



PLANT
FOOD

Kansas City

Democratic Socialists
of America

Issue No. 1

The Red Thread

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HAPPY NEW YEAR

Happy New Year, Comrades. We have a lot to be proud of as a chapter in 2025. Hopefully, this issue can reflect to you just some of what we have done and accomplished last year, but this opener is not for reflection. As we part with the old internal quarterlies and start this project towards a public-facing publication, this too might feel like a clean break. A new year. A new format. Our chapter's struggle briefly and politely paused as the clock struck midnight, leaving us a fresh perspective and a neat restart. Almost like a demanded transformation; missing it might leave us feeling like we missed a moment of possibility.

This feeling is why we are opening this issue with a passage from Gramsci.

In an essay that borders on humor for its level of vitriol, Gramsci argues that our ritualistic relation to New Year's is a capitalist way of experiencing time, reflection, and celebration. As Adorno would later note, a disciplining of our time such that even these breaks and "free time" are shaped by the same social conditions as work. Preventing ourselves from a more authentic leisure and self-understanding. Similarly, our perception that dates are clarifying history rather than arbitrary breaks in a continuous renewal and struggle is grounded in our own perception and understanding, shaped by capitalism.

We open this new publication in this new year with "I Hate New Year's Day," not because we oppose hope or renewal. And not that Gramsci's anger at a fun night with friends is entirely well placed. We open with it because we recognize a need for a more honest conception of time. History is continuous. It is a collective project that is ours to make.

Instead of allowing dates to offer us renewal, we will continue the work of changing the world ourselves. All the while accepting an excuse to come together, be merry, and take an opportunity to step back from work. We write this as a call to a future that is more authentic, a future not determined by capitalism, and a new year that allows us to reclaim our humanity from the determination of capital and make history and purpose together.



Drew Sorenson
Co-Chair of KCDSA

This text was first published in Avanti!, Turin edition, from his column "Sotto la Mole," January 1, 1916. Translated by Alberto Toscano

Every morning, when I wake again under the pall of the sky, I feel that for me it is New Year's day.

That's why I hate these New Year's that fall like fixed maturities, which turn life and human spirit into a commercial concern with its neat final balance, its outstanding amounts, its budget for the new management. They make us lose the continuity of life and spirit. You end up seriously thinking that between one year and the next there is a break, that a new history is beginning; you make resolutions, and you regret your irresolution, and so on, and so forth. This is generally what's wrong with dates.

They say that chronology is the backbone of history. Fine. But we also need to accept that there are four or five fundamental dates that every good person keeps lodged in their brain, which have played bad tricks on history. They too are New Years'. The New Year's of Roman history, or of the Middle Ages, or of the modern age.

And they have become so invasive and fossilising that we sometimes catch ourselves thinking that life in Italy began in 752, and that 1490 or 1492 are like mountains that humanity vaulted over, suddenly finding itself in a new world, coming into a new life. So the date becomes an obstacle, a parapet that stops us from seeing that history continues to unfold along the same fundamental unchanging line, without abrupt stops, like when at the cinema the film rips and there is an interval of dazzling light.

That's why I hate New Year's. I want every morning to be a new year's for me. Every day I want to reckon with myself, and every day I want to renew myself. No day set aside for rest. I choose my pauses myself, when I feel drunk with the intensity of life and I want to plunge into animality to draw from it new vigour.

No spiritual time-serving. I would like every hour of my life to be new, though connected to the ones that have passed. No day of celebration with its mandatory collective rhythms, to share with all the strangers I don't care about. Because our grandfathers' grandfathers, and so on, celebrated, we too should feel the urge to celebrate. That is nauseating.

I await socialism for this reason too. Because it will hurl into the trash all of these dates which have no resonance in our spirit and, if it creates others, they will at least be our own, and not the ones we have to accept without reservations from our silly ancestors.

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YOUR STEERING COMMITTEE

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This magazine is a project of the Kansas City Chapter of DSA. Nobody here gets paid and this is a labor of love to help empower our community and the global working class. Almost all printing and distribution costs come from member's dues and are approved by member vote. But if you like what you see, please help us make this project sustainable with a donation towards the Chapter.





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REPORT BACKS



With 500+ members, multiple committees, campaign working groups, and a range of public and member events, our chapter is constantly living our values. No single issue could cover all we do together or the countless hours of organizing that make it possible.

However, we do start our magazine with the reports from our members on at least some of those events and what it meant to them to participate through the chapter. To give an opportunity to highlight a variety of voices and actions that took place. To offer reflection in particular moments of collective action and the people who make it possible.

These reportbacks are not exhaustive but a spotlight on just a small sliver of the power of a mass member organization.

Crafting With Comrades

Third Place Lounge | November 20th | Members: Alyssa C, A. S. Barnes, Sav M, Carlisle B, Tiffany B, Drew S

Written By: Alyssa C

On November 20th, the Socialist Feminist subcommittee held our first Crafting with Comrades event. The evening had two parts: an educational presentation followed by a social hour and skill share on sewing, crochet, and knitting. The SF subcommittee was created in 2025, and is a subcommittee of KCDSA's Political Justice Committee which focuses on the struggles of marginalized communities. As the Socialist Feminist subcommittee, we wanted to hold an event that centered around something many of our members already love, crafts, an art and labor historically associated with women's work. We held just two monthly meetings prior to organizing this event. It was an expedited timeline I wouldn't have thought possible, but when you have dedicated comrades, things can come together faster than you can even imagine. Tiffany B., our first SF committee chair, and I co-wrote and presented the educational portion. Carlisle B, our PJC Steward, secured the location, elevated our presentation slides, and guided us through our first subcommittee event. Sav created our promotional graphics and was a skill leader along with Tiffany and I for knitting, sewing, and crochet. Third Place Lounge hosted us, giving us a perfect place to gather. Thank you to them, and all of the comrades who joined us and spent the evening learning, creating, and building community.

For the educational portion of our first event, we presented on Craftivism with several examples, historical and contemporary. One historical highlight was the work of women organizers during the American abolitionist movement, who hosted fundraiser craft fairs, selling homemade goods to support anti-slavery efforts. The largest of these fairs raised more than the equivalent of \$100,000 today. Our presentation concluded, touching on the good, the bad,

and the ugly of contemporary craftivism. The good projects like *Stitch Their Names Together*, is a collective artwork that documents the victims of genocide in Palestine. The bad, the pussyhats, a movement centered around a pink knitted hat that signals the wearer is a feminist. The website for The Pussyhat Project, dormant since 2020, states that the "unique collective visual statement (a sea of pink hats) will help activists be better heard" at the Women's March on Washington in 2017. And the ugly.. The blue bracelets, a trend that originated online where white women created beaded friendship bracelets, signalling that the wearer voted for Harris in 2024. This "craftivism", if it can really be called that, was a reaction to voting demographics that showed the majority of white women voters cast their ballots in favor of Donald Trump. Prepping for our presentation, Tiffany mentioned that she saw Etsy shops with the bracelets for sale almost immediately after the trend went viral, nothing escapes commodification.



So what's the issue? Why does it matter if someone wears a bracelet or a hat? It seems harmless and the problem is not in objects themselves. The issue stems from the activity being rooted in, and reinforcing, American individualism. The way many of us are socialized in the U.S. often causes us to begin and end our activism with our personal choices. What we buy, what we wear, what we post. In contrast, the Palestine project combines the work of individuals to create something bigger than any one person. To be clear, this isn't a judgement on anyone who has participated in these "bad" movements. I am right there with you. In high school, I posted so hard to Stop Kony 2012. I've owned T-shirts adorned with feminist slogans. The shirts were ordered from Amazon, likely made in a factory in the global south by exploited women. I libbed out in 2020, participating in BLM protests, posting about it online, but not really having any follow through to join any organizations. This performative, individualistic action left me feeling helpless. It wasn't creating change, it couldn't even conceive of change, because my worldview was limited by what I could achieve alone. Activism should be based on collective action, as the collective can achieve things far greater than any one person alone. The rewiring of our brains from individualistic thought towards a collective one is an ongoing practice that can only be achieved by working with others.

As we move into 2026, I'm excited by what this subcommittee can build together. I consider our first event a success, but even more valuable was the feedback we received in the following SF meeting. Feedback that will make the next event better. We'll experiment with a new structure, make sure we have nametags and a microphone for the presenters. We'll collaborate with our poli-ed committee, to deepen our educational material. Most importantly, we'll be working on it together. The work ahead feels possible because we're doing it side by side.



KC ICE FREE Fundraiser

Bird Comedy Theater | December 21st | Members: Sophie N, Tylor S, A. S. Barnes, Tyler M, Carlisle B, Drew S, Sav M, Willow M, Alyssa C, Mark G, Marc L, Sadie T

Written By: Mark G.

Having only joined the chapter about one month prior to the event, it was both exciting and rejuvenating to participate in the launch of our chapter's KC ICE FREE campaign with a fundraiser for our friends at Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation (AIRR) at The Bird Comedy Club. Despite being on the Sunday night preceding the holidays, the KC ICE FREE show was sold out with over 100 tickets and running up against The Bird's overflow capacity. And, importantly, it was **extremely fun**. The energy was great and it was obvious how many people were excited to spend their Sunday night to help support their vulnerable neighbors over a good laugh (and drink) with like-minded friends. Leading us through the evening was fellow campañero Tay Castillo, who performed a great job of guiding the audience from act to act while directing attention to the donation link that was prominently displayed on stage all evening. The opening and framing the importance of the evening was Karla J, AIRR's founder, who impressed a jovial but serious call to action for the audience. The opening act, Evan Christian Goldt, juggled their memorization of all 1,025 Pokémon between jokes while Kasey Famous walked through her comedically disastrous experience as a dispensary employee. Both acts really set the bar and the rest of the evening did not disappoint. Before the rest of the show, however, we had two more speakers. The first was Muñeca from AIRR and she gave the standup equivalent of an immigration raid rapid response training session, quizzing the crowd while walking through the key details of being a successful volunteer on the scene; then, after a short intermission, I gave a speech that, among other things, connected my family's history of immigration with Kansas City. The real purpose of the speech was threefold: 1) to contextualize the government's ongoing campaign of racial terror with the history of Kansas City and its relationship with the history of immigration in the United States 2) the stakes of this current campaign of terror, its casualties and consequences going forward 3) and that attendees should leave the show with a sense of solidarity, comedy included, while also calling them to take action alongside DSA to help make KC ICE FREE. After such a serious, and honestly semi-depressing, topic, the stage was thankfully saved by Truck Noises's improv set with stage games pulling the crowd in and setting the rest of the night into a blur as Brittany Tilander and Aaron Scarbrough took the stage in turn. Between jokes about feminine hygiene products and communist black metal paintings, the crowd lost itself in an ocean of laughs and hysteric yelps without losing sight of the evening's purpose. Between Tay's MCing, every act couldn't help itself from calling out to the crowd with an indignant, and rightfully righteous, "FUCK ICE" and received a roar in response. As I argued to the crowd on that stage that night, they proved that getting together to laugh at the fascists is more than just an act of solidarity. It's a form of power.

REPORT BACKS



Bodies In Struggle Panel

Bird Comedy Theater | Dec 21st | Members: Carlisle B, Drew S, Tylor S, Sav C, Willow M, Ash M, Micheal K, Hannah M, Zephyr M, Tyler M, Marc L, Sadie T, A. S. Barnes, Micheal B,

Written By: Micheal B

In the Public Policy and Legislation (PPL) subcommittee of the Political Justice committee (PJC), we've been developing our Bodies in Struggle campaign which is focused on education, advocacy, and action around the topic of bodily autonomy under capitalism. In preparation for ZineCon, we put together a short zine that approaches this topic by talking about recent legislative attacks against reproductive rights and trans rights through a queer socialist and socialist feminist lens. The zine was well received and a popular choice from our table at ZineCon. To continue developing our campaign publicly, we decided to next host a panel discussion. We wanted this panel to build on our analysis around reproductive rights and trans rights, but we also wanted to expand our discussion to other issues like policing, incarceration, and immigration under capitalism which are just as much questions of bodily autonomy. The Bird Comedy Theater once again graciously provided us with their space to hold our panel on December 21st. The event was opened with a musical performance by the spectacular Artista Selene who is a local queer Mexicana immigrant artist. Our panelists consisted of Wick Thomas, the first openly trans representative in the Missouri House of Representatives; Cara Hile, who is an organizer with Abortion Action Missouri; Heru Amen-Ra, who is an organizer with Decarcerate KC; and the discussion was hosted by yours truly. It was the first time I had ever done something of the sort, so I was quite nervous, but my comrades made sure I was well prepared with great questions and a great run of show. Our panelists told some amazing stories from their well of organizing experience. We got to hear how their work is changing in the face of recent attacks, about the power and money they're working against, and importantly what the road ahead of us might look like and how to get involved. Members of the KCDSA Audio-Visual crew did an excellent job recording the event, so expect to see video on our socials soon. Additionally, keep an eye and an ear out for upcoming events related to the Bodies in Struggle campaign, or, better yet, join us in the PPL/PJC and help build this narrative and campaign!

No Kings 2.0 Johnson County

Johnson County Community College | October 18th | Members: Jordan G, Ethan B, Cale E, Jessica, Matthew J, and Sean B, Tiffany Brasil

Written By: Tiffany Brasil

No Kings Day 2.0 was one of most widely attended protests in the country. Boots on the Ground hosted one of the numerous national protests at the Johnson County Community College on October 18, 2025. Estimates say 6 to 7,000 protesters showed up on that day. KCDSA was asked to table at the event and we showed up. I, along with Comrades Jordan G, Ethan B, Cale E, Jessica, Matthew J, and Sean B were at the table, many other comrades who were at the event independently stopped in to say hello.

Even before the speakers started, we had a constant stream of interested Johnson County protesters come up to our table. One of the zines we had at the event was an analysis of "the Brownback experiment". The photo itself brought visceral ire from many passersby. This opened discussion on the decimation of education by Brownback before, and how this is just being replicated on a federal level. Some other discussions centered on anger towards Trump and all the things he is doing to destroy our institutions. These discussions gave an opportunity to cut to the root of our problems. It created a clear space to point out the capitalist system we have is functioning as intended. We are living through the symptoms of that machine trying to preserve itself above anything else. The reception to Johnson County was cordial and inviting. There are people who are ready to learn more about what we have to offer and hopefully plug in. We got 40+ sign ups for our newsletter and ran out of zines by the end of the day. Hopefully we are keeping those discussions going.

Of course there were those hesitant at the word "socialism". Closer to the end we were met with a few people who wanted to confide with us "I agree with all you say, but I can't get past the word". To those weary of the term, we welcomed them to join in on our monthly meetings that are open to the public. We also pointed them to our Coffee with Comrades to come see for themselves what the word really means in action. Much of the demographic skewed older, but a few surprises came up. A few spoke about their college days when they were in socialist groups of the time. Quite a few shared how their grandparents were socialist or very socialist minded with a loving layer of nostalgia. It was a notable contrast, but there may be some work we can do to bring in those nostalgic sympathizers.



Chapter Convention

Bird Comedy Theater | Dec 21st | Members: Broad Member Turnout

Written By: Jordan G.

In June of 2024, I moved to the Kansas City area for a new job. Like so many people under capitalism, much of my life and my circumstances revolves around my labor, and so here I was in a totally unfamiliar place with no friends, family, or community, and no idea what to expect, except for some good barbecue. I had already been a DSA member for about a year through the Milwaukee chapter, so I felt obligated to see what my comrades in KC were up to. The KCDSA's Instagram page was advertising this event called "Coffee with Comrades", a chill monthly get-together where chapter members and those looking to join could meet up and talk all things socialism.

The group was small back then, only about seven or eight people, but the vibes couldn't have been more warm and welcoming. The comrades there were passionate and well-informed, discussed opposing viewpoints respectfully, and enthusiastically brought me up to date with the latest goings-on in Kansas City and what the chapter was doing about it. They couldn't have been more unlike the stereotypical annoying "online leftist" who spends more time spewing toxicity toward fellow comrades than actually organizing. Politically, they were pragmatic, yet radical and optimistic. In a time where many people have become frustrated and disillusioned with status quo politics and institutions like the Democratic Party that merely pretend to care about the working class, I was overjoyed to have found a new political home.

Since the summer of 2024, our chapter has grown considerably. This year, we saw Coffee with Comrades grow so much that it had to relocate to a larger location and now meets three times each month in River Market, Johnson County, and Independence. Our chapter found itself with a lot of fresh faces and new energy, but an unclear vision of how to best utilize them. Thus, discussions arose on making our annual Chapter Convention special by turning it into a multi-day event with dedicated programming and voting blocks in which we could set long- and near-term goals for our chapter.

After the resolution to plan such a chapter convention was passed at the July general meeting, the work began on the challenging task of securing venues, finalizing the schedule, reaching out to partner organizations, and doing it all within two months. Our first-ever multi-day convention would be a milestone for our chapter. It was important to get it right and give a good impression of the chapter both to the community and our new members. By the time of the convention, membership had more than doubled over the previous twelve months.

The convention lasted from Thursday, September 18th to Sunday, September 21st. Thursday and Friday kicked off the convention with members-only social events. All business was conducted on Saturday morning, with the afternoon dedicated to an open tabling session showcasing KCDSA's various committees and a special anti-ICE rapid response training provided by AIRR.

