

December 2nd, 2016

# The GITATOR

Newsletter of the University of Oregon  
GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS FEDERATION  
609 E 13th, Eugene, OR 97401 (541) 344-0832 <http://gtff.net> [gtffnewsletter@goug-](mailto:gtffnewsletter@goug-)

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## Upcoming Events!

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### **Mexico Solidarity Network Event**

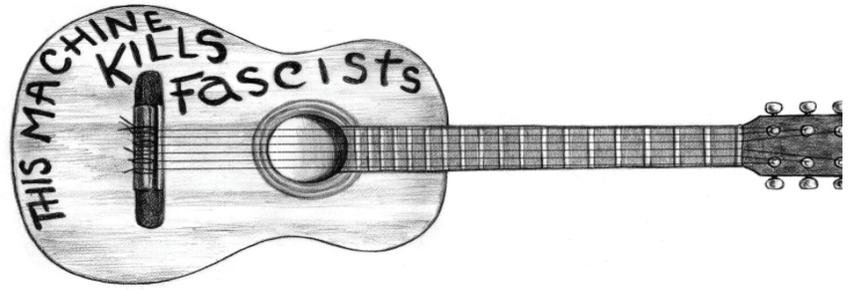
On December 6th, the Mexico Solidarity Network is visiting the University of Oregon, sponsored by the GTFF. The event is called Walking with Subjects of History, lead by Luisella Preciado, attorney with the Fray Bartolomé de las Casas Human Rights Center.

Tuesday December 6th, 2016  
12:30pm presentation: University of Oregon Lillis Hall Room 111  
FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC  
Contact Diego Contreras at [external\\_relations@gtff.net](mailto:external_relations@gtff.net) for more information.

### **Winter GMM**

Our Winter General Membership Meeting is January 27th at the Campbell Senior Center from 6-9pm!

General Membership Meeting  
Campbell Senior Center  
155 High St., Eugene, OR 97401



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## *The GTFF President's Statement in Response to the 2016 Election and Hate*

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The vitriolic rhetoric of hate by Donald Trump's campaign was built upon structural forces of oppression that were violently unveiled last week. His campaign and subsequent election has emboldened forces of hate and oppression nationwide, and has placed them in the highest levels of power within our government.

Additionally, it has inspired acts of terror, violence, harassment, and discrimination in our own communities. This trend represents a direct threat to the civil rights, liberties and safety of our coworkers, students, and neighbors.

This ideology of hate runs in stark opposition to the values and norms that the GTFF represents. The GTFF seeks to create an open, inclusive, and progressive space whereby members can actively stand in opposition to these oppressive ideologies. The GTFF strives for a healthy campus in which our members can work, study, teach, do research, and live without fear, just as we strive for these goals in the community at large.

The GTFF has a long and proud history of fighting for and upholding a safe and fair workplace for all GEs. We have fought for and won access to healthcare, childcare, training to prevent oppression, gender neutral bathrooms, lactation spaces, professional workplaces for all GEs, and much more. We have defended the rights of international GEs and will continue to do so.

**Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, Local 3544, AFT Oregon, AFL-CIO**

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## A Letter From The President...

The GTFF takes seriously the traditional labor union phrase, "An Injury to One is an Injury to All." Therefore, the GTFF:

- Stands opposed to racism
- Stands opposed to rape culture
- Stands opposed to misogyny
- Stands opposed to classism
- Stands opposed to transphobia
- Stands opposed to homophobia
- Stands opposed to ableism
- Stands opposed to xenophobia
- Stands opposed to ethnocentrism
- Stands opposed to islamophobia
- And stands opposed to all forms of oppression

This is a continuous struggle that requires difficult discussions and constant reevaluation in response to the input and needs of our members and community. We will continue to advocate for our members, our students, and other members of this campus and community who are increasingly threatened by these recent political currents. Furthermore, we will pressure the University of Oregon to publicly condemn any and all acts of violence and intimidation on campus.

We will not stay silent. We will not submit. We will not sit down.  
We will stand up.  
And we will fight back.

