager was required to guarantee payment of debt service to the banks.

We pointed out that behind this racist law was the imposition of direct control of the city's finances by the banks, the same ones that had destroyed our neighborhoods with their massive foreclosures. We obtained all the city loan documents through a Freedom of Information Act request, studied them, and became familiar with the fraudulent character of the city's debt service, especially with the interest rate swaps owned by Bank of America, UBS, Chase, Goldman Sachs, Morgan Stanley, Citi, etc. When the emergency manager took the city into bankruptcy to steal the pensions of the city retirees, the Moratorium Now Coalition intervened in the bankruptcy, both with daily demonstrations calling for cancellation of the debt and guaranteeing the pensions and city services and with a legal intervention in a trial against the banks and their interest rate swaps during the bankruptcy proceedings.

We also pointed out how the massive water shutoffs that led to 100,000 homes in Detroit having their water disconnected were similarly initiated to pay off termination fees to the banks on swaps on water bonds, and we brought that issue into the bankruptcy trial as well.

Our comrades carved out a large role in the struggle against emergency management and the Detroit bankruptcy precisely because we developed a programmatic approach that targeted the real source of the crisis in Detroit: finance capital. To this day, the Moratorium Now Coalition is known throughout the movement of the workers and poor in Detroit as the organization to turn to in order to fight the banks and the capitalist system. Unfortunately, the representatives of the labor unions, retiree associations, pension boards and most prominent religious figures in Detroit failed to mobilize a mass struggle against the bankruptcy. In the end, 78 percent of the \$9 billion written off of the City of Detroit's debt was stolen from the pensions and healthcare of 30,000 retired city workers.

Linking U.S. workers' struggle to international movements against austerity

We can and must link our struggles for the most basic human needs of the workers to the worldwide struggle against austerity, bringing internationalism to the workers. In March 2018, the Moratorium Now Coalition built a National Conference to Defeat Austerity. A highlight of the conference was both the reports from different cities, which helped the many Detroit workers and community activists in attendance feel that they were not fighting alone, and also the terrific session on the international dimensions of the struggle against austerity, featuring two Puerto Rican comrades and including the former president of the Electrical Industry and Irrigation Workers Union of Puerto Rico (UTIER), a statement from Jose Maria Sisson from the Philippines, a young woman who had just returned from Lebanon, a speaker on Cuba and solidarity statements from Italy and Spain. The next day, Ricardo Santos Ramos from Puerto Rico did a Facebook video while we toured a hard-hit Detroit neighborhood. It got over 50,000 views, with many Puerto Ricans bemoaning the fate the banks had in store from them upon seeing Detroit's neighborhoods. (Pretty wild when

you consider this was after Hurricanes Irma and Maria devastated Puerto Rico.) A delegation of the Moratorium Now Coalition was hosted in Puerto Rico in September 2018 by UTIER to participate in mass meetings linking the struggles against the bankruptcies in Detroit and Puerto Rico.

The day-to-day struggle around the basic needs of the workers and oppressed necessitates attacking the capitalist system to win anything. The reformists are incapable of formulating demands that meet the crisis because they limit the struggle to reform within the confines of bourgeois property relations. As communists, we have no such limitations. Raising transitional demands that speak to the immediate needs of our class while moving the workers and oppressed in the direction of challenging the foundations of capitalism allows communists to intervene in these struggles in a serious manner even where our numbers are small. This is the Art of Revolution, an art that can and must be revived in the communist movement if we are to reach the multinational working class and win them to the revolutionary perspective that is the only solution to the capitalist war that intensifies every day.

Jerry Goldberg was an organizer for the All-Peoples Congress, Job is A Right Campaign and Moratorium Now Coalition and is a member of the Communist Workers League.

Advertisement

Clara Zetkin: Rosa Luxemburg's Views on the Russian Revolution

Some of the writings of Rosa Luxemburg on the Russian Revolution have been used to oppose Lenin, Stalin and the Great October Socialist Revolution. Clara Zetkin wrote this book which establishes that in the course of the German Revolution Rosa Luxemburg modified her views in her last months prior to her assassination so that they came to proximate to those of Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

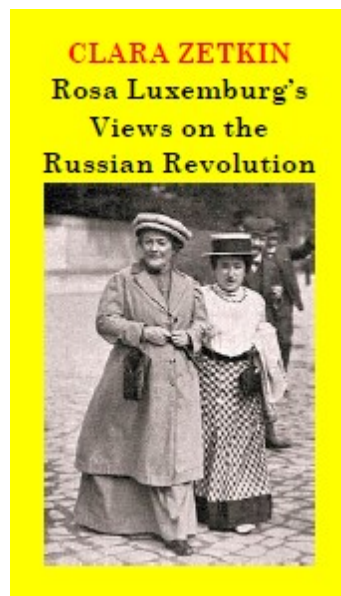
This book was originally written in German in 1922 and translated into Russian. It has been now published in English for the first time by Red Star Publishers in the United States with the co-operation of the journal Revolutionary Democracy, India.

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Why “Transitional Demands” Are Not a Revolutionary Program

George Gruenthal

Recently several groups, mostly from a Trotskyist tradition, have revived the position of “transitional demands.” These include the Communist Workers League (a recent split from Workers World Party), whose article is reprinted here, and the journal “Socialist Revolution.” In a simplified way (these organizations would probably say “over-simplified”), it means that one comes up with a series of demands that sound reasonable to workers, but cannot be won under capitalism. These include “End Unemployment,” “Nationalize the Major Industries and Banks,” (taken from the April 2019 issue of *Socialist Revolution*), and in a slightly different form, “A Job Is a Right,” from the CWL. The idea is that, by fighting for these and similar demands, the workers will learn that they need a socialist revolution to win them. One problem with this is that these groups often don’t explain this to the workers, and rather than being won to socialism they can be turned off to revolutionary struggle, and even more to the groups who put forward this program.

