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# BREAD & ROSE CITY

→ PORTLAND DSA NEWSLETTER | ISSUE 001 | FALL 2018

**BREAD & ROSE CITY** is published throughout the year by the Portland chapter of Democratic Socialists of America. Portland DSA can be reached at [info@portlanddsa.org](mailto:info@portlanddsa.org).

#### ABOUT THE CENTERFOLD ART

Created by artist Lily Gilbert, the DSA Bucket Brigade is a metaphor for grassroots problem solving, an organic, ad-hoc emergency response where systems to fill this function are inadequate, unavailable or nonexistent. It represents DSA showing up to put out the dumpster fires of late capitalism, the conflagrations against communities. The antidote to community atomization is organization and cooperation — showing up to put out your neighbors' fires, to fight for Medicare for all and for immigrants, tenants and workers rights.

Content has been supplied by members of Portland DSA. If you'd like to contribute in the future, please email [info@portlanddsa.org](mailto:info@portlanddsa.org).

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Want to join DSA, or do you need to renew your dues? Learn more at [portlanddsa.org/join](http://portlanddsa.org/join).

#### THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVE BEEN TUMULTUOUS —

This has been a dark time for many in our country. But with the racist, fascist, capitalist administration currently at the helm, it has also been a time for hope and burgeoning activism on the left. In Portland alone, Democratic Socialists of America has grown from a handful of members in the earlier part of 2016, to about 600 one year ago, to more than 1,000 today.

Along with this explosion in size, we've experienced an explosion of energy — from Tax the Rich PDX to Medicare For All, from fighting for Palestinian liberation to abolishing ICE, from advocating for reproductive justice to supporting tenants' and workers' strikes, Portland DSA members are getting involved and making change happen.

We are rolling out this newsletter on a quarterly basis. With Bread & Rose City, we hope to come together on the same page to clarify socialist values, to build solidarity among those active in the chapter and to share in the struggle with those who aren't as actively engaged.



We hope these articles are interesting not only to local DSA members but to the broader public frustrated with their lack of affordable health care, the pay gap, rising rents, poor working conditions, police violence and the local impacts of the global climate crisis.

DSA organizes here in Portland, we organize across the country and we're organizing for a new world where each of us can live our life to its full potential, where everyone is valued not because of the labor we provide for our bosses, but because we are human beings.

We fight for a world without exploitation, a world without endless wars, prisons or borders, a world that strives for true equality. We know that world is on the horizon, and we hope you'll continue the fight to win it.

— *Olivia Katbi Smith and Emily Golden-Fields,*  
*Portland DSA Co-Chairs*

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# What is Socialism in 2018?

→ BY KEITH GUTHRIE

BREAD & ROSE CITY

For the first time in over a generation, socialism is gaining popularity and acceptance in U.S. politics. DSA membership, about 5,000 people total in 2016, has surged to 50,000 today. The fact that a growing number of political candidates openly identify as socialists is another testament to the momentum of this movement. More people every day are becoming politically activated — many for the first time in their lives — and embracing the radical vision that socialism offers for a better world.

Though socialism may finally be shedding the taboo image it has carried for the better part of the past century, there's still no shortage of misinformation about what it is and isn't, leaving the newly interested confused as to what it actually stands for. Many like to inaccurately define socialism as “the government owning everything,” while opponents might go farther to describe socialists as lazy naive slackers who just want “free stuff,” pointing to authoritarian socialist-identifying states as examples of how bad life would be under socialism and its inherent inferiority to the “freedom” of capitalism. But this rhetoric is not only oversimplified, deceptive and false, it also throws the baby out with the bathwater.

Undoubtedly there are important lessons to be learned from socialist movements that devolved into authoritarianism and in identifying the historical factors that contributed to these situations, including the interference of outside capitalist forces violently opposed to the success of any socialist-identifying state. As socialists we need to be willing to discuss these topics openly and frankly. The struggle for socialism in every modern example has been just that — a struggle — an attempt to shape a better world out of the shell of the old one. The idea that failed socialist revolutions are proof that socialism is unachievable or inherently authoritarian rely on cherry-picked facts; at its core, this argument is simply a narrow-minded, stubborn refusal to acknowledge the possibility of a just and more egalitarian society.

