The caravan of a few thousand Central American refugees traveling to the U.S.-Mexico border is a desperate journey of survival. People are walking and sometimes riding on trucks to the border, more than 1000 miles away, to apply for asylum. This may be the largest single caravan of migrants to the U.S. in recent history, but it is not that unusual. For decades smaller caravans of migrants have traveled from Central America seeking asylum in the U.S. The union leadership and their home countries care for their families, and risk their lives in this journey is not an easy one. In their home countries migrants face brutal and corrupt regimes, violence, and disease such as gang death threats, crippling poverty, and environmental calamities. Thousands of farmers have been driven from their lands by years of drought that makes farming impossible. Migrants travel in caravans as a way to provide some security against gangs that regularly attack them throughout their journey, often robbing, raping, kidnapping or killing them.

This recent caravan began in Honduras with about 150 migrants in response to the miserable living conditions there. But the caravan swelled to about 7,000 people once word spread and attracted migrants throughout the country and from Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. More than half of the migrants are women and young girls. One mother traveling with her two daughters said about the journey: “We prefer to die on the American border than die in Honduras from hunger.”

An initial slogan of the caravan was: “The violence and poverty is expelling us.” In Honduras, more than 66% of the population lives in poverty; and 20% live on less than $1.90 per day, regularly going without food during the year. In the poorest areas, 49% of people suffer from malnutrition and 34% of children have stunted development. Over 15% of the population is unemployed. With one of the highest murder rates in the world, Honduras is overwhelmed by the armed violence of criminal gangs and corrupt government, police and military forces.

President Trump has decided to use the images of migrants fleeing life-and-death situations as a way to spew his vile racism, hoping that the fear and hatred he stokes will lead to support for Republicans in the mid-term elections and his 2020 re-election campaign. After repeatedly referring to the migrants as “criminals” who are planning an “invasion” of the U.S., Trump has sent over 5,200 active-duty troops to the U.S.-Mexico border to assist the Border Patrol. That is the same number of U.S. troops in Iraq. This is a blatant ploy to build up people’s fear and hatred of immigrants.

Trump’s attacks on immigrants is nothing new. Both Democratic and Republican administrations try to paint immigrants as villains who pose a threat. Under the Obama administration, less than 50% of the eligible members voted, and fewer than 50% of those who voted turned it down. But the union leadership said that all issues. The union officials’ claim that the national contract was approved means that they won’t submit it to a vote. So what can we seriously expect?

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The U.S. is supposedly a nation of immigrants – people who chose to come here. The real history is quite different. Yes, the majority of people who populate the U.S. were immigrants or descended from immigrants. But there were millions of people living here before the European invasion. Estimates say there were 12 million people living here – referred to today as “Native Americans.”

For many workers once peak tourism season is over, their lives change. Rising housing costs have also forced many workers to accept part-time work in the logging and mining camps.

The conditions that these hotel workers face are similar to other workers throughout the country. And their strike is a reminder that the only way to improve our situation is to organize and fight for a better life.

Why We Stand

We believe the international working class is the social force that can transform society in a way that will destroy forever capitalism. We need people who have experience in dividing. Unfortunately we already have plenty of people who know how to divide us. At times these divisions have been overcome and workers have launched massive movements that won important victories. The largest movement like this in the U.S. was in the 1930s. Our diverse histories and traditions should not weaken us. Our strength lies in our common bond – that we are the ones who do the work of this society. We have every interest in putting an end to the system of exploitation that oppresses all of us.

We Stand For Socialism

A world based on peaceful collaboration and international cooperation of working class people – not the exploiters who rule today.

• The common ownership and sharing of the world’s resources and productive capacity.

• An egalitarian and democratic government, organized and controlled from the bottom up.

The Force For Change Exists Today

Everywhere, working people’s labor makes society run. Working people have the power to bring this system to a halt and bring about the changes needed. Like slavery, feudalism and imperialism, capitalism has made life very hard for the workers of this country.

The forces for change are growing. But the workers who have been organizing for change are being weakened and divided by the policies of the U.S. government, and the plundering of foreign and domestic companies.

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Uber and Lyft: 21st Century Technology, 18th Century Conditions

Six New York taxi drivers have committed suicide in the last year. Taxi drivers are now having to work ridiculously long 12-14 hour shifts just to survive. One driver, Doug Shafter, blames his suicide on having to drive 100-120 hours almost every week. Before shooting himself outside City Hall, he wrote a Facebook post blaming politicians for allowing ride-sharing companies such as Uber and Lyft to enter the city. The influx of cars from these companies effectively “squeeze[d] rates to below operating costs,” forcing drivers out of the industry and out of a means to support themselves. Another taxi driver in this string of suicides, Luiz Mezenti, had been in extreme debt from a $700,000 loan he had taken out seven years ago to buy his taxi medallion (a license that allows you to operate as a taxi driver). Due to the rapidly increasing size of ride-sharing companies, he just could not compete with the flood of unlicensed and low-paid drivers entering and taking over the market for cabs.