When the Communist Party USA was a revolutionary party, and particularly during the Great Depression, it led the fight for the unemployed. It organized Unemployed Councils, which organized unemployed workers to aid strikers instead of being used as scabs, and fought against evictions. One of their slogans was: Jobs or Income Now (JOIN), calling for unemployment relief for those who could not find a job. They explained that full employment was utopian under capitalism, as capitalism could not exist without unemployment (see Marx’s *Capital*, Vol. I, Chapter 25, Section 3), and that only socialism could get rid of unemployment, as the Soviet Union had done under the five-year plans.

In tsarist Russia, Lenin had raised a maximum and a minimum program. The maximum program was for socialism: a state run by the working class (led by its Communist Party), but in the conditions of semi-feudal Russia there was the need for a minimum program, which was summarized in 3 slogans: 1) a democratic republic, 2) an 8-hour day, and 3) confiscation of the landlords’ estates. Some groups claim that Lenin changed his view on the need for a minimum program after the February 1917 Revolution. But this was not true – it only meant that at that point the basic demands of the minimum program had been won, and thus the socialist revolution was on the order of the day.

Today, in the advanced capitalist, imperialist countries, socialist revolution is clearly on the agenda, though of course this does not mean that we can just go

to the workers with abstract calls for socialism. In 1902, when Lenin wrote *What Is To Be Done?*, he explained how the revolutionary party of the working class should raise not only economic demands (higher salaries, better working conditions, etc.), but all demands in the interest of the workers and other oppressed and exploited groups (see Chapter IIIA of Lenin’s work for examples). Most parties calling themselves socialist in the U.S. today put forth many demands that are not economist, such as the fight against police terror, against U.S. interventions around the world, etc.

There is no doubt that the reformist and revisionist parties today use reform demands to obviate the need for revolution. But there are no demands that can magically turn a reform into a revolution. The capitalist class, if forced, can accept any reform demand; the only demand it cannot accept is to abolish itself as a capitalist government: for that a revolution is necessary. (In the Kronstadt rebellion of 1919, the bourgeoisie even supported the demand of the rebels “For Soviets without Bolsheviks.”)

The CWL, both now and when they were the Detroit branch of WWP, did some very good work around local issues. Much of this work is described in their article. But they mistake good demands, such as a moratorium on foreclosures, for transitional demands that will lead the workers to see the need to get rid of capitalism. As they themselves point out, some of these demands were won, at least for a time, *under capitalism*.

One of the main thing that many left groups, even serious ones, often ignore or downplay is winning workers to understand the class nature of the state. This of course cannot be done just by slogans, but through the workers’ own experience.

For example, in tsarist Russia at the time of the 1905 Revolution, many workers, and even more peasants, still had faith in the Tsar. They joined a demonstration led by a reactionary priest, Father Gapon, calling upon “Father Tsar” to help them in their fights with the factory owners. The Bolsheviks took part in this demonstration, but pointed out that the Tsar (and Father Gapon) was no friend of the workers. The workers learned that this was true when the Tsar had his troops fire on the demonstrators, killing many of them (including several Bolsheviks) in the massacre known as Bloody Sunday.

Again after the February 1917 Revolution in Russia, many workers still had faith in the Kerensky government but wanted it to withdraw from World War I. They staged a demonstration against the government, which the Bolsheviks again took part in, but they pointed out

that Kerensky led a capitalist government, which would not withdraw from the war. The government once again attacked the workers. This again brought many workers to the side of the Bolsheviks.

This all does not mean that there is no place in Marxism-Leninism for transitional demands. But they make sense only in a revolutionary situation. Thus, before the October 1917 Revolution in Russia, Lenin put forward the best-known and most realistic transitional

demands: Peace, Bread and Land, which could only be brought about by carrying out the slogan: “All Power to the Soviets.”

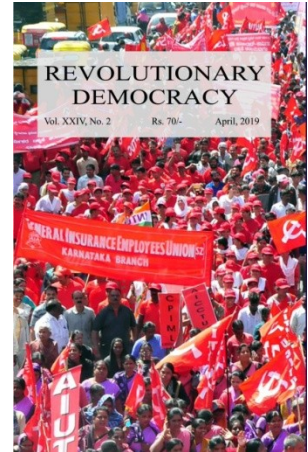
The revisionists can never make a revolution, because they want to reform capitalism, not overthrow it. But the Trotskyists, by putting forth utopian demands, also cannot overthrow capitalism. They are opposite sides of the same coin, as in reality they both ignore the class nature of the state.

Advertisements

Revolutionary Democracy is a half-yearly theoretical and political journal published in April and September from India. It contains materials on the problems facing the communist movement, particularly relating to Russia, China and India, the origins of modern revisionism, the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and developments in the international communist movement. Most of the contents of current and back issues, as well as an extensive archive, is available at:

www.RevolutionaryDemocracy.org.

In the United States, it may be ordered through Red Star Publishers at: www.RedStarPublishers.org, which also has the contents of the latest issue.