Some business items deliberated on the convention floor were the creation of two Steering Committee Co-Chair positions and the chapter's budget for the next year. We also ratified our chapter's endorsement process (possibly the most controversial item we've discussed not related to the chapter logo) which we recently saw carried out to completion. In November, KCDSA endorsed its first candidate, Hartzell Gray, for Missouri's 4th Congressional District. Throughout the deliberation portion of the convention, members had disagreements, made motivations against proposals, but kept things respectful, collaborative, and truly democratic. The goal of the debate was collaboration and consensus, not "winning" at the expense of other comrades.

Sunday's programming included presentations about DSA's national-level committees, a debrief of the 2025 DSA National Convention, and a brainstorming session for discussing the chapter's long-term goals and priorities. These goals included increasing diversity within the chapter to better reflect that of the community, doing outreach on nearby college campuses and in rural areas, establishing an Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee, and producing physical print publications such as the Red Thread (thanks for reading, by the way!).

Just as a convention like this would have been almost unimaginable a year prior, I suspect our chapter will likely be unrecognizable to us (in the absolute best way) by the time next year's convention rolls around. I can't wait to see what we accomplish. I remarked often to some comrades in the weeks leading up to the convention that this multi-day chapter convention



REPORT BACKS



would be the worst in the chapter's history because the ones that follow will be even better. If this is what we can pull off in a couple months, then imagine what we can accomplish with the experience and membership we have now.

The convention, however, was not without its mishaps, goofs, and even a couple oopsies. Next year, we will be sure to have a gavel ready for the chair before deliberation begins. We will also be sure that anyone presenting from a laptop has an HDMI cable handy (and that under no circumstances does said cable leave the room!). And lastly, we (read: I) will not forget to ask able members to stand first before singing the Internationale. But through it all, we laughed, locked in, and pulled it together at the end.

There were also genuinely spectacular moments as well. Our new members received a thorough crash course in Robert's Rules of Order when we deliberated on a third-order amendment (an amendment to an amendment to an amendment) to a proposed resolution. Comrade Tylor, our Convention Chair, concluded business with a truly epic closing speech (see 'The World We Deserve' on page 36 to read this speech! - Ed.) about the importance of our work as organizers and our power as members of the working class. All of us singing the Internationale together for the first time was an experience I will never forget. I feel truly lucky to be right here in Kansas City in the year 2025.

Like many of us, I had to return to my "real" life and my "real" job the Monday after the convention, where I would spend hours increasing shareholder value rather than organizing and serving my community with my comrades. But, I take comfort in knowing

that that I will be back with my comrades soon and doing the work that really matters. There is always more work to be done, and I couldn't ask for better people to do it with.

Our chapter is growing and changing in so many exciting ways. We are moving and evolving with the lessons we learn and, like all good socialists, in response to changing material conditions. The ruling class will keep making mistakes, and we will keep learning from ours.

So, to members new and old, I want to extend my deepest thanks. Thank you for your hard work and for being part of our community in KCDSA. To those who are not DSA members: If you are fed up with the capitalist system and want to build a new, better world that benefits all human beings, and not billionaires, landlords, fascists, and white supremacists, then let this be your call to organize and join us! It cannot be overstated how important you are and how much your contribution matters, no matter how big or small. You are living proof that there is good in the world and in humanity and that a better world is possible.

Solidarity forever

Jordan G.



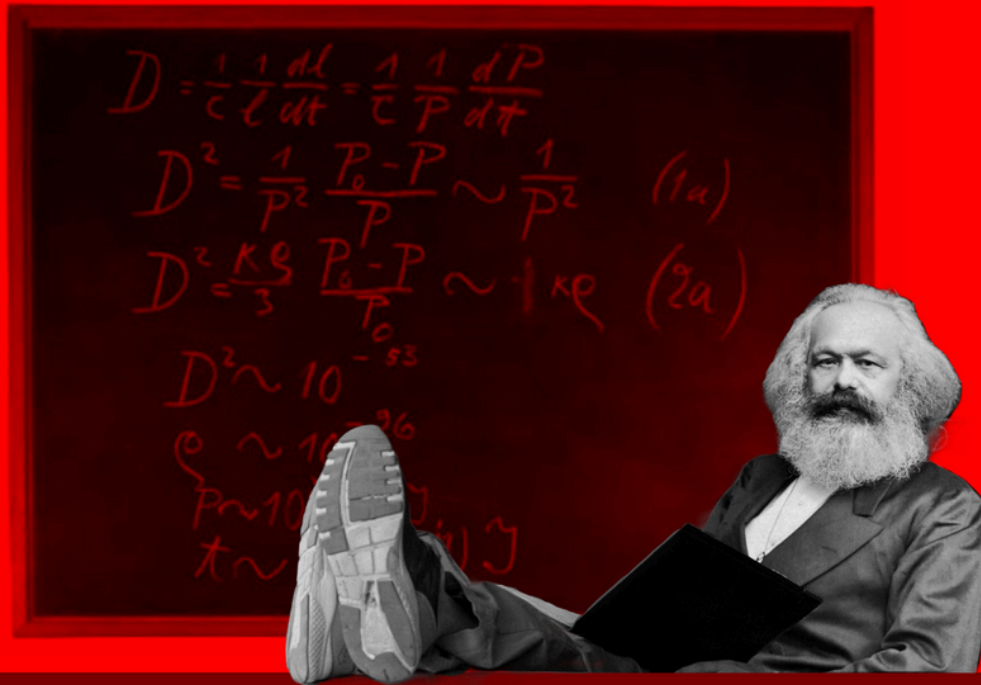
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**An update from
your**



**Political
Education
Committee**

Preface

This mini-lecture was originally created to help summarize an array of articles for the article discussion series that the PEC facilitates monthly for the chapter. November's series was titled "Identity, Class, & Intersectionality" and was constructed around the four articles (in order):



Neither Intersectionality nor
Economism: For a Genuine
Class Politics
**Donald Parkinson, Aug. 7,
2019**



Lesbian and Gays Support The
Miners
Mike Jackson



Intersectionality and Marxism
Ashley Bohrer



Who's afraid of identity?
Luca Fraillon

The preceding mini-lecture is largely unchanged from the original writing.

Introduction

At the start of these discussions, I like to take the time to read a quick presentation to either summarize the articles I had sent, or talk about the topic more broadly. With the absence of any creative ideas these articles haven't already covered, this month's presentation will be focused on the former. As seems to be the nature of these summary-lectures, before I actually begin summarizing each article separately, I'd like to take a brief 30 seconds to outline the importance of having good theories of identity. As materialists, it's important to realize these identities aren't abstract things, but formed through real socio-economic processes and relationships. It's an obvious fact that the working-class is not a homogenous whole; and while we are all united in our toil, we must also understand the other perspectives and struggles pervasively found within it. Framing identity through material processes allows us to interrogate the sources of these struggles and thus makes finding the correct route to rid of these oppressions far easier.

Parkinson's Article

With that said, I think this makes for a great segue into our first article—one which in my eyes outlines these ideas effectively. Donald Parkinson's article "Neither Intersectionality nor Economism: For a Genuine Class Politics" analyzes the common formulations of so-called "class-first" economism

embodied in the article by Adolph Reed Jr., and non-class intersectionalism embodied in the article by Kimberlé Crenshaw. As the title of the article reflects, Parkinson mounts a critique of both currents, writing that for "class-first" economism, "politics must steer clear of divisive political issues and instead focus on basic bread-and-butter economic issues to build a constituency." which would imply that "we must focus on simple reformist campaigns to expand the welfare state." and ignore the demand for Socialism due to its divisiveness. On the other intersectional end, Donald writes that it "doesn't explain how these oppressions are reproduced in society. [...] [And] because of its genesis in legal theory, [it] seeks to [...] end the practice of these oppressions within the framework of bourgeois law and order." Here, both traditions fall into a reformist strategy of either repeating the right-wing social democracy of the post-war era, or taking the form of single-issue activism and coalitions to make existing social relations fairer as opposed to changing the foundations of society itself. Counterposed to these two examples, Parkinson champions a "universalist class politics that can engage all terrains of social life, is capable of developing and practicing a critique of our entire society, and can unite the proletariat in all its diversity" to fight for a new society which—to use a quote from Marx—emancipates "that of all human beings without distinction of sex or race."

Jackson's Article

Moving on into the second article in our series, we find a far more historical piece of writing penned by Mike Jackson, one of the founders of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners. In this historically centered piece, Mike writes a firsthand account of the solidarity work LGSM had done during the 1984–1985 miners' strike in the UK. From the 1940s onward, it was no big secret how much power the National Union of Mineworkers had; in 1974 the union had even brought down a conservative government during a strike. In the aftermath, the Ridley Plan was created in preparation to directly fight the union during the next major strike action, which would begin sometime by March 6th of 1984. It is with this historical context that we find the origins of the LGSM movement. According to the article, LGSM was founded on July 15th 1984 in an apartment owned by Mark Ashton—another founder of LGSM. One of the first official actions of the London section was to twin a trio of mining communities, with Dulais Valley being the highlight of the article. “When the Dulais support group received our letter there were not a few raised eyebrows. Some miners were openly hostile and suggested that they would be made a laughing stock of the valleys. Others argued that they had never knowingly met lesbians and gays and that they should use the opportunity to get to know more about us.” This initial adoption of the Dulais Valley support group would hastily grow into an unbreakable relationship of Solidarity between the two communities. A visitor from Dulais “told us that the strike was teaching them a great deal, they now knew what police harassment was about, what media lies and distortions were about. Things that black people, lesbians and gays have experienced for far longer than we have.” From that moment, LGSM would focus on collecting donations for the Dulais strike group, whether at gay bars, book stores, or at the well-renowned Pits and Perverts ball they had organized. Ultimately, LGSM had managed to raise somewhere around £70,000 in today's money for the strike groups they had twinned. With the return to work being called, the article outlines the actions the supported miners had done for LGSM and the broader queer movement, including standing side by side during the 1985 pride parade, collecting donations for the AIDs epidemic, and generally popularizing the queer struggle whenever they had the chance. To end this summary, I'd like to share a quote from a Dulais mineworker featured in the article: “Now our fight is over, it's time to turn round and support those who have supported us for their struggle continues, and none less than the lesbians and gays who have stood by us solidly.”

Bohrer's Article

Moving into our third article—titled “Intersectionality and Marxism”—we find a much more academic analysis of the two currents in thought. Outlining the criticisms of the two currents from each other's perspectives, Ashley Bohrer finds that some of the critiques thrust are in fact misplaced. As the article outlines, intersectional critiques of Marxism for “reduc[ing] all social, political, cultural and economic antagonisms to class.” are partly true as “Some Marxist theorists do in fact omit any significant discussions of race, gender or sexuality from their work, explaining the processes of capital accumulation, crises and dispossession in gender- and race-blind terms.” However, Bohrer also outlines that this is a critique Marxist feminists also mount against traditional Marxism as well, and that attempts to ameliorate these criticisms from a Marxist feminist perspective (whether successful or not) have long been incorporated in contemporary scholarship. On the other end of the stick, Marxist critiques of intersectionality “Perhaps unsurprisingly, [critique] that intersectionality has an underdeveloped analysis of class as a fundamental axis of oppression.” And that “intersectional analyses often have the effect of misapprehending the nature of class itself, postulating a qualitative equivalence between it and other forms of oppression where none exists.”¹ A final critique laid upon by Marxist scholars involves the abstraction of identity into individualized experiences disconnected from structural, material and historical processes. “Since identity politics, and therefore intersectionality theory, are a bourgeois politics, the possibilities for struggle are also bourgeois. Identity politics reproduces the appearance of an alienated individual under capitalism and so struggle takes the form of equality among groups at best, or individualized forms of struggle at worst.” This criticism, claims Bohrer, is as misplaced as the intersectional critique of Marxism, that is, it is applicable to some examples of the underlying theories, but has largely been either ameliorated or simply not applicable to broader theories. In the aftermath of these critical overviews, Bohrer then goes into outlining a provisional integration of Marxism with Intersectionality. And that while Ashley privileges capitalism and argues that “capitalism is the root of the modern class, gender, sexuality and race systems of oppression” she does not say “that class is the primary or privileged axis of oppression. Rather, Marxist analyses gives the clearest analysis of certain aspects of class and also, more so than other theories, have devoted much time, effort and energy to detailing the historical and contemporary workings of capitalism.”

Fraillon's Article

Finally moving into the last article of the month, titled "Who's afraid of identity?", we return to a far shorter, more classically Marxist and Hegelian analysis of identity. The article begins by outlining the dialectical and material nature of identity—i.e., as embodying both positive and negative components and as being born from material relations reproduced in society. To emphasize the latter point, Luca Fraillon—the author of this article—describes the modern conception of something as simple as age falling apart in previous modes of production: "Despite having been alive for 26 years, telling someone in the early stone age that they are 'pushing 30' wouldn't make much sense. The conditions for numerical age to emerge as an identity, namely the codification of the division of labour, simply don't exist." Using this material analysis, Luca makes a direct blow to misunderstandings and misuses of the term class reductionism: "Where does class fit into this? We've shown how identity ultimately arises out of production – is this class reductionist? No. Class is not the mode of production. There is a substantial and important difference between saying that "everything comes back to class", and "everything comes back to material conditions". Class itself is an identity, and perhaps the most obvious one. [...] All identities arise from material conditions, [i.e.,] the mode of production of any given society. The struggles of queer people, women, and people of colour are thus intimately linked to the struggle against capitalism, and do not exist in opposition to it." Adding a final point, Luca writes that intersectionality is an often misunderstood term amongst the socialist-left and that "While crude applications of intersectionality reach liberal idealist conclusions, historical materialist applications of it allow for an important Marxist analysis of specific cultural phenomena."

Conclusion

To end this summary-lecture, one leading thread throughout most of these articles is the placement of Capitalism as the source of modern systems of oppression. And in order to change these systems of oppression a full frontal assault must be pursued against Capital; To rid of racism, transphobia, homophobia, sexism, colonial oppression, ableism, and other sights of struggle, the sources of these oppressions—that being the underlying mode of production—must be decisively defeated at the hands of a truly universal proletarian class. If you are to take one thing from these articles, I recommend you take this common thread to heart.



¹A note from Carlisle, our current PJC Steward:

"In my personal reflection, I think this is still what we have today and something we saw play out and still playing out in our DSA chapter. When a group that has rich theoretical marxist/socialist knowledge and theory doesn't concern itself with material issues affecting marginal communities, or doesn't speak to it or demonstrate relevance of class ideas meaningfully, those marginalized will not join, and the causes they do organize around are oftentimes devoid of that theory because there may not exist a tradition accessible to them to pull from. For example, LGSM is so impactful to me because it's one of the few concrete traditions or examples that I could resonate with as a unification of socialist/marxist organizing and queer struggle, as inseparable struggles."

A History Of Economic Planning & Calculation

Preface

This micro-lecture was originally created to help outline the history of economic planning for the article discussion series the PEC facilitates monthly for the chapter. September's series was constructed around economic planning with the four featured articles (in order):



Modern Industry and Prospects for Socialism
Dónal Ó Coisdealbha



How to Make a Pencil
Aaron Benanav



Planning and Anarchy
Jasper Bernes



How socialism can organize production without money
Adam Buick & Pieter Lawrence

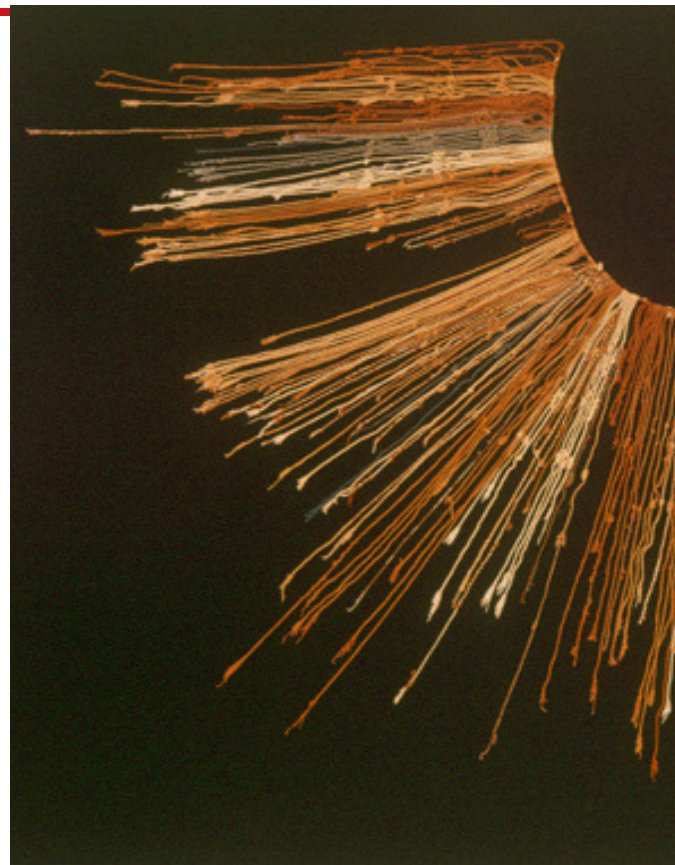
The preceding mini-lecture has been lightly edited to provide a slightly more in-depth history than the micro-lecture had time for originally.

Introduction

Planning is an incredibly vital component to Marx & Engel's conception of a socialist mode of production. It's occasionally repeated in popular and important works from the two on the necessary creation of "a system in which all ... branches of production are operated by society as a whole – that is, for the common account, according to a common plan, and with the participation of all members of society."¹ Such an important component to communist production is rarely understood by the average socialists of the modern day. In this month's micro-lecture, I'll be outlining a very brief history of economic planning, from the accounting and control of long lost societies, to the industrial behemoths of capitalism today.

