

Abolish ICE! No Wall! Free the children!

John Moore / Getty Images



By ANDY BARNES

The immigration crisis in the United States has two essential forces at play. One is the struggle of immigrant workers to find a better life, away from the horrors created by U.S. imperialism in their home countries. The other deals with the forces of capitalist class rule within the United States, who act to divide workers by means of racist myths, while super-exploiting vulnerable immigrant workers and controlling their movements.

Why are people coming to the United States? Why do they enter illegally? The reality is human: immigrant workers and families want to escape the danger of gangs, war, poverty, or domestic abuse. The immigrants, many of them women, want to find a home that is stable enough so they can get a job, put food on their children's plates, and send them to school. This

is the motivation of the vast majority of all who enter the country at the southern border, legally or illegally.

Often, immigrants who go through legal means to enter the country are simply rejected, told that "America is full," and instructed to return to the horrors they are running from. These cast-off people choose to face the dangerous trek through the desert; exploitation, robbery, and brutality by criminal elements; and a dehumanizing round-up by U.S. border agents because they believe it still gives them a slim hope of obtaining better lives for their families.

Yolanda de la Cruz, from Guatemala, was arrested when she and her four-year-old son crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without having legal documents for herself. She had tried three times to file for asylum without success. In mid-July she was reunited with her son, after border officials had separated them for six weeks. She told a reporter from *al-Jazeera*

(Above) Women and children from Central America wait for processing by U.S. border agents.

that when agents arrested her at an airport: "My son stayed there sitting, and I said, 'I'll be back.' He started to scream, calling 'Mommy, Mommy!' But I couldn't go back."

Her son was sent to a government facility in Texas and then to a privately run one in Oklahoma, the type of incarceration that thousands of immigrant children have been subjected to. Yolanda did not speak with her son for 30 days. "He is traumatized by what happened," his mother said. "He has nightmares, wets the bed, and he tells me, 'please, don't send me back to that place.'"

Human beings don't bring their children to another country with the purpose of disrupting civil society

(continued on page 5)

Where science and socialism intersect

By BARRY WEISLEDER

I strongly recommend the latest book by Ian Angus, "A Redder Shade of Green." This anthology, published by Monthly Review Press (New York, 2017, 198 pages), contains well-written articles, very accessible to non-experts, that first appeared between 2009 and 2017. They summarize the latest scientific findings on the state of the environment and provide cogent arguments against climate change deniers and environmental reformists.

A compelling case is made for involvement in existing social movements that are doing what can be done right now to reduce carbon emissions. Opposition to the construction of oil pipelines, to fracking for gas, and to military operations (all of which consume inordinate levels of carbon-based energy) are the leading examples.

This book is a fitting companion piece to Angus' prodigious work, "Facing the Anthropocene" (2016), which adduces a sweeping political economy of carbon capitalism, from its origins to today.

The author roots eco-socialism, the programme for system change to avoid catastrophic climate change, in the seminal works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and their Red Chemist colleague Carl Schorlemmer. Angus not only explains the "metabolic rift" between capitalist production and nature, but documents how the "Great Acceleration" of post-World War II fossil fuel usage defines a new fraught epoch, the Anthropocene.

The insatiable drive of global capi-



talism to grow and profit, at any cost, threatens to disrupt the "Earth System" irreparably, portending the end of human civilization.

"A Redder Shade of Green" correctly targets the system of irrational growth and waste, and it identifies the tiny class that rules over it. Redder rejects the claims of liberal Greens and pro-capitalist conservationists that all or most of humanity is fundamentally to blame for excessively eating, clothing, sheltering, and reproducing itself.

The sub-title of the book, "Intersections of Science and Socialism," signifies its strength. It affirms its commitment to build mass movements in the streets to challenge the powers that be. Effectiveness can best be achieved by collaborating with everyone willing to fight for a better future, regardless of

(Above) Effects of climate change: Europe, like much of the world, has suffered record-breaking heat this summer. Massive forest fires have raged throughout the continent, from Sweden to Spain and Greece.

differences on social class and ultimate political goals. At the same time, Angus insists, eco-socialists should relentlessly advance a scientific critique of the fundamental enemy.

Unfortunately, the intersection of socialism, as a philosophy or programme, with the revolutionary vanguard of the working class, is entirely missing. The paramount need to create a political party, one that is capable of leading the struggle against the toxic mode of production, towards a socialist and democratic conclusion is conspicuous

by its absence.

Angus seems to try to justify postponement or abandonment of the project of building a revolutionary workers' party with the comment, "we have to accept that the socialist movement is not going to triumph in the immediate future" (page 163).

Just as it is foolhardy to try to predict when the Earth System, an incredibly complex and unpredictable matrix, will go beyond "the tipping point," it has been repeatedly proven wrong to exclude the outbreak of socialist revolution.

After all, as "Redder" demonstrates, the world is dominated by a global socio-economic system riddled with deep and explosive contradictions. Indeed, no workers' revolution that did take place actually happened as predicted. And those upheavals that were first predicted did not occur when or where they were anticipated.

Furthermore, when revolutionary conditions arise, it is usually too late to start building a party; it is then too late to get it sufficiently rooted to be able to lead insurgent masses to a decisive victory. Given the dire fate of the environment today, humanity can ill afford to squander any opportunity to make radical change.

Finally, it begs the question: Where are the eco-socialists going to find the most like-minded comrades? Where will they find the very best builders of broad, mass movements now needed, if not in a revolutionary workers' party or pre-party formation? That recognition is actually the Reddest Shade of Green. ■

JOIN SOCIALIST ACTION!

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers' movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where various groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers' party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite—whose profit-driven system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics—not alliances with the bosses' parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a Labor Party based on the trade unions.

We support the struggles of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism—women, LGBT people, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation's capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. We maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be smashed. That is why we fight for revolution. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers' government, and the fight for socialism. Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

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Anti-fascists face rightists, cops in Portland

By STEVE XAVIER

On Aug. 4, the Patriot Prayer group, led by Joey Gibson, the GOP U.S. Senate candidate in Washington state, organized a mobilization of far-right and neo-fascist groupings in Portland, Ore. This rally included the proto-fascist Proud Boys, an organization that has repeatedly, and violently, attacked the Occupy ICE camp in Portland. Militia members with Confederate flag patches on their clothing joined with neo-Nazis at Waterfront Park. Proud Boys wore t-shirts celebrating the murderous Pinochet dictatorship and depicting “leftists” being thrown from helicopters.

An anti-fascist counter-mobilization of thousands squared off against the rightists, while hundreds of cops tried to separate the two opposed forces. The counter-protest included unions, left organizations like the International Socialist Organization and the DSA, as well as other anti-fascist forces. The protesters outnumbered the reactionaries decisively. *Unicorn Riot*, an anti-fascist news outlet, reported collusion between cops and rightists.

Predictably, the cops attacked the counter-protesters with explosive “flash bangs” and tear gas. Chanting, “Whose streets? Our streets!” counter-protesters refused to disperse when cops ordered the demonstration to leave the area of the rightist rally. As police attacked counter-protesters, much to the delight of the rightists, some anti-fascists responded by throwing bottles and rocks. Under police cover, the reactionaries tried to take the streets—only to be told to return to the park.

Activists reported four arrests, and one woman was said to have been taken to the hospital. Press reports say that numerous counter-protesters were injured. *Willamette Week* reports that “as in past protests, police force was aimed squarely and nearly exclusively at one side: the antifascists.”

The role of cops and the state

Farrell Dobbs, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the 20th century, speaking about the struggle against fascism, pointed out: “The line of the police is to defend the exercise of the formal democratic rights of the fascists, on the one hand, and not to “see” the violations of the democratic rights of the fascists’ victims. Meanwhile, the cops take full advantage of any violation of bourgeois-democratic law that the anti-fascists may commit. In any kind of confrontation between antifascist and fascist forces, the basic line of the cops is to protect the fascists in any way they can and to join in the victimization of the antifascists.”

Socialists understand that police are the armed enforcers of the capitalist order that is upheld by the



courts, prisons, and politicians. As Dobbs asserted, cops “protect the rights of the fascists while at the same time using fascist forces to try to keep others from exercising those (democratic) rights. One of the forces used to implement this is that most malevolent of all the repressive instruments of capitalist rule, the police forces. The police structure is of a character that makes it a breeding ground for fascists.”

Socialists advocate mass counter-mobilizations against fascists wherever they try to spew their racist filth in public. We also support the right of oppressed peoples and the labor movement, the targets of the reactionaries’ hate, to defend themselves against racist violence.

Fascism: symptom of capitalism in crisis

We reject the notion that Trump is a fascist. Nevertheless, Trump’s right-wing populism has given new vitality to fascist and extreme-right forces through his utilization of racist, sexist, Islamophobic, and anti-immigrant rhetoric to energize his base. As one fascist leader put it, “Trump has set us free.” This was demonstrated by Trump’s refusal to disavow the fascist mobilization in Charlottesville last summer, calling some of the fascists “very fine people.”

The problem with the constant barrage of this or that Republican being a fascist is that it makes it more

difficult to recognize the real thing when it rears its head. Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky characterized fascism as a mass movement of “the crazed petty bourgeoisie [the “middle-class”] and the bands of declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat [shiftless and criminal elements]—all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy.”

Fascism is a symptom of capitalism in crisis. While fascists often use anti-capitalist rhetoric, their purpose is to preserve the capitalist order by smashing the workers’ movement. Although the fascists are currently a fringe movement, the capitalist class will use their services as strong-arm strikebreakers, terrorists, and assassins if it appears necessary—and even, under conditions of extreme crisis, put the fascists in charge of the government, as happened in Germany and Italy before the Second World War.

Defeating fascism and the ultra-right requires mass counter-mobilizations, defense of the right to self-defense, independence from the state—police, courts, and politicians—and relentless class struggle. Fascism is the manifestation of all of the horrors of the capitalist system vomited forth for all to see. The ultimate defeat of the fascists requires the abolition of the capitalist system itself. ■

Pack the courtroom for Mumia on Aug. 30!

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

PHILADELPHIA—Oral arguments on behalf of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal will take place here on Aug. 30 before Judge Leon Tucker of the city and county Court of Common Pleas. Defense activists plan to fill the courtroom and to demonstrate outside to demand a new trial for Mumia and his freedom. Socialist Action urges all supporters of civil liberties to come to Philadelphia to join the Aug. 30 protest, starting at 8 a.m. at 1301 Filbert St.

Mumia, an award-winning journalist and Black movement activist, was convicted in a notoriously biased frame-up trial of murdering a Philadelphia police officer in 1981. He has remained in prison for over 36 years, and has suffered recently from medical problems that were allowed to go untreated.

The *Williams v. Pennsylvania* decision in the U.S. Supreme Court provided an opening for attorneys to appeal Mumia’s conviction. In 2016, Terrance Williams argued successfully that Judge Ronald Castille, who was on the bench in appeals of Williams’ murder conviction in Pennsylvania’s Supreme Court, had also been personally involved in prosecution of his case years earlier as Philadelphia district attorney. In the court victory, Williams’ death sentence was vacated.

On similar grounds, Mumia’s attorneys

have filed appeals stating that Judge Castille had been personally involved in his case, when as district attorney he worked to uphold Mumia’s conviction. At an April 30, 2018, court hearing, however, the prosecution stated that they had found no evidence corroborating Castille’s prior involvement in the case.

This indicates that the office of current DA Larry Krasner will oppose Mumia’s petition to throw out the state Supreme Court’s denial of his appeals, which would allow him to re-file an appeal. Krasner attracted national attention when he ran as a liberal “reformer” during his campaign for district attorney a year ago, but has shown no inclination to look very deeply into the racism and judicial prejudice surrounding Mumia’s case.