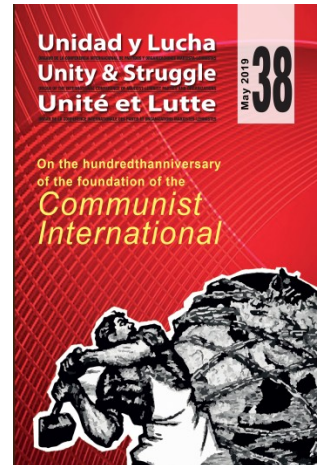


Unity & Struggle is the half-yearly theoretical organ of the International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations (ICMLPO). The ICMLPO consists of Marxist-Leninist parties in North and South America, Europe, Africa and Asia. Current and back issues, in English, Spanish and Turkish, as well as other material from the ICMLPO, are available at:

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The Use of Identity Politics to Undermine the Left

Anna Coco

The US government and ruling elite have infiltrated and attempted to destroy the Left since its inception. In the 1960's the CIA think tanks came up with numerous strategies to destroy the Left, such as promoting drug use and promiscuous sexuality as a form of not only "Brave New World" escapism, but diverting attention from working class issues. Remember Jerry Garcia repeating Timothy Leary's famous quote "turn on, tune in, and drop out?" Even the decriminalization of marijuana today is really not to stop the Prison Industrial Complex, which is still arresting millions of young men, especially those of color, but about pushing escapism as a replacement for protesting in a country where half the population lives near or below the poverty line. "Get high; forget your cares." "Don't fight back. Jesus was a pacifist." (Forget that Jesus flogged the bankers in the temple during Passover.) The Communist Party USA and other Left parties were successful in pushing back this degeneration, discouraging drug and alcohol use as well as criticizing sexual objectification, particularly of women.

Another government strategy involved promoting Identity Politics, which along with political correctness in the late 1980's actually achieved its goal of successfully undermining the Left as can be seen in its current state. This time period wasn't coincidental, since this was the time the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union was collapsing. It was at this point that the Left started turning inward and becoming fragmented, with no center to keep it together which is what the Soviet Union represented. Feeling betrayed, demoralized, and bewildered, the CIA easily infiltrated and injected the Left with its poisonous sting, causing many Left parties to reject dialectical materialism, and in some cases even Marxism itself!

ID politics was the late 1960's brain child of the CIA to divide and conquer the Left, pitting groups against each other. Political Correctness helped promote ID politics by using the same methods as McCarthyism. Since socialism is a logical, scientific economic system, proponents couldn't be allowed to explain or discuss what is was or it would convert others; therefore McCarthyism relied on shutting down debates and free discussion by employing name calling, shouting down speakers, and further isolating and marginalizing Leftists, especially through blacklisting them.

From the 1930's to the 1970's the motto of the Communist Party and the Left was "Black and White Unite". The question for example of the CP getting involved, whether in the Scottsboro Case or in

unionizing the segregated South, took place with many open debates, where all questions were allowed to be raised, discussed, and answered, including those by less advanced white workers who didn't understand or agree. It was the openness of these discussions and debates that allowed this sector to understand the nature of racism and to make the CP's motto a success. In a nation that was then only 12% black, gaining white support during the Civil Rights era was crucial in changing the nation and its laws. The Black Panther Party understood this and gave talk in some of the poorest white communities such as in the Appalachians; even converting and forming important alliances with white working class organizations, such as the Young Patriots in Chicago.

The CIA unfortunately successfully changed "Black and White Unite" into Identity Politics in the 1970's, where different special interest groups began vying for crumbs, promoting selfish individualism and rejecting collectivism, one of the basic foundations of Marxist Leninist ideology.

Following bourgeois feminism, white men were now the enemy and women felt pitted to fight men in order to demand more managerial jobs. Blacks began demanding the right to have more black police officers; as if women oppressing other women or black officers cracking the heads of black men was somehow progressive. What followers of ID politics failed to understand was that changing the driver didn't change the system. My chances as a woman of dying from a preventable heart attack are the same whether the doctor at the hospital today is male or female, as are the chances a black man having his head smashed in by the cops whether the officer is white or black. Instead of collectivism, workers divided among race, sex, ethnicity, religion, etc., promoting selfish individualism. Of course there are supportive women and people of color. But certain individuals are not the system. A perfect example was the Left dismantling the anti-war movement during the Obama administration because it would be seen as racist to protest a black president. What was forgotten were the millions killed abroad in US wars of Imperialism, especially Africans who didn't care what race the current president was. As a result, today, Libyan men are being sold into slavery!

Whereas before ID politics, the enemy was clearly understood to be US imperialism, or the 1%, now the enemy had become the white, heterosexual, male workers. Marxists understand that white men are not our enemies, but our necessary allies in getting reforms

under capitalism and in overthrowing the true enemy, the 1%. United we stand, divided we fall.

Unfortunately this vilification and exclusion of white males led to bitterness, creating the racism and sexism we see today. Many were driven into the arms of the right-wing in order to feel included. Enter transgender ideology, the new ID politics of today. Exploiting the Lesbian, gay, and bisexual movement, although the ideology itself is anti-gay and homophobic, it has been promoting itself as the Civil Rights movement of the 21st century. Let's forget that Native people, African-Americans, and women still haven't won many significant civil rights.

If white men were the enemy of yesteryear, women are now the new enemy, regardless of color or race, allowing men their turn to experience inclusion in the Left by attacking and excluding women.

It's not for nothing that penises are still called penises, but vaginas are front-holes, breast-feeding is chest-feeding, and woman can get their monthlies just like men (although I would seriously suggest that any man who does should go see a doctor ASAP and have their hemorrhoids put back in). Because transgender ideology, which is not the same as transgender individuals, just as all feminists are not bourgeois feminists, is a two-pronged attack not just against women, but the Left, too.

Its first prong of attack undermines women's contribution to reproducing capital, both as the sex that bears tomorrow workers and cannon fodder and as workers. Discussions on birth control, maternity leave, food stamps, public services, as well as low wages and work inequality along with sexual harassment that affect working class women, become subordinate to transgender questions that affect less than 1/10 of 1% of the population, such as unisex bathrooms.

The second prong undermines the unity of the Left and the possibility of revolution. As Lenin said, "There can be no real mass movement without the women." How can there be when women represent half the population and are the most exploited sex under capitalism? In fact, how many people are aware that every major revolution in history was started by women? From the English, French, and the Russian Revolution, which by the way took place on March 8, 1917, International Women's Day, it was women demanding bread that began it all. It is women who generally have to take care of and feed the family, especially the children. Prevent women from organizing or leading their own organizations, and the 1% are guaranteed there will be no reform or revolution.