Socialism could be described as believing the world can and should be transformed into a place where human potential is maximized and individual happiness achieved through collective economic production, democratic and

sustainable distribution of resources and promotion of universal solidarity. Our world today has been ravaged by the exploitation and violence of capitalism's never-ending quest for profit. It's no surprise that many are now pushing for “building a better world,” a platitude we all are likely familiar with. What separates socialism from the traditional liberal vs. conservative political paradigm is that, instead of blaming society's dysfunctions on a few problematic policies or individual decisions, socialists see the underlying capitalist system as the structural source driving inequality and oppression.

Within the movement differing tendencies frequently have conflicting ideas on tactics and strategic priorities. But at the end of the day, socialism basically boils down to a belief in the core principles of radical democracy, human equality and collective strength through solidarity, and the understanding that each of these concepts cannot be fully achieved without the others. Building socialism in the present isn't about repeating the past; it is about organizing and bringing the struggles of all people together into a common mass movement and, through that solidarity, building enough power to ultimately dismantle all forms of oppression and exploitation.

Whether you are new to the movement or a longtime socialist, the time for action is now. Impending climate catastrophe, obscene economic inequality and the spread of violent right-wing fascism and racism are all wake-up calls that the era of moderate political compromises has passed. It's time to stand up — not just in our social media feeds, but also out in the streets. We shouldn't just be demanding the world we want from those in power. We must build it from the ground up in our own communities and on our own terms.

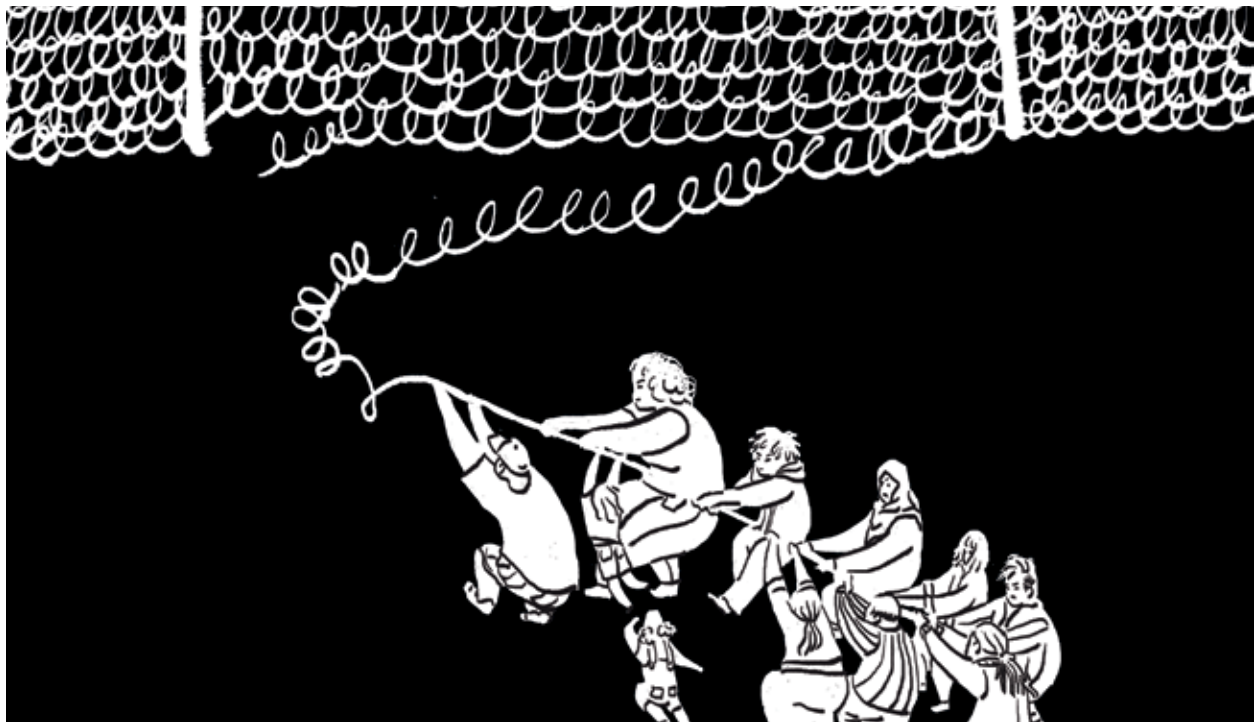
FALL 2018

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# The Occupation

→ BY DAVID PURUCKER

BREAD & ROSE CITY



FALL 2018

In the wake of important electoral victories for socialist-endorsed candidates and ballot measures in New York, Michigan and California, thousands of people have taken the plunge and joined the Democratic Socialists of America. Here in Portland, our own chapter's rapid growth — in terms of membership, financial strength and organizing capacity — surely owes something to this high-profile electoral work. But another, very different event from earlier this summer may have been just as important. Portland DSA's support of the dramatic occupation at the ICE facility in Southwest Portland was crucial to the early success of that action and vividly demonstrated the range and radicalism of our political vision.