In solidarity,

Kadie Manion  
President, Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation



## Ya Gotta Keep 'Em Agitated:

### Labor History Edition!

#### *Did you know...*

#### ... This Labor History Moment?

The Arditi del Popolo (People's Squads) was an Italian workers' militant anti-fascist group founded at the end of June 1921 to resist the rise of Mussolini's National Fascist Party, out of worker frustrations with the legalist strategy of dominant trade unions and the Italian Socialist Party.

#### ... These December U.S. Labor Events?

*December 5th, 1955* - The American Federation of Labor (AFL) and Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) merged, forming the AFL-CIO. The merger ended a 20 year split in the U.S. labor movement over the form trade union organizations should take.

*December 8th, 1886* - The American Federation of Labor (AFL) was founded in Columbus, OH by twenty-five craft unions.

*December 9th, 1869* - The Knights of Labor were founded, which broadened the labor movement beyond a small subset of skilled trades.

*December 28th, 1973* - The Skylab crew went on a one-day strike to protest working conditions and overwork.

#### ... This Important Quote?

"I'm a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will"  
- Antonio Gramsci (December 19th, 1929 letter)

**Well, now you know!!**

*Jeff Ewing*

*VP of Membership Communications*

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## Thoughts on Organizing

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Somehow I've caught your attention reading this article, so I'm going to start provocatively: I hope as soon as possible we can move beyond seeing people who voted for Donald Trump only as 'basketful of deplorables'. For those of you who just recoiled from that statement, please let me explain.

I do not condone the action those voters took; but in ways I can empathize with them. At first I was flabbergasted that the state I grew up in – Michigan, the state I have been proud to claim as 'home' – went 'Red' for the first time since the Reagan administration. But reflecting on growing up in Lansing, Michigan, a city like Detroit and other Michigan cities still reeling at some level from the punches of outsourcing and automation over the past decades and the heavy blow of the 2008 recession, I can understand why just enough voters turned to Trump.

Those swing voters (or the indifference of non-voters who stayed home) saw their economic marginalization as a greater concern than Trump's hateful rhetoric. I personally believe for many people human rights does not necessarily 'Trump' their own well-being. But as much as we might want to denounce all Trump voters, I hope instead we see this as an opportunity to play some long ball over the coming years and 'right some wrongs'.

While we have now a president-elect who strikes fear (rightfully so) into the hearts of many Americans, Trump's election can also be viewed as the wake-up call parts of this country needed. Or at least it helped set the alarm. For we are already seeing that Trump does not intend to 'drain the swamp'; he just intends to rearrange the alligators. This can be an organizing tool if used wisely.

Hence, why I emphasize this is NOT the time to alienate and degrade those citizens who voted for Trump. Although to be clear, I should note I realize there are at least some Trump voters who will not be reasoned with and are dangerous to confront; here I'm targeting Trump voters who are 'low hanging and ripe' for easier picking.

Again, I realize some of you, especially those in most historically marginalized groups, are likely to eye me with at best suspicion, at worst scorn for my above statements. That is fair, and I'd like to be open about my background. I personally for much of my life was too sheltered by 'white privilege' and 'white moderatism'. I was brought up to respect people as people regardless of any characteristic, but real political conversations and exposure to the dark sides of American history were rare. I'm still living with that legacy and trying to break that mold in which I was initially shaped. Fortunately we learn, adapt,

and (hopefully) use that knowledge to change our world for the better. And we all know lashing back against hate with more hate will get us nowhere and will only further distance the chasm between citizens in our country.

To all of my friends in historically marginalized groups: I want to stand with you and make sure you are treated equally in all facets of life. I know you have been hurt (and face future harm) and that I can never really understand that pain. I also want to fight violence with hate and rage, but I implore, I beg you to help me resist in non-violent ways.



*Image with the Otpor! logo.*

As an organizer, I for the coming years hope to draw inspiration from groups like Otpor!, the Serbian resistance group that eventually helped oust the dictator Slobdan Milosevic in 2000. I believe past resistances like Otpor! can teach us important things for our resistance against Trump; that instead of protest, they instead use clever, funny, yet insightful means that will help persuade more people to get involved. I hope we can use this basis to organize. (cont., page 4)



## Thoughts on Organizing (cont.)

We need to not only organize within our union to make us strong against known future threats (like the dismantling of fair-share dues payments), but also to produce positive outcomes in our communities.