Judge Tucker told Mumia to file an amended petition based on new evidence released by the prosecution during the “discovery” process. That petition, which was filed on July 9, will be argued on Aug. 30. Mumia is represented by attorneys Judith Ritter, professor at the Widener School of Law, and Samuel Spital, of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund.

The petition states that documents newly released by the prosecution show that Ronald Castille, as Philadelphia district attorney, participated in a critical decision to expedite issuing warrants

for execution, particularly for those who were convicted as “police killers.” That is the category Mumia was placed in.

The petition points out that the new evidence includes a June 15, 1990, letter from Castille to Gov. Robert Casey “imploping him to sign and issue death warrants in such cases. ... The letter represented the culmination of several months of Mr. Castille soliciting information about the status of Philadelphia’s capital cases, including Mr. Abu-Jamal’s case. ... Castille urged the Governor to ‘send a clear and dramatic message to all police killers that the death penalty in Pennsylvania actually means something.’”

The prosecution has stated that because the June 1990 letter did not specifically name Mumia, it cannot be used as evidence of Castille’s personal involvement in the case. The amended petition by the defense has responded by making it clear that Castille’s urging the governor to sign death warrants undoubtedly applied to Mumia—who was the subject of the most known and publicized case of an alleged “police killer.”

Whether the prosecution bothered to find and release *all* of the documents that might establish Castille’s involvement in Mumia’s case is not known. The petition also pointed out, “*While not necessary for Mr. Abu-Jamal to prevail in this Petition, a letter to the Governor*

about signing a warrant for Mr. Abu-Jamal’s execution could very well be amongst documents that have not been found by the Commonwealth.”

Attorney Rachel Wilkinstein commented in a memo sent to supporters of Mumia’s defense: “It is without a doubt that the District Attorney’s office has suppressed and/or destroyed documents showing Castille’s personal involvement in Mumia’s case—direct input into legal arguments against Mumia’s appeal claims, tracking the status of his direct appeal and seeking a death warrant against Mumia and seeking his execution.

“The prosecutors who worked on Mumia’s case for decades—specifically Ronald Eisenberg and Hugh Grant—have known since the *Williams* decision that Mumia would make a new challenge to Castille’s bias in denying his appeals. They left the DA’s office before Krasner assumed his position as District Attorney. No attempt was made to review their personal file. Nor was there an attempt to review Castille’s files.

“Significantly the prosecution absurdly argues that Castille’s involvement in tracking capital cases and attempting to expedite death warrants, particularly in cases of those convicted as “police killers,” does not apply to Mumia. With that conclusion, the prosecution opposes Mumia’s petition. The prosecution has taken a political decision, not a legal one. Krasner’s office continues the frame-up conviction of Mumia.” ■



(Left) Marginalized workers of Haitian descent join May Day 2018 march in Santo Domingo, D.R.

Haitians face expulsion from the U.S. and the Dominican Republic

By MARTY GOODMAN

Haitian immigrants face a double-barreled wall of racism, from Donald Trump as well as from the historic racism of the ruling class of the Dominican Republic, which shares its border with Haiti.

After decades of racist bipartisan immigration policy toward Haitians, in November 2017 Donald Trump revoked the Temporary Protective Status (TPS) of 58,000 Haitian immigrants. The administration announced that TPS for Haitian nationals will expire on July 22, 2019. Some 27,000 U.S. citizen children face family separation. Obama granted TPS to Haitians in the wake of Haiti's catastrophic January 2010 earthquake, causing over 200,000 deaths and displacing 2 million. But Haiti is now "safe" to return to, said a recent White House statement.

In recent years, Haiti has seen a death toll of 10,000 and 800,000 infected from a cholera epidemic, multiple hurricanes, the still uncompleted earthquake clean-up, 40% unemployment, anti-government unrest, and mass expulsions from the Dominican Republic.

Haiti cannot accommodate a massive influx from the United States!

The policy is consistent with Trump's racist anti-Haiti remarks: a "shithole" country, Haitians "all have AIDS," "why would we want any more Haitians?" and his call to "take them out" of a proposed bipartisan immigration deal.

Trump had already cut TPS from 1000 Sudanese, 5300 Nicaraguans, 9000 Nepalis, and 260,000 Salvadorans—who will all have to leave the U.S. in 2019 if they can't win residency. Some 275,000 U.S.-citizen children of TPS holders are affected. Also impacted are Queer and trans people who fear violent attack.

A suit filed on March 15 in New York claims violations of law and the Constitution by Trump administration officials with racial hostility toward Haitians. Bringing the lawsuit is the National Lawyers Guild (NIPNLG) and the law firms of Kurzban, Kurzban, Weinger, Tetzeli and Pratt P.A. (Kurzban). The suit includes a dozen plaintiffs, including *Haiti Liberté*, the largest weekly Haitian newspaper, and Family Action Network Movement, Inc. (FANM). Co-counsel Ira

Kurzban, said, "Make no mistake, Trump's decision to terminate Haitian TPS is motivated by his repellent bias towards Haitians and other people of color."

Mobilizations of immigrant rights advocates have spread throughout the U.S., protesting the elimination of TPS and DACA programs. On July 26, one such demonstration was held in downtown Manhattan, sponsored by at least two-dozen activist immigration forces. The action attracted 300.

Meanwhile, inspired by Trump, racist Dominican politicians have called for building a wall at the Dominican-Haitian border. In May, there were 11,000 expulsions at the border and of 5000 Haitians living in the DR. During the first three months of the year, nearly 35,000 Haitians were deported. There are 750,000 Haitians living in the Dominican Republic—with over 200,000 subject to possible deportation.

The Dominican Deputy for the National District, Vinicio Castillo, has said, "For me, there is a crucial issue for the Dominican Republic, its sovereignty. ... We are experiencing a peaceful invasion of an indigent population." Castillo has vowed he would collect more than 300,000 signatures for a wall, promote a bill, and possibly a national referendum.

In the past, U.S. military personnel have assisted the DR, a staunch anti-communist ally, at its border, providing training and technology. Moreover, Haitian paramilitary trained undisturbed in the DR before launching two bloody coups—in 1991 and 2004.

In 2013, the Dominican government targeted Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent with a racist court decision known as "La Sentencia 168/13," which stripped citizenship rights from more than 250,000 individuals whose families had immigrated to the DR since 1929. The DR government has deported tens of thousands, although many have never been to Haiti. Tens of thousands fled deportation and mob violence.

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have demanded a halt to the expulsions.

The Dominican ruling class has historically promoted what's called "anti-Haitianism." In 1937, up to 40,000 Haitians were murdered in a few days by Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo. Anti-Haitianism portrays everything "black" as bad. Anti-Haitianism is used as a scapegoat for the government's failed economic policies dictated by the U.S.-dominated World Bank. ■

Haiti rebels against World Bank policies

By MARTY GOODMAN

From one end to the other, Haiti was lit up July 6, 7, and 8 as a mass uprising engulfed the country. Igniting the flame was a massive fuel price hike that was called on July 6 at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the gangster-like enforcement arm of the U.S.-dominated World Bank, in exchange for a \$96 million loan to Haiti. Haitians have called World Bank/IMF plans "the death plan."

Working-class and unemployed Haitians (40%) from one end of the country to another, blocked roads, burned tires, discharged guns, and wrecked some 80 stores, including torching three supermarkets owned by Reginald Boulos, president of the national chamber of commerce and industry of Haiti. The U.S. issued a travel advisory and airlines cancelled flights.

As many as 20 people were killed and more than 50 arrested. As a result of the brutal austerity regime in Haiti, the deaths must be laid at the door of international capitalism and U.S. imperialism.

Due to the scale of protests—some say larger than the protests that brought down dictator "Baby Doc" in 1986—within hours of the announcement, Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant announced that the government was suspending the price hike.

A week later, on July 14, Lafontant resigned along with his cabinet, sparking a governmental crisis. By resigning, Lafontant was able to head-off a no confidence

vote in parliament the same day.

President Jovenel Moïse, who likens himself to Donald Trump, received only 20% of the vote for president and was under investigation for money laundering before firing the lead investigator. Moïse called the hike just 10 minutes into the highly anticipated Brazil versus Belgium world cup soccer match, in which Haitian fans were rooting for Brazil. A Brazilian win would dampen the sting of a price hike, thought the cynical president—but Brazil lost. The enraged masses immediately took to the streets after hearing of Moïse's savage price hike.

"They were waiting for when we were about to be happy because of Brazil, and then they put the knife in our belly," said an unemployed man in Port au Prince, the nation's capital. "They don't want us to laugh even just once." Gasoline, used by working people to get to their jobs, jumped 38% overnight to \$4.60 a gallon, and kerosene, used by the poor to cook and light lamps, jumped 51% to \$4 a gallon. The World Bank says that about 59 percent of the population makes less than the equivalent of \$2.41 per day. Inflation is 12.8% in Haiti, where prices are already high for consumer goods.

Haiti became a member of the IMF in September 1953, and agreed to an incredible 33 IMF-supported programs. Acceptance of IMF loan repayment schemes require adoption of what has been dubbed "structural adjustment" policies, which include: privatization of state-owned enterprises, slashing tariffs

on locally produced food, cutting governmental spending on public services, and making it easier for foreigners to invest.

The Haitian government-in-exile accepted such an agreement in 1994 by then Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in exchange for a U.S./UN military occupation of his country. The occupation removed a bloody CIA-backed coup that overthrew Aristide in 1991, but left the corrupt ruling class intact.

Secret Wikileaks documents revealed the role of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in the 2010-2011 presidential elections in Haiti. Clinton pressured the Haitian electoral council to bump up the status of the pro-U.S. candidate Michel Martelly, a known associate of criminal and coup elements. With Clinton's help, Martelly was able to enter run-off elections and win. And the U.S. corporate media screams about Russian influence in the U.S. elections!

Central to the demands of protesters is ending corruption. President Moïse, just days before the protests, ordered cops to destroy homes near Moïse's house so that he could build a private road and helipad. Those who lost their homes were not compensated, despite neighborhood protests. In addition, Moïse calls himself "the banana man," whose large banana farm displaced local farmers' land, again without compensation.

The embezzlement and wasting of \$3.8 billion from the Venezuela-provided PetroCaribe fund over the past few years raised the level of the corruption issue.

Included are huge subsidies for parliamentarian's homes, often a second one, which contributes to the outrage felt by the impoverished and jobless masses.

Leading up to the July rebellion, workers took to Haiti's streets in big numbers on May 1, International Workers Day. Marchers demand an increase in the official minimum wage from 350 gourdes (US\$5.38) to 1000 gourdes (US\$15.36) per day.

The Confederation of Haitian Workers (CTH), the National Central of Haitian Workers (CNOHA), and other unions led the protests through the central Champ de Mars. A separate May Day march of 1000 sweatshop workers in Port au Prince was led by Bataye Ouvriye (BO), a leftist union. Some two weeks later in the capital, BO led an estimated 20,000 in three days of protests.

According to Haitilibre news service, the Socialist Alternative and "Rasin kan pèp" parties, as well as political organizations of the "democratic and popular" movement, which brings together some 20 opposition political parties, mobilizations have been announced to take place throughout August to demand the resignation of President Jovenel Moïse and the release of people who were arrested during the fuel hike demonstrations.

The July rebellion was, it is agreed, virtually leaderless. There is a desperate need today for a revolutionary socialist party to emerge from within the Haitian working class to lead the masses in a fight against capitalism, the World Bank, and U.S. imperialism. Building solidarity with the emerging struggle in Haiti is more important now than ever! ■

To my union brothers & sisters: Immigrants are not your enemies

By A WORKING UNION CARPENTER

All of us in the building trades have heard it said often, “They are taking our jobs!” “They are pushing wages down!” Politicians exploit this sentiment with hateful speech, and the union bureaucrats who run our unions echo this language to divert us from the truth—these workers are much like the rest of us. All they want is to work and support their families. The racist anti-immigrant rhetoric used by our union leaders and capitalist politicians only serves to divide us.