To learn more about the occupation and find out what our chapter can learn from the experience, I spoke with several Portland DSA members who were closely involved on the ground, as well as chapter leadership who organized actions farther from the camp.

Portland DSA was involved with the occupation from the very beginning. As news of the federal government's family separation policy reached a crescendo in early June, the Direct Action Alliance contacted Portland DSA to co-host a rally at the local Immigration and Customs Enforcement center. Portland DSA's large social media reach helped draw hundreds to the June 17 rally and march, which evolved into a small overnight occupation on the building's steps.



Over the next several days, the makeshift camp grew, and by the fourth day the occupiers were able to shut down the building. Several DSA members from Portland and Eugene were on the ground for the entire five-week duration of the camp, while many other DSA supporters visited for the large evening vigils. The Portland facility's shutdown ignited a wave of similar occupations in cities around the country, including an intense series of clashes outside of an ICE office in Philadelphia.

Portland DSA's support was "really instrumental" during the first few days of the local occupation, said Chris C., a DSA organizer who stayed for the whole occupation. The chapter provided the growing camp with material support, including shade canopies, walkie-talkies, and lots of food and water. Chris, along with DSA members Juno Suárez and Jordan Sheldon, served as liaisons between the chapter and the camp. They posted on Slack, the chapter's cloud-based organizing platform, to request supplies and keep members informed, and they signal-boosted camp press releases through social media. Members of the chapter Steering Committee helped set up an Abolish ICE-focused national DSA conference call joined by over 400 people. Chris was on the call, and gave a tour of the camp to the others ("I'm kinda DSA-famous now!" Chris told me).

Portland DSA also pursued a strategy independent of the occupation. On June 20, the chapter published an open letter with a list of demands for the Portland City Council (the letter was drafted independently, but Jordan told me that the demands of DSA and the occupiers "were more or less the same"). Eight days later, DSA and a group from the camp appeared in force at a City Council meeting, filling the chambers and an overflow room. Chapter co-chair Olivia Katbi Smith testified and repeated the demands: Adopt the recommendations of the Sanctuary City Task Force, withdraw from the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) and restrain the Portland Police Bureau from assisting federal officers in clearing the encampment. Interestingly, DSA's actions may have influenced Mayor Ted Wheeler's promise that the Portland police would not assist in clearing the camp, as his announcement to not intervene came only hours after the letter was published. (The mayor's promise was eventually broken.)

After the ICE facility was forcibly reopened on June 28, divisions around strategy began to emerge within the camp. This led to a split between an "Occupy ICE" group, which wanted to continue pursuing direct action tactics, and an "Abolish ICE" group that favored a longer-term strategy involving pressure campaigns on City Council, more or less mirroring the strategic consensus of Portland DSA. This seemed like a "more strategic" course of action, Jordan told me, and the Abolish ICE group eventually withdrew from the occupation to organize independently as Abolish ICE PDX, although Jordan remained at camp to continue serving as a liaison.

By mid-July, DSA's support for the occupation continued, but strategic focus had begun to shift. The July 8 DSA chapter meeting featured an educational "RED Talk" on abolishing the carceral immigration system, but no votes or official discussion around the occupation were on the agenda. "I think we sort of assumed that it was gonna be swept pretty soon," Olivia told me. "It didn't seem like something that we needed to figure out next steps on the occupation because it seemed inevitable that it was gonna end."

But anti-ICE organizing was ramping up in other ways. On July 17, about a dozen DSA members attended another City Council meeting to urge the rejection of a proposed amendment to the city's contract with G4S, a multinational security corporation that helps operate ICE detention centers. Working within the chapter's Abolish ICE Caucus, DSA members have been conducting research and planning new pressure campaigns to end the G4S contract and pull the city out of the JTTF. And in the chapter's Racial Justice Working Group, members are helping the campaign to defeat the anti-immigrant Measure 105, which threatens to overturn Oregon's already weak "sanctuary state" law.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Portland DSA hit the ground running in its Abolish ICE work, but there is always value in strategic reflection. Chris, Jordan and Olivia weighed in on what lessons we can learn from Occupy ICE.