This cannot be achieved by shouting back at hateful rhetoric and continuing to polarize the debates; instead, fight fear and hate with laughter and jokes. This is the time we can begin to build a coalition to change for 'good', but it requires us to examine ourselves in the mirror and commit to not being hypocrites by using hate against hate. Remember, love Trumps hate.

We must empathize, educate, and entertain those who have been marginalized to win their support for making a more equitable and just future. The time is (always) now to create this change; for if we do not seize this moment, our country will only sink into further division and turmoil.

Let us join together in solidarity around the ways we can begin to progress (not regress) to more sustainable, equitable, and just futures for all citizens of Earth. I hope to hear your ideas, critiques, and comments.

Thanks for reading.

*Devin Lea  
VP of Organizing*



## Statement: In Solidarity with Standing Rock

We oppose the continued destruction of indigenous peoples' bodies, sovereignty, cultures, land, and resources. We believe that as unionized workers, we have a responsibility to critically examine our contributions to different structures of oppression and to support other movements for social justice and liberation. We understand that justice for workers cannot, and should not, be achieved at the expense of other marginalized groups in our political and economic system. We recognize the Dakota Access Pipeline as a manifestation of the oppression, exploitation, and colonization of indigenous peoples and their resources. We are, therefore, proud to stand in solidarity with #NoDAPL and with all union workers who oppose environmental racism and the continued reliance on fossil fuels.

We condemn AFL-CIO's support for the Dakota Access Pipeline and we reassert the native community rights to their land and resources.

We also condemn the actions of federal, state, and local governments and private security that continue to violate the protectors'

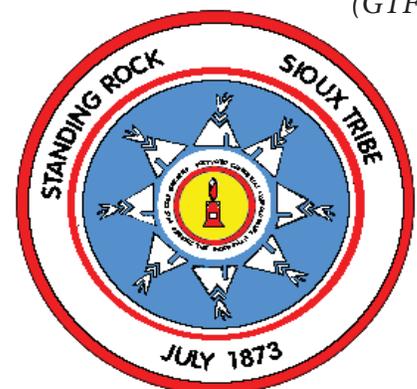
sovereignty and right to their land and resources, that have met protectors' peaceful resistance and protest with the use of reprehensible violence. The actions of the government only highlight once more the levels of police brutality and state violence against people of color.

Finally, we wish to ask our community to support the efforts of the water protectors, by sending donations and participating in diverse actions of solidarity. Make sure to support EarthJustice in their attempt to relitigate the environmental review that lead to approval of the current route, more information is available at: <http://earthjustice.org/case/dakota-access-pipeline>.

#NoDAPL #StandTall

In Solidarity,

*The Executive Council of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF)*



## Guest Editorial: Fighting White Supremacy

*Editor's Note: One new regular feature in each Agitator will be a Guest Editorial, a space for committed leaders and activists outside the GTFF but involved in labor and social justice movements to speak their mind on an issue of importance to them. We appreciate our allies' work!*  
*In Solidarity,*

*Jeff Ewing, VP of Membership Communications*

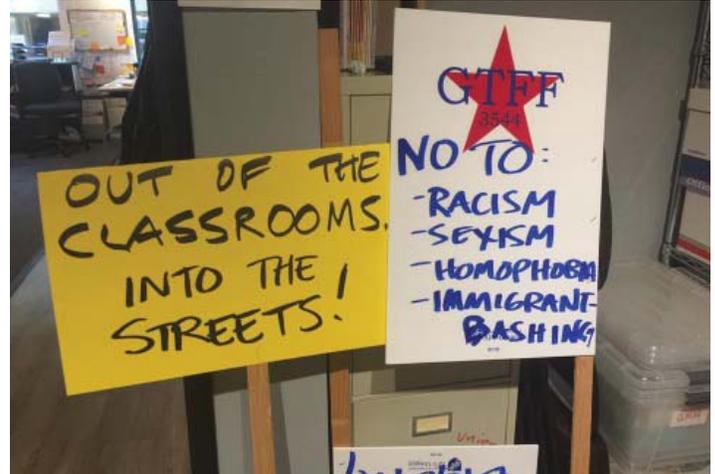
Nov 8th most certainly will go down in the books as one of the major political upsets in our country. At a time when we have an abundance of new language, literature and authorities on classism, racial and gender equity, white privilege, fragility, and the power of unions for workers, half of our country decided on setting back the clock to a time where violent racism was overt and worn like a badge of honor. A time where inequality was hardly challenged and political correctness wasn't even a concept to be beaten down.