Immigrants come to the U.S. for a variety of reasons. Many are looking for a better life, one free from economic hardship and poverty. Others come fleeing harsh political repression and violent drug cartels.

It’s important to understand that the economies of Latin American countries are underdeveloped and poverty stricken because of the conditions imposed by U.S. imperialism and multinational corporations. The North American Free Trade Agreement didn’t just

have an effect on U.S. workers; NAFTA imploded sectors of the Mexican economy.

The U.S. policy of supporting dictators and military coups in Latin America, the most recent in Honduras in 2009, have resulted in repression, union busting, murders, and disappearances of activists. Drug activity by cartels exacerbates the problems of societies that are already stressed by underdevelopment. Cartels and governments often cooperate, either covertly or more openly.

Socialists assert the right of working people to travel and migrate without the restrictions imposed by capitalist-imposed borders. As the Wobblies and other old-time unionists used to point out, the working class has no country! Our solidarity lies with the sisters and brothers of the worldwide working class. The interests of the capitalists, a tiny parasitic class, and the *proletariat*—the class that does the work and creates all of the wealth—are fundamentally opposed.

And what about the workers without documents—

so-called “illegals?” Undocumented workers are specially oppressed victims of the bosses’ greed—generally *forced* to labor for skimpy wages and no benefits, and without union representation. They are victimized by employers, cops, and the system. By virtue of their undocumented status, they cannot be a “drain” on social services, as racist politicians like to claim. The truth is that they contribute taxes without any recourse or compensation.

The solution is not deportations and victimization but recognizing that the undocumented workers are our brothers and sisters. They are a component part of the U.S. working class and deserve our support and solidarity. Rather than repeating the bosses’ talking points, our unions should be fighting to organize these workers into a strengthened labor movement.

Fight for papers for all and the right to organize! Stop deportations and keep families together! Stop workplace raids! Abolish ICE and the whole repressive machinery of the state! ■

... Immigration

(continued from page 1)

or committing wanton violence. That is a racist myth, one that justifies ICE’s existence and guides every action they take. Indeed, that myth has underpinned the policy decisions, of not just Trump but of all past administrations, Republican or Democratic.

But this absurdity is what you would have to believe to support the actions of ICE. Many U.S. citizens understand this; tens of thousands took part in demonstrations in over 700 U.S. cities on July 30 to demand “Don’t break up families” and “Abolish Ice.” More recently, immigration activists have built Occupy encampments near the offices of ICE in Philadelphia, San Francisco, Portland, New York, and other major U.S. cities. Workers at Microsoft and Amazon have attempted to stop their technologies from being used to abuse and control immigrant workers.

To try to understand why immigrant workers are trying to find a new home, it is useful to look more closely at Guatemala. A 1944 revolution saw the establishment of a reformist democratic government. After the country’s land-reform program was seen by the United Fruit Company to threaten its interests, the CIA instigated a coup in 1954. Hundreds of peasant leaders were rounded up and executed.

Later, under Reagan’s watch, the genocidal Rios Montt presidency was fully supported under the guise of anti-communism. Hundreds of thousands were slaughtered with full U.S. support. The kind of barbarity suffered in Guatemala at the hands of U.S. imperialism was repeated in El Salvador and Nicaragua, where the U.S. supported counterrevolutionary death squads.

We should not forget the 2009 military coup in Honduras, an operation Hillary Clinton has admitted to being involved with. Following the coup, the murder rate in Honduras skyrocketed—increasing by 50% from 2008 to 2011. Peasant organizers, LGBT activists, and opposition political candidates have been killed. Drug-related violence and governmental corruption have both mushroomed. Unemployment affects 44 percent of the working population.

The struggles that workers face in traveling to the U.S. border cannot be adequately understood without reference to the crushing of democracy and job opportunities in these countries. The “problem” of immigration must be placed squarely at the door of the U.S. government and the capitalist owners of industry.

Role of immigrants in the U.S. economy

There is plenty of work that *must* be done in the United States to improve the lives of its inhabitants. Public works are a constant need, and virtually every industry could use a reduction of working hours. Food and shelter are not in short supply, though often unaffordable. The U.S. alone grows enough grain, in caloric amounts, to end world hunger. There are more empty apartments in major cities than homeless people. In a rational society, willing laborers would be welcomed to the country.

But the capitalist does not want you to be rational. They want you to be racist. Racism is used primarily to divide the working class into easy-to-chew bits. If immigrant workers can be made afraid, then they won’t report abuse, they will take lower wages, they will eschew benefits, accept worse housing and health care, if only to avoid deportation.

This is all very profitable. After all, workers are only exchangeable cogs in the bosses’ eyes. Why not hire the cheaper form of labor—those who are most vulnerable? And likewise, migrant labor is much easier to maintain if the rest of the workers are too scared of foreigners to see that the real enemy is at home, sitting on top of

them—the capitalists who profit from their labor.

The barbarisms of the Trump administration are only the manifestation of a longstanding policy that criminalizes immigration and scapegoats immigrants as the source of our economic and social problems—rather than the capitalist exploiters.

The Obama administration saw the largest number of deportations to date, and both the Obama and Bush administrations laid the legal groundwork that made the Trump barbarisms possible.

If the Trump and Obama administrations differed at all on this issue, it was simply in regard to the *degree* of cruelty with which immigrant workers could be treated—not on whether they warranted being treated like human beings in the first place.

Both Obama and Trump are dedicated to the capitalist system of exploitation for private profit, which necessitates tight control of the labor force within a country. The question of the “legality” of an immigrant worker is one that only capitalism asks.

Abolish ICE!

The call to abolish ICE is certainly timely. A Pew poll in mid-July showed that a slightly larger grouping of Americans view ICE unfavorably (47%) than those who view it favorably (44%). Even many liberal Democratic Party politicians have gotten on the anti-ICE bandwagon, in an attempt to increase their support from among the progressive-minded electorate. New York gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon referred to ICE as a “terrorist organization!” In July, three House Democrats even put a bill on the agenda of Congress to do away with ICE within one year, but more senior Democrats later indicated that they would vote against the bill.

New Democratic Party star Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), made the slogan “abolish ICE” one of the cornerstones of her successful primary election bid for U.S. Senator in June. More recently, however, Ocasio Cortez has hedged on her statements, saying that she wants to see ICE replaced with an “updated INS-like structure,” referring to the earlier Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Principled immigration activists and socialists point out that it is worthless to call for the abolition of ICE, while accepting an agency that restricts immigration with only slightly less cruelty. Detentions of immigrants were *already* high in the decade before the national security crackdown that followed the 9/11 tragedy (ICE was created in 2002). In the earlier decade, over 1,200,000 immigrants faced proceedings in U.S. federal courts, slightly less than two-thirds of the number after 9/11.

And today, the arrests and repression on the border are handled by several agencies—not just by ICE. We have to demand that ICE and the *entire* police and prison apparatus that is used to persecute immigrants be dismantled.

Change the system!

“Providing jobs and education to all the refugees would be too expensive” is often bleated out by people in government who are more than willing to vote for yet more billions into the capitalist war machine. This is to

Socialists file for ballot



(Above) On Aug. 8, campaign volunteers handed in over 10,900 signatures to put Fred Linck, Socialist Action candidate for U.S. Senator, on the Connecticut ballot.

say nothing about the stockpiles of tools, equipment, and food that are simply sitting in warehouses waiting to be sold for a profit! It is not a matter of funds but political will. If the workers decided to remake society, to create a new system in which fulfilling human needs came first, it would be hard to stop them.

Could these demands, these calls for basic humanity, be achievable today? Yes! Revolutionary socialists do not put off socialism and workers’ control of the economy to some far-away utopian date. It is achievable now. Dignity, safety, and democracy for all workers—including immigrants—is possible today. In the process of organizing against racist deportation and the vile immigration system, working people will hopefully see that they have the power to tear down the entire rotten edifice of capitalist society.

The fundamental solution is with the working class, and it requires action and solidarity throughout the world. The spread of capitalism over the 20th century resulted in the worldwide penetration of industry and the exploitation of workers for the capitalist market. Because of this, the working class in this country has a stake in the survival and wellbeing of the global working class.

Solidarity of the workers and their allies against the exploiters is key, and this path has been bravely blazed by many, from those in the Occupy encampments against ICE to outright refusals at the workplace or in our communities to cooperate with them. This resistance must become universal and ongoing if the workers are to win. Abolish ICE! Welcome all war refugees! End solitary confinement and family separation! Money for jobs and education! ■

Nicaragua: Dynamics of an interrupted revolution



(Left) Cheering crowds in Managua greet Sandinista guerrillas in 1979.

By JEFF MACKLER

The unfolding events in Nicaragua over the past three months pose two critical questions for socialists and antiwar activists. Where do we stand on the critical issue of U.S. imperialist intervention and where do we stand with regard to the dynamics of the still-unfolding confrontations?

That U.S. imperialism is intervening in Nicaragua today against the capitalist FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) government of Daniel Ortega cannot be denied. President Trump has openly threatened to send U.S. troops. Over the past three years a few million dollars, \$4.1 million to be precise, has been openly sent by the CIA-controlled National Endowment for Democracy to various NGOs and other anti-FSLN groups.*

Every major U.S. newspaper today regularly blares shrill denunciations of the Nicaraguan government, demonizes Ortega, and quotes extensively from its sources in the Nicaraguan Catholic Church, the COSEP (Superior Council of Private Enterprise), and from some right-wing Nicaraguan student members of the capitalist-dominated Alianza Cívica por la Justicia y la Democracia (Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy)—who recently visited a few of most virulent Heritage Foundation reactionaries in Washington, D.C. These included the anti-Cuban Revolution Senators Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, who currently lead a bipartisan effort to urge Congress to impose sanctions on Nicaragua. Similarly, Civic Alliance students met in El Salvador with representatives of the long-governing death squad ARENA party.

None of this is new, either with regard to U.S. policy in Nicaragua or anywhere else in the world. U.S. imperialism's interventionist war budget exceeds \$1 trillion annually, perhaps much more since the accounting excludes figures for the secret operations of the CIA and other covert government agencies organized to defend and advance U.S. "national security" interests by any means necessary.

U.S. intervention takes a multitude of forms, depending on the specific situation in each country. These vary from direct intervention via overt wars, as is the case today in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Niger, Somalia, Libya, and Yemen (*The New York Times*, March 15, 2018) to special operation wars. The scope of the latter was reported in a revealing article in the Sept. 24, 2015, *TomDispatch.com* by Nick Turse, a fellow at The Nation Institute who has written for *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Nation*.

Turse states: "U.S. Special Operations forces have already been deployed to 135 nations, according to Ken McGraw, a spokesman for Special Operations

Shockingly, there was never a major land reform under Sandinista rule. The majority of arable land remains in capitalist hands.

Command (SOCOM). That's roughly 70 percent of the countries on the planet. Every day, in fact, America's most elite troops are carrying out missions in 80 to 90 nations, practicing night raids or sometimes conducting them for real, engaging in sniper training or sometimes actually gunning down enemies from afar.

As part of a global engagement strategy of endless hush-hush operations conducted on every continent but Antarctica, they have now eclipsed the number and range of special ops missions undertaken at the height of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Turse summarized his case demonstrating the scope of this sophisticated and unprecedented covert U.S. war machine: "In the waning days of the Bush administration, Special Operations Forces (SOF) were reportedly deployed in *only* about 60 nations around the world. By 2010 [under the Obama administration—J.M.], according to the *Washington Post*, that number had swelled to 75. Three years later, it had jumped to 134 nations, slipping to 133 last year, before reaching a new record of 135 this summer." [Emphasis added—J.M.] No doubt the figures under Donald Trump are similar.

To these more hidden forms of U.S. intervention and war, we must add the U.S.-imposed embargoes, blockades, and sanctions, as well as the now routine and deadly covert drone wars. And we might add to the list the crippling U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund-imposed conditions that demand austerity as the price of usurious loans.