These lessons — on the value of direct action, navigating solidarity and preparing for repression — and additional insight from the ICE occupation are continued online. To read more, visit the chapter's Medium account, [medium.com/@dsaportlandoregon](https://medium.com/@dsaportlandoregon).



# Portland DSA Condemns Police Violence Against Protesters



In the wake of police using flash bang and stinger grenades that seriously injured peaceful demonstrators — and which could have harmed far more at the counter-protest of a Patriot Prayer rally on Aug. 4 — Portland Democratic Socialists of America and the Oregon chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) issued a call for reforms.

Throughout the rally, Portland police primarily focused on protecting the alt-right groups and their hate-motivated behavior, including escorting Patriot Prayer and Proud Boys members throughout downtown Portland. When alt-right groups disobeyed Portland police commands, there were no consequences. However, according to the National Lawyers Guild and journalists' video evidence, police initiated and escalated violent and assaultive behavior against those standing in opposition to the alt-right.

Police used batons to hit peaceful demonstrators and threw them to the ground. A flash bang grenade or other type of explosive projectile injured one woman, and another hit someone in the head, causing severe injury that could have been fatal had they not been wearing a helmet.

"All people deserve EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER LAW," CAIR-Oregon Spokesperson Zakir Khan said in a statement. "This discriminatory behavior causes us a great deal of concern and the Oregon Department of Justice must investigate the tactics that took place at these events."

The events reiterated that we cannot trust the police to properly investigate nor protect against hate crimes and we cannot trust the police to use tact toward citizens and journalists.

"The police have made it very clear where their allegiances lie," said Olivia Katbi Smith, Portland DSA co-chair. "We cannot continue to allow our brothers and sisters to be targeted and intimidated while the police either stand by and do nothing or actively enable fascist organizing in our city."

The National Lawyers Guild, which had legal observers on the ground monitoring police that day, also condemned the police's use of deadly force.

"We are outraged, dismayed, and heartbroken by the one-sided violence the police displayed," the NLG said in a statement. "Those who come to defend their community against the violent ideologies of white, male, cis, hetero, Christian, and American supremacy should never be met with deadly force by the police. We join the calls for PPB to discontinue their use of militarized 'less-lethal' weapons, at protests, during house raids, and for any other purpose. Funding for such weapons and their training can and should be redirected away from the police, and into the services that create real safety for the people of Portland."

# Your Vote Matters

→ BY CHRIS PRYOR

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez's primary victory in New York has opened a floodgate of mainstream interest and news coverage concerning Democratic Socialists of America and socialist ideas. Her charismatic campaign has contributed to an influx of new membership much in the same way that Bernie Sanders' campaign did in 2016. National DSA and chapters across the country have been very proactive in endorsing and running candidates for all types of public service. It is very exciting to see such an energetic new generation of young socialists running for public office and demanding change.

Here at DSA, we're a big-tent organization. The subject of electoral politics can be a polarizing issue. There are some within our local chapter who are fundamentally opposed to any electoral work and view grassroots organizing of mass movements to be the only mechanism for radical leftist change. Others argue that tactical electoral work in support of both legislative and candidate campaigns increases our organizing capacity, grows membership numbers and shifts the public discourse away from the center. Here in Portland DSA, there are some who are fundamentally opposed to any work with the Democratic Party, some who want to take over the Democratic Party and some who think we should vote on any progressive ticket that can win an election. There are also others who advocate for only nonpartisan or ballot initiative electoral campaigns and endorsing only DSA members in candidate campaigns.

Political opinion certainly runs the gamut so it is important to get the discussion going on what our electoral strategy looks like. With 2020 on the horizon, Portland DSA has a new electoral working group looking to channel the energies of Portland's burgeoning socialist movement toward developing PDX DSA political discourse, electoral strategies, policy initiatives and candidates to run in local, county and statewide partisan and nonpartisan elections in Oregon.

In the meantime, we get to vote in November! Portland DSA has endorsed voting no on four state ballot measures and voting yes on one city ballot measure in the upcoming midterm election.