So now we are here, and in some ways we've got no one to thank but ourselves. Our echo chamber denied us the ability to view our overconfidence, self-righteousness, and disregard for white poor working folks, who, in economic desperation perhaps, had decided that it was time they embraced their access to power through whiteness. These are many of the same folks that in '08 and '12 had chosen "Hope" embodied by a black man, yet now the economic woes of the white populace told us in no uncertain terms they were "victims" of the "others" taking their country, and returned to that country's familiar blueprint of what so many of their ancestors had been able to build a (now lost) legacy on.

White supremacy.

In some ways we let them walk right into it. We chanted along with Bernie stating yes to Workers Rights! A rigged system!" But like many phrases these are generalizations, and have many forks on the road, where the final destination could vary wildly. While we chanted with Bernie and envisioned an equitable distribution of wealth we assumed that everyone else envisioned the same.

After the primaries, some white working poor began



to listen to Trump's version of "Workers Rights! And a rigged system!" and echoed a growing whitelash against 'political correctness' as one reason for the woes of workers, coupling it with demands to shut down Black Lives Matter protestors and flirtations with white nationalism. The people, his people, were primed for a Trump agenda that took on new meanings. 'More jobs' began to mean jobs for white people. Law and order, for white people. Veteran services and honor, only for those who are white, and the rights to exercise 2nd Amendment rights—only for whites.

Millionaires and Billionaires and rich folk that supported a Trump presidency knew that it meant more money for them through tax cuts.

Their deal resembled that which was cut for plantation owners once they had no slaves. These former owners were given a deal with the ability to sharecrop their field, calling it an opportunity for newly "freed" blacks while the overseeing of said "business deal" was given to poor white folk as new managers.

Fast forward in 2016, to a new deal for tax cuts for the rich so they can continue to protect their billion and multimillion dollar empires through "corporate sharecropping" overseen by (often white) CEOs, Boards, and top to mid-level management.

As for this "New White Deal Era" that began on Nov 8th. (cont., page 6)



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## Caucus Corner:

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*Editor's Note: Another new feature I'm starting in the Agitator is the Caucus Corner, a dedicated space where Caucuses can introduce themselves to the membership, and communicate anything they wish, from simple statements to full analyses or whatever else is among their priorities. Caucuses serve important communities within the GTFF, and hopefully this will be a useful venue for their goals!*

*In Solidarity,*

*Jeff Ewing, VP of Membership Communications*

### **Workers' Caucus Statement:**

The workers caucus is committed to promoting a radical class consciousness and solidarity within the GTFF, with other unions, and with other social movements. In order to do so, the Workers' Caucus embraces and organizes around a social movement unionism approach to fight for social justice both within and beyond the GTFF.

*In Solidarity,*

*Andy Labuza  
Chair, Workers' Caucus*

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## Fighting White Supremacy (cont.)

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I only emerged out of my cave of uncertainty days later when I realized our commitment to our families, parents and ancestors are stronger than any fear.

The union movement I serve, the college I intend to lead along with other volunteer community members, the Latinx community I am a part of and of service to, deserve any amount of fight I have in me, so I reconnected myself to those I knew and who were ready, and as days passed and I grew stronger. I knew the other half-plus-2-million of my country is not one that embraces a Trump presidency.

But I still see the writing on the wall (or, should I say, the swastika-laden wall)

WE. ARE. AT. WAR.  
And the promise of the beautiful mosaic that is our country is now shattering under the growing numbers of an emboldened fascist-ready populace.