I cite all of the above only to make the point that U.S. intervention against its perceived "enemies" in Nicaragua, and indeed everywhere on earth, is the rule—not the exception. In response to all of the above, and doubly or triply so with regard to poor and oppressed nations, the U.S. antiwar movement must stand unequivocally and unconditionally opposed to all U.S. imperialist interventions.

U.S. hands off! Out now! Self-determination for Nicaragua and all other poor and oppressed nations! These demands are the precondition for any serious

effort to build a U.S. antiwar movement capable of challenging and defeating the U.S. war machine and its record of mass murder, devastation, exploitation and conquest.

Socialists are not idle commentators

In this anti-imperialist context, however, each component of any successful U.S.-based united front, democratic, mass-action movement must be free to express its own views on the internal dynamics operating in each nation where any form of U.S. intervention is underway. I say this because serious revolutionary currents with forces in the U.S. *and* worldwide, including in Nicaragua, can never be idle commentators with perspectives limited to U.S. politics. Socialist internationalists aim at building revolutionary socialist parties in every nation.

Hence, I present the views of Socialist Action with regard to Nicaragua today. But first a note on our credentials—on our standing to critique not only the policies of U.S. imperialism but the politics of the capitalist Daniel Ortega-FSLN government.

Beginning with the July 19, 1979, revolutionary victory of the FSLN over the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship and the events leading up to it, Socialist Action was among the central organizations that sought to construct a powerful and massive U.S. movement that demanded first and foremost, "No U.S. intervention in Central America and the Caribbean!"

The times were propitious for such work. In addition to the defeat of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, who slaughtered 50,000 workers and peasants in the final months of his rule, the workers of Grenada and El Salvador were on the rise. Led by Maurice Bishop and his New Jewel Movement (Joint Endeavor for Welfare, Education and Liberation), Grenadian revolutionaries toppled the murderous, Mongoose Gang dictatorship of the U.S.-backed, Sir Mathew Eric Gairy regime. Gairy was knighted "Sir" by the British House of Lords for his role as essentially Great Britain's loyal "independent" colonial administrator.

In El Salvador, guerrilla fighters were on the move to challenge the U.S.-backed and armed death-squad regime that was responsible for the murder of El Salvador's Archbishop Oscar Romero and a group of visiting nuns from Cleveland, Ohio, as well as thousands of workers and peasants who opposed its murderous rule. In Guatemala, revolutionaries were challenging the U.S.-backed Rios Montt dictatorship, which had murdered an estimated 400,000 indigenous people!

In this context, and still fresh from the massive U.S. mobilizations against the U.S. genocidal war in Vietnam that murdered four million Vietnamese, the antiwar movement had become a powerful force in U.S. politics. Tens and hundreds of thousands periodically mobilized against any U.S. threat of intervention in Central America to the point where the U.S. Congress was compelled to pass in 1982 the famous Boland Amendment to a House appropriations bill that banned military aid to the heinous Salvadoran dictatorship and to the Nicaraguan Contras, who sought to overthrow the then revolutionary Sandinista government.

During this period Socialist Action was prominent in every aspect of the rising antiwar movement. Our comrades were invited as prominent guests, representing the U.S. antiwar movement, to International Solidarity Conferences in Managua and Grenada. We were central to the periodic organization of national antiwar conferences in the U.S. that called major national mobilizations across the country. We met with, exchanged views with, and often interviewed in our press FSLN commanders including Daniel Ortega, Jaime Wheelock, Omar Cabezas, and Tomas Borge—to name a few.

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What's behind the protests rocking Nicaragua?

By CHRISTINE MARIE

Since April, hundreds of thousands of Nicaraguans have taken to the streets in protest of the policies of the government led by FSLN President Daniel Ortega. The protests at one point escalated to road blocks and occupations and have been fiercely resisted by the government. Undoubtedly, Nicaraguan society is in crisis. Here, we present some important background information as to its origins.]

It is clear the working class is not in the leadership of the opposition forces currently carrying out a "national dialogue" with the government. A mis-leadership composed of the business group COSEP and the Catholic Church seems to be in the driver's seat in these meetings. Additionally, the United States and other imperialist powers are intervening via the Organization of American States and wooing student groups to demand new elections without any regard for Nicaragua's sovereignty.

Given the number of reactionary players attempting to shape Nicaragua's future, it is important to understand how students, the working class, and small business people came to be ready to take to the streets when the regime proposed to implement International Monetary Fund recommendations to cut pensions.

Since the 2006 election of Daniel Ortega to the presidency, there has been what the Latin American Studies scholar William I. Robinson called an "intensification of capitalist development." The Nicaraguan government, encouraged by the International Monetary Fund, has facilitated a dramatic growth in imperialist investment in Free Trade Zones, infrastructure, agribusiness, and mining. At the same time, according to the *Christian Science Monitor* (Nov. 7, 2011), large contributions from Venezuela were used to bolster private companies tied to key figures in the ruling FSLN party.

The resulting lop-sided economic growth, not unsurprisingly, has led to a series of ecological crises that are threatening peasants and indigenous peoples, and to new inequalities that must be faced by workers, small businesses, and the people making a living in the informal sector. Significant layers of the Nicaraguan population have responded to these indignities over the last decade with protests.

In 2014, discontent with the state of affairs was threatening enough to the ruling FSLN that it fought and won legislation to overturn the term limits that would have prevented Ortega from running again for office. In 2016, FSLN power was used to press the Supreme Court to disqualify Ortega's main opponent from the election altogether, bringing civil libertarians into the forefront of the social movement.

One of the most graphic responses to the FSLN electoral manipulation was a demonstration of 10,000 indigenous people who supported the Yatama party in Puerto Cabezas-Bilwi. Yatama has been protesting the FSLN's failure to rein in a massive settler movement that is grabbing land in the autonomous zones where the Miskitu people hold communal property rights. Over half of the Miskitia rainforest region has already been taken by colonists seeking timber, gold, and land for cattle-raising, and the FSLN has not acted.

In April, these settler incursions onto indigenous land resulted in the infamous fire in the Indio Maíz Biodiversity Reserve, a fire that destroyed 6300 hectares or 15,567 acres of protected land. The Nicaraguan government's initial refusal to accept international firefighting help was one of the sparks that ignited the April protest movement, as the catastrophe was such a dramatic example of the "profits before people" ethos of the new Sandinista economic plan for the nation.

The outrage over the Indio Maíz fire was prepared by years of indigenous and rural protests against a concession signed by the regime with the Hong Kong-based HKND Company for a massive and hugely destructive shipping canal that would bisect the country, break up the Mesoamerican biological corridor, and cut through four nature reserves, a globally important wetland, and Central America's largest body of freshwater. The scale of the proposed digging and accompanying land expropriation is hard to grasp. The canal has been slated to be 65 miles long, occupy 500 square miles, and displace at least 7000 people.

In the years since the canal project was announced, rural Nicaraguans and indigenous groups have carried out at least 90 protests (*Havana Times*, April 28, 2018). In the last year, news accounts have begun to report that the canal itself may be dead in the water due to lack of investment and a new deal between Panama and Beijing. But no one in the movement is



relieved, as the legislation that was signed for the canal project, Law 840, allows subsidiary development of deepwater ports, roads, and tourist areas under the same sovereignty-threatening and people-displacing rules. The FSLN has announced that it is going forward, for example, with a deepwater port in the heart of indigenous territory, just north of the Indio Maíz Biodiversity Reserve, at Bluefields (Rico, *Today Nicaragua*, Feb. 15, 2018).

The government's facilitation of big investment by foreign mining companies has led to a new protest movement as well. In Nicaragua, there is no greater symbol of imperialist perfidy than a gold mine. In 1926, the Nicaraguan hero Augusto Sandino famously began his guerrilla war against the Yankees by occupying the San Albino gold mine and using the funds from production to buy weapons for his army, a combat unit that was initially composed of 30 gold miners. After four months of lucrative extraction, he blew up the mine, making it a symbol of international capitalist exploitation (Sandra Cuffe, "Nicaragua's Golden Rule").

In 2015, the residents of the agricultural town of Rancho Grande in the department of Matagalpa, part of the buffer zone of the Bosawás Biosphere Reserve, won a years-long struggle to stop the Canadian company B2Gold's "El Pavón" open-pit gold-mining project there. The Yaoksa Guardians community environmental defense movement not only repeatedly demonstrated despite police violence, but organized a civil resistance campaign against the state that included a boycott of the schools and keeping their children home until the Minister of Education showed up to experience their protests.

The Rancho Grande victory was one high point in a grinding battle now mobilizing regional anti-mining groups from the Chontales, León, and Nueva Segovia departments, united under the banner of a new organization called the National Environmental Movement Against Industrial Mining (MONAFMI). One of the anticipated fights will focus on a proposed new mine in the historic San Albino district, which is to be operated by the Canadian Golden Reign Resources.

In August 2017, Ortega issued executive decree 15-2017, which repeals the country's historic Environmental Evaluation System and allows environmental review of mines to be bypassed all together by a decree of the Ministry of the Environment. At the same

(Top) Women in Managua in June help construct a barricade against police and paramilitary attacks.

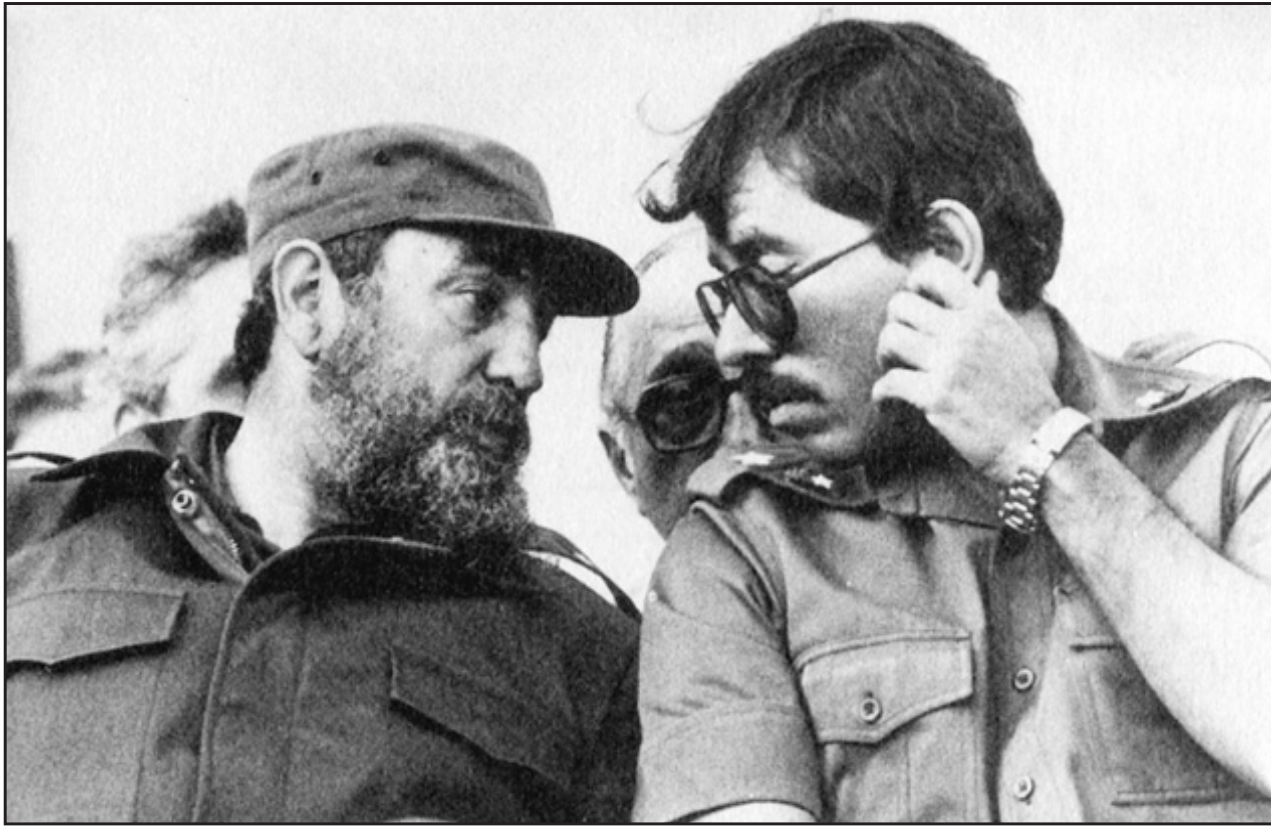
(Below) Funeral for a protester killed by police.

time, the people of Santa Cruz de la India were in the streets contending with riot police in order to protest an attempt to start a mining project, backed by the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC), to be run by the UK-based Condor Gold. Civil resistance prevented actual digging for nearly a year but in July, the company submitted a revised permit plan to Managua, which is expected to be approved.

