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BREAD & ROSE CITY

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ABOUT THE CENTERFOLD ART

Created by Portland DSA member and designer Kate Taylor, *This Machine Kills Fascists* was inspired by the well-known message that originated on the guitar of American folk musician Woody Guthrie and derived from their own protest signage used at #DisruptJ20's action "Rise Up and Resist Fascism" on January 20, 2016. Guthrie painted the slogan on his guitar after writing the song 'Talking Hitler's Head Off Blues' and denounced fascists, particularly their leaders, as a group who set out to "rob the world."

Content has been supplied by members of Portland DSA. If you'd like to contribute in the future, please email 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.

DEAR COMRADES,

Four years ago, Bernie Sanders's presidential campaign led tens of thousands of people to reexamine socialism as a political ideology and to join DSA chapters across the country in record numbers. But as we begin another presidential election year, we also remember that socialism is both more expansive and more personal than presidential electoral politics. Socialism is about how we as a society care for our children every day. It's about rebuilding our relationship to the planet so that it can sustain life. It's about building solidarity with, and learning from, socialist projects around the world.

In this issue of Bread & Rose City, you'll learn about Portland DSA's campaign for universal preschool, a program that has the potential to alleviate poverty and improve educational outcomes for children throughout their lives. You'll gain insight into the reality of taking socialist ideals off the page and putting them to work in the streets and in the halls of government in Venezuela. You'll find out how Portland DSA is challenging liberal conventional wisdom on fighting climate change and pushing the conversation beyond market solutions we know are doomed to failure.



Portland DSA, like our comrades across the country and around the world, is fighting on many fronts. Capitalism, fascism, and imperialism threaten our progress at every turn. But we are not alone in this fight. The past four years have taught us that our message has a wide reach, and that democratic socialism can win.

We hope this issue inspires you. We hope it presents you with a vision of the future we all deserve. Most of all, we hope it reminds you why we fight.

We have a planet to win.

— Laur Muth, co-editor of *Bread & Rose City*, co-chair of DSA's Anti-Imperial Working Group

Universal Preschool Now!: County Ballot Measure for Free, Year-Round, Universal Preschool

→ BY MARY KING

BREAD & ROSE CITY

WINTER 2020

Portland, DSA has committed to a campaign for a ballot measure for free, universal preschool funded by a new county income tax on the top 5% of households.

Universal preschool is a good first step in an electoral strategy to deliver concrete, material gains for children, low-income and working people, women, and people of color. We can transform a sector paying poverty wages into a source of public sector jobs with union representation, while investing in kids and families. Also, universal preschool—or universal pre-kindergarten (UPK)—is widely popular and getting a lot of buzz!

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL?

It's publicly funded, high-quality care for all three- and four-year-olds whose parents want to enroll them. Done right, it is:

- a) Nurturing, fun, and play-based,
- b) Offered year-round, on schedules that work for kids, parents and staff,
- c) Available in different settings: schools, nonprofit centers and family daycare, and
- d) Provided in several languages by a diverse, culturally responsive staff earning good wages and benefits, including professional development.

WHY SHOULD WE FIGHT FOR PUBLIC SERVICES LIKE UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL?

Capital's relentless search for profits plays out in the public sector as a continual push for privatization and austerity. Well-funded lobbyists press to subsidize big business and the wealthy, cut public services and safety and environmental regulations, and shift taxes down the income scale.

But good public services—like education, health care, and child care—create a high quality of life and reduce labor's dependence on employers, strengthening our bargaining power in the workplace. A big public sector investing in people creates a stronger economy with less inequality and poverty, as shown by the superior performance of the Scandinavian economies.

WHY IS UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL GETTING SO MUCH PRESS?

Child care is prohibitively expensive. Parents pay up to \$1,800 a month for care for infants and toddlers in Multnomah County. That's a mortgage payment, or nearly a full month's salary—before taxes—for a minimum wage worker employed full-time.

→ CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Care costs so much that a lot of people can't afford to leave their children in care in order to work. Our society assigns the work of unpaid care mostly to women. The result is poverty, especially for single mothers who don't have time to provide all the care and money their families need, and for older women, whose past time spent in unpaid care work means lower Social Security benefits and meager pensions.