Where we may have initially scattered for safety, we must now become a Resistance, ready for action.

It is time we step up our tactics.

From the highest reaches of government that we have access to, to the broadest coalitions of grassroots movements we belong to.

We must engage in this war in full force by making use of all our assets and skills.

For the enemy has declared their intent and has made good on selecting his generals in the fight against our communities and allies.

One such immediate way that we can begin is to broaden the idea of what a sanctuary city is, and can be.

A proposal was sent to the City of Eugene Human Rights Commission to advise the Eugene City Council to adopt an ordinance to protect both our undocumented brothers and sisters and our Muslim brothers and sisters.

A proposal was sent to the City of Eugene Human Rights Commission to advise the Eugene City Council to adopt an ordinance to protect both our undocumented brothers and sisters and our Muslim brothers and sisters.

If you would like to provide a 2 minute public comment asking the Human Rights Commission to do so, please come to:

Atrium Building  
(99 W. 10th Ave., Eugene, Oregon)  
Monday 12/5 at 5:30 pm.

For details on the document please like the FB page Make Eugene Springfield Sanctuary Cities.

Brothers and sisters,  
We will not disappear  
Or whimper in fear,  
A War is afoot  
And justice is on our side.  
Are you ready for a fight?

*Phil Carrasco  
Latinx, Labor, and Human Rights Advocate*

## 'Solidarity Forever', lyrics by Ralph Chaplin (1915)

When the union's inspiration through the  
workers' blood shall run

There can be no power greater anywhere  
beneath the sun

Yet what force on earth is weaker than the  
feeble strength of one

For the Union makes us strong

Chorus

Solidarity forever, solidarity forever

Solidarity forever

For the Union makes us strong

Is there aught we hold in common with the  
greedy parasite

Who would lash us into serfdom and would  
crush us with his might?

Is there anything left to us but to organize and  
fight?

For the union makes us strong

It is we who ploughed the prairies, built the  
cities where they trade

Dug the mines and built the workshops,  
endless miles of railroad laid

Now we stand outcast and starving 'mid the  
wonders we have made

But the union makes us strong

All the world that's owned by idle drones is  
ours and ours alone

We have laid the wide foundations, built it  
skyward stone by stone

It is ours, not to slave in, but to master and to  
own

While the union makes us strong

They have taken untold millions that they  
never toiled to earn

But without our brain and muscle not a single  
wheel can turn

We can break their haughty power gain our  
freedom when we learn

That the Union makes us strong

In our hands is placed a power greater than  
their hoarded gold

Greater than the might of armies magnified a  
thousandfold

We can bring to birth a new world from the  
ashes of the old

For the Union makes us strong



## From The Editor

The Editorial Committee for the Agitator is very pleased to have received so many submissions to the newsletter. Keep them coming to [member.communications@gtff.net](mailto:member.communications@gtff.net)!

If you do submit, we ask that you submit up to 300 words in a Word document with standard formatting. Also, don't forget to include a title!

### Staying informed & connected is easier than ever!

- We want feedback! Tell us what you think about the newsletter at: [member.communications@gtff.net](mailto:member.communications@gtff.net)
- Come to membership meetings and social events! (see calendar on pg. 1 for times and locations)
- Join the Facebook group: GTFF
- Follow on Twitter: @GTFF\_3544
- Check out the website: [www.GTFF3544.net](http://www.GTFF3544.net)

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*Submissions of all sorts are  
welcome!*

*Contact your  
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Information*



### About The GTFF

Our Mission Statement:

*“The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, a union of the graduate employees of the University of Oregon, commits to creating a strong, safe, and diverse community of educators and scholars for the purpose of protecting and promoting the interests of its membership.”*

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) is a labor union representing over 1400 Graduate Employees at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.

Our goals are:

- to improve the quality of life for GEs in the areas of salary, workload and working conditions through collective bargaining and the enforcement of our contract,
- to fight for an adequately funded educational system, accessible for all people, and
- to help create a revitalized, socially aware union movement, which is a positive force for change for the entire community. Volunteers and activists are welcome!