Condor Gold expects to produce 80,000 ounces of gold a year from this one pit. Its expectations are in line with the ecologically damaging and demographically disruptive national output of gold and silver, which has grown seven times since the 2007 election of Ortega (Cecelia Jasmine, *mining.com*, July 6, 2018). It is easy to see why a large layer of the Nicaraguan population feels that it is time to take down Nicaragua's "open for business" sign.

One of the greatest indignities for working-class Nicaraguans has been the drastic expansion of Free Trade Zones. In 2010, Free Trade Zones in Nicaragua accounted for 90% of manufacturing exports from the country (Nathalie Picarelli, "Who Really Benefits from Export Processing Zones?" August 2016). In 2017, the National Commission of Free Zones approved the entry of new companies in the sectors of tobacco, textiles, and agro-industry. There are now 115,000 workers in Nicaragua being exploited by industrialists who have been given a 90% tax exemption for 10 years and pay their laborers an average of \$157 per month, an amount that only comes to 33% of what the government estimates is necessary for a minimum existence.

Investors are not hard to come by, as the maquiladora wage in Nicaragua is the lowest in Central America. However, the bravery of workers demanding drinking water, health care, and lower production goals became international news when a 2016 protest of 3000 workers at the South Korean company Tecnotex in Tipitapa was stormed by government riot police, and organizers were charged and found guilty of crimes with prison sentences. Tecnotex produces garments for export to companies in the United States, including Kohls, Target, JC Penney, and Walmart. ■



(Left) Fidel Castro and Daniel Ortega confer in 1980. Unfortunately, Nicaragua failed to follow the Cuban road by completing its revolution and overturning capitalism.

... Nicaragua

(continued from page 6)

The same collaborative relations were established with Grenada's Prime Minister Bishop and other Grenadian revolutionists based on our key role in founding the broad Grenada Solidarity Committee. We helped to organize national U.S. tours and speaking engagements for several of these revolutionary leaders. We helped win the support of significant sections of the U.S. labor movement for non-interventionist positions, including some dozen national U.S. trade unions. In the San Francisco Bay Area the mass mobilizations that we played a leading role in initiating included endorsements and contingents from all seven Bay Area Central Labor Councils and some 100 trade unions from the area.

Based on our direct experience in Nicaragua and regular contact with Nicaraguan leaders and activists and with access to a wide range of documents, speeches, visits and personal encounters, we were able to detail and record with precision the unfolding and always changing dynamics. Socialist Action produced two major books and countless articles expressing our views of the strengths and weaknesses of the FSLN: "Nicaragua: Dynamics of an Unfinished Revolution," by Alan Benjamin, in 1989, and "Assault on Nicaragua: The Untold Story of the U.S. 'Secret War,'" in 1987.

The latter includes an article by this author entitled, "Nicaragua/Contragate: Strategic Questions for the U.S. Antiwar Movement." This was published *before* the sensational Iran/Contra congressional hearings that revealed the illegal U.S. funding of the infamous Nicaraguan "Contras" via CIA agents and their accomplices, who facilitated bringing crack cocaine into the U.S. in collaboration with the infamous drug-smuggling Colombian Medellin Cartel. Much of the proceeds from the sale of this cocaine was then funneled to the Contras. Additional covert Contra funding was obtained by the CIA from the secret sale, via National Security adviser Oliver North, of U.S. surfaced-to-air Tow missiles to the Iranian government and from funds secured from Zionist Israel and the Saudi Monarchy (See "Inside the Shadow Government," by Daniel Sheehan, 1988).

In short, Socialist Action's 10-year record of opposing U.S. intervention in all its forms afforded us a modest but important national and international platform from which we attempted to influence the course of events in the U.S. and in Nicaragua through direct contacts with the leading Nicaraguan revolutionaries based on our record of unconditional support to Nicaragua's right to self-determination.

Socialist critique of the FSLN

And just what was our stand in relation to the FSLN leadership? While we considered Daniel Ortega and the FSLN's central leaders "revolutionists of action," that is, honest revolutionaries who desired important changes in Nicaraguan society, we recognized that they were fundamentally adverse to breaking with Nicaragua's capitalist class—the major component of which, along with the Catholic Church, also opposed the Somoza dictatorship, but for its own reasons. In this decisive matter, we were among the FSLN's harshest critics.

Nicaragua's capitalists began to break with Somoza

in the years following the 1972 earthquake that leveled Managua, killed 10,000 people, and left 250,000 more homeless. They, along with the Catholic Church, especially objected to Somoza's stealing millions of dollars in relief funds from the U.S. and elsewhere. When they supported the FSLN-led 1978-79 uprising, Somoza's response was to send his army's helicopters to drop 500-pound bombs on their factories.

Somoza's 1978 murder of *La Prensa* editor Pedro Joaquin Chamorro sealed his fate, as the opposition capitalists soon after formed a series of political alliances with the FSLN culminating in the June 1979 Junta of National Reconstruction (JGRN) headed by five figures—Daniel Ortega and two others close to the FSLN; a leading capitalist, Alfonso Robelo, who later became a central Contra leader; and Violeta Chamorro, wife of the slain *La Prensa* owner and editor. Chamorro founded UNO (United National Opposition) and later similarly supported the Contras. She went on to defeat Ortega in the 1990 presidential elections.

The JGRN, a coalition capitalist (multi-class) government alliance, was originally pressed by the Jimmy Carter administration via its Special Ambassador William Bowdler, along with the heads of state of Costa Rica, Venezuela, and Panama, to add two additional capitalist representatives for a total of seven, in order to give the main representatives of Nicaraguan capital a majority. Somoza would leave, they agreed, taking with him Nicaragua's treasury, while his National Guard army would be fused with the FSLN's fighting forces—its head to be approved by the U.S. This would be followed, according to what became known as the "Carter Plan," by the convocation of a "government of national accord" whose representatives would be two-thirds capitalist and one-third FSLN. The plan was unacceptable to the FSLN, and often dubbed "Somozaism without Somoza."

Somoza did depart, but his leading generals continued their mass slaughter in a final but unsuccessful effort to demolish the FSLN forces. In the final months of struggle, the FSLN organized an insurrectional general strike, at great cost, stormed the remaining Somoza bunkers in Managua, and completely defeated and captured Somoza's National Guard army.

On July 19, 1979, undoubtedly with the support and approval of the Nicaraguan masses, they moved to establish a *governmental* framework that gave them a *political* majority in the central institutions of the new state. But the FSLN's *political* majority was never matched by its control of the basic *economic* institutions of the post-Somoza state. Here, the old capitalist class ruled with impunity and with the assent of the FSLN:

- During the first six months following the July 19 victory, the heads of 15 of the 18 new government ministries were capitalists.

- Nicaragua's bankrupt banks and related financial institutions were "nationalized" but only to guarantee that most of the debts incurred by the Somoza government would be paid over time to various international banking institutions. A JGRN proclamation stated, "It is necessary to preserve the prestige of the country among the international financial centers by assuming the payment of the international obligations contracted by the private sector." This included a negotiated agreement with some 100 commercial banks to pay off in installments the Somoza government's \$1.6 billion debt.

- Nicaragua's major agro-export crops, the cen-

tral source of its wealth, remained in capitalist hands.

- In regard to land reform, the FSLN government nationalized *only* Somoza's land, some 20 percent of the total. The rest largely remained in capitalist hands. In short, and shockingly, *there was never a major land reform in the first decade of Sandinista rule and there has never been one to this day.* The majority of arable land remains in capitalist hands.

- The major and powerful capitalist alliance, the Superior Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP) established by the anti-Somoza elites, remains in place to this day and operates as the dominant force in Nicaragua's capitalist economy.

- Less than a month after the July 19 FSLN seizure of power, the JGRN decreed that all land and property belonging to the non-Somoza capitalists that had been "illegally" seized by insurgent peasants had to be returned to its former owners.

- Following the FSLN's coming to power, this anti-Somoza bourgeoisie controlled the commanding heights of the Nicaraguan economy—especially with regard to the agro-export sector.

In 1982, 73 percent of all productive activity was in private hands. In agriculture, which accounted for 70 percent of all exports in 1982, 86 percent of Nicaragua's productive assets were in private hands. The economic facts in Nicaragua today differ little from what the FSLN established in 1979, whether the FSLN was formally in governmental power or not.

The figures above are not accidental. They reflect, as we shall see, the considered view of the FSLN leadership that capitalism—the domination of society by an elite ruling class of private property owners that control Nicaragua's land, banks, financial institutions, and foreign trade—and not the construction of a socialist society is the only social system capable of meeting the needs of the people!

Cuba & Nicaragua: Revolution vs. reform

A few years after Daniel Ortega's 1990 presidential election loss to Violeta Chamorro, the electoral representative of the political forces that backed the Contra war against Nicaragua, I visited revolutionary Cuba and had an opportunity to discuss the situation in Nicaragua with several Cuban leaders. They included the head of the Cuban Communist Party's cadre school, who for 10 years had overseen Cuba's efforts to spread Cuba's revolutionary ideas across Latin America. He had been Cuba's liaison with Che Guevara when Che was sent to Bolivia to partake in the guerrilla effort in that country. His incisive comment on Ortega's election loss to Chamorro's UNO remains with me to this day. "You can't make a half a revolution," he stated.

His reference was to Cuba's 1959 revolutionary break with capitalism and its massive distribution of Cuba's land to its landless peasantry, as compared to the FSLN's maintaining the essentials of Nicaraguan capitalism intact, including the private ownership of land by Nicaragua's previous oligarchs and super rich. In Fidel Castro's words on this critical point, "We nationalized the Cuban capitalist class down to the nails in the heels of their boots."** In sharp contrast, here's what leading FSLN spokespersons had to say on this question:

Commander Tomas Borge, *New Left Review* (July/August 1987), said, "There is not—nor could there be [in Nicaragua]—an ideological project as clearly defined as the one that existed in Cuba. ... It is no accident that the [Nicaraguan] bourgeoisie has been given so many economic incentives, more even than the workers; we ourselves have been more attentive to giving the bourgeoisie economic opportunities than in responding to the demands of the working class. We have sacrificed the working class in favor of the economy as part of a strategic plan."

Francisco Pizarro, top economic adviser to the FSLN, in the French Fourth International magazine *Inprecor* (No. 185, July/August 1987): Taking the Cuban socialist road "would not only be naive but also deeply irresponsible in the case of Nicaragua ... a profound program of expropriation of land, industry and commerce ... would be disastrous in a country whose economic structure is marked by the important weight of agricultural production and by an atomization of property in the countryside, in industry and in commerce."

FSLN Defense Minister Humberto Ortega (quoted in Francis Pisani's "Le Volca Nicaraguyan," 1984): "We cannot resolve at the same time the problems of na-

(continued on page 9)

... Nicaragua

(continued from page 8)

tional liberation and those of social liberation. We must first complete the stage of national independence and national liberation.”