What is Marxism? What does it represent? It doesn't represent Hegelian idealism nor does it represent bourgeois mechanistic science. It represents a historical,

dialectical materialism that analyzes the evolution of human society from one form to another, as Charles Darwin's theories in the Origin of the Species analyzed the evolution of living beings.

Much of the transgender movement isn't even working class; it mainly represents white, upper middle-class males who are racist, homophobic, and misogynist. It argues for gender stereotypes that tell homosexual men, for example, that they are really women or that racism is an imaginary concept. When transwomen says they are women, they are in fact negating not just biology and science, but eliminating the whole history of oppression that women experience. You heard the expression, you are what you eat. Imagine someone saying "I ate some soul food last night and I'm feeling black, although I've never seen a black person in my lilywhite town."

Transgender ideology has set a dangerous precedent by referring to feelings rather than biology, which ultimately allows discrimination not just against women, but people of color including native people.

Women aren't oppressed because of a feeling, but because of their sex; for physically being the only sex that can literally reproduce the workers for capital. Being a woman isn't a feeling. Just like being black isn't a feeling. Being a Native American isn't a feeling. I can't wash off my sex any more than a person of color can wash off their color. Is capitalism a feeling, too? Can we unfeel exploitation on Monday morning?

Liberals who reject dialectical materialism reject nature and the evolutionary connection in nature.

Transgender ideology is effectively using language to erase women and subordinate them to the fetishes of men in nearly every English-speaking country. With the passing in England of the Gender Recognition Act, which Congress is trying to pass in the US as the Equality Act, women must defer to men as men now have the right to enter female facilities and colonize female sports at will against the wishes of women and the safety of girls. It took until 1920 for women in the US to have separate bathrooms, which Russian women won in the 1917 revolution. Lenin in fact championed female-only spaces and female leadership in female organizations. Really, how many women would like to turn around in the women's showers and see a throbbing hard boner on a transgender woman staring at you? What about at a Rape Center or women's prison? For those who don't know, it's already happening: pedophiles and male rapists insisting they feel like women have been allowed into girls' bathrooms and even placed in women's prisons where they have raped women. Female sports and scholarships, better kiss that goodbye as men

by birth have a physical advantage over women. Let's go back to 1950's America.

When the Left so wholehearted absorbed trans ideology, it threw scientific socialism under the bus as well as thoroughly self-destructing, making it the butt of jokes for the right-wing. From Black Lives Matter to FRISO Left, ISO, WWP, CWL, and PC USA to name just a few, all these organizations are now being redubbed Politically Correct USA.

In some parties, transwomen expelled long-time left women by acting like real creeps, demanding that lesbians in their parties have sex with them or suck their woman's cock, whatever that is. When the women refused, they were accusing of witchcraft, I'm sorry, of transphobia and expelled for non-compliance. The real question in most cases wasn't even transphobia, but who wants to have sex with a real dick who doesn't know how to respect women, especially lesbians. It is rape to ever demand or try to coerce someone to have sex regardless of their age, sex, or gender. There is no place in any civilized society to allow rape or rape culture, and especially not the Left. In other cases, women were expelled for exposing male sexual predators, such as in ISO, DSA, WWP, and PC USA. I was told I should be ashamed of myself for shaming the PC USA by exposing a predator, when that party should be ashamed. In other cases, women were expelled because they didn't agree with male comrades over the question of prostitution and violent porn. Imagine the outrage if a black man was stripped of his position and expelled, because he didn't like to be called an N* and didn't agree that slavery and lynching films weren't empowering? In fact, why is the Left offended by Black Face, but not by Drag? Transgenderism is misogyny in drag.

Soros has spent over millions of dollars promoting transgenderism. Yet women on the Left who complained were ridiculed and silenced.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the CP subverted itself to neoliberalism when it decided to pimp itself to the Democratic Party. Even the ISO, FRISO right and many other so-called Left parties began embracing bourgeois liberalism, which has its roots in neo-

liberalism or the free market economy, completing wedding themselves to parliamentary instead revolutionary goals.

Think of the level of misogyny; the CIA couldn't destroy so many group like WW, which has existed for 60 years. How did it finally destroy these parties through transgenderism? Before we think this is an organic movement, which is separate from being transgender, it is actually funded by the CIA and its think tanks. That is the reason why it funded by so much money. Any legitimate organization would distance itself from these elements and I'm sure there are LGBTQ+ organizations that did.

When the National Center for Transgender Equality Action Fund hosted the 2018 Trans Equality Now Awards in Washington D.C. on May 17, 2018, its sponsors looked like something from a parody. The list included: the CIA, George Soros' Open Society, Facebook (which is partially funded by the Atlantic Council, i.e. NATO), Google, Amazon, Capital One Bank, Shook, Hardy & Bacon (a law firm dedicated to defending Big Pharma), as well as a number of pharmaceutical companies and clinics including: Gilead Sciences, Meltzer Clinic, and Phrma. [See comments at the end of this article.] For women on the Left, this open display by the CIA and Soros was like the government and the bankers sticking their middle finger at them. It proved what they had been saying all along.

To this day, the Left still hasn't apologized to women and is still promoting destructive ID politics, pushing women to the hypocritical right-wing. It makes perfect sense for liberals to be doing this, because as their name suggests neo-liberalism, they want to push women to the right. But why the Left? In fact, why was the Left so eager to adopt trans ideology and expel women.

Either promote the Left, that is the Left we've inherited and, like a corrupt union, we understand as Marxist-Leninists that we don't destroy, but attempt to revitalize, or create female Left organizations like Women for Racial and Economic Equality to push Left more left.