Before Proto-Socialism

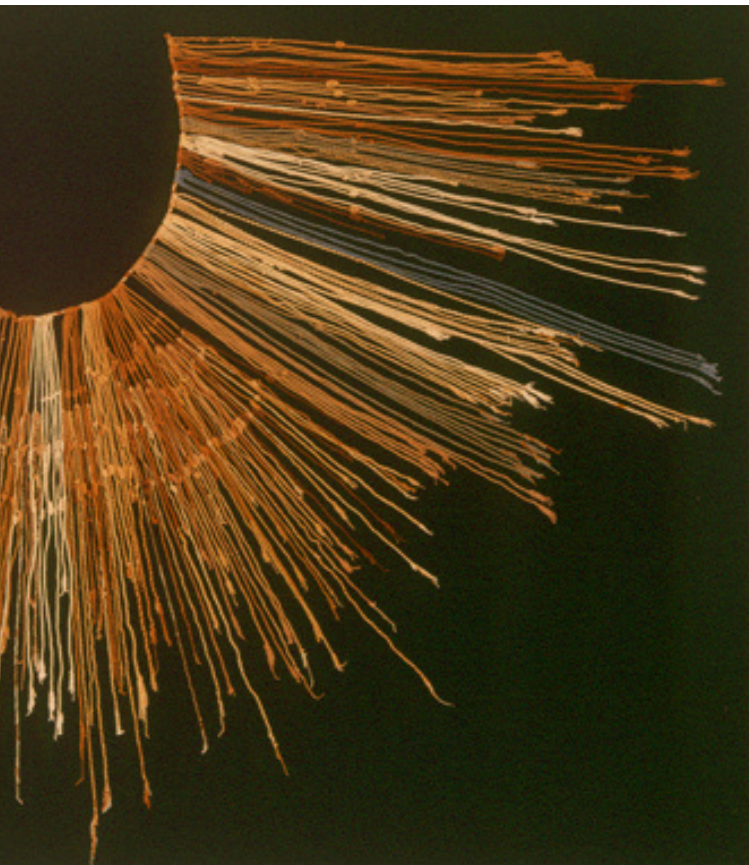
To heavily paraphrase and simplify my previous writings on the subject,² we'll first begin our journey with



something I had talked about before: the Incan Empire. Known for its large absence of markets and exchange, the Incan empire utilized the physical accounting of goods—i.e., in-kind accounting & allocation—to control its economic projects and affairs. The empire was known for their sizable public works projects which included vast road networks and buildings dedicated towards both the storage of goods and records, and the lodging for those transporting and utilizing those records, among other things. Accounts of stock were recorded using the famous Quipu, an accounting tool made from thread. Information was recorded using a plethora of criteria, such as differing knots in the thread, differing thread orderings, differing thread lengths, differing thread colors, and even differing thread compositions. This system of accounting and allocation was used all throughout the Empire, from the smallest organizational unit to the broadest of chiefdoms. While a deeply theocratic empire, the economic accounting and allocation processes of the Incan state provides an interesting perspective into the modern planning debate.

During Proto-Socialism

Jumping ahead 2-300 or so years, we find the first truly "socialist" and proto-socialist perspectives on economic planning. Babeuf is a noteworthy case for being rather explicit on the inefficiency of the market and the demand for production planned according to need. Writing:



*"Competition, [...] submerges conscientiously made products under a mass of deceptive goods contrived to dazzle the public, competition achieves low prices by obliging the worker to waste his skill in botched work, [...]; competition gives the victory only to whoever has most money; competition, after the struggle, ends up simply with a monopoly in the hands of the winner and the withdrawal of low prices; competition manufactures anyway it likes, at random, and runs the risk of not finding any buyers and destroying a large amount of raw material which could have been used usefully but which will no longer be good for anything."*³

Babeuf puts forward a vision for a world where the economy is "intelligently directed and stimulated with an eye to usefulness and to the general well-being.", where the work of all "will constantly converge toward the great social aim, the common prosperity". It's clear to see the connection between Babeuf's criticisms of "competition" (capitalism) and his ideas on an "intelligently directed" production with the later scientific socialist ideas on the anarchy in production and the call for a "society composed of associations of free and equal producers, carrying on the social business on a common and rational plan."⁴

Planning In Revolutionary Social Democracy

Skipping past Marx & Engels' own writings on the subject⁵ and jumping straight into the very late 1800s/early 1900s, we'll begin to see more concrete ideas formulated, with one of the first coming from Otto Neurath. The Austrian Marxist and positivist Neurath originally formulated planning as an extension of the economic relations Austria had generated during WWI. Neurath had found that "As a result of the war, in-kind calculus was applied more often and more systematically than before ... war was fought with ammunition and with the supply of food, not with money". Neurath had believed that the in-kind accounting he saw during the war could be applied outside of war conditions, imagining the employment of:

*"an in-kind calculus – intended to supplement the common monetary calculus with its incomes, taxes etc. and provide the basis for investigating the economy – will show how certain quantities of mines, fields, forests, swamps, etc., and imported resources and machines etc., yield certain quantities of coal, copper, flour etc., which in turn become part of the conditions of life on the one hand and means of production on the other, such as raw materials or auxiliary inputs for machines etc."*⁶

While Neurath's conception of planning is popular with the articles I sent, there were other theoreticians of the time who advocated differing approaches to planning, notably Otto Liechter, who advocated for a system of planning based primarily on the computation of labor-time, something which Marx & Engels' themselves would incipiently theorize. This labor-time accounting of both Liechter and Marx would be altered and taken further by the Dutch 'Group of International Communists' (the GIK) with their work titled the "Fundamental Principles of Communist Production and Distribution".

Soviet & Chilean Planning

Moving from the 1910s and '20s into the 1960s and early '70s we begin to see real examples and concrete plans for the institution of economic planning in socialist experiments—most notably Victor Glushkov's conceptualized OGAS system of the USSR, and the partly realized project Cybersyn of Stafford Beer and Fernando Flores in Chile. While OGAS never attained funding and ran into bureaucratic hiccups, project Cybersyn was partly realized and would find use before its destruction at the hands of the Fascist Pinochet

regime. Both systems were conceived as a web of devices connected through networks—one might even say an interconnected network... an internet... perhaps?—used to transmit, receive, calculate, and post information regarding production. Information would be sent from local nodes to regional aggregators & decision-makers, and those aggregators/decision-making nodes would send information to the main center for calculation and computation, whether that be Chile's CHECO (Chilean Economic simulator) in Santiago or the USSR's main calculation-node in Moscow. While these were the conceived designs, neither system would ever get to experience such completeness. Chile only had a couple of mainframes to use for such a project and OGAS was already deprecated by 1971. What Cybersyn would manage to achieve was through using Telex Machines (basically predecessors to Fax machines) to send production statistics to the control center in Santiago. The statistics would be printed out, read by computer engineers, and quickly translated into punch-cards to be fed into the mainframes present. This system as it existed was put to the test during a major CIA funded employers' strike. During this strike, the Cybersyn system—with the help of spontaneous community organizations and industrial belts—had allowed non-striking workers and their production-units to account for resource shortages, connect with each other to coordinate deliveries to distribution points, and calculate optimal routes unblocked by striking truckers and facilities, all of which in conjunction to other community organizations severely limited the damage the strike was able to cause. Because of Cybersyn's ultimate success against the strike, the CIA would abandon more covert and soft forms of disruption for much more conspicuous and violent forms of disruption, eventually leading up into a coup which would spell the end to the socialist experiment in Chile on September 11th, 1973.

Modern Day Capitalist Planning

In the modern day, 50 years after the Chilean tragedy, I'll end this lecture off with a final look at planning systems in modern capitalism. It's scarcely known that economic planning is used in capitalist society a lot more than free-market libertarians would like to admit! Each company acts as an island of planning, only utilizing market-mechanisms when needing to interact outside of itself. And, even then, certain companies have such close interaction with each other, that they may eschew

market mechanisms between themselves entirely as well! Walmart uses the CPFR process they originally helped to fund to C(Collaborate with firms within their supply chain to P(Plan production and distribution according to future F(Forecasts created through demand so R(Replenishment can be made efficient and easy. According to Coisdealbha's article, Toyota and other manufacturers use a system of pull production to cooperate with supplier associations to plan manufacturing according to algedonic signalling triggered by "bins" as they are near full or are near empty. These systems, among many others, don't coordinate production using buying-and-selling, they directly plan production according to signals and information beyond mere price. As Dónal takes the time to outline, these production processes contain the potential seeds of socialist planning; they contain certain social-relations that are held back by the capitalist system, waiting to burst out and become unfettered by private ownership or profit.

Footnotes

¹ From the 14th plank of Engels' The Principles of Communism

² The very first class the Socialist Night School facilitated had a piece of writing created for it which outlined the Inca Empire's use of in-kind accounting, among other subjects.

³ Taken from:

<https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/birchall/1996/xx/babeuf.htm>

⁴ Marx, Karl. "the Nationalisation of the Land." 1872.

www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1872/04/nationalisation-land.htm.

⁵ For Marx & Engels' writings on the subject of economic planning and communism, I will point you towards: 'Anti-Dühring', 'Capital: Vol. 1', 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', 'The Nationalisation of the Land'.

⁶ Neurath, Otto, R S Cohen, and Thomas E Uebel. 2004.

Economic Writings : Selections, 1904-1945. Dordrecht ; Boston: Kluwer Academic.



**"ENVIRONMENTALISM WITHOUT CLASS
STRUGGLE IS JUST GARDENING,"
CHICO MENDES**

THE FUTURE IS OURS
ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS ORGANIZE



BY TYLER MARTIN

KCDSA & HARTZELL GRAY MAKE HISTORY, AND YOU'RE INVITED!

PHOTO FROM A CHAPTER TOWN HALL WHERE WE HEARD FROM OUR FELLOW MEMBER AND CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE **HARTZELL GRAY** ABOUT HIS VIEWS ON CREATING A BETTER WORLD. OUR MEMBERS ASKED QUESTIONS RANGING FROM CAMPAIGN STRATEGY TO INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY



You know what they say, "Go big, or go home!" That's what KCDSA has done all year, and what we're setting ourselves up to repeat in 2026. In 2025, we have more than doubled in membership from roughly 200 members to now being nearly 550 members strong, and our growing chapter is ready to flex that people-power to effect real, positive change in our community that takes power from the wealthy and returns it to the working class. We're doing that by ending 2025 making chapter history with our first-ever electoral endorsement of Hartzell Gray for Congress.

Our chapter has worked closely with Hartzell over the last 6+ months as he progressed through our endorsement process. We had multiple meetings where we talked about his policies and strategy, and reported back to membership along the way. We also had multiple opportunities for all of our newer members to get to know Hartzell more personally throughout that process at various social events. All that time, our Electoral Committee was preparing ourselves by deep diving into Federal policies and local districting, doing the research necessary to undertake a Congressional campaign endorsement. When KCDSA does endorsements, it isn't just a casual stamp of approval or a commitment to donate; an endorsement is a commitment to the candidate themselves as a

movement builder and to use our network of organizers to rally around that candidate. This two-way relationship, called co-governance, is what sets us apart from the Democratic Party, who quite literally only requires you to win the primary to gain their support. Even though it's a lengthy process, it helps ensure our candidates share our chapter's ideology, a commitment to co-governance, and that we know our candidates inside and out.

We got to know Hartzell really well over the past year as we collaborated closer than ever before, and dug into his background and goals for his campaign. Many of you may already know Hartzell from his days as a radio host for 96.5 The Buzz, but many of you may not know Hartzell, the organizer. The first time I talked to Hartzell he shared his personal story with me and I could immediately tell just how much he cares about people other than himself. And I've seen that repeatedly in his organizing over the years. From working with Federal employees who weren't being paid during the government shutdown and making sure they had food to eat, to building bus benches for people who rely on our public transportation system in places our city wouldn't provide them, to doing tenant organizing with KC Tenants helping ensure people have a dignified place to live, Hartzell has proven time and time again that he cares about community more than self. And you can see

that through his policies. Whether it's supporting universal healthcare, calling for a renewable transition by 2035, or advocating for housing as a human right, we can all see that Hartzell truly wants to build a better world for everyone.

So, why now? As Trump and his goons in Jefferson City try to gerrymander our communities, we are stepping in to fill the void left by the Democratic Party, who has all but completely abandoned red states and continues to shift their own politics further to the right. We are standing up to support a candidate who doesn't care how you draw the lines, or who controls the legislature, because he has a brand of politics that is universally understood by all: we are all getting screwed over by the richest people on Earth, and it's time for that to end. Hartzell also stands up for working people, something both parties abandoned decades ago. He won't sell out American jobs or family-owned farmland to private equity or foreign corporations. Rather, he wants to build an economy where you actually have a say in your workplace and what happens with the profits you create. You can see that in his commitment to being

funded by the working class, so that he can stay accountable to the working class, instead of selling out to dark-money PACs and lobbyists. Simply put, the reason we're doing this now is because we did the pre-work, we're confident in Hartzell as an organizer and movement builder, and we know that we can win no matter how they carve up our state.

Even though we're confident in our abilities, we certainly won't be able to do this by ourselves! We need our community to rally around Hartzell's campaign, and the DSA, to show that a better way of doing politics is possible. By coming out and canvassing, phone banking, text banking, and spreading the word about Hartzell's campaign, we can show that the democratic socialist way of doing politics is both popular and capable of winning. We can show that a way of politics that is of, by, and for the people is the right way forward for our country. Consider this your personal invitation to join the DSA and volunteer with Hartzell's campaign. Because, as Hartzell always says, "We got us!" and it's going to take everyone playing a part to make this possible!



Political Cartoon By A. S. Barnes

"Oligarchs thrive off the exploitation of the working class. They steal the fruits of our labor. They weaponize nostalgia to suppress our solidarity. They'll hold our memories hostage in search of a handout. It's a sick gift, and billionaire bootlicking is bipartisan. Pathetic."
— Hartzell Gray on the Kansas Stadium Deal

TEAM NAME CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS
"WYANDOTTE WENDIGS"

In mid-October 2025, we all found ourselves on a deepening slide down the news cycle, becoming more aware day by day that Congress would be unable to do its job to avoid a federal government shutdown. A shutdown that would lead to an estimated \$24 billion in federal spending withheld in the first month alone, 900,000 furloughed, and two million federal employees working with no paychecks for 43 days. Approximately 34,000 federal employees in the Kansas City metro were impacted, and approximately 18,000 military members and their families between Ft Leavenworth and Whiteman Air Force Base.

Forty-two million families would lose their SNAP or EBT assistance on October 27 - 100% of everyone who qualifies for SNAP, or 650,000 Missourians, 300,000 children, and 188,000 Kansans, including nearly 85,000 kids. It is important to note that the monthly administration of SNAP costs the federal government roughly \$8 billion each month - 1.3% of our annual federal budget - and the government's Congressional Budget Office has estimated that, as a result of the 43-day shutdown, \$14 billion was wasted - never to be recovered.

While they bickered online and uploaded artificially generated videos and photos of each other, as President Trump poured literal sh*t on the general population and illegally withheld taxpayer funds from workers and food for the poor, local advocates and community partners were slowly building solidarity from the ground up.

With the upcoming expiration of healthcare subsidies, local housing costs doubling at twice the national rate, and the immediate consequences of federal workers not receiving pay for an unknown period, our families, elders, and children began to bear the brunt of the pain. Schools and daycares lost Head Start funding. Food Pantries and nonprofits themselves were unable to purchase food from Harvesters, as both received federal funding cuts.

With all of this in front of us and in our minds, KCEATS was created with the belief that the most radical thing that anyone can do is to care about whether a stranger goes to bed hungry. On October 20, KCEATS was officially established, and our volunteers worked together over the next two months to sound the alarm that no matter what happens, KCEATS. Our organizers began putting together plans and strategies to defend our people from the biggest threat to our local economy and

FEEDING SOLIDARITY

BY: KAITLYN AUSTIN



food security in 90 years. Thanks to the generosity of The Ship in the West Bottoms, we began to host a walk-up pantry in the front space of the bar on Friday nights from 4 to 7pm. We started small, passing out flyers to local businesses and asking the community to donate pantry goods to help us fight back. The KC DSA membership and the Carceral Accountability Council donated an initial large pile of groceries, enough to help provide security for local federal workers and their families who are going without pay for the duration of the shutdown. The following week, the Lawrence DSA chapter membership pitched in and donated a trunkful of food. Multiple local businesses jumped in to help, giving their time and space to collect donations and host fundraising events to benefit the cause. We have raised \$910 to date in donations for supplies, operations, and mutual aid through our Workers Solidarity Fund, with more fundraising events to come.

With holidays around the corner and pantry shelves hauntingly bare, the KC DSA chapter's membership quickly donated a rented refrigerated truck for a city-wide food drive the weekend before Thanksgiving. Hartzell Gray donated supplies and aid in his personal capacity, helping us establish a relationship with the National WWII Museum & Memorial, which graciously hosted us for the event. Thirty volunteers arrived on Saturday, November 22, to help collect and load food into the truck for delivery to the pantry at Community Assistance Council. DSA membership was present, as were volunteers and activists from Do Something MO, 50501 KC, KC Defender, Carceral Accountability Council, Boots on the Ground Midwest, Sisters of Charity Leavenworth, and the Justice & Dignity Center.

Our stuff-a-truck drive ultimately collected over \$10,000 worth of donated food items from the community, including multiple cases of turkeys and spiral hams, rare and valuable items like cases of milk and cheese, individually packaged snacks for kids, and pet food, so many essentials that made an immediate difference for someone in need. A very thoughtful person donated two boxes of Narcan. KC KIDS EAT estimates their ongoing school snack drive has brought in \$6,424 in donated goods, resulting in approximately 21,942 servings for our kids in the community.