Communities of color carry high burdens of unpaid care. Discrimination means unemployment, low wages, high incarceration rates, impoverishment, and a lack of access to services. In addition, inadequate health care and the toxic stress of racism mean that many adults are in poor health, unable to help care for children.

Child care is labor-intensive; young children need a lot of attention, requiring a much higher ratio of staff to kids for preschool than for older children.

This underpaid care labor force is largely female, with women of color significantly overrepresented. Family daycare providers work very long hours, often taking in little or nothing, just to keep their businesses afloat.

WHY SHOULD VOTERS CARE, IF THEY DON'T HAVE YOUNG KIDS OR WORK IN CHILD CARE?

Everyone was a child, taken care of by someone else. We all have an obligation to take care of the next generation. And as we age, we're all going to rely on younger people to work and support the social programs we depend on.

Child care is a proven anti-poverty program that can raise people into better economic circumstances within two generations. High-quality preschool is the single best strategy for raising high school graduation rates. Kids grow up to earn more and are more likely to go to college. They are better able to avoid jail, substance abuse, and early childbearing.

Child care enables parents to work more; for example, Washington, D.C.'s year-round, universal preschool dramatically increased mothers' employment, hours and wages. While public provision of high-quality care for young children helps middle-class families, it particularly benefits low-income kids and parents.

Investment in high-quality child care is the best economic development strategy we've got: it helps to create a more skilled labor force, attracting employers and raising everyone's wages. Most people continue to live in the areas where they grew up, so local areas reliably capture the benefits of higher earnings and lower poverty rates. By contrast, location subsidies to businesses—like those extorted by Amazon—are iffy; jobs may never materialize, and businesses can fold or leave town.

Businesses value a skilled workforce over tax breaks. And economists have shown that working with people who earn more creates a spillover effect of raising the wages of everyone else in the firm. Lower poverty rates and higher earnings both raise tax revenues and free up tax dollars.

WHY THE COUNTY, RATHER THAN THE CITY OR METRO?

The county is the jurisdiction most engaged in early education and human services. We can put a measure on the county ballot with half the signatures required by the city or Metro. Portland voters strongly supported earlier progressive revenue efforts, and the county was close behind.

Income inequality in the county offers the chance to put Portland's wealth in the service of lower income communities in East Multnomah County. The average income west of 82nd is comparable to the second richest state in the country, while the average income east of 82nd is equivalent to the second poorest state.

WHY MAKE IT UNIVERSAL? WHY SHOULDN'T WEALTHY FAMILIES PAY?

Universal benefits bring us together, while means-tested programs create division and resentment. Means-tested programs are always badly funded. After decades, Oregon still serves only 60 percent of kids eligible for Head Start, despite its relatively low cost and clear success.

By contrast, programs that serve everyone create a politically powerful, middle-class constituency to defend and expand the program. Quebec started universal preschool with 4-year-olds 20 years ago, and now—with child care, summer programs and after-school care—takes care of kids from birth to age 12.

ARE THERE GOOD EXAMPLES TO FOLLOW?

The best U.S. examples are Washington, D.C., with publicly funded care for all three- and four-year-olds, and New York City, which is well on its way, having created preschool for 70,000 four year-olds and 13,000 three year-olds in 6 years.

We have the chance to build on our tiny Oregon program, Preschool Promise, which is based on best practices. By passing this ballot measure, we can make huge progress in making it universal, year-round, and better paid, and set an example for the rest of Oregon.

Ecosocialism or Barbarism

→ BY DAVID PURUCKER

These are tough times for the environmentally aware socialist. The International Panel on Climate Change warns that humanity has only about 12 years to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius. Trump and the Republicans seem determined to turn Earth into the planet Venus. And we know the Democrats won't do much better—in D.C. and here in Oregon, their imaginations are still limited to failed market non-solutions like cap-and-trade.

But there are glimmers of hope. The Green New Deal advanced by socialists and progressives in Congress frames climate change as an issue of justice and economic power. It's just one part of a movement that demands we see environmental crisis and capitalist crisis as inextricably linked, a politics that some activists call ecosocialism. Here in Portland DSA, the Ecosocialist Working Group, now a year and a half old, has become a lively center of chapter organizing. According to its founding document, the working group seeks to “ensure that the transition to socialism in the United States is grounded in the sound ecological principles of sustainability and biodiversity,” and to be a consistent voice for environmental issues in the chapter. They focus on building power for environmental justice in coalitions with working class and front-line communities.