**NO ON MEASURE 103** — A no vote on 103 would prohibit large out-of-state corporations from amending our state constitution to prohibit something called a "grocery tax." The measure is being bankrolled by out-of-state corporations including Kroger, Costco and Albertsons Safeway, which have donated \$1.96 million to mislead voters into thinking that it is intended to prevent a retail sales tax on food. In reality, the measure is intended to freeze the corporate minimum tax rate for billion-dollar corporations who sell products under the broad category of "groceries." If this passes, it will dramatically inhibit the ability for future progressive taxes to be imposed on the wealthy to raise revenue for essential public services.

**NO ON MEASURE 104** — A no vote on 104 rejects another constitutional amendment that would expand the state's three-fifths supermajority requirement, requiring a three-fifths majority vote in both the House and Senate to pass any legislation increasing revenue through changes in tax exemptions, credits and deductions. This measure expands the inhibitive requirements for progressive taxation to fund basic social services. At the time this was written, the largest contributor to the campaign was the Oregon Association of Realtors with \$793,000.

**NO ON MEASURE 105** — A no vote on 105 preserves Oregon as a "sanctuary state" that does not use local police, funds or personnel to enforce federal immigration laws. One of the largest contributors to supporting the measure so far was the Federation for American Immigration Reform with \$177,000. They have been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a hate group.

**NO ON MEASURE 106** — A no vote on 106 opposes a constitutional amendment that would prohibit public money from being spent on abortions. This is a major threat to the reproductive rights of women who receive subsidized state health care. The top donor to supporting the measure has been Oregon Life United with \$171,000.

**YES ON PORTLAND CLEAN ENERGY FUND** — A yes vote on PCEF supports a 1% surcharge on the revenues of Portland retailers with over \$1 billion dollars in total sales and \$500,000 in Portland sales to fund renewable energy, energy efficiency and green infrastructure projects. It also stipulates for workforce training to be provided to traditionally underemployed and economically disadvantaged communities of color.



# Chapter Updates

## ANTI-IMPERIALIST CAUCUS

The Anti-Imperialist Caucus is ramping up a campaign to get the Portland Trail Blazers to cut ties with rifle scope manufacturer Leupold and Stevens, whose sniper scopes have been used by the Israeli military in its deadly suppression of Gaza protesters, along with the militarized Ferguson police. Leupold and Stevens is featured at Blazers games and tries to associate itself with veterans, or “hometown heroes,” despite its horrific connections to human rights abuses and violence. This fight will continue as the Blazers season gets underway.

## TAX THE RICH PDX

Portland DSA’s Tax the Rich Campaign is planning its next steps, which might lead to launching a ballot measure in 2020. This local tax on incomes over \$250,000 could be used to fund potential new social services, with universal preschool as a major present focus of research. The plan for a progressive tax on the richest residents also continues to gain endorsements. Official supporters include Jobs with Justice, Multnomah County Democrats, Laborers’ Local 483, Portland Metro People’s Coalition, AFSCME Local 88, state Rep. Rob Nosse, Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer and Mary C. King, professor of economics emerita at Portland State University and Rhodes Scholar. A full list of endorsements is at [taxtherichpdx.org/endorsements](http://taxtherichpdx.org/endorsements).

## MEDICARE FOR ALL

Over the summer, PDX DSA’s Medicare For All campaign brought heavy metal fan and single-payer health care advocate Tim Faust to Sunnyside Community House, where he talked about the importance of Medicare For All. The campaign also continues to canvass, knocking on doors not only in Portland but in Wilsonville as well. In August, Medicare For All supporters turned out for Sen. Ron Wyden’s town hall, demanding that Wyden sign on to Sen. Bernie Sanders’ Medicare For All bill, SB 1804. You can listen to Faust’s talk at [soundcloud.com/portlanddsa](https://soundcloud.com/portlanddsa), and make sure to watch a video from Sen. Wyden’s town hall at [tinyurl.com/DSACallsOutWyden](http://tinyurl.com/DSACallsOutWyden).

## POLITICAL EDUCATION

Portland DSA hosted its first Socialist Summer Day School in June at Sunnyside Community House, with comrades providing educational talks on topics ranging from the political economy of socialism, housing and tenant rights, to climate change, social liberation and Marxism. The Political Education Working Group is now planning a DSA organizer training program and a West Coast conference while continuing regular reading groups as well.