Our donated groceries are collected and sorted by volunteers, then routed to the pantries. Our kids' snacks and any monetary donations for the KC KIDS EAT

program are routed to our partner, DC Okonta, to distribute directly to schools within the Kansas City Public School system. As a direct result of the solidarity that has been cultivated in just two months, KCEATS has officially partnered with the Community Assistance Council to secure grant funding and an operational structure to expand our capacity, make new partnerships, and distribute critical services and aid in 2026.

We built solidarity by beginning with simply talking to one another and sharing our knowledge and experiences. By talking with each other and connecting with resources and information, we began to establish security systems in a time of chaos. Our most fundamental belief is that we are all each other's social security. We believe in connecting resources directly to the people already on the ground doing the work, as the people closest to the problem are closest to the solution.

The people involved with and donating their resources to KCEATS have all been a very special kind of person from the beginning. Each person who has stepped up to say they wanted to help is someone who wouldn't accept their neighbors going to bed hungry in our community. Many of the volunteers are people who also have problems and catastrophes in their own lives. One volunteer has been without heat in their home, and one has been without gas for hot water. One lost their only mode of transportation in a freak car accident. One lost their federal job due to DOGE cuts and has been unable to land another job since. All the people who choose to prioritize others over themselves continue to motivate us when times are hard and inspire the mission of KCEATS every day.

To all the volunteers, partners, and supporters of this project over the last two months, I want to extend my deepest gratitude on behalf of the community you dutifully show up for and make a difference in every day. I am thankful for you, this city, and I would like to dedicate this poem by Gwendolyn Brooks to you all.

Paul Robeson

"We are each other's harvest;

We are each other's business.

We are each other's magnitude and bond."

We are all stronger together. Solidarity forever.

Kaitlyn C. Austin, captain of KC EATS & Workers Solidarity Fund.

www.workerssolidarityfund.org

www.communityassistancekc.org

FOR A RENEWED INTEREST IN REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-IMPERIALISM, A BRIEF REFLECTION:

BY: SILVIA ANN LISA

Nobody who has paid attention to the escalations against Venezuela in the past few months should be surprised by the land invasion and kidnapping of the democratically-elected and left-wing President Maduro. Nonetheless, it may be difficult not to get startled at the wanton aggression and complete disregard for global order signaled by an overt amerikkan coup.

The problem is imperialism. We must make this crystal clear. The problem is not Trump, the problem is not the far-right, the problem is not oligarchy or a retreat from liberal democracy; these are symptoms. The problem is imperialism, the problem is capitalism.

For a socialist, imperialism means precisely the tendency of capital to internationalize, driving toward multi-national monopolies. Sometimes imperialism looks like liberal predatory trade agreements, sometimes it looks like fascistic overt militarism. But these forms of imperialism require each other, they are inseparable. Capitalism requires imperialism; we must root our analysis of the aggression against Venezuela in a rigorous critique of capitalism.

Mass anti-war movements have broken out in the imperial core before, they can break out again. We must learn the lessons from the 60s, we must agitate without reservation against capitalism and imperialism once again, we must build a revolutionary anti-imperialist movement firmly rooted in the pursuit of socialism and then communism. This time, we must win.

Stand with Venezuela.

Stand with Maduro.

"Two, three, many Vietnams!" -Che

All power to the people.

THE QUEER THREAD

BY: TYLOR STANDLEY AND
JORDAN SMIRL

The World's First Queer Liberation Movement

Germany in the 19th century had extremely strict laws against homosexuality. Paragraph 175 of the criminal code mandated imprisonment for any man found guilty of homosexual activity, and while similar laws were on the books in other countries, in Germany the penalties were often much harsher. Those convicted could face up to 4 years in prison and a lifelong forfeiture of civil rights. Hundreds suffered these punishments each year. Efforts by conservative political leaders to expand the law to criminalize lesbianism ultimately failed, but women faced their own struggles in the form of restrictive gender norms and limited rights, and those exposed as homosexual were often ostracized.

With this in mind, it shouldn't be surprising that the world's first queer liberation movement started in Germany. As early as the 1860s there were public figures speaking out against the persecution of homosexuals. Many of these early queer rights activists were affiliated with the German Workers' Association (the first socialist political party in the country), and they were joined by more radical members of the burgeoning women's rights movement. Leslie Feinberg notes in her "Lavender & Red" series in *Workers World* that Anna Rüling, a lesbian and a leader of this movement, criticized the moderates who wished to exclude homosexuals from their struggle. She expressed her hopes for the future in a 1904 speech: "Perhaps not today or tomorrow, but in the not too distant future the Women's Movement and [homosexuals] will raise their banners in victory! Per aspera ad astra! [Reach for the stars!]"

In 1897, socialist and queer activist Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee to campaign for the rights of gay, lesbian, and transgender Germans and to petition the government for the repeal of Paragraph 175. Karl Kautsky, Eduard Bernstein, and other prominent Social Democrats of the era joined this effort to decriminalize homosexuality. To them, the fight for socialism and for queer liberation were closely intertwined. As Hirschfeld declared at a political rally in 1918: "We want the community of peoples, struggle against racism and national chauvinism, removal of limitations on economic and personal communication between peoples, the right of peoples to self-

determination regarding their relationship to a state and their form of government."

Following the First World War and the revolution that swept Germany in 1918-1919, a more progressive attitude towards gender and sexual minorities took hold. Many were still arrested for homosexual activity but in major urban centers the queer community enjoyed a period of greater tolerance and visibility. As Clayton J. Whisnant writes in *Queer Identities and Politics in Germany*:

Gay and lesbian bars flourished in Berlin and many other cities. Homosexual periodicals, for a time at least, were openly sold in public kiosks. Gay men, lesbians, and men and women whom we would identify today as transgender formed clubs on a scale that was unheard of anywhere else around the world.

Berlin also saw the foundation of Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science in 1919, which was the first medical center in history to offer hormone therapy and sex reassignment surgery, along with contraceptives, sex therapy, treatments for STDs, and "lectures on a variety of subjects, including psychoanalysis, sexual pathology, forensic sexology, and the physiology of sexual differences." The Institute was one of the few places where openly transgender people could find employment.

This epoch was unfortunately short-lived. Germany's queer community became one of the Nazis' first major targets after they rose to power. In 1933, police raided and shut down gay bars across the country. Stormtroopers and members of the Nazi German Students' Union broke into Hirschfeld's Institute and publicly burned the contents of its archives, some 20,000 books documenting the history, science, and experiences of queer people in Germany and around the world. The following year the Nazis purged homosexuals from their own party, most

notably Ernst Röhm, the openly gay leader of the SA whose sexuality had long been a source of embarrassment for Hitler. Information seized in raids was used to out gay and transgender people. Around 100,000 were arrested and put in "protective custody" alongside socialists and Jews. Some queer people were held in regular prisons but many were sent to concentration camps where they were experimented on, forcibly castrated, and either worked to death or executed.

When the Second World War came to a close, queer people hoping for a return to Weimar-era liberality were disappointed. Paragraph 175 remained on the books in both East and West Germany, and many of those who had been convicted of homosexuality under the Nazi regime were kept in prison. As Hans-Joachim Schoeps

wrote in 1962, "For the homosexuals the Third Reich has not yet ended." Meanwhile in the United States the Red Scare resulted in the persecution of queer people as a "subversive" and "undesirable" element of society that threatened America's interests as much as the communists did. This wave of oppression, often referred to today as the Lavender Scare, cost thousands of queer Americans their jobs and reputations. It wasn't until the late 1960s when things would finally begin to turn around for the queer community in both Germany and America.

Nuclear Contradictions

Rajani Palme Dutt, Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain from 1939-1941, studied and wrote extensively on the character of fascism as he watched its rise across Europe. He wrote:

Fascism...is the most complete and consistent working out, in certain conditions of extreme decay, of the most typical tendencies and policies of modern capitalism.

What are these characteristics which are common, subject to a difference in degree, to all modern capitalism and to Fascism? The most outstanding of these characteristics may be summarised as follows:

1. The basic aim of the maintenance of capitalism in the face of the revolution which the advance of productive technique and of class antagonisms threatens.
2. The consequent intensification of the capitalist dictatorship.
3. The limitation and repression of the independent working class movement, and building up of a system of organised class co-operation.
4. The revolt against, and increasing supersession of, parliamentary democracy.
5. The extending State monopolist organisation of industry and finance.
6. The closer concentration of each imperialist bloc into a single economic-political unit.
7. The advance to war as the necessary accompaniment of the increasing imperialist antagonisms.

All these characteristics are typical, in greater or lesser degree, of all modern capitalist states, no less than of the specifically Fascist states (Fascism and Social Revolution, 92).



As Sherry Wolf explains in her book *Sexuality and In* short, fascism is capitalism in crisis. As economic instability leads the working class into desperation, hostility against the bureaucracy (from both right- and left-wing populism) reaches a boiling point. The ruling class responds by utilizing the full force of the state to coerce the working class into submission. Specifically, fascism's obsession with a particular set of family values stems from capitalism's requirement for a very specific family form.

In order to function, capitalism needs an unequal division of labor within the household. The most efficient structure divides the labor according to gender. Men go to work for the bosses (or to war for colonial expansion), while the women remain at home to perform unpaid labor. Her responsibilities are to keep her husband fed and satisfied so that he can return to work again each day and to raise children as the next generation of workers. This family structure is a crucial development from the feudal system in which women still performed unpaid domestic labor, raising children for agricultural work alongside the family. Capitalism retains these feudal family relations in order to keep a steady flow of workers. As Sherry Wolf explains in her book *Sexuality and Socialism*:

The family also serves a sociological function. By training young people to accept traditional sex roles—men are the smart or strong breadwinners, while women are the nurturing companions and child-raisers—families are ideal incubators for rigid sex norms. Homosexual and transgender behaviors present a challenge to this ideological norm. After all, if women can look and act “like men” and men can look and act “like women” and/or if men and women can live in same-sex relationships and each embody attributes conventionally attributed exclusively to men or women, gender and familial norms are thrown into question. The behavior of sexual minorities and gender-benders weakens and even defies these sex and gender roles, thus undermining the attitudes most desirable to the smooth functioning of capitalist society (34).

LGBTQ+ people rarely reproduce this social structure. We generally do not have children or raise them to become good little workers. Queerness, like all forms of marginalization, places one outside of social expectations. It takes us off the path society has paved towards success and into a world where we can make our own pathways and define “success” for ourselves. It opens the possibility for our home life to reflect a

profound love based on equality rather than the transactional hierarchies that define social relations under capitalism. Within alternative families, we often find happiness and intimacy. We find freedom to express ourselves in ways that the nuclear family disallows.

Refusal to assimilate, however, brings a certain risk. Margaret Thatcher summarized capitalism's liberal philosophy well when she said, “There is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families.” Capitalism removes communal spaces, places us in competition with our neighbors, and demands that we pick ourselves up by our own bootstraps. Capitalism thus cannot afford alternative models of the family because its logic rejects the possibility of social cohesion. Survival in this order requires that we act out of self-interest. It tells us that we are inherently selfish, and then creates a world which rewards selfish actions. We are duty-bound only to ourselves and to our immediate nuclear family (which functions as little more than an extension of ourselves).

As marginalized members of the working class, queer people find themselves stuck between two seemingly impossible options: fight against the system, or fight to fit in. As neoliberalism and austerity have further divided the working class by identity and stripped it of the collective power necessary for the liberatory struggle, many LGBTQ+ people have opted to fight for the latter, individualistic option. Today, assimilation largely guides the priorities of the queer rights movement. Our demands are limited to the rights which we very much deserve but which pose the least threat to capital, such as the right to marry or to adopt children. In short, we seek to retain our queer identity while still providing value for capitalist society and increasing our odds of survival.

Here, however, we confront one of capitalism's core contradictions: our economic structure demands a nuclear family, but is completely incapable of creating the material conditions for people to attain this structure. The cost of childcare and housing has made the nuclear family entirely unattainable for the vast majority of Americans. More and more workers choose not to have children and to live with roommates and friends. In the US, the nuclear family found prominence for only a very brief period. Even within the social safety nets created with the New Deal, a slight majority of white middle class families were able to create their picturesque “Leave it to Beaver” suburban lives. These social safety nets, however, were unsustainable under capitalism and have been almost entirely dismantled. Every president since FDR, Republican and Democrat, has stripped our welfare system and given it to the capitalist class.

This contradiction is detrimental to capitalism because it is detrimental to the working class which makes this system function. After the turbulence of the Great Depression, the ruling class subsidized the nuclear family model with the New Deal in order to prevent revolution. But reforms never stick. Now, the solution is to use the state to enforce a social order beneficial to the owning class—aka: fascism. So, we must ask, what do queer people gain once we achieve acceptance in the current culture? Are we truly liberated if we gain the freedom to express our sexuality and gender, but still suffer under the crushing weight of late stage capitalism along with the rest of the working class?

In light of the material conditions of the time, it is no surprise that the Nazis targeted those who deviated from sexual and gender norms. It is also no coincidence that the first queer liberation movement grew explicitly out of Socialist theory and revolutionary political organizing. Had the German Revolution of 1918 succeeded, one can only imagine how much more Hirschfeld and his Institute for Sexual Science could have accomplished (and how much of it could have survived for us today).

We turn now to the historical development of later movements for queer rights, particularly in the American context, which unfortunately lacked this theoretical foundation and eventually settled for assimilation.

Queer Radicalism And Regression

In the sociopolitical environment of the late 1940s through the 1960s, the reach and ambitions of queer rights activism were limited. Competition between the US and Russia for global influence meant that both countries enacted domestic policies that were restrictive in their own way. Homosexuality was re-criminalized in Russia in part because it was believed this would help increase birth rates, and in the US, the patriarchal, heterosexual structure of the nuclear family was upheld as a central pillar of capitalist morality. The few organizations that gained prominence for promoting the interests of queer people during this era were generally conservative, distancing themselves from the radicalism of earlier activists and adopting the term “homophile” rather than homosexual.

By the late 1960s many queer people in America—especially those of the younger generations—were beginning to grow restless. East and West Germany decriminalized homosexuality in 1968 and 1969, respectively, but the American homophile movement’s appeals to polite society fell flat. Homosexuality was treated as a disease and gay men were sometimes

lobotomized in an effort to “cure” them. Queer publications were subject to censorship, people could lose their jobs if their sexuality was exposed publicly, and police raids on gay and lesbian bars were a regular occurrence. At the same time, the Civil Rights movement and the sexual revolution were dramatically altering the country’s social landscape and opening up new realms of possibility. Queer people hungered for something more revolutionary than lackluster appeals for assimilation and acceptance.

1969 marked a major turning point in the struggle. The NYPD raided Stonewall Inn, a popular gay bar, on one of its busiest nights. Activists had engaged in various forms of protest and even small-scale riots prior to this event, but on the night of June 28th, something snapped. People were fed up, and hundreds gathered at the bar to fight back against the police. This carried on for the next several nights, with the number of protestors reaching multiple thousands and the police responding with tactical teams. Feinberg points out that it was Black, Latin, and transgender people who led the resistance to police—“those with least to lose.” She quotes Dick Leitsch, a gay activist present at the riot who observed, “It was the ‘queens’ who scored the points and proved that they were not going to tolerate any more harassment or abuse.”

Radical queer organizations began to spring up immediately afterwards. This included Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries and the Gay Liberation Front, which both stressed the importance of fighting not only against the oppression of queer people but the structures of capitalism more broadly. The Los Angeles chapter of the GLF adopted the following as their statement of purpose:

We are in total opposition to America's white racism, to poverty, hunger, the systematic destruction of our patrimony; we oppose the rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer, and are in total opposition to wars of aggression and imperialism, whoever pursues them. We support the demands of Blacks, Chicanos, [Asians], Women, Youth, Senior Citizens, and others demanding their full rights as human beings. We join in their struggle, and shall actively seek coalition to pursue these goals.

Marsha P. Johnson, the Black transgender woman often celebrated for her role in the Stonewall riots, was a member of the GLF and one of STAR's founders. On the intersection of the struggle for gay rights with other political struggles she was quoted as saying, "You never completely have your rights, one person, until you all have your rights."

Though these organizations would be dissolved in the 1970s, their radicalism was revived during the AIDS crisis a decade later. Outrage over the government's inaction sparked the formation of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) in 1987. Seeing the Reagan administration's refusal to do anything as a deliberate effort to kill off the queer community, ACT UP adopted the pink triangle—used to mark homosexuals in Nazi concentration camps—as one of their primary symbols. They engaged in a wide range of public actions nationwide to draw attention to their struggle and to demand a response, from their "Silence=Death" poster campaign to "die-ins," throwing stink bombs into government buildings, and dumping the ashes of dead loved ones onto the lawn of the White House.

The efforts of ACT UP and other organizations into the 1990s produced greater sympathy for the plight of queer Americans. There was an increase in research and government resources for victims of AIDS and growing public tolerance for gay, lesbian, and transgender people. Homosexuality (which was still illegal in many states) was federally decriminalized in 2003, the Hate Crimes Prevention Act in 2009 established protections based on sexuality and gender identity, and same-sex marriage was legalized following the Supreme Court case *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015. But with these victories the radicalism of queer activists gradually diminished. Whereas Pride events were once protests against an oppressive system, they are now festivals of entertainment sponsored by big corporations. Symbols of queer identity and resistance are now products that can be purchased anywhere. The normalization of queer people as part of capitalist society and the lack of an immediate threat to life and liberty has unfortunately caused many to feel that revolutionary politics are no longer necessary.