The Ecosocialists led DSA's involvement in the Portland Clean Energy Initiative campaign in 2018. The PCEI victory plus the national attention paid to the Green New Deal have helped the working group grow rapidly. Six months after the caucus was formed, it formalized itself in the chapter and became an official working group. With all this new energy, the Ecosocialists have been able to launch several exciting campaigns. One focus has been organizing the chapter to oppose the Clean Energy Jobs bill (H.B. 2020), a cap-and-trade policy being pushed by Democrats and liberal environmental groups in Salem. Last year, the Ecosocialists put forward a resolution proposing that Portland DSA oppose H.B. 2020. Working group member Nick Caleb made the case to the chapter that cap-and-trade has failed to curb emissions in other countries, and that the hype around H.B. 2020 risks allowing the Democrats to delay serious climate action yet again.

The resolution passed with strong support from the chapter and was later covered in *Willamette Week*, causing a stir in the state's mainstream environmental establishment with its opposition to cap-and-trade. DSA's dissent on this issue has the potential to open up space for more left-leaning environmental groups and activists to come out against weak policies like cap-and-trade. It's an early demonstration of the role DSA can play as a left pole for environmental justice in Oregon.

H.B. 2020 ultimately failed to pass—Republicans staged a theatrical walkout even after a series of capitulations and industry carve-outs from the Democrats. Without popular support from the environmental left, the Democrats were unable to push through their false market solution.

The working group is building coalitions with environmental justice organizations in Portland and around the state. The working group recently signed on to a seven-point framework for an Oregon Green New Deal developed by the Just Transition Alliance, which includes principles like community-controlled energy, regenerative agriculture, and support for job transition programs out of extractive industries. Moving forward, the Ecosocialists will focus on presenting the OR GND to the public, fleshing out its policies, and pressuring legislators to sign on.

The Ecosocialist Working Group is a great place for new DSA members to gain valuable experience in direct action, environmental law, and the ins and outs of Oregon environmental politics. Future projects include giving input for the implementation of the Portland Clean Energy Fund, developing a campaign to bring Portland General Electric under public control, opposing oil-by-rail expansion in the city, and engaging in base-building in Portland DSA. In addition, the Ecosocialist Working Group is launching a reading group for members to learn more about the intersection of environmental and socialist issues, and launching a zine.

When *B&RC* asked Bobby Hayden, the former facilitator, what made ecosocialism important, he highlighted its orientation toward the future.

“Ecosocialism is a framework to envision the world we really want to live in,” Hayden said.

Of course, every socialist project has a touch of the utopian. But ecosocialists spend a lot of time thinking about the real nitty-gritty of the future—how to reorganize our urban environments, how to build an energy grid for everyone, and how to create a society that prioritizes people and planet over profit.

THIS
MACHINE
KILLS
Fascists

Socialism Outside of a Textbook: Our Obligation to Support the Venezuelan Socialist Project

→ BY CANDY LUISA HERRERA



BREAD & ROSE CITY

WINTER 2020

In Miami, Venezuela is a topic of discussion rife with misplaced anger, confusion, and, more often than not, a passionate hatred for socialist movements. Yet in the Pacific Northwest, where we struggle to hold on to the little diversity we have, conversations about Venezuela are virtually nonexistent.

Local history notwithstanding, it is important for anyone who considers themselves a leftist to have a basic understanding of the Venezuelan socialist project and the significance of the monumental achievement the Bolivarian Revolution represents for socialists, communists, and anarchists around the world.

While the narrative concerning the global south makes us reflexively refer to states like Venezuela as “poor

countries,” the reality is quite different. Venezuela is a Latin American country steeped in natural resources. As often noted by infamous war criminal and former National Security Adviser John Bolton, Venezuela has the largest oil reserves on earth, at almost 300 billion barrels. It currently has 161 metric tons of gold, and also boasts the second-highest natural gas reserves in the Western hemisphere.