## SOCIALIST SOCIAL COMMITTEE

If you have noticed DSA at summer events like the Hawthorne Street Fair or Sunday Parkways in Northeast Portland, it’s likely because of the new focus on raising awareness and building community by the Events and Activities Working Group. You can join the group to help brainstorm and plan these events. Keep an eye out for a winter party in the coming months, and join us for DSA Movie Night with a screening of “Pride” at the Clinton Street Theater on Nov. 20.

## SOLIDARITY FOR TENANTS’ RIGHTS

At the August general meeting, DSA members voted to support the renters striking at Holgate Manor, a more than 80-unit Southeast Portland apartment complex where a private investor in California is trying to push out longtime tenants, many of whom are low-income, seniors and immigrants. The strike began its second month in September. To donate to the fund supporting Holgate Manor tenants, visit [gofundme.com/holgate-manor-strike-fund](https://gofundme.com/holgate-manor-strike-fund). Recognizing that eviction is a pipeline to poverty and homelessness, the Tenants Rights Caucus also continues to educate renters on the eviction court process and advocate for universal eviction support — in other words, to ensure there is no eviction without representation.

## ABOLISH ICE CAUCUS AND ANTI-JTTF

What does abolishing ICE on the local level look like? It means getting the city out of the Joint Terrorism Task Force and out of its contract with G4S. The Abolish ICE Caucus has also been involved in advancing the nationwide prison strike that took place Aug. 21 to Sept. 9.

## ORGANIZING LABOR

The chapter’s Labor Working Group has been partnering with organizations on worksite organizer training workshops, boycotting union-busting at Burgerville and rallying in solidarity with Kaiser health workers and Vancouver teachers on the picket line. If you haven’t filled out the chapter’s labor survey, please make sure to do so at [tinyurl.com/DSAlaborsurvey](http://tinyurl.com/DSAlaborsurvey). And if you want to get a job with other socialists, join the labor “salting” project! Email [portlandDSAlabor@gmail.com](mailto:portlandDSAlabor@gmail.com) for more info.

## SOCIALIST FEMINIST CAUCUS

Last month, the Socialist Feminist Caucus partnered with the Medicare For All Campaign to host “Reproductive Health Justice for All,” an educational event focused on reproductive health justice, how we can fight for it and how it fits into the broader socialist demand for free universal health care. The caucus also hosts regular reading groups to discuss topics such as sex workers’ rights, caregivers’ work and, soon, trans issues. Look for these events on our calendar at [portlanddsa.org/calendar](http://portlanddsa.org/calendar).

## ECOSOCIALIST CAUCUS

The recently re-seeded Ecosocialist Caucus celebrated in September when the state recommended denying a special exemption for the proposed Jordan Cove liquefied natural gas facility and pipeline. Caucus members are continuing their opposition to any new fossil fuel infrastructure projects while exploring ways that Portland DSA can help bring energy democracy to our city and state. And right now, caucus members are dedicating time on the campaign to pass the Portland Clean Energy Fund, Measure 26-201. You can track these activities through the caucus’s new Twitter, [@ecosocialistpdx](https://twitter.com/ecosocialistpdx), and Facebook page at [facebook.com/ecosocialistpdxdsa](https://facebook.com/ecosocialistpdxdsa).

## ELECTORAL WORKING GROUP

The recently formed Electoral Working Group focuses on electoral campaign work including ballot measures, candidates and opposition campaigns and fosters political discourse within the chapter. Moving forward, the group is looking for ways to develop a coordinated infrastructure to support chapter-endorsed campaigns by working with voter data, external organizers and the general membership.

## QUEERFOLK FIGHTING RAINBOW CAPITALISM

Founded to organize against rainbow capitalism and to advance a non-heteronormative and internationalist culture within the chapter, the Queerfolk Caucus recently had its first meeting. The group is now discussing supporting Black and Pink, an open family of LGBTQ prisoners and “free world” allies working to abolish the prison industrial complex.

## OTHER EVENTS

For the latest updates to chapter events, you can visit [portlanddsa.org/calendar](http://portlanddsa.org/calendar). A snapshot of upcoming activities can also be found at [tinyurl.com/pdx-dsa-events](https://tinyurl.com/pdx-dsa-events).