Comment on sources

The source for the CIA and others having funded the 2018 Trans Equality Now Awards seems to have "disappeared" from the internet, and they seem to have decided that their sponsorship of the 2019 awards would have been too open. However, after some searching, we were able to find the Transgender Equality Annual Report 2017, at:

<https://transequality.org/sites/default/files/docs/resources/annual%20report%202017%20final.pdf> (page 8; page 10 of pdf), which includes the same sponsors as in 2018.

Also, Soros' Open Society Foundations has funded individual transgender activists who are leaders in various Left organizations. One is Imani Henry, a leading member of International Action Center and

Workers World Party. The source of this is available at:

https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/cfp_20050101.pdf, on p. 10-11. This criticism is more aimed at his party than at him himself, for allowing him to accept this funding, just as no progressive trade union organization would have its members accept money from the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD), a notorious conduit for CIA funding.

As sources mysteriously disappear from the internet, we have put these sources on the web-site used by Towards Marxist-Leninist Unity (www.MLtranslations.net).

Venezuela and U.S. Imperialism in Latin America

Tom Siracuse

Once again the United States government shows its true imperialist face, this time in Venezuela. Capitalism is inextricably wedded to imperialism. Of course, the U.S. claims it supports democratically elected governments and the right of colonized peoples to determine their own destinies. In the 19th century, Great Britain claimed it was bringing modern progress to its colonial empire. When governments exert some independence from the U.S., this government engineers coups or outright invasions to overthrow those governments. This is especially true of those countries that possess valuable resources such as oil. Venezuela has the largest reserve of oil in the world. Before nationalization in 1976, the oil industry was controlled by such companies as Exxon-Mobil (ESSO), Conoco-Phillips and Chevron. The Venezuelan economy has depended mostly on its oil revenues, which are subject to extreme fluctuations in the international oil market, causing serious economic problems. Since Hugo Chavez, a former colonel in the Venezuelan army, was elected in 1999, the Venezuelan oligarchy, supported by the US government, has tried to overthrow the Venezuelan government. Both Chavez and his successor Nicolas Maduro have espoused socialism and have used much of the revenues from oil on social programs that have benefited the poor.

Citing the "Monroe Doctrine", US President Trump has announced that he will not tolerate socialism in the Latin America. This arrogant imperialist attitude has not been limited to the present US government. The US has pursued an imperialist policy since it became a "republic" with the adoption of the Constitution. A strong national government with a national army was in a better position to pursue its genocidal confiscation of indigenous lands beyond the Appalachians. Once that was accomplished, US imperialism focused on Latin America in the latter half of the 19th century. By the 20th century, a growing conflict between the puppet local bourgeois governments and the peasantry and proletariat has been taking place.

The class conflict in Venezuela has become acute. So far, most of the Venezuelan working class and the military have supported Chavez and Maduro. Taking advantage of a glut of oil on the world market and the reduced revenues from the sale of Venezuela's oil, the Trump administration announced it will put an embargo on Venezuelan oil and will seize Venezuelan assets in the U.S. This will cause further suffering among the people of Venezuela. Recently, a drone was flown into Venezuela from Colombia in an attempt to assassinate

Pres. Maduro. A direct US invasion would have serious consequences throughout Latin America so Trump is trying to get Venezuela's neighbors, Brazil, Colombia and Peru, whose present conservative governments are friendly to the US, to invade Venezuela. The Trump administration is supporting the leader of the oligarchy's opposition party, Juan Guaidó, a person who was never elected. It does not matter to the US that Chavez and his successor Maduro were elected by the *majority* of the Venezuelan people. Why doesn't the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives introduce a resolution in Congress condemning these boldfaced violations of international law and the principles of the United Nations? The answer is obvious; both corporate parties support US imperialism.

Once Europeans came to the Western Hemisphere, they waged constant wars and genocide against the indigenous people to occupy their lands. To satisfy the needs of mercantile capitalism, millions of Africans were forcibly imported across the Atlantic to work as slaves on large plantations. After its own independence, the US joined France and England to defeat the first successful slave revolution in history, in Haiti. These nations have kept Haiti an impoverished country ever since.

The US has always considered Latin America and the Caribbean as its back yard. As early as 1828, President James Monroe declared that no new colonization in the Americas would be tolerated and that the Western Hemisphere would be "a sphere of influence" of the U.S., as most of Spain's colonies had achieved their independence. This U.S. policy has been known as the "Monroe Doctrine". By 1846, the U.S. had manipulated Mexico into a war and, upon winning, forced Mexico into ceding its northern provinces (half of its national territory) which included Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah and Colorado! In 1862, the U.S., embroiled in a civil war, was not able to enforce the Monroe Doctrine when France installed the puppet Maximilian, brother of the Emperor of Austria, as Emperor of Mexico. The Mexicans themselves, led by Benito Juarez, revolted and executed Maximilian in 1867. In 1898 the US, declared war on Spain, by then a weak second rate power, and forced Spain to cede its few remaining colonies – Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam, and made Cuba a dependent state. In 1893, the US overthrew the native government of Hawaii and made those islands a U.S. territory. By 1900, the U.S. joined the exclusive European club of overseas colonial powers. Failing in negotiations with Colombia over building a canal

through its province of Panama in 1903, President Theodore Roosevelt was instrumental in organizing a successful independence revolt in the province. This enabled the US to occupy and control a canal zone that split the new nation of Panama. Connecting the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans greatly enhanced US power internationally. The canal opened in 1914, just in time for WW I, that bloodbath among competing imperialist powers.

The list of US coups and military invasions has been endless throughout the 20th century and up to today. After the other 20th century bloodbath – WW II, among imperialist powers, the U.S. emerged as the world's most powerful capitalist power and installed puppet regimes in the former European colonies. In Latin America, the U.S. organized coups or military invasions in Colombia, Guatemala, Panama, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Paraguay, Haiti, Grenada, Cuba, the Dominican

Republic and now again in Venezuela. The number of military bases and facilities in Latin America has steadily increased: Guantanamo, the Dutch West Indies (Curacao & Aruba), Panama, Honduras, El Salvador, Colombia and Peru.