Today, however, attacks on queer rights have ramped back up. The LGBTQ+ community, and especially transgender people, have been one of the primary targets of the neo-fascist movement that kicked off in 2016 with Trump's first electoral victory. Now in his second presidency, with Project 2025 as the framework for his administration's restructuring of American society, the intention to eradicate queer people from public life has been made clear. This new Lavender Scare has

resulted in book bans targeting queer literature, a dramatic reduction of trans rights, threats to trans healthcare, removal of hate crime protections, and even talk of overturning *Obergefell*. Government webpages on LGBTQ+ issues, including medical research papers, have been scrubbed. Though public opinion remains tentatively supportive of queer rights and the Trump administration's policies have triggered broad condemnation, reactionaries are fighting hard to control the narrative surrounding LGBTQ+ issues and to again promote "traditional" (read: straight, patriarchal) morality as the baseline for American society.

Queer Liberation through Mass Politics

There is a well-meaning, but misguided and frankly dangerous claim that Queer existence is inherently radical. In truth, queerness by itself simply reveals a tension that already exists within capitalism. It sheds light on the instability of the nuclear family and forces the capitalist class to make concessions in order to relieve those tensions. As we have shown above, capitalism is perfectly capable of adapting to some of the demands of some sections of the queer community, so long as those concessions can maintain an unequal division of labor within the accepted alternative family models. By the same token, recent history shows again and again that the ruling class is ready and willing to strip away those concessions as soon as it is profitable to do so. A movement for queer liberation, therefore, cannot simply be a request for the right to marry and adopt, or to have our HRT and gender affirming surgery covered by insurance.

For decades we have been stuck in a cycle of begging the ruling class for equality and then losing our rights when the masters see a way to make a profit from our misery. As American imperialism turns inward, marginalization intensifies and minority groups become the scapegoats for capitalism's complete inability to provide for the working class. For the sake of the nuclear family, the queer community is already losing the few protections and rights that were granted to us. The Civil Rights Act has been gutted in order to protect white privilege in the political system. DEIA laws have been repealed in order to protect white, able-bodied privilege in the labor economy. Meanwhile, child labor laws are being repealed and secret police are abducting non-white immigrants, all to keep the wages of the remaining white laborers at the lowest rate possible.

At every level of bureaucracy in this country, our governmental bodies are controlled by corporations and capitalists whose bottom line is threatened by the

prospect of economic and political democracy. So long as the power of the state remains in the hands of the capitalist class, liberation for anyone is unattainable. The power of the state must be placed entirely in the hands of all those who live in it so that we can organize a society based around our needs as a collective and ensure the well-being of those who are not deemed “productive” members of the current social order. Hirschfeld understood long before Hitler began sending queer people to concentration camps that queer rights were never just about queer rights; our primary fight is for true democracy.

For the ruling class, concessions and privileges are an extremely effective tactic of “Divide and Conquer.” Under chattel slavery and Jim Crow, white workers were still very much exploited by capitalists. Yet, the privileges they enjoyed were enough to keep them complacent and even willing to fight for the maintenance of this system. The material conditions made them all-too willing to embrace racist ideologies.

To divide the queer movement and thus conquer it, the ruling class will allow gays and lesbians to marry, providing some much-needed relief from oppression to these individuals. Though they are still very much oppressed under capitalism and patriarchy, these “more acceptable” queers gain relative privilege among the marginalized classes. They understandably fear losing that relative comfort and thus take fewer risks in the fight. Some even become useful idiots for the maintenance of capitalism by embracing anti-trans ideologies or moralizing a nuclear family model for same-sex couples. Some of the marginalized conform by means of the carrot, while the rest get the stick.

This is how capitalism divides all workers from one another and convinces us to maintain the status quo—leaving the capitalists in charge of the state. It is painstakingly difficult to convince white people to sacrifice their privilege for black and brown people being murdered by the police and enslaved by for-profit prisons. It is similarly difficult to convince cis-heterosexual people to fight for the rights of gender and sexual minorities.

The only way to change the system—to give all power to all people—is through a worker democracy. The only way to convince *all* identity groups within the working class to fight for our rights is through mass political organizing. This begins with a democratic organization, where minorities have representation and the ability to steer the organization towards truly liberatory tactics. This is why we encourage all marginalized people to join the Democratic Socialists of America.

The DSA is imperfect and not remotely as radical as this historical moment requires. Reformist tendencies linger within the DSA’s tactics from its origin as a reactionary Reagan-era movement. However, the revolutionary tendency within the DSA grows as capitalism collapses and imperial violence turns inward. Reformism is unsustainable within a truly democratic movement. For all of its flaws, we are convinced that the structure of the DSA will be the vehicle for a liberatory movement if we use it as such. If marginalized people and their revolutionary allies use our representative power within the DSA’s parliamentary structure to force its nearly one-hundred thousand members to fight for liberation, we can minimize the risks of fighting as individuals or as isolated identity groups.

Only then can we create a worker democracy and build a social order which not only allows the existence of alternative family structures, but celebrates, encourages, and provides for them.

It is not too late for the Socialist movement in America to learn the historical fact that reform without revolution breeds complacency and perpetuates fascism. If humanity is to survive we must create a world where production and distribution of our material needs are equitable and democratically controlled. All of our struggles are, in the end, one struggle for the liberation of all humanity. In this way, queer liberation is nothing short of human liberation.

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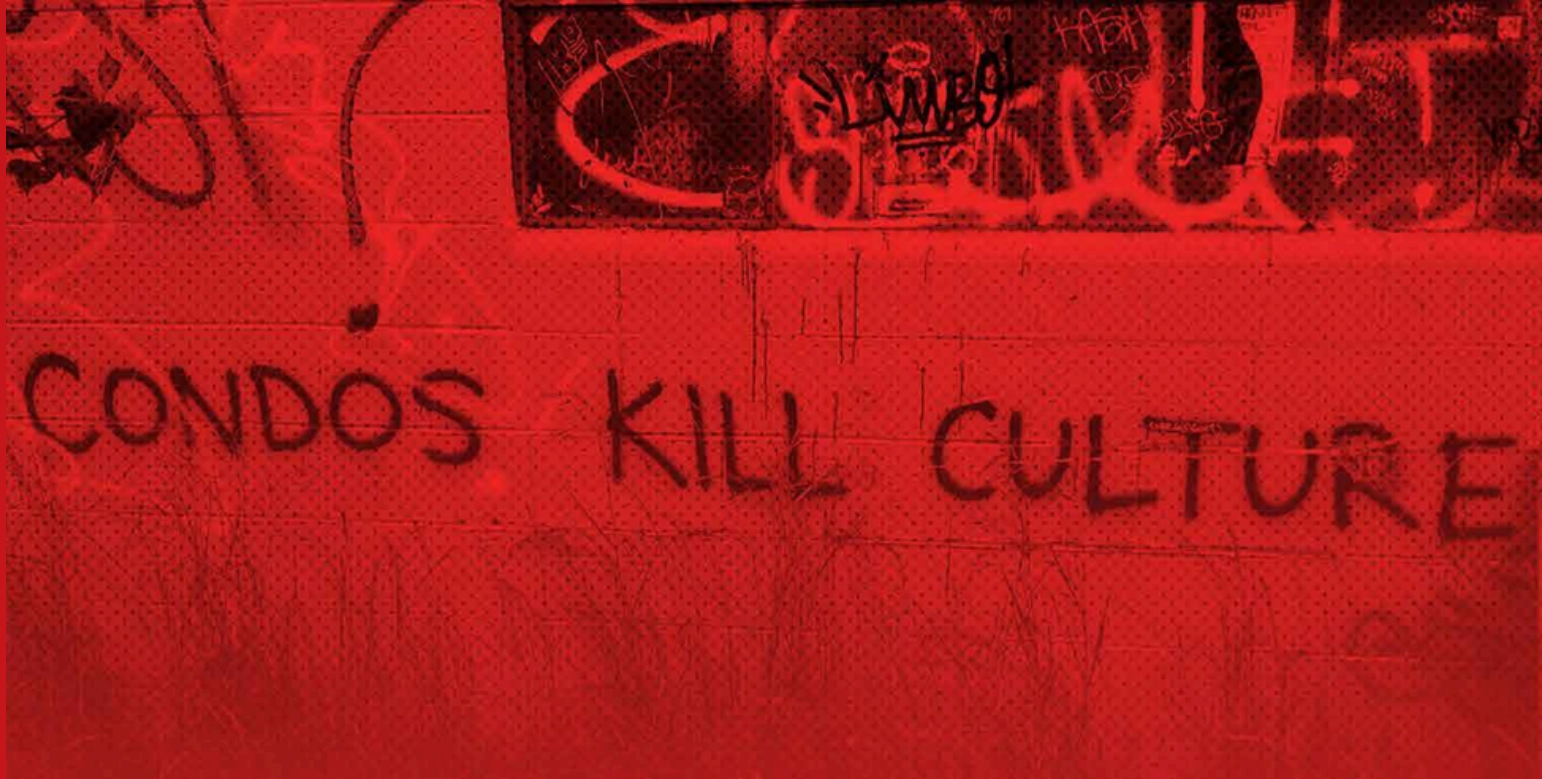
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A WORKING CLASS TESTIMONY: FROM GRIEF TO HOMELESSNESS, AND THE STRUGGLE FOR STABILITY.

BY: COMRADE WALTER E. CAPPS

Back In March 2020, right as the COVID shutdown started. I went through hell trying to find housing stability. I was living with my aunt after my parents died, and late one night a fight broke out. Because I'm neurodivergent, loud noises can overwhelm my senses. My aunt and her boyfriend were drunk, blasting music at 1 a.m., and when I asked them to turn it down, it only got worse. They took my phone so I couldn't call for help, and I had to physically defend myself. The police ended up being called, and I was the one who went to jail.

The shutdown started literally that same day. The jail put me on suicide watch (even though I wasn't actively suicidal), but because they didn't have the staff or resources, they released me quickly, and I suddenly had nowhere to go.

A friend from my old D&D group stepped up and gave me a place to stay. I got a job at FedEx Ground, biking 10 miles on the highway every night just to get to work. After a while, I saved enough to get a lease in the same apartment building where my friend lived.

Then the landlord sold the building to KC Home Rental, one of many corporate landlords swallowing up housing in Kansas City. My rent at the time was \$475. They wanted to remodel and jack up rents to maximize profit. My friend couldn't afford it and was pushed out. Two months later, he died due to his health problems.

When my lease ended in November, they refused to renew mine too. They wanted my unit vacant to remodel and resale.

That was my first experience with corporate landlords, and then 2nd time being homeless. I learned how hard life is when housing is treated as a commodity instead of a human right. This kind of thing doesn't just happen to me, if I was the only one, that'd be one thing. But THOUSANDS of regular people in Kansas City experience this every day, especially with companies like KC Home Rental taking over entire neighborhoods.

This can happen to you, it can and might've happened to your neighbor or a family member.

Don't you want to have a home that is YOURS? Where you can raise a family, and then when your time comes you can pass the home on to your kids, and then they can do the same for their kids, and their kid's kids, for generations to come?

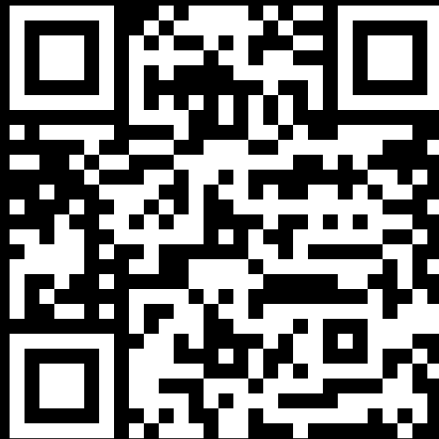
This is why tenant organizing matters!

This is why socialist politics matters!

Fight for a better future!

What happened to me was shitty, but I can't go back in time and neither can you (maybe) so all we can do is build a better future.

**UNION PRINTED MERCH
DESIGNED BY LOCAL ARTISTS IN
SUPPORT OF KANSAS CITY DSA**



SUBVERTING ZORRO, A RADICAL RETELLING

BY: MICHEAL KING

To support the chapter's KC ICE FREE Campaign, the Political Education and Political Justice committees joined forces for a movie night exploring the history of police violence against Mexican Americans, and immigrants of color broadly, using the legend of Zorro and the true history of Joaquin Murrieta as the discursive lens of analysis. The event was a resounding success, with around 30 in attendance, and a very strong post-movie conversation. Below is the introduction to the film:

While watching Zorro, I found a contradiction – how could a Hitler-supporting and anti-semitic fascist like Walt Disney allow his company to create a character based on Joaquin Murrieta, a Mexican American legend that stood against all that Walt Disney was? Shouldn't Disney, an avowed white supremacist, be supportive of the vigilante violence that saw the mass lynching of Mexican Americans in both California and Texas, and not Zorro's resistance against this state-sanctioned white supremacist terrorism? Zorro comes into existence during a time period of extreme violence, seeing both literal class warfare exemplified by the Pinkerton Detective Agency murdering union members, as well as the white supremacist terrorist attacks and aerial bombardment of Black Wall Street. However, by 1957 there had been a cultural shift due to the rights won by workers during the Great Depression and the Civil Rights movement, which by this time had already seen the *Brown v. Board of Education* case and the Montgomery Bus Boycott.

This shift in the material conditions forced a shift in the presentation of ruling class ideology, leading to the creation of neoliberalism: an ideology that dresses the wolf of fascism in the sheep's clothing of democracy. This is the historical materiality that allows Zorro to become a ruling class tool in service of perpetuating the myths necessary for the reproduction of hegemony. Zorro is never portrayed as fighting against systemic injustice, he fights against corrupt individuals who threaten the 'American Dream' and 'American Democracy'. Zorro is seen as fighting the anachronistic values blocking America's 'divine progress' to the multicultural bliss of neoliberal inclusion. However, this is not at all in line with Zorro's origin story, which is inspired by the book "Joaquin Murrieta" written by Yellow Bird

(aka John Rollins Ridge), who, as a victim of the Trail of Tears, deeply understood systemic white supremacy and created a character that explicitly fought against white supremacist state terrorism. Zorro is intricately tied to the histories of Native American genocide, slavery in the *encomienda* system, US Imperialism, and to all forms of domination embedded in the foundation of the USA as a settler colonial, hetero-patriarchal capitalist society.

The narrative is constructed in 3 parts: first, historical background looking at how slavery and genocide create the material foundation of Westward Expansion – the historical time period our story takes place in. Next, I contextualize white supremacist state violence through the history of Joaquin Murrieta and how this name came to be used to justify the extrajudicial murder of Mexican Americans by the California Rangers, a state-sanctioned death squad. In the final act I show how Yellow Bird's (aka John Rollins Ridge) experience from the Trail of Tears created his perspective of white supremacist state violence that is foundational to his retelling of the story of Joaquin Murrieta into one of heroism against state violence. I then conclude in an act of radical re-appropriation by showing Zorro as a figure liberating not the state but those in bondage and explicitly against the extrajudicial kidnapping and murder of Mexican Americans and immigrants of color at the hands of the California Rangers. By leaving out the liberal narratives of acceptability and inclusion, I am offering a radical re-reading of Zorro, a subversive Zorro that places the struggle against white supremacist state violence front-and-center. A Zorro not interested in saving 'America' or its corporatocracy, but in fighting against systemic white supremacist violence perpetuated by both the US government and the colonial legacy of the *Encomiendas*.

To understand this radical Zorro, we must look at white supremacy in all of its forms – the colonial legacy of slavery, the genocide of Native Americans, the terrorism of vigilante and state-sponsored groups like the Rangers – as being the same interconnected struggle that continues today, as we struggle against a new wave of state-sanctioned racialized terrorism. The purpose of this film is to make explicit how the fascist project of state terrorism of the Trump regime, which is not interested in cloaking its true intentions behind the sheep's clothing of a liberal multicultural framework, connects to the origins of white supremacist state terrorism. To end state violence for good, it is not enough to fight only against

the blatant fascism of the Trump regime: we must realize, as Yellow Bird and his character of Joaquin Murrieta did, that the ENTIRE SYSTEM is GUILTY. When we recognize that the system is the problem, then we can understand that to end state violence we must radically alter society away from the hegemony of capital and its false democracy and into the radical democracy offered by socialism. All oppression is connected because we are all connected. An injury to one is an injury to all, because your struggle is my struggle. I fight for you because we have the same enemy. I fight for you because I believe in a world that puts justice above domination, that puts human need over profit, that does not recognize the supremacy of the ruling class: only a radical democracy of the people!

Viva Joaquin, Viva Joaquin Murrieta, Viva la Revolucion!!!!



¡VIVA JOAQUIN!

*A socialist movienight
exploring resistance to
police violence through the
legend of Zorro.*

**October 29th, 7pm
UMKC Royal Hall 206
political-justice@kcdsa.org**

THE WORLD WE DESERVE

BY: TYLOR STANDLEY

Below is the script for a speech I delivered on Saturday, September 20th for the 2025 KCDSA Chapter Convention. It has been slightly reworked for publication.

"We got us" — Hartzell Gray

In the DSA we don't just care for each other's material needs. We eat and drink together. We play games; we have concerts and comedy shows. We have real friendships. I've only lived in Kansas City since December '24, but this chapter has become family to me. I care about this city and I want to learn its history and become a part of it. I love being part of a community, but it is even greater because it is this community.