Venezuela’s immense wealth, now in the hands of those seeking a mission of wealth distribution and social justice, is part of what’s allowed the Bolivarian Revolution to make tremendous gains in the past 20 years. Under Presidents Chavez and Maduro, Mission Barrio Adentro, in partnership with Cuba, provides free medical services, including dental care and medicines, to poor

Venezuelans. The educational mission programs range from literacy classes (Mission Robinson) to high school education (Mission Ribas) and university education (Mission Sucre), meaning education in Venezuela is now free from daycare to college. Most recently, Gran Misión de la Vivienda (Great Housing Mission) was successful in its goal of building over three million new homes for low-income workers.

In response to capitalist countries' economic "sanctions" (a misnomer; they could more accurately be called unilateral coercive measures), the Venezuelan government has developed the CLAP box program. The Local Production and Supply Committees [CLAPs] form a national food distribution network partnering with local communal councils to offer staples that "sanctions" have made difficult to find. More than sixty percent of the population participates in this program.

As noted by *Truthout's* excellent article by Greg Palast titled "In Venezuela, White Supremacy Is a Key Driver of the Coup" even the CIA Factbook can attest to the Revolution's successes, even if they're intentionally muted: "Social investment in Venezuela during the Chavez administration reduced poverty from nearly 50% in 1999 to about 27% in 2011, increased school enrollment, substantially decreased infant and child mortality, and improved access to potable water and sanitation through social investment."

Yet response to these gains has ranged from silence to criticism of Venezuela's political process from textbook socialists (see *Jacobin's* dismally uninformed 2017 article "Being Honest About Venezuela"). I use the phrase "textbook socialists" to denounce those who embrace Marxism as philosophy but not as practice. Because radical democracy is at the heart of our movement, it is utopian if not downright foolish to assume such a massive social project would unfold in perfect harmony.

As a labor unionist for years I can personally attest to the messiness of democracy. And I assure everyone that after the revolution we will still have people who thrive in chaos, emasculated capitalists, imperialists, racists, and TERFs attempting to undermine our mission at every turn. And that is exactly why we as socialists have a political and moral obligation to support the Venezuelan people—especially since the Bolivarian Revolution is a movement driven by the Black and Mestiza/o community. To subscribe to a utopian theory of a workers' democracy defined by perfection and present only in one's head is not

just naïve, it is counter to the tenets of both Marxist praxis and proletarian internationalism.

Defending the Bolivarian revolution is an important struggle of the socialist movement on a global level, and it is critical we do not avoid engaging with and supporting this resistance because of cultural chauvinism and racism. On the one-year anniversary of Juan Guaidó's failed US-backed coup of democratically elected socialist president Nicolas Maduro, Venezuela remains one of the global centers of imperialist national conflict.

WHY VENEZUELA IS RELEVANT TO OUR ORGANIZING

Venezuela has demonstrated again and again the power that collective transformation can have on workers as long as oppressed peoples are equally empowered. While brutal US and Western sanctions have forced Venezuelans to endure five years of economic recession, Venezuelans' persistent support for Chavez and Maduro has foiled our country's persistent attempts to overthrow him. That

is an extraordinary feat in and of itself and a goal we should strive for.

Our local chapter of Hands Off Venezuela! recently hosted a journalist from Venezuela Analysis, Paul Dobson, via Skype. We asked him what it was like to live in a country whose

government wasn't always having a public discussion on who to bomb next. His answer was worth noting—in Venezuela, the workers aren't always working to pressure a right-wing government into assuming policies that people want, but rather working to construct programs of collective liberation. They live life "on the other side of the coin."

Imagine just for a moment what our lives would be like as socialists if we spent our time not in constant conflict with a regime but problem-solving in the aftermath of a successful political revolution. It would be far closer to a full expression of human potential.

If we are actively anti-racist and actively attempting to build a multi-racial socialist movement, we must look to the model of Venezuela. In the words of Workers World Party secretary Larry Holmes speaking at the one-month anniversary of the US's failed coup in Caracas, "Every time an oppressed people try to take control of their destiny it is akin to a slave revolt. And those who think they are the rulers of this world forever cannot allow that and they will do anything to stop it."

Chapter Updates

ANTI-IMPERIALIST WORKING GROUP

The Anti-Imperialist Working Group is dedicated to organizing against the “highest stage of capitalism.” We know that the U.S. is the greatest imperial power operating in the world today, and as socialists in this country, we must build a mass movement against its imperialist aggression abroad and against vulnerable populations at home.