However, no longer is the United States the unchallenged capitalist super power. Competitive capitalist powers such as China, Russia, Germany, the United Kingdom and Japan engage in gaining spheres of influence in their need for new markets, natural resources and cheap labor. Capitalism's inner contradictions such as the need to constantly increase profit, over-production, competitive imperialism including never-ending wars, booms and busts, unemployment and its inability to solve an impending environmental disaster, are causing insoluble crises. This is causing a resurgence of working class militancy and opposition to US imperialism at home and throughout the world.

Tom Siracuse, Secretary of the Manhattan Local of the Green Party; MA from Columbia University in Latin American History; Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica, 1963-1965

Two Comments, From Lenin and Stalin

Lenin: *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Chapter X, 1916

“In its economic essence imperialism is monopoly capitalism. This in itself determines its place in history, for monopoly that grows out of the soil of free competition, and precisely out of free competition, is the transition from the capitalist system to a higher social-economic order.”

J. Stalin

Speech at a Meeting of Voters of the Stalin Electoral District, Moscow, February 9, 1946

“As a result of the first crisis of the capitalist system of world economy, the First World War broke out; and as a result of the second crisis, the Second World War broke out.

“This does not mean, of course, that the Second World War was a copy of the first. On the contrary, the Second world differed substantially in character from the first. It must be borne in mind that before attacking the Allied countries the major fascist states – Germany, Japan and Italy – destroyed the last remnants of bourgeois-democratic liberties at home and established there a cruel terroristic regime, trampled upon the principle of the sovereignty and free development of small countries, proclaimed as their own the policy of seizing foreign territory, and shouted from the housetops that they were aiming at world domination and the spreading of the fascist regime all over the world; and by seizing Czechoslovakia and the central regions of China, the Axis Powers showed that they were ready to carry out their threat to enslave all the freedom-loving peoples. In new of this, the Second World War against the Axis Powers, unlike the First World War, assumed from the very outset the character of an anti-fascist war, a war of liberation, one of the tasks of which was to restore democratic liberties. The entry of the Soviet Union into the war against the Axis Powers could only augment – and really did augment – the anti-fascist and liberating character of the Second World War.”

Put One More “S” in the U.S.A.

Langston Hughes (1934)

Put one more S in the U.S.A.

To make it Soviet.

One more S in the U.S.A.

Oh, we'll live to see it yet.

When the land belongs to the farmers

And the factories to the working men—

The U.S.A. when we take control

Will be the U.S.S.A. then.

Now across the water in Russia

They have a big U.S.S.R.

The fatherland of the Soviets—

But that is mighty far

From New York, or Texas, or California, too.

So listen, fellow workers,

This is what we have to do:

Put one more S in the U.S.A. [Repeat chorus]

But we can't win just by talking

So let us take things in our hand.

Then down and way with the bosses' sway—

Hail Communistic land.

So stand up in battle and wave our flag on high,

And shout out fellow workers

Our new slogan to the sky:

Put one more S in the U.S.A. [Repeat chorus]

But we can't join hands strong together

So long as whites are lynching black,

So black and white in one union fight

And get on the right track.

By Texas, or Georgia, or Alabama led,

Come together, fellow workers!

Black and white can all be red:

Put one more S in the U.S.A. [Repeat chorus]

Oh, the bankers they are planning

For another great big war.

To make them rich from the workers' dead,

That's all that war is for.

So if you don't want to see bullets holding sway

Then come on, all you workers,

And join our fight today:

Put one more S in the U.S.A.

To make it Soviet.

One more S in the U.S.A.

Oh, we'll live to see it yet.

When the land belongs to the farmers

And the factories to the working men—

The U.S.A. when we take control

Will be the U.S.S.A. then.

Ilhan Omar and the Anti-Imperialist Movement

AntiConquista

<https://anticonquista.com/2019/06/21/ilhan-omar-and-the-anti-imperialist-movement/>

Nicholas Ayala, June 21, 2019

Across the Global North, there has been a rise of progressive, anti-establishment candidates who position themselves as anti-imperialists. These candidates win support from the anti-war camp in the imperialist countries through their rhetoric. They say they are non-interventionist and against sanctions. In the imperialist empire, taking an anti-war and anti-imperialist stance is of utmost importance for socialists. As Mao Tse-tung detailed, the primary contradiction in the struggle for a socialist world is the defeat of imperialism.

The anti-imperialist rhetoric of these democratic socialists seemingly points toward a growing anti-war movement in the Global North, challenging the imperialist ventures of the U.S. and its lackeys. Even for those without socialist praxis, who simply seek a peaceful world, the idea that these new politicians will bring peace through their critiques of their nation's foreign policy has taken hold and won over many.

However, this anti-imperialist and anti-war rhetoric winning over scores of leftists, liberals and "socialists" in the North is a blatant lie. Their flowery rhetoric is just enough to capture the hearts and minds of the anti-war base in the Global North while their actions in the bourgeois political institutions display a firm commitment to imperialism.

To get a better idea of how these "progressives" are hypocritical opportunists, let's take the example of U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar. Omar is a controversial figure within the Democratic Party because of her critiques of U.S. foreign policy, Israel and her push for domestic social reforms. Her "anti-war" stance has won her widespread praise from the anti-war base in the U.S. and activists across the world. TeleSUR even recently published an article praising Omar for challenging the U.S. political elite and establishment. In it, they praise her for speaking out against U.S. intervention in Venezuela and for her critiques of Israel. However, it doesn't go much further than that. Omar simply critiques, speaks out and shakes a finger at the global hegemon. Omar's rhetoric is no doubt progressive, but when the spotlight fades, her actions fall in line with the most far-right U.S. politicians.