FSLN Minister of Agriculture Jaime Wheelock, (see Jaime Wheelock, “El Gran Desafío” [“The Great Challenge”], Managua, Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, 1983, p. 101): “It is important to understand that the socialist model is a solution for contradictions that only exist in developed capitalist countries. ... Even though we have socialist principles, we cannot effect the transformation of our society by socializing the means of production. This would not lead to socialism, rather, on the contrary, it could lead to the destruction and disarticulation of our society.”

In truth, and notwithstanding the horrors perpetrated by the U.S.-backed Contra war against the FSLN government that took the lives of some 15,000 Nicaraguans, the FSLN’s failure to distribute “land to the tillers” and its failure to nationalize capitalist property more generally had the effect of deeply alienating the Nicaraguan masses. In 1990, when the FSLN itself organized every aspect of the electoral process, it shockingly lost the presidency to the forces backed by COSEP, the Catholic Church, and the U.S. government!

While the FSLN ceded governmental power to its rivals, in the brief interim between its 1990 loss and the installation of the new government, a number of its central leaders in the infamous Piñata Affair seized the opportunity to enrich themselves by appropriating public buildings and major hotels, and establishing control over major logging, agro-industrial operations, and some banking institutions. In short, leading FSLN revolutionaries became capitalists!

In 1996 and 2001 Ortega lost his second and third bid for the presidency but returned to this post in the elections of 2006, 2011, and 2016. However, during this entire period the essential nature of Nicaragua’s economy has been capitalist and Nicaragua has remained the second poorest nation in the hemisphere.

It is true that the FSLN early on, and with the help and influence of the Cubans, did seek to introduce some critical reforms, including a national literacy campaign, the establishment of important women’s and student organizations, a national trade-union federation, and improvements in health care. During the recent decade—relying only on oil-based funding assistance from Venezuela, as opposed to at the expense of Nicaraguan capitalists—the FSLN introduced some social programs aimed at providing direct assistance to the nation’s poor. (The “asistencialismo” is now diminishing in proportion to Venezuela’s ever-deepening economic crisis.) But as with all the other “pink revolutions” in Latin America, the essentials of capitalism remained intact, in time dooming the masses to a life of poverty and deprivation.

Nicaragua’s wages are among the lowest in Latin America; its foreign-owned free economic zone sweatshop maquiladoras, as with everywhere else in the world, serve imperialist needs for cheap labor. The majority of the population is relegated to the “informal” sector of the economy—that is, to selling trinkets and other petty commodities and food on the streets and elsewhere to eek out a minimum living.

Nicaragua’s heinous law formally banning abortion includes a penalty of six years in prison for violators. It is a prime example of FSLN collaboration with the extreme right and the Catholic Church. When the political parties representing the latter introduced this reactionary legislation into the National Assembly, the FSLN freed its parliamentary representatives from party discipline. This allowed for enough FSLN “yes” votes to pass this reactionary legislation, among the most backward laws in the world—albeit to date, no one has been jailed for its violation.

I might add that the FSLN votes banning abortion paved the way for its newfound 2006 electoral alliance with the Catholic Church and its leading prelate, Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo. This alliance returned Ortega to the presidency. Obando, who had travelled to the U.S. decades earlier to lobby Congress for aid to the Contras to overthrow the FSLN government, went on to be an FSLN supporter. He presided over Ortega’s wedding to Rosario Murillo, today Nicaragua’s Vice President. “I am a Catholic man,” Ortega told a recent mass FSLN rally in Managua to boost support for his beleaguered government, and perhaps, to once again signal that the FSLN’s alliance with the Catholic Church might well be re-established.

Our point here is to demonstrate once again that from the 1979 Revolution to this day, FSLN policy has been to govern in coalition with Nicaragua’s capitalist elite. In more recent years, the “socialist” facade



of revolutionary integrity has all but disappeared, occasional rhetoric notwithstanding.

Failure of the “pink tide” in Latin America

Tragically, we must say the same with regard to all Latin America’s “pink revolutions” over the past decade and longer. Upon coming to political power, the governments of Lula/Brazil, Morales/Bolivia, Kirchner/Argentina, Ortega/Nicaragua, Correa/Ecuador, and Chavez-Maduro/Venezuela, rhetoric aside, never contemplated a revolutionary break with capitalism.

Whatever differences distinguished one from the others regarding the implementation of sometimes substantial reforms were subordinate to the fact that in all cases the essential social structures and institutions of the capitalist state remained largely intact. “INTACT,” again, means that the fundamental ownership and control of the commanding economic heights of the nation were to remain in capitalist hands; the land and natural resources, the key banks and financial institutions remain today in capitalist hands. With regard to key oil and natural gas resources, even these, albeit sometimes formally “nationalized,” were weakened or nullified by many of the traditional “small print” or fake nationalization agreements with foreign capital that guaranteed their interests.

Unlike the Cuban Revolution of 1958-59, in which the Fidel Castro leadership definitively broke with capitalism, none challenged private ownership of the banks and leading financial institutions. None challenged corporate ownership of the major media. None fundamentally broke with international capitalist trade organizations. None established a monopoly of foreign trade and none established any semblance of control by the working masses over the political institutions that governed their lives.

All of these “pink revolutions,” with Nicaragua’s tragically evolving to become perhaps the faintest shade of all, proved to be incapable of guaranteeing that the measures implemented to alleviate the terrible conditions endured by the masses for decades and longer would become permanent or institutionalized. All of these reformist regimes attempted to coexist with capitalism, a fatal and impossible project that in time doomed them to inevitable retreat, if not devolution to the rule of the previous elites. Nicaragua was no exception.

Recent mass upsurge

Over the past four months, and following the FSLN’s now withdrawn decree lowering pension payments by 5 percent and increasing taxes on the poor, we have witnessed massive mobilizations for and against the FSLN government. Most of the spokespersons for the anti-FSLN forces appear to originate from the right, indeed, in some cases from the most reactionary sections of society that look to the U.S. but who were previously aligned with the FSLN. In the absence of clear revolutionary socialist forces on the scene, this is tragically inevitable.

Undoubtedly, however, a huge measure of the mass alienation from the FSLN today is due to its own policies, not only its proposed pensions reductions and tax increases but to its granting of important areas of land to private interests to facilitate an Inter-oceanic Canal, its delay in taking decisive moves to stem a series of raging wildfires, its violent response to initially peaceful demonstrations, as well as the overall grinding poverty of the majority of the Nicaraguan people.

(Above) A strike was called in July to protest repression by the Nicaraguan government.

Here, we admit to a lack of any precise knowledge as to the perpetrators of the violence that has marked the present protests. We have seen credible reports from FSLN supporters and from its opponents that some 300, perhaps 400, have been killed and many more wounded. While it is clear that the FSLN has a virtual monopoly of the institutions of repression and violence—the army and police—we are in no position at this time to determine the veracity of any assessments. Yet we have no doubt that forces backed by the U.S. as well as the capitalist FSLN government and its armed forces are fully capable of defending their interests with violence. We are not indifferent in this matter.

Again, we stand in opposition to any and all forms of U.S. intervention. It makes a difference to revolutionary-minded workers *who* replaces governments and institutions that stand as obstacles to revolutionary progress and *what* those forces put forward as an alternative. The “right to revolution,” the right of the vast majority to seize control of their fate and build a new world, belongs only to the oppressed masses themselves.

In time we will learn more about how the tragic shootings and murders began. But this too is subordinate to gaining an understanding as to what interests the *leadership* of the contending forces represent. On this we are certain. Neither has presented a platform aimed at challenging any form of capitalist domination and exploitation. Undoubtedly, there are forces that fundamentally reject Nicaraguan capitalism, likely on both sides, but to date, they are isolated at best and their programmatic views remain largely unknown.

Both of the leading contenders for popular support have proven capable of mobilizing mass forces, whether they originate from the deep discontent with FSLN policies or from FSLN supporters who see any challenge to the Ortega government as an inevitable social regression.

For now, however, it appears that the violent physical confrontations that have polarized the country for the past three months have receded and, perhaps, yet another round of reconciliation negotiations are on the horizon. We have no reason to believe that today’s major players, as in the past, are not fully capable of reaching agreements that once again subordinate the interests of the Nicaraguan masses to the rule of capital. We have no interest in such negotiations, other than to demand in the U.S. that imperialism keep its bloody and grasping hands off Nicaragua.

Needless to say, we are staunch advocates of the construction of a mass revolutionary socialist party in Nicaragua, a party organized independently of and against all imperialist interventions and against the rule of capital in Nicaragua itself. This must be a party that is deeply imbedded in the just struggles of the Nicaraguan people for a society free from capitalist plunder and exploitation. ■

*We note here for perspective that in recent years U.S. NGO and NED funds to boost the projects of Nicaragua’s FSLN-pampered capitalist class, or even FSLN “civil society” projects have been more often than not overt, if not welcomed.

**With regard to Cuba’s view on the Nicaraguan Revolution, we should note that in the early 1980s an article by Fidel Castro appeared in the U.S.-based *Guardian* that cautioned the FSLN *not* to take the Cuban road. But this is a subject for another time.

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

website: <http://socialistaction.ca>

Ford's War begins

By MITCHELL SHORE

Socialist Action members proudly joined the June 13 People's Rally at Queen's Park to protest some of the first actions of the Doug Ford-led Progressive Conservative Party government. On June 7, the Tories won 76 of the 124 seats in the Ontario Legislature—securing 61 per cent of the seats with only 40 per cent of the votes cast, amounting to no more than a quarter of the total electorate.

Despite the hard work of the organizers, the turnout was poor. Only about 200 people attended. While the extreme heat of the day served as an excuse, the primary reason was the absence of an organized union presence. Besides a handful of individual union and community activists, and the solid presence of the \$15 and Fairness coalition and three or four socialist groups, there was no sign of coordinated union participation.

Likewise, there was no sign of the New Democratic Party. The NDP, Canada's only labour-based political party, is now the Official Opposition in Ontario. Sadly, its leaders seem comfortable confining their meager resistance efforts to the chambers of the legislature—an approach that is bound to fail. The Tories hold a majority of seats and the NDP can only slow the torrent of reactionary laws.

NDP MPPs are powerless to actually to stop any Conservative Party legislation. They ought to join us on the streets to amplify their voices and educate for change. And where were the brave activists of the NDP who called for action immediately following the election? Ford is not taking the summer off. Before we know it, much more will be stripped away in the name of "saving taxpayers' money."

Premier Doug Ford has already put in place a hiring freeze and has frozen the pay of all Ontario public service managers. He fired Ontario's Chief Scientist, sacked the government's investment czar, terminated its top business adviser, and decimated Hydro One's leadership. The promise that "no one is getting laid off" under a Ford administration was quickly exposed as a lie.

The Tories then awarded a plush patronage position to Rueben Devlin, a former hospital president, a former president of the Progressive Conservative party, and a close friend of Doug Ford. This is a three-year contract that comes with a \$348,000 annual salary—on top of his existing, six-figure, public pension! His role will be to think about new ways to end "hallway medicine." Again, this cynical appointment exposes the falsehood behind the promise about putting "an end to the government's party with your money." Over three years that's \$1 million—money that could be better used to employ unionized nurses to try to deal with treatment delays in our hospital hallway-medicine crisis.

At a time of dramatic climate change and extreme global warming, the Tories have rolled back most of the mild green energy efforts of the previous Liberal Ontario government. The new Minister of the Environment, Rod Phillips, stated that government would come up with its own plan to fight climate change that does not put an "onerous burden on the economy." What do those plans entail? To start, they cut government subsidies and supports for green energy technologies and appliances. They cancelled 758 renewable energy contracts in an effort to save \$790 million.

The government tabled legislation to

kill the White Pines wind turbine project on Lake Ontario, south of Belleville, which will leave taxpayers on the hook for about \$100 million.