I moved here last December to work for a family member, and I came out and began living openly as a trans nonbinary person shortly after moving. Yet I still live closeted, pretending to be a boy while I'm at work and while I'm around most of the people who are responsible for bringing me into this world. But with you, my comrades, I never had to "come out." You know the real me that not even my blood relatives know. Not for one moment have I been afraid to be myself with you.

This is the kind of camaraderie that transcends our ideological differences. It doesn't matter if you're a Trotskyist or an Anarchist or a Marxist-Leninist or Stalinist. It doesn't matter if you think the DSA should work for a dirty split, a clean split, or a dirty stay with the Democrats. It doesn't matter if you lean more towards reformist or revolutionary strategy in the current moment. If you are able to see my humanity and struggle for my liberation and for the liberation of all humanity alongside me, then we are comrades. This is why I joined the DSA over other socialist organizations that I may align with more closely on paper.

The DSA is far from perfect and we have a lot of work to do. For example, there is no excuse for our lack of ethnic and racial diversity. We are going to change that. I know we will change that, because—as Carlisle so perfectly put it in their speech at Solidarity Summer this year—the DSA is not the kind of organization that tells people to "wait their turn" for liberation. I knew from day one, sitting in a chapter orientation meeting, that the DSA is committed to fighting for the liberation of all

people. We understand that no one is free until everyone is free, that all of our struggles are interlinked as one struggle for the liberation of humanity.

Where to Find Power

Since joining this chapter I have found that organizing allows us to see the beauty in humanity, what it means to really live as a social species. We are meant to live like this—to take care of each other, to have a system in place that makes sure that we are at least getting bread to survive.

In the short time that I have been part of the KCDSA I feel like I am only just now beginning to understand what it means to be in community, to understand what politics is supposed to be—a collective effort of problem solving to meet one another's needs. In the DSA we get to practice real democracy! Who else in this country can say that?

The world we seek to build is one where we do not have to waste our democratic efforts undoing the destruction and oppression inflicted upon us by capitalism and all other class based systems. It may feel insignificant to spend our precious few hours on this earth deliberating over budget proposals, structural changes, and resolutions, all while terrorists steal our neighbors, commit genocides, and destroy the only planet we have. But we are laying stones in the foundation of a fortress which can withstand the battles to come. The only thing that defeats fascism and tyranny is organized solidarity. When we practice democracy together, we teach one another and the next generation what politics will look like when we have abolished class hierarchies.

When we on the left speak of revolution, or when we reject the bourgeois politicians of the Democratic Party, our opponents ask us what our plan is. They balk and ask, "What is the alternative?" Their skepticism betrays the fact that they have no idea what democracy is. It shows that they have lived in a world that has deprived them of education. They have no idea of their own power or how to use it. The answer is in the way that we organize. When we practice democracy, we are building the alternative!

Power is not a limited resource which the ruling class can take from us. Power is like love. It is unlimited and relational. It is something that we give to one another. At our chapter convention we gave comrade Bea power by hearing and taking seriously their proposal for making our organization more accessible. We gave comrade

Oliver power when we took seriously his request for chapter funds to support the chapter library, which is itself an opportunity for us to empower one another by sharing in common our resources for education.

Even when we turn down one another's ideas, as we often do in our deliberation, we are not limiting or taking power. Our power is not getting our ideas passed. Our power is in being heard and taken seriously by our community; it is in our ability to have a voice and to make it heard. In the DSA everyone has a voice.

Stay Vigilant

But we cannot let this taste of humanity slow us down. We cannot get complacent and think that we are safe. We are not safe, and neither are our children. Over the summer, a comrade posted in Slack that ICE was spotted in Salina, headed towards KC. Later, we were updated that ICE was actually headed to Chicago. I felt guilt at being relieved that ICE was not coming here. I was relieved that we would not have to endure the fascist violence. Not yet. Now they are in Chicago or LA or DC or Memphis or Asheville...but they are not here yet.

But that isn't true, is it? They are here.

This has always been an occupied country. From the beginning, it has been an imperial project. For generations, this project has given some of us privileged positions—comfortable, “successful” lives that preoccupied us with those privileges while it trampled others. Here, at the highest stage of capitalism, we are experiencing the violence of its primary contradictions as the system collapses in on itself. Like a great cosmic battle, capitalist imperialism struggles against class consciousness. It creates its own grave diggers in us, the working class!

We will fight peacefully for as long as we can, but this nation has shown us that no matter how peaceful we are, they will accuse us of violence while they hold guns to our heads. The ruling class demands that we remain peaceful. What they really want is for us to remain silent while they suck the blood from our throats. As long as the working class is silent and docile, they have the “peace” they desire.

They have the highest prison population in the world, use them for slave labor, and call it “peace.” They have a “ceasefire” in Gaza while Israel continues to reign down hell from the skies, and call it “peace.” They abduct anyone with brown skin and send them to torture camps and call it “peace.”

As the great black revolutionary Kwame Ture said, “Peace isn't the answer, liberation is the answer.”

To an oppressor, anything except silent, obedient submission is itself an act of violence. As long as we remain silent, they will continue to escalate their violence against us. What makes us think they will not do to our children what they've done to the children of Gaza for the sake of a bit of real estate or another zero in their bank account? Until we are liberated, there can be no peace.

But the fascists have betrayed their weakness! They have shown us their hand. We do not need to use the same weapons they use against us. Not yet. So long as our speech is considered violence against the oppressors, we will speak louder! So long as my existence as a queer person is violence against fascists, I will live more boldly in that queerness. Your existence as a worker is itself violence against the capitalist class. So workers of Kansas City, UNITE!

Down with capitalist imperialism. Long live KCDSA. Long live Socialism.



**“...WE
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THE SOCIALIST PARTY PLATFORM OF 1912

The 1912 Socialist Party platform reminds us that socialism in the United States once articulated bold demands rooted in working class power. Reprinting it today allows us to compare our current movement's aspirations and think critically about our objectives.

The Socialist party declares that the capitalist system has outgrown its historical function, and has become utterly incapable of meeting the problems now confronting society. We denounce this outgrown system as incompetent and corrupt and the source of unspeakable misery and suffering to the whole working class.

Under this system the industrial equipment of the nation has passed into the absolute control of a plutocracy which exacts an annual tribute of hundreds of millions of dollars from the producers. Unafraid of any organized resistance, it stretches out its greedy hands over the still undeveloped resources of the nation—the land, the mines, the forests and the water powers of every State of the Union.

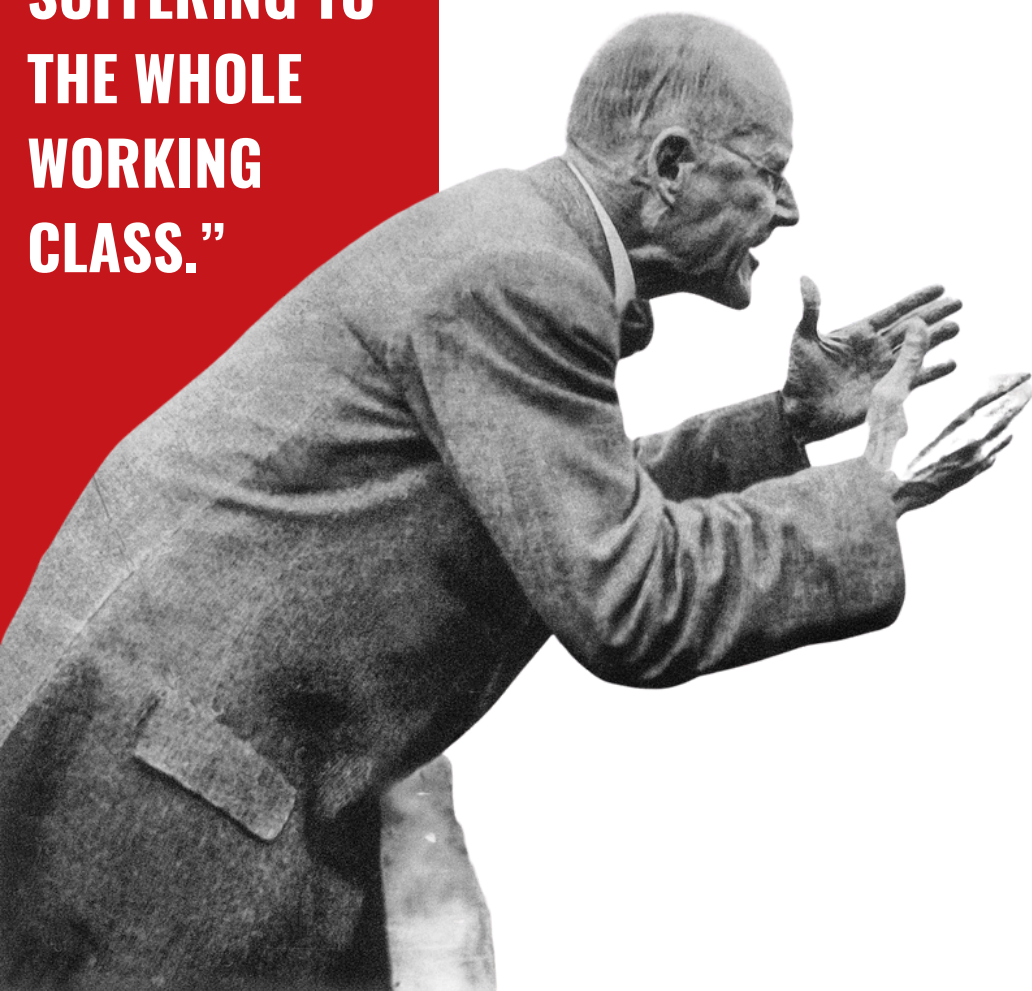
In spite of the multiplication of laborsaving machines and improved methods in industry which cheapen the cost of production, the share of the producers grows ever less, and the prices of all the necessities of life steadily increase. The boasted prosperity of this nation is for the owning class alone. To the rest it means only greater hardship and misery. The high cost of living is felt in every home. Millions of wage-workers have seen the purchasing power of their wages decrease until life has become a desperate battle for mere existence.

Multitudes of unemployed walk the streets of our cities or trudge from State to State awaiting the will of the masters to move the wheels of industry.

The farmers in every state are plundered by the increasing prices exacted for tools and machinery and by extortionate rents, freight rates and storage charges.

Capitalist concentration is mercilessly crushing the class of small business men and driving its members into the ranks of propertyless wage-workers. The overwhelming majority of the people of America are being forced under a yoke of bondage by this soulless industrial despotism.

It is this capitalist system that is responsible for the increasing burden of armaments, the poverty, slums, child labor, most of the insanity, crime and prostitution, and much of the disease that afflicts mankind.



Under this system the working class is exposed to poisonous conditions, to frightful and needless perils to life and limb, is walled around with court decisions, injunctions and unjust laws, and is preyed upon incessantly for the benefit of the controlling oligarchy of wealth. Under it also, the children of the working class are doomed to ignorance, drudging toil and darkened lives.

In the face of these evils, so manifest that all thoughtful observers are appalled at them, the legislative representatives of the Republican and Democratic parties remain the faithful servants of the oppressors. Measures designed to secure to the wage-earners of this Nation as humane and just treatment as is already enjoyed by the wage-earners of all other civilized nations have been smothered in committee without debate, the laws ostensibly designed to bring relief to the farmers and general consumers are juggled and transformed into instruments for the exaction of further tribute. The growing unrest under oppression has driven these two old parties to the enactment of a variety of regulative measures, none of which has limited in any appreciable degree the power of the plutocracy, and some of which have been perverted into means of increasing that power. Anti-trust laws, railroad restrictions and regulations, with the prosecutions, indictments and investigations based upon such legislation, have proved to be utterly futile and ridiculous.

Nor has this plutocracy been seriously restrained or even threatened by any Republican or Democratic executive. It has continued to grow in power and insolence alike under the administrations of Cleveland, McKinley, Roosevelt and Taft.

It proposes that, since all social necessities today are socially produced, the means of their production and distribution shall be socially owned and democratically controlled.

In addition to this legislative juggling and this executive connivance, the courts of America have sanctioned and strengthened the hold of this plutocracy as the *Dred Scott* and other decisions strengthened the slave-power before the civil war. They have been used as instruments for the oppression of the working class and for the suppression of free speech and free assembly.

We declare, therefore, that the longer sufferance of these conditions is impossible, and we purpose to end them all. We declare them to be the product of the present system, in which industry is carried on for private greed, instead of for the welfare of society. We declare, furthermore, that for these evils there will be and can be no remedy and no substantial relief except through Socialism, under which industry will be carried on for the common good and every worker receive the full social value of the wealth he creates.

Society is divided into warring groups and classes, based upon material interests. Fundamentally, this struggle is a conflict between the two main classes, one of which, the capitalist class owns the means of production, and the other, the working class, must use these means of production on terms dictated by the owners.

The capitalist class, though few in

numbers, absolutely controls the government—legislative, executive and judicial. This class owns the machinery of gathering and disseminating news through its organized press. It subsidizes seats of learning—the colleges and schools—and even religious and moral agencies. It has also the added prestige which established customs give to any order of society, right or wrong.

The working class, which includes all those who are forced to work for a living, whether by hand or brain, in shop, mine or on the soil, vastly outnumbers the capitalist class. Lacking effective organization and class solidarity, this class is unable to enforce its will. Given such class solidarity and effective organization, the workers will have the power to make all laws and control all industry in their own interest.

All political parties are the expression of economic class interests. All other parties than the Socialist party represent one or another group of the ruling capitalist class. Their political conflicts reflect merely superficial rivalries between competing capitalist groups. However they result, these conflicts have no issue of real value to the workers. Whether the Democrats or Republicans win politically, it is the capitalist class that is victorious economically.

The Socialist party is the political expression of the economic interests of the workers. Its defeats have been their defeats and its victories their victories. It is a party founded on the science and laws of social development. It proposes that, since all social necessities today are socially produced, the means of their production and distribution shall be socially owned and democratically controlled.

In the face of the economic and political aggressions of the capitalist class the only reliance left the workers is that of their economic organizations and their political power. By the intelligent and class-conscious use of these, they may resist successfully the capitalist class, break the fetters of wage-slavery, and fit themselves for the future society, which is to displace the capitalist system. The Socialist party appreciates the full significance of class organization and urges the wage earners, the working farmers and all other useful workers everywhere to organize for economic and political action, and we pledge ourselves to support the toilers of the fields as well as those in the shops, factories and mines of the nation in their struggles for economic justice.

In the defeat or victory of the working class party in this new struggle for freedom lies the defeat or triumph of the common people of all economic groups, as well as the failure or the triumph of popular government. Thus the Socialist party is the party of the present day revolution, which marks the transition from economic individualism to Socialism, from wage-slavery to free co-operation, from capitalist oligarchy to industrial democracy.

Working Program

As measures calculated to strengthen the working class, in its fight for the realization of its ultimate aim, the co-operative commonwealth, and to increase its power of resistance against capitalist oppression, we advocate and pledge ourselves and our elected officers to the following program:

Collective Ownership

1. The collective ownership and democratic management of railroads, wire and wireless telegraphs and telephones, express services, steamboat lines and all other social means of transportation and communication and of all large-scale industries.
2. The immediate acquirement by the municipalities, the states or the federal government of all grain elevators, stock yards, storage warehouses, and other distributing agencies, in order to reduce the present extortionate cost of living.
3. The extension of the public domain to include mines, quarries, oil wells, forests and water power.
4. The further conservation and development of natural resources for the use and benefit of all the people . . .
5. The collective ownership of land wherever practicable, and in cases where such ownership is impracticable, the appropriation by taxation of the annual rental value of all land held for speculation or exploitation.
6. The collective ownership and democratic management of the banking and currency system.

Unemployment

The immediate government relief of the unemployed by the extension of all useful public works. All persons employed on such works to be engaged directly by the government under a workday of not more than eight hours and at not less than the prevailing union wages. The government also to establish

employment bureaus; to lend money to states and municipalities without interest for the purpose of carrying on public works, and to take such other measures within its power as will lessen the widespread misery of the workers caused by the misrule of the capitalist class.

Industrial Demands

The conservation of human resources, particularly of the lives and well-being of the workers and their families:

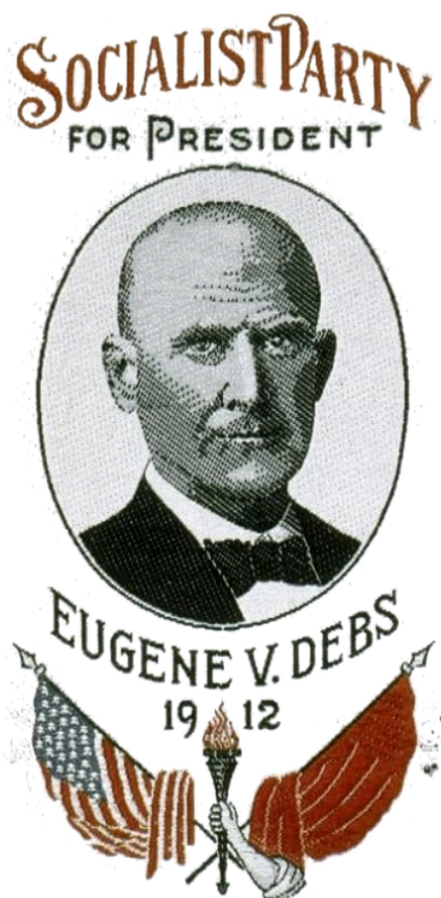
1. By shortening the workday in keeping with the increased productiveness of machinery.
2. By securing to every worker a rest period of not less than a day and a half in each week.
3. By securing a more effective inspection of workshops, factories and mines.
4. By forbidding the employment of children under sixteen years of age.
5. By the co-operative organization of the industries in the federal penitentiaries for the benefit of the convicts and their dependents.
6. By forbidding the interstate transportation of the products of child labor, of convict labor and of all uninspected factories and mines.
7. By abolishing the profit system in government work, and substituting either the direct hire of labor or the awarding of contracts to co-operative groups of workers.
8. By establishing minimum wage scales.
9. By abolishing official charity and substituting a non-contributory system of old-age pensions, a general system of insurance by the state of all its members

against unemployment and invalidism and a system of compulsory insurance by employers of their workers, without cost to the latter, against in diseases, accidents and death.