First, there is the case of her pushing for sanctions against China and supporting Islamist terrorists in Syria. In China, Omar co-sponsored HR 649, known as the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2019. This bill



seeks to sanction China and work with international bodies to defend the supposed violation of human rights of Uyghur Muslims. With unsubstantiated evidence, the West claims the Uyghurs are being placed in internment camps and that their rights are being violated. These claims are substantiated by a member of the U.N. High Commission of Human Rights, a duplicitous organization to begin with, which obtained its information from an anti-China group funded and backed by the West.

On Syria, Omar tweeted about how the Syrian people revolted against a "repressive dictator," President Bashar Al-Assad. She seemed to have forgotten the election where Syrians overwhelmingly voted for Assad and that these so-called "rebels" are Islamic terrorists eager to behead, enslave, murder, kidnap and torture the Syrian people. While Omar often identifies as a refugee, she has no qualms about supporting the very people who created one of the worst refugee crises the world has ever seen. Further, her criticisms of Israel fall flat with respect to Syria. She has publicly sided with bombings and missile launchings by the Israeli regime against the Syrian government, directly aiding terrorists.

On Venezuela, Omar has received praise when she denounced sanctions as a form of economic warfare. She is even quoted as saying U.S. "humanitarian aid" is a guise for invasion. When it comes to the imperialist attacks on Venezuela, it would seem Omar takes a very radical stance. This, until you take a look at her voting record. Three recent bills expose the deception in Omar's "anti-imperialist" position on Venezuela.

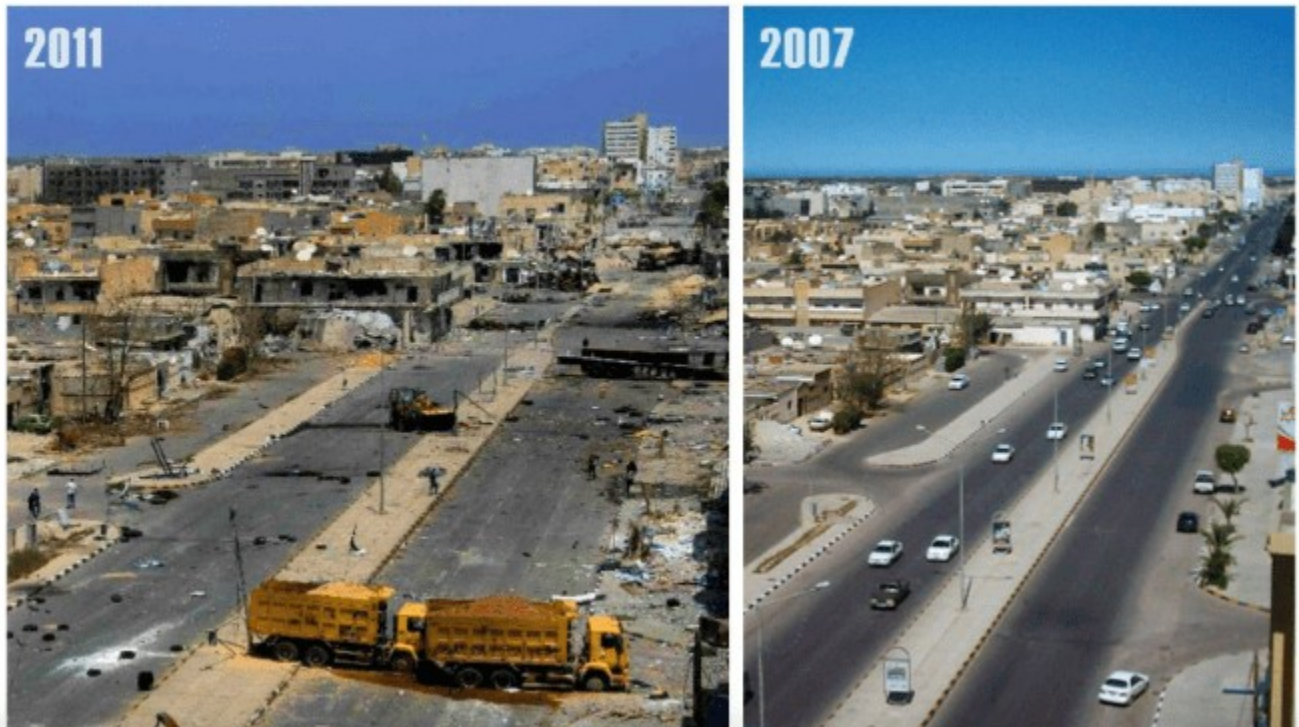
First is the Humanitarian Assistance to the Venezuelan People Act of 2019 (HR 854). The bill was

passed by the House of Representatives, where Omar serves as a Congresswoman on a “motion to suspend the rules.” The bill was passed unanimously. No elected official objected to this bill, including Omar. What does it do? HR 854 sets aside \$150 million to provide “humanitarian assistance” to Venezuelan opposition figures, including those in NGOs and in neighboring countries. Although Omar publicly decries U.S. humanitarian aid as a guise for invasion, she supports a nefarious bill that will directly funnel millions of dollars to a violent, racist, right-wing opposition. So much for that “anti-imperialism.”

The second bill is the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2019 (HR 648), which we discussed a few months ago. This bill was supported by many “progressive” candidates in the Democratic Party and sets aside an additional \$17.5 million to “promote democracy in

Venezuela.” Promoting “democracy,” in the already-democratic Venezuelan state, is code for U.S. aid to terrorist opposition forces. How did Omar vote? She voted in favor of the bill.