In what came as a shock to many people working in the Ontario Public Service (OPS), immediately after the election and following the Speech from the Throne, congratulatory messages were sent to the Tories by two major public sector unions, OPSEU and AMAPECO. This is a betrayal of working-class resistance and solidarity. Instead of "cutting Ford some slack," these organizations should be gearing up to defend the jobs and rights of all union members and stand up to defend the services of the people of Ontario.

The first thing on his legislative agenda is busting the four months-long strike of teaching and graduate assistants at York University. CUPE Local 3903 members walked off the job on March 5 seeking improved job security as well as better funding for the university. It was the longest academic strike in Canadian history. Not surprisingly, rather than using their authority to compel York U to come to a



(Above) Ontario Premier Doug Ford.

negotiated settlement, the Tories chose to make one of their first legislative initiatives an attack on workers, and ultimately an attack on the quality of education at Ontario universities.

At this critical time, the mis-leaders of two major public service unions should be ashamed of themselves for offering the government congratulations. CUPE 3903 deserves union solidarity, not offers of collaboration with the political thugs who forced them back to work.

The Tories repealed the 2015 sex education curriculum. In its place, the Tory homophobes have reinstated the 1998 curriculum! This is a highly sanitized version of a curriculum that preceded high-speed internet and Google, from a time before cyber bullying and the dangers of sexting, a time before open and honest discussions about consent, sexuality, gender identity, and same-sex relationships.

The Tories are doing this, it seems, largely to appease a tiny layer of social conservatives in their ranks, including the religious nut Charles McVety, right-wing newspaper columnist Barbara Kay, national president of the anti-abortion Campaign Life Coalition Jim Hughes, and the newly appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education, the home-schooled 20-year-old Sam Oosterhoff, all of whom backed Doug Ford in his bid to become leader of the party.

The Tory thugs have also announced they will cut essential curriculum development, which was started on recommendations from the Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation Commission. They put a stop to the development of an Ameri-

Socialist challenges Ford supporter in Toronto's Ward 1

Community Organizer and Tenants' Rights activist Peter D'Gama joined the race to become city councillor for Ward 1 in northwest Toronto. D'Gama, 56, representing Socialist Action, is the grassroots, left-wing alternative to Vincent Crisanti, a strong backer of the Doug Ford-led Progressive Conservative government at Queen's Park, which in its first days cut funding for city programmes and infrastructure repairs.

"Toronto has an acute affordable housing shortage, resulting in serious social, economic, and health consequences," said D'Gama. Upon filing his nomination papers on July 20, he denounced the feverish pace in condo construction and other real estate developments that seem geared to foreign investors—while the shelter

needs of poor and homeless people are ignored. One hundred homeless individuals died on the streets of Toronto in 2017.

D'Gama calls for a massive social housing construction programme, under the control of workers and residents. He insists that the urgently needed housing, public transit, community recreation, and green energy-transition initiatives would create jobs with a living wage and can be funded by steeply increasing taxation of giant banks and corporations and the rich owners of multiple properties.

D'Gama said Socialist Action is campaigning in Ward 1, and beyond, for a Workers' Agenda and for a Labour City Hall.

For more information call 437-333-7247 or visit www.socialistaction.ca.

can Sign Language (ASL) curriculum, and they have cut all funding for crucial school repairs.

Ford moves to reduce city council

Then, in a stunning assault on local democracy, Doug Ford announced on July 26 that he intends to reduce Toronto City Council from 47 to 25 seats. It is unprecedented to make such a structural change, not only without public consultation but in the midst of an election campaign, which began on May 1. This move, which Ford claims will save a measly \$25 million in a city budget of over \$14 billion, is designed to ensure conservative control of the country's largest municipality in order to facilitate the harshest austerity agenda on tap.

Likely next is the repeal of Bill 148, the labour law reforms that include a \$15/hour minimum wage set for January 2019. This will probably be followed by a tax cut of 20 per cent that will most benefit the rich. His tax credit for child care costs will not create more spaces, raise or enforce standards, or boost pay for low wage workers. No steps to build social housing, and no

significant increase in health care funding are in store. The Ford government has also postponed implementation of the Ontario Special Investigations Unit Act aimed at improving police oversight.

Ontario is headed towards a return to carding—a practice that disproportionately targets Black and Brown people. Carding is a racist practice that stigmatizes minorities but does nothing to stop crime. This decision was made just days before Michael Tibollo, the Minister of Community Safety and Corrections, the man tasked with heading up the Anti-Racism Directorate, said in the Ontario Legislature that he wore a bulletproof vest when visiting Toronto's largely poor and racialized neighborhood of Jane and Finch.

On June 17, Doug Ford's office announced the creation of an Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry into Ontario's past spending and accounting practices. This inquiry will be under the direction of former Liberal Premier of British Columbia Gordon Campbell. It's another indication that Tories and Liberals are cut from the same cloth. The \$6 billion that Ford promised to find in "efficiencies" translates to firing thousands of teachers, health workers, and others in the public sector. Cuts in services will be staggering and bloody, impacting most harshly on the impoverished. Ford is a job killer, and a servant to his corporate buddies, whose taxes he will greatly reduce, putting the province deeper in the hole.

So, what can we do? We need more than just talk about recreating the Days of Action which challenged Ontario Premier

Mike Harris in the mid-1990s. In fact, a better action model is needed to avoid a repeat of what happened then. In 1998, leaders of the Ontario Federation of Labour and its major affiliates terminated the momentum-gathering Days of Action rather than risk losing control of the movement. The result was massive demoralization of the labour movement and ultimately the re-election of Mike Harris in 1999. And if you think things were bad during the Mike Harris years, you haven't seen anything yet.

Urgently needed is real, unlimited, militant action. But so far, we have seen very little coordinated resistance. Socialist Action is circulating widely a resolution to encourage all unions, every NDP electoral district association, social justice movements and working class organizations to discuss and adopt a plan in favour of coordinated mass action.

If working class organizations go on record now in favour of mass action opposition to the Ford/Conservative agenda in Ontario, and for a democratic united front of resistance to capitalist austerity, it will help to prepare and coordinate the next phase of struggle. It can also be a very useful item in our tool kit to connect with rank and file workers, fighters against oppression of every kind, and social justice movements.

For an OFL emergency convention!

The resolution presented below, which was adopted unanimously on July 29 by the University-Rosedale NDP Annual General Meeting, calls for a democratic united front of resistance to capitalist austerity. It will help to prepare and coordinate the next phase of what is likely to be a long and hard struggle.

"Be it resolved that (fill in your union, NDP association and/or community organization) request that the Ontario Federation of Labour hold an emergency convention to adopt an action plan to confront and defeat the Doug Ford - Progressive Conservative government agenda.

"Be it further resolved that (your union, etc.) commits to respond with mass protests, including rallies, demonstrations and job actions, up to and including sectoral and general strikes, against Doug Ford—PC government attacks on public services, civil liberties, equity seeking groups, unions and non-organized workers in this province.

"We believe that all unions and social justice partners, in anticipation of serious cuts to jobs and services, should go on immediate strike alert and build a broad, democratic united front of resistance."

The only way to stop the Ford-nado that is ravaging the province is to shut it down before the mix of hot air and cold hearts gains much strength and power. We can do this best by building an impenetrable wall of resistance and opposition—which could be a vital step towards winning a Workers' Agenda for Ontario.

Stormé DeLarverie: The lesbian spark in the Stonewall uprising

By ANN MONTAGUE

Next year will be the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising. In the early morning hours, gay men and lesbians fought back against the police raid of the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. After that event, which began in the early morning of June 28, 1969, Gay Liberation had joined the lexicon of Women's Liberation, Black Liberation, and Chicano Liberation.

There are phenomenal lives and stories connected to that night that should not be forgotten or erased. One is that of Stormé DeLarverie—who had been fighting back all her life and fought back that night.

Stormé had a tough Southern upbringing. She was born in Louisiana in 1920; since she had no birth certificate, she chose Dec. 24 as her birthday. Her mother was a Black servant in the house of her father, who was white. They made sure she got an education, but growing up biracial in the South was a continual fight.

She told Kirk Klocke in an interview that she still had scars on her leg from when bullies hung her by the leg from a fence post. Her brother had to take her down, and she wore a brace for years. She started singing as a teenager in New Orleans jazz clubs until she came out as a lesbian at 18 and moved to Chicago, which is where her singing career really began.

She met a dancer named Diana, the love of her life, and went on the road with Doc Bender and Danny Brown. Finally, she could be herself and was respected as a singer. Together they created the Jewel Box Revue, an extravaganza with 25 high-kicking drag queens and songs sung by Stormé, the baritone who always dressed in a white tuxedo. It was the first racially integrated drag revue in the country. She was the emcee and music director for 14 years.

They toured the country, and starting in 1957, their popular shows could be seen twice a week at the Apollo Theater in Harlem. Stormé was also a bouncer for lesbian bars in Greenwich Village.

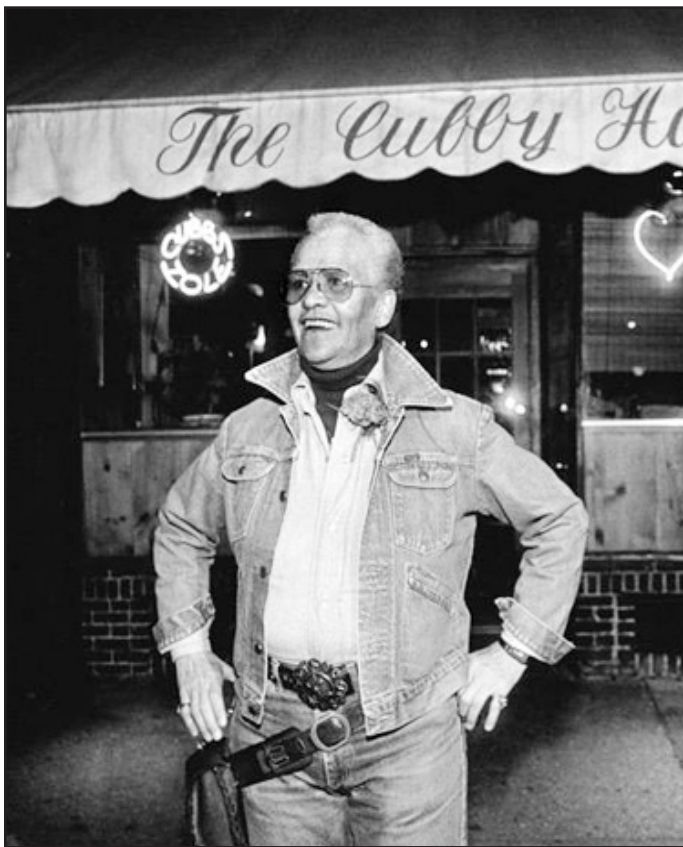
Stonewall Inn

The Stonewall Inn was Mafia owned and operated. Before you could enter, you had to be checked through a peephole; if you were not gay or lesbian you could not come in. Organized crime kept the gay bars racially segregated and most of the bars for people of color were on 42nd Street and in Harlem. There were, of course, exceptions to the color bar.

There are varying descriptions of the patrons of The Stonewall Inn, but also some general agreement. The owners of Stonewall were one of the few that allowed same-sex couples to dance together. They had a system of blinking lights to warn everyone of an impending raid.

The bar drew patrons from different parts of the city. They were mostly closeted gay men (probably married to women), college boys, and homeless gay youth. It was not primarily a drag bar. There were lesbian bars in Greenwich Village too, and some lesbians also went to the Stonewall.

Stormé was involved in forming the Stonewall Veter-



(Left) Stormé, a bouncer at The Cubby Hole in the West Village, ca. 1990s.

ans Association and was later elected vice president. They often had panels of speakers, and over the decades she was always quick to remind later generations what it was like before Stonewall: Lesbians and gay men could receive a \$70 fine for "looking at someone with desire."