Political Demands

1. The absolute freedom of press, speech and assemblage.
2. The adoption of a graduated income tax, the increase of the rates of the present corporation tax and the extension of inheritance taxes, graduated in proportion to the value of the estate and to nearness of kin—the proceeds of these taxes to be employed in the socialization of industry.
3. The abolition of the monopoly ownership of patents and the substitution of collective ownership, with direct rewards to inventors by premiums or royalties.
4. Unrestricted and equal suffrage for men and women.
5. The adoption of the initiative, referendum and recall and of proportional representation, nationally as well as locally.
6. The abolition of the Senate and of the veto power of the President.
7. The election of the President and the Vice-President by direct vote of the people.
8. The abolition of the power usurped by the Supreme Court of the United States to pass upon the constitutionality of the legislation enacted by Congress. National laws to be repealed only by act of Congress or by a referendum vote of the whole people.

9. The abolition of the present restrictions upon the amendment of the constitution, so that instrum may be made amendable by a majority of the voters in the country.
10. The granting of the right of suffrage in the District of Columbia with representation in Congress and a democratic form of municipal government for purely local affairs.



The abolition of the power usurped by the Supreme Court of the United States to pass upon the constitutionality of the legislation enacted by Congress. National laws to be repealed only by act of Congress or by a referendum vote of the whole people.

11. The extension of democratic government to all United States territory.
12. The enactment of further measures for general education and particularly for vocational education in useful pursuits. The Bureau of Education to be made a department.
13. The enactment of further measures for the conservation of health. The creation of an independent bureau of health, with such restrictions as will secure full liberty to all schools of practice.
14. The separation of the present Bureau of Labor from the Department of Commerce and Labor and its elevation to the rank of a department.
15. Abolition of all federal district courts and the United States Circuit Courts of Appeals. State courts to have jurisdiction in all cases arising between citizens of the several states and foreign corporations. The election of all judges for short terms.
16. The immediate curbing of the power of the courts to issue injunctions.
17. The free administration of the law. The calling of a convention for the
18. revision of the constitution of the United States.

Such measures of relief as we may be able to force from capitalism are but a preparation of the workers to seize the whole powers of government, in order that they may thereby lay hold of the whole system of socialized industry and thus come to their rightful inheritance.



AGAINST CHAUVINISM: ON THE COLLAPSE OF THE WEATHER UNDERGROUND ORGANIZATION

BY: SILVIA ANN LISA

“Nothing slows down movement building like a misogynist.”

—Courtney Desiree Morris, “Why Misogynists Make Great Informants”

“In such times of great social upheaval the outcome often depends upon timely action to remove a particular road-block which is holding up further advance and growth of revolutionary power.”

—Clayton Van Lydegraf, “The Object Is To Win”

The present essay revisits the collapse of the Weather Underground Organization (WUO), tracing chauvinistic tendencies prevalent throughout the organization’s history which are inseparable from its eventual collapse. We must learn from this history as we continue to organize for socialism. Aside from infiltration and repression, it is our own chauvinistic tendencies which pose the greatest danger to the socialist movement. To

parody what Courtney Desiree Morris analyzes of misogyny (indeed, chauvinism and misogyny usually arrive hand-in-hand): chauvinism is often the calling card of the informant, but the chauvinist does the informant’s work, regardless if they are an actual cop. A crucial task confronting us as socialist organizers today is eradicating chauvinism in our work and politics.

By chauvinism, I mean postures such as I know what is right for you better than you do, or the revolution must go through me. Chauvinism is anti-dialectical and opposed to scientific understandings of exploitation and oppression; chauvinistic practices are those which reproduce structures of domination based on nation, race, sex, ability, position, or organization. Although there is much overlap between ways chauvinism appears, we can point, on one hand, to our interpersonal dealings and organizational work, and on the other, to the kinds of politics we express. In our work, chauvinism will often look like insulation of leadership, avoidance of ideological struggle, and putting the interests of the organization ahead of the interests of the masses or the

revolution. In the politics we express, chauvinism is revealed in positions that reproduce white supremacy, cis male supremacy, anti-transness, and body normativity, in any justification of bourgeois state violence, and in any defense of social democracy as an end goal, as the latter is inseparable from imperialism and national domination. Expanding on these forms of appearance of chauvinism is the subject of analysis in revisiting the collapse of the WUO here.

The collapse of the WUO must be framed alongside its refusal of material support for the Black liberation struggle. To quote "On the Black Liberation Army," a 1979 pamphlet written by then-incarcerated BLA veteran and long-time prisoner of war Jalil Muntaqim (who, after 49 years, was finally released in October 2020):

A major contradiction was developing between the Black underground and those Euro-American forces who were employing armed tactics in support of Vietnamese liberation struggle. By 1973-75, this contradiction became full blown, whereby specific Euro-American revolutionary armed forces refused to give meaningful material and political support to the Black Liberation Movement, more specifically, to the Black Liberation Army.

As early as 1967, in Clayton Van Lydegraf's notable, "The Object is to Win," one of the ideological leaders of the WUO was already demonstrating contradictions in how the white underground understood its role in relation to the Black movement. Van Lydegraf offers the following principle as a strategic guide: "The people of oppressed nations turn liberators and chop off the grasping arms of the monster; we sap and mine its vitals." What does this mean?

In one sense, Van Lydegraf is making a general call for white radicals to join Black revolutionaries in armed struggle; he recognizes, "the most determined Black revolutionaries are taking up arms as the only way to win. No other section of the left has yet done this. These two facts express a definite difference between Black activists and leaders and most of the white left." Yet, there is this ordering of duties: the oppressed nations chop off the arms of the monster, we sap and mine its vitals. Who is we? On a

naïve understanding, this could mean that those fighting outside of the landmass known as the United States will destroy imperialism abroad, those fighting within the colonial U.S. borders will destroy capitalist institutions on this landmass. This, however, would seem to go against Van Lydegraf's own understanding of the situation. He continues, "the Black struggle is now but one part of a world-wide majority movement against U.S. domination." Van Lydegraf clearly understands the Black struggle as opposed to U.S. domination, but he is at best ambivalent in "The Object is to Win" whether this understanding amounts to a legitimate call for independence of a Black nation within so-called U.S. borders, or, indeed, if the struggle must necessarily be led by Black revolutionaries.

He continues, "if a little bit of Marxism comes from the German professor, the small capitalist, the Russian lawyer, the Georgian divinity student, or the Chinese student-peasant, but somewhat re-shaped by U.S. young people, students, and intellectuals, what is so tragic in that?" Of course, one cannot definitively say, when Van Lydegraf speaks of young people, students, and intellectuals, whether he is speaking of young Black people, Black students, and Black intellectuals, but context suggests that he is at least talking about contributions of "white activists," and usually he makes clear when he is speaking of the Black struggle. Indeed, earlier in the essay, Van Lydegraf refers to "the U.S. people – that is, the Blacks, young people, intellectuals, workers"; once again, one could interpret the commas here to allow conjunction, but this does not change that Black people are set apart in the series. This makes the question of who contributes that new "little bit of Marxism" especially important. Aside from convincing

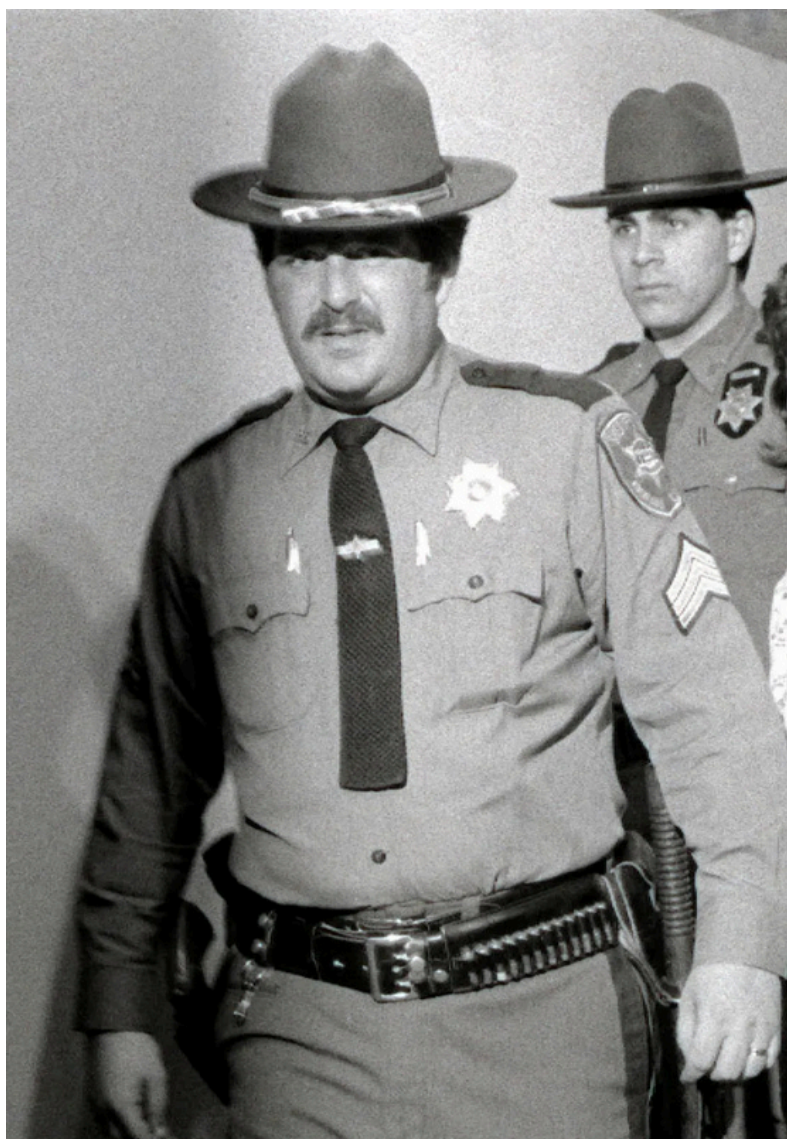


white activists of the necessity of armed struggle and disclosing to white activists “both the monstrous nature and the fatal vulnerability of the U.S. empire,” in “The Object is to Win,” Van Lydegraf does not seem to recognize a unique contribution of the fight for Black liberation to the overall struggle for socialism. That is, the Black struggle seems to be one among many struggles against imperialism, rather than the necessary strategic leading force in a struggle against white supremacy, insofar as the latter is inseparable from u.s. imperialism.

We should be fair to Van Lydegraf, who does at least state that “it is an exceptional advantage to have in the U.S. a Black nation which spearheads the resistance,” but given the rest of the essay, “spearhead” seems to refer to preceding in time rather than offering necessary strategic guidance. In this sense, the oppressed nations do the dirty work to “chop off the grasping arms,” as this temporally precedes the white activists squirming in like leeches to “sap and mine its vitals.” An editor’s note to the third edition of “The Object is to Win,” which states, “who takes state power and the forms of revolutionary power are beyond the scope of this paper and call for much further study and analysis,” fails to rectify the omission of any special analyses of white supremacy and male supremacy. Van Lydegraf was relatively young and inexperienced when he wrote “The Object is to Win”; he himself will develop a much more complex understanding of the role of white socialists as regards national liberation. For example, nine years later, in his July 1976 essay “In Defense of Prairie Fire,” Van Clayton will critique that the WUO had replaced “the entire question of fighting white and male supremacy and for support of Black and Third World liberation struggles” with the mere “question of relating to Black and Third World organizations and contacts.” But the limits of “The Object is to Win” are indicative of precisely this substitution of questions, limits which will culminate in more overt forms of chauvinism and the WUO’s eventual collapse.

Although, on Muntaqim’s analysis, it would not be until 1973-75 that the contradiction between Black and white revolutionary forces would become full-blown, between December 1970 and January 1971, a glimpse at this burgeoning contradiction will foreshadow what is to come. In December 1970, Bernardine Dohrn would author the “New Morning – Changing Weather” communique; in January 1971, the Panther 21 would respond with their “Open Letter to Weatherman Underground.”

Dohrn’s communique comes nine months after the tragic explosion at a Greenwich Village townhouse, which killed three WUO members. “New Morning” is largely a reflection on how the WUO dealt with this tragedy and how their politics changed in the wake of it. The Panther 21 letter comes 21 months after their group arrest by the NYPD in April 1969. “Open Letter” functions, on the one hand, as a show of respect for and solidarity with the WUO, on the other hand, as a scathing critique of the political lines expressed in “New Morning.” While “New Morning” does provide valuable self-criticism of some chauvinistic tendencies in WUO leadership, “Open Letter” is a valuable reminder that chauvinism must be eliminated in all forms.



Early in “New Morning,” Dohrn shares that, in the wake of the townhouse explosion, WUO members had been reflecting on how “this revolution could leave intact the enslavement of women if women did not fight to end and change it.” Describing the kind of attitude developing in the WUO collective living at the Greenwich Village townhouse ahead of the explosion, Dohrn states,

At the end, they believed and acted as if only those who die are proven revolutionaries. Many people had been argued into doing something they did not believe in, many had not slept for days. Personal relationships were full of guilt and fear. The group had spent so much time willing themselves to act that they had not

dealt with the basic technological considerations of safety. They had not considered the future: either what to do with the bombs, if it had not been possible to reach their targets, or what to do in the following days.

While this passage most clearly reveals an adventurist militancy in failing to consider safety or contingency plans, this adventurism follows a chauvinistic leadership style. Ideological struggle is not a form of harassment which should devolve into guilt and fear; it is a chauvinistic style of leadership to force a good comrade into action they do not believe in rather than winning them over by proving the correctness of the line. Far from justifiable military discipline, suspending ideological struggle is the suicidal recklessness of chauvinism when armed struggle is the order of the day.

After sharing organizational changes aimed to make the WUO more family-like and connected to the masses, Dohrn recounts that “many of these changes have been pushed forward by women.” She also, throughout the communique, shares narratives of revolutionary women involved in national liberation struggles, suggesting that if more people in the U.S. knew their stories, more people would join in the fight against imperialism. A tension therefore exists when Dohrn says, “it is now up to revolutionary women to take the lead.” On the one hand, her recognition of the strategic leadership of revolutionary women follows the experience of witnessing revolutionary women in the WUO enact positive change by resisting male chauvinist tendencies. On the other hand, the recognition of Third World women is based in an idealist fantasy about the mobilizing power of American empathy. Sharing narratives of those most targeted by colonialist and imperialist violence is undoubtedly important for connecting our understanding of theory to that of lived experiences, but a narrative is no replacement for strategic leadership. Further, only the strategic leadership of Black, Indigenous, and Third World people can instruct us on how to defeat those white racists who will, for example, hear the story of a Palestinian mother who lost her child to starvation and ask, “but do you condemn Hamas?” The closest Dohrn gets to positively looking for strategy outside the white clandestine movement is in asserting, “the Lakotas laughed at the whites’ appointing one man to be chief of all the Lakota tribes, as if people wouldn’t still go with whichever leader they thought was doing the right thing.” Even here, this is



at best a lesson wrapped in an anecdote and divorced from any recognition that Lakota peoples, as well as all Indigenous nations housed within U.S. borders, are necessarily the vanguard in the struggle against American colonialism.

Upon relating experiences of loss and struggle by the WUO with their own, the Panther 21, in their "Open Letter to Weatherman Underground," disclose that, "although we can understand fully where you are coming from — we sensed a certain mood and saw certain statements in your communique that sent chills up our spine." To begin, "Open Letter" critiques commitments by the WUO to "mother country youth culture communes" which "smack heavily with escapism." This seems to reference, on the one hand, a move from underground cells to "new families," living on the road and in the country, which Dohrn notes in "New Morning" as moves "freaks and hippies and a lot of people in the movement" were pursuing. On the other hand, it seems to reference Dohrn's claim that "consciousness-expanding drugs are weapons of the revolution." In any case, to the Panther 21, "the emphasis is on individual freedom still, while we are dealing with group freedom still." "Open Letter" questions,

where do blacks and the rest of the third world fit into the scheme of things in your "new families"? You see, you state that "none of these changes that people are going through are rules and principles." Now in dealing with the mother country — black and third world relationships — in dealing with revolution — in dealing with "the need for new men and new women" — you are dealing with principles — or are you trying to tell us that these contradictions have been dealt with — we are not convinced.

On a surface level, the criticism is that the predominantly white WUO rushed toward personal transformation without reckoning with what remnants of bourgeois ideology might crop up therein. This is certainly relevant, as a prevalent tendency existed in the WUO to speak about Black, Indigenous, and Third World people without considering how their struggles provide unique strategic leadership in the global struggle against capitalism. Yet, more subtly, this is a criticism that the WUO was retreating from dialectics. "Open Letter" continues, "Use

"to pursue a liberated self-consciousness without in the same moment pursuing the liberation of all exploited people is to pursue liberation devoid of liberation, that is, nothing at all."

the new consciousness BUT remember this new consciousness of love, creativity, and liberation will not the new consciousness BUT remember this new consciousness of love, creativity, and liberation will

not stop the exploitation of the third world." In other words, personal and political struggle must coincide. To pursue, for example, a liberated self-consciousness without in the same moment pursuing the liberation of all exploited people is to pursue liberation devoid of liberation, that is, nothing at all.