Finally, the third bill which contradicts her overall foreign policy position is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, Support Act (HR 676). This bill “reiterates congressional support for NATO,” preventing U.S. President Donald Trump from removing the U.S. from the organization. It states that NATO has been “a pillar of international peace and stability.” Oh, you mean the same NATO that helped bomb Yugoslavia? The one that invaded Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia? Oh, yes. That NATO. The one that also bombed Libya into oblivion, aided Islamist “rebels” and turned the country into its current slave state. Yes, you guessed it — she also voted in favor of this bill.



A view of Tripoli Street in Misrata, Libya after the 2011 NATO invasion (L) and in 2007, five years before the invasion (R). | Source: Rense

Omar is a prime example of the growing trend of opportunism in the Global North. She, along with other progressives and “social justice” Democrats, should be heavily criticized for her support of the same imperialist policies she claims to be fighting. What makes Omar particularly dangerous is that rather than receiving criticism for her imperialist actions, she receives praise, despite the fact that she is completely full of shit. In the age of First World social chauvinism and identity politics, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get leftists — even the most radical — to see through

Omar’s two-faced positions. As I write this, I’m reminded of the Hillary Clinton e-mails exposed by Wikileaks. In these e-mails, Clinton speaks of the importance of politicians having a “public” and “private” position on issues. In the imperialist core, social democrats have taken this to heart, especially with foreign policy.

We must not fall under the sway of these bourgeois opportunist politicians and take every opportunity to expose their deceitfulness.

China and Russia Are Allied to Contend with the USA

On Wednesday, June 5, 2019, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited his opposite number, President Vladimir Putin, in Russia, with the aim of establishing a commercial and technological alliance between the two countries. In the framework of this meeting, the Chinese firm Huawei signed an agreement to develop and implement 5G technology with the company MTS, the largest mobile phone operator in Russia.

Beyond the technological and commercial aspects of the agreements, this is a new demonstration of the inter-imperialist struggle between the three great world powers, which only favor the interests of the monopoly groups in each country. The commercial and technological alliance of China and Russia creates a new possibility of contention in the telecommunications market worldwide, which would put the U.S. economy in serious trouble.

Russia has seen a solution to its own problems in a trade alliance once China declared itself the "best friend" of the Putin regime. China, for its part, applauds the closeness to Russian knowledge to strengthen its products.

The United States has forced the creation of this alliance that, in the long run, means a potential danger to its markets. The restrictions imposed on Huawei Technologies Co. forced China to look for a new support base in Russia. Experts talk about the creation of a "technological monster": the knowledge of programming and hacking of the Russians together with the advanced hardware provided by China could monopolize the world market. It is true that it would lose almost \$300 million in the U.S. market, but it is



very likely that it will dominate global communications if it manages to develop 5G technology.

The Trump government has imposed harsh conditions on other countries for the development of telecommunications in their territory, threatening them with restrictions and punishment to U.S. companies to prevent their trade with other transnationals. In a few days there will be a G20 meeting of the 20 richest countries in the world, to discuss the issues that favor their economies. Certainly, the tensions between the countries will lower their tone in order to seek their own benefit, although the inter-imperialist struggle will continue for an indefinite period of time, in order to monopolize the markets.

Meanwhile, the world continues to be a spectator to see who dominates the market. In the long run, as long as we are not able to develop our own technology, we will have to put our information in the hands of the imperialists, who will sell it to whoever pays the best for it, because the rich countries are the only beneficiaries of any war.

China y Rusia aliadas para disputar a EEUU

El miércoles 5 de junio de 2019, el presidente chino Xi Jinping visitó en Rusia a su homónimo, el presidente Vladimir Putin, con el objetivo de entablar una alianza comercial y tecnológica entre ambos países. En el marco de este encuentro, la firma china Huawei firmó un acuerdo para desarrollar e implementar la tecnología 5G con la compañía MTS, la más grande operadora de telefonía móvil de Rusia.

Lejos de los aspectos tecnológicos o comerciales de los acuerdos, esta es una nueva demostración de la pugna inter-imperialista entre las tres grandes potencias mundiales, que favorecen únicamente los intereses de los grupos monopólicos de cada país. La alianza comercial y tecnológica de China y Rusia configura una nueva posibilidad de disputa del mercado de las telecomunicaciones a nivel mundial, que pondría en serios aprietos a la economía estadounidense.

Rusia ha visto una solución a sus propios problemas de alianza comercial una vez que China se ha declarado como “mejor amigo” del régimen de Putin. China, por su parte, aplaude el acercamiento al conocimiento ruso para fortalecer sus productos.

Estados Unidos ha forzado la creación de esta alianza que, a la larga, le significa un peligro potencial para sus mercados. Las restricciones impuestas a Huawei Technologies Co., obligaron a China a buscar un nuevo sitio de apoyo en Rusia. Expertos hablan de la creación de un “monstruo tecnológico”: los conocimientos de programación y hackeo de los rusos unido a un hardware de avanzada proporcionado por China, que podrían acaparar el mercado mundial. Es cierto que perdería casi 300 millones del mercado estadounidense, pero es muy probable que se adueñe de las comunicaciones globales si logra desarrollar la tecnología 5G.



El gobierno de Trump ha impuesto severas condiciones a otros países para el desarrollo de las telecomunicaciones en su territorio, amenazando con restricciones y castigos a las empresas estadounidenses para evitar su comercio con otras transnacionales. En pocos días se realizará la reunión del G20, los veinte países más ricos del mundo, para discutir los temas que favorecen sus economías. Seguramente, las tensiones entre los países bajarán de tono en aras de buscar beneficios propios, aunque la pugna interimperialista continuará por un período indefinido de tiempo, en aras de monopolizar los mercados.

Mientras tanto, el mundo continúa como espectador para ver quién se adueña del mercado. A la larga, mientras no seamos capaces de desarrollar nuestra propia tecnología, deberemos poner en manos de los imperialistas nuestra información que se venderá a quien pague mejor por ella, pues los países ricos son los únicos beneficiados de cualquier guerra.