Recently we organized an anti-war demonstration protesting U.S. aggression against Iran and the ongoing American occupation of Iraq. We’ll be holding an anti-war panel discussion on February 23rd alongside other leftist organizations. Join our channel on Slack (#wg-anti-imperialist) and follow developments for the panel discussion at tinyurl.com/PDXAntiWar.

LABOR WORKING GROUP

For the Labor Working Group, 2019 was filled with trainings, reading groups, and two Socialist Job Fairs to sow the seeds of rank-and-file organizing throughout the Portland area. The last few months have featured some exciting wins led by DSA members and collaborators, including a new Grand Central Bakers Union, and the impressive membership drive and strike that lead to a winning contract at Clark college.

We’re excited to continue our work in 2020 building our capacity and our solidarity across our community. Upcoming projects include “Secrets of a Successful Organizer” trainings, salting, anti-war resolutions, campaigning for Bernie and Universal Preschool Now, and much more. Check out tinyurl.com/pdxdsalabor to see what we’re up to and join our efforts!

POLITICAL EDUCATION WORKING GROUP

The Political Education Working Group (PEWG) coordinates educational events and content for the chapter. PEWG is dedicated to bringing a deeper knowledge of history, theory, current events, and all things that pertain to the class struggle. Our current work includes: coordinating Red Talks (short topical educational segments at the

general meeting—reach out if you have an idea for one!), running the Socialist Foundations class (a four week intensive educational program) and a new recurring writing workshop event, and helping comrades start reading groups. If there’s anything important that you want to learn or teach about in the chapter, join us!

RACIAL JUSTICE WORKING GROUP

The Racial Justice Working Group works for racial justice through research, analysis, and action. We organize with other anti-racism groups in Portland and promote inclusivity within DSA. Our current priorities are police accountability, an ICE-free Oregon, and defending immigrant rights. We make demands in the police contract negotiations, advocate for a ban on facial recognition technology, monitor Portland’s withdrawal from the Joint Terrorism Task Force, and support the Oregon DA for the People campaign. We connect with immigrants and communities of color through participation in PoC-led community events, voter registration drives, and collaborative work to defend immigrant rights. Contact us at pdxrjwg@protonmail.com or #wg-racial-justice channel on Slack.

FUNDRAISING WORKING GROUP

The Fundraising Working Group has been keeping extra busy finding every opportunity to raise money in the chapter to keep all of our projects and working groups on track and fully funded. Back in July, we spearheaded a campaign to cover travel and housing expenses for all of our delegates at the bi-annual convention in Atlanta. Since then, we have successfully launched the Mutual Aid Fund so our members can help each other out financially. We’ve rolled out multiple new merchandise items including a new t-shirt design and bandana. We have completed our first participatory budgeting process to democratically allocate our chapters’ discretionary funds. And in December, we worked to turn our annual holiday party into a major fund-raiser with our first ever raffle event. Join us at one of our monthly meetings if you’d like to help keep our chapter’s finances on point!

INFO-TECH WORKING GROUP

Members of the working group and the Communications Committee moved our chapter web site to WordPress in January. This move will make the site much easier to update, and let us host a blog, videos, and have multiple languages. The working group has also been testing a Slack chat replacement called Mattermost, because the chapter has outgrown our free Slack account. We continue to work on privacy and security by giving training on password management. In 2019, the group contributed to the chapter's annual security review, and a co-chair testified at City Hall on the City's information privacy resolution.

PHILIPPINES SOLIDARITY CAUCUS

The Philippines Solidarity Caucus took its message of human rights and anti imperialism to the city government. It joined Filipino community groups and the International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines in winning a resolution from the Human Rights Commission against US military aid for the Duterte regime. Next step—onwards to city hall! They are also planning a movie night, details TBD.

ECOSOCIALIST WORKING GROUP

The objective of the Ecosocialist Working Group is to build local power for climate and environmental justice in solidarity with regional, national, and international movements. The working group is currently deciding on its next major body of work.

Most recently, we've rallied at the Capitol against the Jordan Cove pipeline project in Southern Oregon, tabled at the Climate Strike, published the first issue of an ecosocialist mini-magazine, and planned a new reading group of A Planet to Win: Why We Need a Green New Deal. Come join our next meeting February 18th, 7-9 PM at the IWW house to help plan our next big project!

OTHER EVENTS

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