While it is a more obvious point to criticize that the WUO exhibits a chauvinistic posture toward Black, Indigenous, and Third World struggles by emphasizing the importance of these struggles while maintaining the centrality and strategic leadership of white activists, we must address the challenging point made in "Open Letter," which, despite its difficulty, offers firm strategic grounding should we face it head-on. Namely, the primary criticism levied by the Panther 21 against the WUO is that the latter was retreating from armed struggle. On this point, the Panther 21 state,

We are sorry to hear that the townhouse "forever destroyed" your "belief that armed struggle is the only real struggle." That places us in a unique position because, as Che stated — "Armed struggle is the only solution for people who fight to free themselves" — and we have lost dearly loved comrades. Also — probably every experienced revolutionary has — but we realize that risks must be taken — some will die — others will replace them (or us) — like people rapping about ending racism, colonialism, sexism and all of the other pig "isms", exploitation and all that — but these things can only be ended by revolution — and revolution is — in the final analysis — ARMED STRUGGLE — revolution is VIOLENCE — revolution is WAR.

One may risk an extrapolation that, while fear of loss is universal, allowing such a fear to stunt resistance is a response only the privileged can afford.

The point, of course, is not to demand that revolutionaries go out and commit adventurist violence. As analyzed above, it is a chauvinistic style of leadership

to coerce members of an organization to participate in actions they do not believe in; commitment must be won through ideological struggle. Still, it is a chauvinistic politics to condemn armed struggle outright. While coercive leadership must be avoided, equally must we avoid revisionism, bourgeois moralism, and the like. There is a short line between revisionism – to the extent that this implies liquidation of armed struggle – and racial or dominant nation chauvinism. Revisionists tend not only to avoid armed struggle, but positively to condemn it. This amounts, whether or not at the level of conscious expression, to condemning the national liberation struggles, as an imperialist power will never be compelled to liberate its own colonies (colonies from which it extracts resources, without which it will lose monopolistic profit) simply by nonviolence and appeals to good conscience. Imperialism will not be defeated without armed struggle, this is a basic fact. Any group which claims dedication to anti-imperialism but fails to support the armed struggle of oppressed nations is anti-imperialist in word, chauvinist in deed. Following Muntaqim, appearances of racial and dominant nation chauvinism in the WUO will become full-blown in the years to come.

In May 1974, the WUO releases its seminal *Prairie Fire: the Politics of Revolutionary Anti-imperialism*. An above-ground offshoot of the WUO named *Prairie Fire Distributing Committee (PFDC)* is established around the same time to handle distribution of *Prairie Fire*. Actualizing the goal of *Prairie Fire*, a national response follows this release, and local *Prairie Fire* organizations begin to materialize around the country. Soon, the PFDC is transformed into the *Prairie Fire Organizing Committee (PFOC)*, an above-ground national organization which remains strongly connected to the WUO. Early in 1976, the PFOC – in close conjunction with the WUO – conducts the *Hard Times Conference*, a national meeting held in Chicago. The *Hard Times Conference* is, in most every report, characterized by the resistance of white male leadership against contributions of Black and Third World comrades and of women. It is a testament to these comrades that they were able to overcome the repression of WUO leadership and share messages about the importance of supporting the national liberation struggles, resisting white and male supremacy, and overcoming chauvinism in all incarnations; nonetheless, the organizational ethos of the WUO would be severely scrutinized after *Hard Times*.

It is not difficult to read the *Hard Times Conference* as signaling the impending collapse of the WUO. A November 1976 article entitled “Criticism of the Central Committee of the WUO,” released by the WUO Revolutionary Committee, however, makes clear that salient issues had been festering in the WUO long before *Hard Times*. The Revolutionary Committee recalls extensive struggle over what was to be included in the May 1974 book, wherein four out of the five Central Committee members “fought tooth and nail for opportunist lines.” Referencing the attitudes of the Central Committee to *Prairie Fire*, “Criticism” states, “for all five of them politics were secondary to the fact that it was producing organization.” Indeed, the Central Committee is said to have, “put organizational unity above political principle.” Demonstrating the farcical sense of “organizational unity” held by the WUO Central Committee, at the national meeting to ratify the final draft of *Prairie Fire*, comrades voted down the opportunist lines forwarded by the Central Committee “consistently and overwhelmingly.” Nonetheless, “three months later the main opportunist leader at this meeting was put in charge of political education” by the Central Committee.

“Criticism” goes on to list myriad “crimes” perpetrated by the WUO Central Committee, which fall under three headings: crimes against “National Liberation Struggles,” “Women and the Women’s Movement,” and “the Anti-Imperialist Left.” While many particulars are listed under each heading, a general throughline is white and male chauvinism exhibited by the Central Committee. In the National Liberation Struggles section, “Criticism” would foreshadow Muntaqim’s later critique by revealing that the WUO Central Committee, as a principle, refused to support the BLA “on the alleged basis that they weren’t Marxist-Leninist, or organized along the lines of democratic centralism, as defined by us.” In the Women and the Women’s Movement section, “Criticism” details suppression of lesbian voices within the WUO, a generally predatory stance taken by the Central Committee toward women’s unions and organizations, and resistance against any line which would challenge male supremacy. In the Anti-Imperialist Left section, “Criticism” accuses that the Central Committee “organized for white and male supremacy inside all organizations [it] had influence in; attacked [the] revolutionary line of those we could not control through use of character assassination.”

“Criticism” concludes with the following summary on failures of the WUO Central Committee:

What do these crimes amount to for the Central Committee and the WUO? White and male supremacy; material privilege in the form of prestige, power and status; the ability to control others and to lead a comfortable life. The domination of Third World nations and of women was the basis of seeking hegemony and control over the whole revolution, and turning it into a counter-revolution, to “socialism” for white people.

Such a claim is anti-dialectical, ahistorical sophistry. Advocating the strategic leadership of Black, Indigenous, and Third World women and femmes is made necessary by scientific analysis of the unique modes of exploitation that arise at a structural intersection of capitalism, imperialism, white supremacy, and cissexual male supremacy. This is not an essentialism which claims that by some metaphysical property of their identity, a Black, Indigenous, or Third World woman or femme has inherently more revolutionary ideas (this, indeed, would be a strange mimicry of the chauvinist posture). Understanding the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and Third World women and femmes as structurally necessary is precisely opposed to chauvinism: rather than a posture of inherent superiority, it is an assumption of quintessential exploitation in a society like this one. As socialists, our focus on the proletariat follows an understanding that the proletarian exists as the negativity of capitalist society, the source of surplus-value who has no capital themselves. It is well past time for every socialist – especially those who are white, cis, and male – to recognize that this negativity is more negative for some proletarians than others. The actual cost of being alive tends to increase at certain intersections of exploitation in a capitalist, anti-Black, and anti-woman society. Such recognition does not follow naïve ideologies about race and gender, it follows a structural understanding of disparate economic effects caused by ways white supremacy and cissexual male supremacy augment capitalism.

At time of writing, with the exception of the Desiree Morris, Muntaqim, Panther 21, and Lenin texts, each document cited here can be accessed on the Freedom Archives. The Desiree Morris and the Muntaqim texts can be accessed on the Internet Archives. The Panther 21 text can be accessed on JSTOR. The Lenin text can be accessed on the Marxist Internet Archives.

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DEATH TO ALL CHAUVINISM, ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE.



POLITICAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE: A YEAR IN REVIEW

BY CARLISLE BELLERIVE



This year has been a big year for KC DSA. I am certain that elsewhere in this edition, our comrades will be sharing the details of the Chapter's astronomical growth, over doubling in size and at a rate nearly double the national average. And there will be no shortage of praises sung for the accomplishments of our members, from coordinating with the Mid-MO and St. Louis DSA Chapters to forgiving \$3.48 million in medical debt, to opposing the reopening of the Leavenworth prison as an ICE detention center, to joining union workers on the picket line, to launching our KC ICE Free Campaign. We are all feeling the difference and the potential that only comes from coordinated action and a disciplined organization of people who truly believe in and are willing to fight for a better world.

I'm going to zoom in on one component of the work behind the scenes, and that is the Political Justice Committee of the KC DSA, one of many Committees where the majority of our organizing work originates and comes to fruition in the Chapter. When I first started in this Chapter, I had been a dues-paying but otherwise uninvolved member, what we call a "paper" member, for just under 4 years. I moved to this city in late 2024 and was eager to get involved, but I, like many others, had imposter syndrome. I had in my mind a list of requirements that read like a resume: 1-2 years of experience, previous history with various organizations, a list of accomplishments to reference. This imposter syndrome was amplified when I saw that the majority of those present at the first meeting I attended were white cisgender men. This is the crowd I had expected (the crowd I have come to expect in many traditional political spaces) and I felt what I have felt many times in my life—that my experiences, my perspective, my knowledge, and my voice would not count the same in this room. I worried that if I didn't learn to speak the dominant language of a particular canon of long-dead socialists, that I wasn't going to be recognized as credible or capable of change.

I share this initial emotional response not to focus on my individual experience, but because I know this feeling is something many are familiar with. The feeling of exclusion, of not being the right fit for a

political space, has led many on the margins to resort to existing spaces, often apolitical, to develop a shared sense of community. At best, we find spaces that are political, but often issue-based, focusing on addressing a single issue or cause without an overarching theory of change. The work of politics, then, is often left to the white men who feel at home in these traditional spaces, with those on the margins fighting to address specific problems without an analysis of the broader systems that produce these problems or a strategy to address them. People on the margins, whether Black, brown, Indigenous, transgender, queer, women, or disabled have unique perspectives that are essential to ensure that the world that we fight for does not replicate the harms and exclusions of the current system.

Here, I want to both pull back the curtain on what organizing is and looks like, and to demonstrate the democratic process at the core of DSA that makes change possible. Having decided on the need for a dedicated political, explicitly socialist space for those on the margins, I expressed at a Chapter meeting in November of 2024 that I was interested in forming a Committee for this purpose. With escalating attacks against immigrant populations and the queer community that have been borne out, this work needed to be at the core of our organizing. I asked those interested in being a part of this project to connect over coffee and to workshop what we would want out of a Committee like this, and 10-15 people were a part of that initial gathering. We discussed what the potential structure could look like, the goals of the Committee, and a rough timeline for its creation. A proposal was then brought forward at the January 2025 Chapter meeting to

officially form the Political Justice Committee with the stated purpose of focusing centrally on the struggles of marginalized communities, and to do so through an unapologetically socialist lens.

We established recurring meetings on a monthly basis, discussed the work of the original four subcommittees we had landed on, and early on adopted the use of Robert's Rules to ensure that our meetings were productive, democratic, and participatory. We were clunky at times as we learned how to follow procedural motions, but we moved forward and refined our process as we went. We followed the rubric of the IWW, with the principle to conduct a meeting as if there were 100 people in the room to prepare for the time when there are 100 people in the room. This has proven to be prescient for our Chapter and for the PJC—at the time of writing, our Chapter has 540 Members-In-Good-Standing, and the Committee has grown to nearly 100 members. Over the months, we dissolved subcommittees and created new ones, adapting to the needs and interests of the members involved. We developed a template to follow to encourage regular events, both social and educational, and members continued to join. Throughout this process, we were responding to not only the place of the Committee in the Chapter, but the material conditions of the world around us.

Looking back, I'd like to take a moment to evaluate our progress in achieving our originally stated aims. For one, we began with the aim of broadening the political education of the Chapter through engagement with marginalized identities and their experiences. We have hosted many political education events through the various subcommittees, including

hosting a recurring Book Club where we have discussed topics from family abolition to migrant labor, racism and class, and capitalism and disability. We have had documentary viewings and discussions around ACT-UP, hosted by the Queer Socialist Subcommittee, and the legend of Joaquin Murrieta, hosted by the Latine Subcommittee. We've developed an internal Accessibility Guide and training for our Chapter to increase accessibility for all through the work of the Disability Justice Subcommittee. We've done outreach in the queer community with our Spill the Tea! events, discussing themes of co-optation, homonationalism, pinkwashing, rainbow capitalism, and local KC queer history. The Socialist Feminist Subcommittee hosted a Crafting with Comrades event as part educational discussion about the exclusion of women from guild work in textile industries and the role of crafts in political expression and activism, and part skillshare with members teaching crocheting, sewing, mending, and knitting. Another aim of the PJC was to ensure the DSA is inclusive and representative of the local population. The PJC at the time of writing has 60% non-men comprising its membership, an uncommon occurrence (outside of groups like the Childcare Subcommittee, which reflects further work to do). The PJC Book Club read the text *The Anti-Social Family* and had a group of almost entirely non-men present for the discussions for the first time since I have been a member. The conversation was different, and veered into directions that it otherwise wouldn't have had the space not existed in the way it did. Similarly, the first Crafting with Comrades event was a success, especially with women and queer

folks, and we have received requests that we host another. The aim is now to turn this into a series. The Latine Subcommittee became the launching point for our KC ICE Free Chapter Campaign, with an active member from that subcommittee now serving as the Chair of the Campaign Working Group with the effectiveness and urgency that our political moment demands.

A third aim of the PJC was to create a dedicated group tasked with following and responding to legislation that posed a threat to marginalized identities. The PJC recently adopted a Committee-wide campaign called Bodies in Struggle, stemming from the work of our Public Policy & Legislation Subcommittee that had spent the past year tracking harmful bills in both MO and KS legislatures. We hosted our first public-facing event in late December, a panel centered around bodily autonomy. We invited panelists Heru Amen-Ra of Decarcerate KC and the host of We Keep Us Safe: The

Movement podcast show; Cara Hile, senior organizer with Abortion Action MO; and Wick Thomas, Missouri State Representative for MO House District 19 and Missouri's first openly transgender lawmaker; to speak about the interconnections of abolition, incarceration, immigration, abortion and reproductive justice, transgender justice, healthcare, and more. We plan to continue these panels and bring organizers together to collaborate on ways we can work together by identifying barriers in common and sharing strategies for success.

Finally, we set a goal of maintaining that the struggles of marginalized identities are the struggles of the working class, and that identities must be understood as inseparable from their class positionality. The struggles we fight for are for universal liberation, and we cannot in this struggle neglect the racial, gendered, and ableist hierarchy that capitalism exploits for profit. We have remained on message in all of our previously

discussed activities and we will continue to push for recognition of this fact throughout our work and in conversation with the Chapter.

Regarding areas for improvement, while we have altered the demographics of the Chapter regarding women and queer members, we are cognizant of the work yet ahead of us. We recognize that growth only comes from work that speaks to and effectively addresses the concerns of those on the margins, and while the development of consciousness about the issues faced by others is critical for this work, it cannot stop there. This was the impetus for the KC ICE Free campaign, recognizing that we cannot leave the work of fighting ICE and working toward abolition of the immigration system only to those most affected. As we continue to grow in capacity and experience, we are committed to being active participants in not only the struggle against ICE and family separation, but against the insidious carceral



state that cages for profit; the segregated labor practices inflicted on the disabled community; the blatant racial discrimination of property owners colluding to exclude Black businesses in our communities; targeted attacks against the transgender community and access to healthcare; access to safe and affordable abortions and reproductive justice; and other struggles disproportionately affecting marginalized communities.

An additional area for improvement is in our influence as a Committee on the rest of the Chapter. While members of the PJC are in communication with other Committees and the overall culture has benefited from a diversity of perspectives and concerns, there are always areas for improvement. It is important to ensure that not only the PJC, but all Committees have a greater diversity in membership. The work of the Chapter is cumulatively the work of all of our Committees and Working Groups, and we must be more intentional about providing the trainings and resources for members to get involved in Committees and work that they otherwise might not be drawn to or feel qualified for. The role of the PJC is not to replicate the work of other Committees with a more diverse

membership, but to create a home for our members to then be active in the Chapter as a whole, to claim the space with confidence.

One of the goals of the PJC for 2026 is to aid in the establishment of an Afrosocialists and Socialists of Color group, whether their preference is to form as a Committee, Working Group, or branch. The desire is here, and we must be intentional about dedicating time and space to formulating how this will most effectively be done and lay out a roadmap for its creation. We have also discussed the aim of increasing our partnerships and coalitions with other organizations to work in tandem on projects and around various struggles, including with churches and labor unions.

As Steward of the PJC from its origin and now again through the fall of 2026, I have had the privilege of seeing members step into their power. I have seen them grow into leaders in this Committee and step into roles in other Committees, coordinating events, and following through to translate ideas into action. Through the work of the PJC, there are now members in this Chapter who otherwise would not be here, who now feel that they do have a place, that they should and must have a say in determining what the

world we are building will look like. If I have learned anything in my young queer adult life, it is that we cannot wait for revolutionary spaces to be created for us—we must create the foundations of our own liberation, and that begins with community. But we cannot replicate our past mistakes and allow these spaces to become apolitical, purely social, and powerless. We cannot be at the whims of corporations, of monied interests, of legislators bought by lobbyists—this is a foundation of sand. We must build power on solid ground, of and for the working class among us, with a clear picture of capital at work against us and a plan to move forward together to take power and create a world on our terms. Liberation is not granted, it is seized, and we look forward to seizing our collective liberation arm-in-arm with you.

**In Solidarity,
Carlisle**





ABOLISH ICE

THIS MAGAZINE IS A PROJECT OF KANSAS CITY DSA