You could be arrested for not wearing a certain number of "gender appropriate articles of clothing." This meant that lesbians who might be wearing a three-piece suit had to be able to show they were also wearing a bra and stockings. If not, they could be thrown in jail.

Stormé's recollection

Stormé recalled her part in the uprising at a public, videotaped event sponsored by the Stonewall Veterans Association. She started at the beginning: "The cops were parading patrons out of the front door of the Stonewall at about 2 a.m. in the morning. I saw this one boy being taken out by three cops, only one in uniform. Three to one. I told my pals, 'I know him! That is Williamson, my friend Sonia Jane's friend.'"

"Williamson briefly broke loose," she continued, "but they grabbed the back of his jacket and pulled him right down on the cement street. One of them did a drop kick on him. Another cop senselessly hit him from the back. Right after that a cop said to me, 'move faggot,' thinking I was a gay guy. I said, 'I will not and don't you dare touch me.' With that the cop shoved me, and I instinctively punched him in the face."

Four officers then attacked her and handcuffed her in response. When she pointed out that she was cuffed too

tightly, one officer hit her head with a billy club. As she was bleeding from the head, she turned to the crowd and shouted, "Why don't you guys do something?" After a long struggle, she was dragged towards a police van, and that was when everything exploded. Many who were there remember her call to arms.

Stormé was always clear: "It was a rebellion, it was an uprising, it was civil disobedience. It was no damn riot."

Of course, she was correct. Stonewall was not a one-night riot. Thousands of gays and lesbians rose up for six nights. There was organizing during the day and returning to the Stonewall Inn every night for six nights. Out of the uprising grew two activist organizations, the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activist Alliance, and three gay and lesbian newspapers.

Erasing Black lesbians

Claire Heuchan wrote an article for AfterEllen.com entitled, "We Need to Talk about Misogyny and the LGBT Community's Erasure of Black Lesbian History." Heuchan focused in the article on the erasing of Stormé from some of the "official" histories of Stonewall. She was cut from the 1995 and the 2015 "Stonewall" films as well as from many histories of that period—and most recently in a press release by the National Center For Lesbian Rights.

Heuchan pointed out, "Lesbian history is hard to find, Black representation, female representation, and lesbian representation are not always straightforward to find, especially when you are looking for all three at once. Stormé, in all her Black butch magnificence, put herself at extraordinary risk to fight injustice and she deserves to be remembered for it. It was Stormé who led the resistance of homophobic police brutality at the Stonewall Inn."

After Stonewall

For years, Stormé worked as a bouncer at lesbian bars, such as the Cubby Hole in the West Village. Stormé became a self appointed guardian of lesbians in Greenwich Village, patrolling the streets for the next 30 years. For many she was known as the Sheriff of Greenwich Village. She was legally armed and would not put up with any form of intolerance, bullying, or abuse of lesbians in the Village. She was a fearless protector of lesbian spaces.

Her longtime friend Lisa Cannistraci bought a lesbian bar and named it Henrietta Hudson; she hired Stormé as the bouncer. When Stormé could no longer work, the women she protected came back to protect her until she died on May 29, 2014, at 93. Cannistraci summed up Stormé's life: "She was a superhero, a vigilante defender of the defenseless." ■

... Democrats

(continued from page 12)

tion of the clean versus the dirty break on the *Socialist Worker* website.

The debate within the DSA of whether to endorse actor Cynthia Nixon's bid for governor of New York shows the contradictions inside that party. After the victory of Ocasio-Cortez, Nixon proclaimed that she too is a "democratic socialist." The DSA in New York has endorsed Nixon over the objections of some in the left wing of the group. Eleven people in the 34-member New York City leadership committee voted not to endorse.

The Democrats have proven time and again that the only role they see for the left is to bring voters back into the ranks of a party that is fundamentally opposed to the interests of working people and the oppressed. In fact, the Democrats have demonstrated that they would rather lose an election than have a candidate whom they consider too "radical" win an election.

The Democrats openly abandoned George McGovern's campaign in 1972, preferring a Nixon victory to the candidate termed by some to be the advocate of "acid, amnesty, and abortion." Ironically, the original intent of McGovern's campaign was to channel left sentiment into the Democratic Party. Democrats welcome the left wing of the party, as long as the left doesn't challenge the party's status quo. The DNC sabotage of the Sanders campaign during the 2016 primary season is illustrative of the lengths to which the Democrats will go to stop a challenge.

The Wisconsin upsurge of 2011 against Scott Walker's anti-union legislation was demobilized by the Democrats and their lieutenants in the trade-union bureaucracy, who diverted the energy of this movement into an electoralist recall campaign. The Democrats are skilled at co-opting and assimilating progressive movements and activists, but they have consistently failed to really champion the needs of the victims of this system.

Revolutionary socialists don't oppose participation in elections. Electoral campaigns are a tactic that can spread socialist ideas. However, this is counterposed to the idea of electoralism, which sees elections as an end in themselves. When revolutionaries succumb to the electoralist temptation, they become fixated on winning elections and water down program to gain a mass following. Revolutionaries draw the class line in politics; we oppose support for bourgeois candidates and multi-class political alliances.

Many of the advocates of a clean break with the Democrats, such as the ISO, Socialist Alternative, or Solidarity, support the building of a "third" party. This is often expressed as support for the Green Party, a multi-class "progressive" party, or for some broadly radical or populist type of party. By supporting Green candidates, these left organizations blur the class lines.

The Green Party is not a socialist or working-class party, and candidates are not bound to the party program or principles. One extreme example is the candidacy of Jim Condit, Jr., an anti-Semitic 9-11 "truther" who is currently the Green candidate for a Congressional seat in the Cincinnati area. This isn't the first time that Condit has been a Green candidate; He ran for the same seat in 2016 and lost. While the party

has "disavowed" Condit, the damage is done. Without control over the actions and programmatic positions of candidates, an alternative party can't present a coherent vision of the future.

We need a party that expresses the interests of the working class against the ruling class. The labor party slogan is not an abstraction; it expresses a fundamental need of workers and the oppressed. Past attempts to build a working-class party have been diverted into the Democratic Party by labor bureaucrats. During the labor upsurge of the 1930s, a resolution calling for the formation of a Labor Party was passed at a United Auto Workers convention. CIO tops and the Communist Party, both keen to support Roosevelt's reelection campaign in 1936, short-circuited the attempt.

During the 1990s an attempt to build a union-based labor party never got beyond the formative stages. The main obstacle remained the continued subordination of the ranks to the Democrats by a labor bureaucracy that is incapable of breaking with their paymasters. The Mazzocchi-led Labor Party of the 1990s proved incapable of running independent candidates, which led to the eventual demise of the effort.

The fight for a workers' party will necessarily be a combined process of building a class-struggle leadership in the unions and among the unaffiliated working class, while fighting for class independence. It is not a given that a labor party would automatically be a party that looks only to achieving minimal reforms. Given the long suppression of the political, social, and economic interests of the working class, a break with business as usual may give a more radical character to the new political instrument. A mass workers party could very well be a step towards a mass revolutionary party. ■

The left debates its relation to the Democratic Party

Win McNamee / Getty Images



By JOHN LESLIE

The New York primary win of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a member of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), has reignited a debate on the U.S. left: Can socialists use the Democratic Party to achieve change?

For those on the left who support a break with the Democrats, moreover, the question of how this break will take place is a point of contention. Some argue that socialists can use the Democrats' ballot line without sacrificing principles or independence. "Platforming" socialist candidates, they claim, will lead to a "dirty" break with the Democrats as opposed to the "clean" break that is promoted by the pro-independence left.

In a *Jacobin* essay, writer Eric Blanc argues that contemporary socialists should follow the example of the populist Nonpartisan Leagues (NPL), which grew up in the Midwest in the 1910s and '20s. In North Dakota and other states, the NPLs ran candidates in Republican Party primaries. By 1918, the NPL had won control of both houses of the North Dakota legislature and a congressional seat. NPL legislators enacted a series of reforms, including a state-owned bank and a state-owned railroad. However, the GOP and Democratic Party establishments worked together to reverse these gains and enacted laws to tighten ballot access for outsider candidates.

The NPL success story, in Blanc's estimation, is the formation of the Farmer-Labor Party (FLP) in Minnesota. The FLP is portrayed by Blanc as an ally of the Minneapolis Teamster strike of 1934. Blanc concedes, however, that relations between strikers and the FLP administration "were rocky," saying that the "strengths and weaknesses of the FLP in power were not unlike social-democratic administrations elsewhere in the world."

In the early phases of the strike, Olsen tried to balance between the strikers and bosses, but in the end came down on the side of the capitalists. While some of the strikers were supporters of the FLP, the FLP

governor, Floyd Olsen, called National Guard troops against strikers. As a reformist party, the FLP was incapable of acting decisively in the interests of its own base of workers and farmers. After first attempting to balance between the workers and bosses, the FLP administration turned to repression against strikers.

The idea of "platforming" socialists in the primaries of bourgeois parties will be met with institutional barriers and an overwhelming pressure to adapt politically to the Democratic mainstream. It should also be noted that the political situation now is not the same as in the 1930s, when a layer of socialist and communist activists were helping to lead a massive explosion of industrial unions in the CIO. Today, the unions face an existential crisis, and the left has, at best, tenuous roots in the unions.

What sort of party?

One of the main, and most urgent, tasks of the U.S. working class is achieving its political independence. Building a party that is not working-class in program and character can only translate into the reconfiguration of the bourgeois parties, not their replacement.

Revolutionaries must fight for a break with the Democrats based on a clear class program and orientation. That is why socialists call for a labor or workers' party based on the mass organizations of the working class and oppressed peoples. It's not merely a question of breaking up the two-party duopoly.

A workers' party would necessarily have an orientation to mass struggle, not just to electoralism. The lessons of the teachers' strikes earlier this year point to the power of mass action, as well as the necessity of working-class political independence. These strikes won major gains for education workers, but without a party of our own, the victories won by these strikes can be reversed by the twin parties of capitalism.

For dirty break advocates, using the Democratic ballot line is simply a tactical question. Opponents of participation in the Democratic Party are dismissed as purists or ultra-left sectarians. The question remains: Is the Democratic Party a hospitable place for

(Above) Bernie Sanders speaks to workers fighting for a \$15 minimum wage. Sanders' presidential campaign aimed to pull labor and left activists back into the Democratic Party—known as the "graveyard" of social movements.

socialists? They point to the victory of Ocasio-Cortez, a self-described democratic socialist, as an example of how socialists can use one of the parties of Wall Street to advance the struggle for socialism.

Ocasio-Cortez learned quickly that to win and maintain support from the party establishment, she has to adjust her views to more mainstream positions. This is reflected in the evolution of her position on Palestine. Having caught flack for her condemnation of the Israeli massacre in Gaza, Ocasio-Cortez signaled her support for the "two-state solution" and said that she now wanted to *study* the issue.

In recent tweets, Ocasio-Cortez has opined on the need for being tough on crime and national security. In reference to the Democrats, while speaking in San Francisco on July 31, Ocasio-Cortez asserted the need to "reclaim this party."

The notion of the Democratic Party as an arena for socialist politics was given new strength by the Bernie Sanders primary contest in 2016, the rapid growth of the DSA after the Trump victory, and now, by Ocasio-Cortez. The Democratic Party hierarchy is, of course, pushing back, with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi and Congress member Maxine Waters declaring that the Democrats are not a socialist party. The use of red-baiting and anti-Soviet imagery by liberals against Trump's alleged ties to Russia should be a warning light to any socialist who thinks they can change or use the Democrats.

This discussion over whether to work inside the Democratic Party is being carried on both inside and outside of the DSA. Socialist Alternative has expressed support for Ocasio-Cortez, while the International Socialist Organization is debating the ques-

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