For example, the average Uber driver makes only about ten dollars an hour. Working a 40-hour work week at this rate puts them around the federal poverty line for a family of two. Drivers also have no way of knowing how much time they’ll spend driving or earning money. They have no legal protection for a minimum wage, health insurance, workers’ compensation, sick pay, overtime, or unemployment benefits. Drivers have to pay their own taxes, maintain their own cars, cover their own gas and maintenance costs, and are responsible for their own gas, food, and shelter. They live from week to week. The companies care only about their own profit. And since Uber and Lyft compete to dominate the taxi and rideshare market, they have also been increasingly cutting driver pay to lower their costs. Ridesharing companies are desperate to predict income or how much time you’ll spend on a job.

At the same time, Uber and Lyft have flooded the streets with drivers in order to provide on-demand car service.

However, it’s not great for the drivers of these new taxi companies either. In fact, last month New York saw its first Uber driver suicide. Other drivers, like the Chicago taxi driver Jack Cestaro, say that Uber and Lyft are not making money. They are paying drivers less than they would make from forming unions and bargaining.

Meanwhile, as drivers go on strike, Uber’s stock price continues to plummet. Its sales last year totaled $23 billion. But workers haven’t seen any of it. They aren’t making any progress.

Immigration is usually a political issue, with politicians using people’s insecurities. Despite the fear-mongering over latino and other “undocumented” workers, the U.S. is now taking in one million immigrants from Mexico and Central America. The largest immigration today is from China, India and countries in Southeast Asia. If immigration from Mexico has fallen since 2000, most undocumented immigrants from Mexico (78%) have lived in the U.S. for ten years or more. There has been an increase in immigration from Central American countries over the last years, though the majority of them are facing economic, political and social crises. The economic, social and political crises brought on largely by the policies of the U.S. government, and the plundering of those countries by U.S. corporations has pushed millions into desperate poverty. And climate change has accelerated the destruction of crops and farmlands, causing hundreds of thousands to flee their farms in search of a livelihood throughout Central America.

Throughout history, patterns of immigration reflect the changing conditions in different parts of the world.

In the countries with more developed economies, like the U.S., new immigrants often work in the hardest, dirtiest and lowest paying jobs. This is not an accident. Where there is growth in construction, and meatpacking – jobs that most native-born workers would prefer to not to work.

The rich and their politicians have always used our fears, languages, and histories to divide us. At times these divisions have been overcome and workers have launched massive movements that won important victories. The largest movement like this in the U.S. was in the 1930s. Our diverse histories and traditions should not weaken us. Our strength lies in our common bond – that we are the ones who do the work of this society. We have every interest in putting an end to the system of exploitation that oppresses all of us.

A Nation of Immigrants – One Working Class

Marriott Workers on Strike

Seven thousand hotel workers across the U.S. are on strike against Marriott, the world’s largest hotel chain. Its sales last year totaled $23 billion. But workers haven’t seen any of it. They aren’t making money – all they’ve seen is more work. Many are working two or three jobs to make ends meet. Rising housing costs have also forced many workers far from where they work, making for extremely long commutes. Workers have inconsistent schedules. For many workers once peak tourism season is over, their lives are reduced and they lose their health care coverage.

Another strain on hotel workers is Marriott’s program that encourages guests to opt out of housekeeping. But hotel workers say it’s an excuse to cut jobs and make them do more work in less time. If enough hotel guests opt out, housekeepers are sent home, waiting to find out if there’s work for them. Then they have to be on call ready to come back in on short notice.

The hotel workers are part of the union, UNITE HERE, and have three demands for their strike: job security, an end to unsafe overwork, and better wages and benefits. Their slogan is: “One Job Should Be Enough.”

The conditions that these hotel workers face are similar to other workers throughout the country. And their strike is a reminder that the only way to improve our situation is to organize and fight for a better life.

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• The common ownership and sharing of the world’s resources and productive capacity.

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The Force For Change Exists Today

Where We Stand

The world we live in today is increasingly ruled by prejudice and fear, under a system of widespread violence and war, where exploitation and oppression are the rule, with the exception of a small group who live on the spoils of this system. Capitalism is often expressed through war.

Protection of the US imperialist system, plotting science to work against scientists who don’t destroy it.

• A society where human relations are based on respect, equality and dignity of all people, not racism, sexism or homophobia.

Who We Are

We believe the international working class is the social force that can transform society to work for a better future. We need people who are willing to fight for such a possibility.

We need people who have experience in dividing. Unfortunately we already have plenty of people who know how to divide us.

Between 1840 and 1850, almost 20 percent of Ireland’s working poor migrated to the U.S. to escape poverty, famine and war. Between 1882 and 1914, twenty million immigrants came to the U.S. looking for jobs.

In fact, immigration from Mexico has fallen since 2009. Today is from China, India and countries in Southeast Asia. In 1882 and 1914, twenty million immigrants came to the U.S. looking for jobs. Immigration is usually a political issue, with politicians using people’s insecurities.

In Ireland, where the British rulers imposed massive taxation, the destruction of crops and farmlands, causing hundreds of thousands to flee their farms in search of a livelihood throughout Central America.

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