



**15th Annual U.S.-European Transatlantic Social Dialogue
September 14-16, 2017
Worker Institute at Cornell's ILR School
16 East 34th St, New York City**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2017

6:00 PM Opening Plenary and Reception - Labor Solidarity in Divided Times

From Brexit to Trump's election to the rise of the radical right across Europe, the political context across Europe and the U.S. has shifted significantly in the past year. The divisive nature of the current political moment is particularly important to the labor movement and its allies – racism, xenophobia and misogyny, in particular, are being used to divide working people. At the same time, an elevated level of activism has emerged to protect the most vulnerable and fight for social justice. How can the labor movement play a major role in protecting the most vulnerable in our societies, resisting rising authoritarianism, and still play offense to build a powerful workers' movement despite intensifying attacks on worker rights and collective representation?

Speakers

- Linda Burnham**, Research Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance
- Bhairavi Desai**, Executive Director, New York Taxi Workers Alliance
- Hector Figueroa**, President, Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ
- Gabriela Ibrom**, Transnational Department, IG Metall
- Chuck Jones**, Former President of United Steelworkers Local 1999
- Esther Lynch**, Confederal Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation

Moderator: Sarah Jaffe, Independent Journalist and Nation Institute Fellow

**Thursday night's event is open to the public and you are welcome to share this invitation to the event with other people: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/labor-solidarity-in-divided-times-tickets-37466083063>*

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2017

8:00 AM **Breakfast**

9:00 AM **Welcome**

9:15 AM **Session 1**

Labor and the Political Context in the US and Europe - The Current State of Play

This session will take stock of the current political context in the US and Europe, highlighting key parallels and connections in the strategic terrain across different national and regional contexts and focusing on the theme of building solidarity in divided times. **What are the implications of growing right-wing populism for labor, social rights, and cultural pluralism in advanced democracies? What are the challenges and opportunities for unions and other actors seeking to challenge right-wing populism and strengthen progressive coalitions in the current moment?**

Speakers

Jen Kern, Working Families Party

Philippe Pochet, European Trade Union Institute

Andreas Botsch, DGB International Department and **Birgit Kraemer**, Institute of Economic and Social Research/Hans Boeckler Foundation

Shannon Gleeson, Worker Institute at Cornell

Chair: Maite Tapia, Michigan State University and Worker Institute at Cornell

10:45 am **Coffee & Tea Break**

11:00 am **Session 2**

Understanding and Explaining the Recent Success of Right-Wing Populism

This session addresses the success of right-wing populism in the 2016 “Brexit” referendum and recent elections in the US and several European countries. It considers the role of economic anxiety, cultural/racial nationalism, and other factors in driving voting behavior and seeks to unpack the entrepreneurial success of right-wing populists.

How did different groups including young people and union members vote? What are the divisions right wing leaders have exploited, the organizing approaches they have used, and the rhetorical and narrative strategies they have deployed? What lessons should organized labor and other progressive actors take away from these results as they look to upcoming election cycles?

Speakers

Sarah Jaffe, Independent Journalist
Fabian Virchow, University of Dusseldorf
Fabian Lindner, Macroeconomics Institute, HBS
Tim Vlandas, University of Reading, UK

Chair: Ajay Singh Chaudhary, Brooklyn Institute for Social Research

12:45 pm **Lunch**

1:45 PM **Session 3**

Labor’s Response to Right-Wing Attacks on Vulnerable Communities – What Can Unions and Worker Organizations Do to Support the Most Vulnerable?

Recent times have seen increased stigmatization, surveillance, and exclusion of vulnerable communities by right-wing actors in the US and Europe. Immigrants and refugees have been targeted across a number of different countries, as have LGBTQ communities and racial, ethnic, and religious minorities. This session explores what unions and other worker organizations are doing and could do to support organizing among vulnerable communities at this political moment. What are the most promising approaches that worker organizations are using to support their own members? What kinds of collaborations are being developed (e.g., with immigrant rights organizations) to strengthen the broader infrastructure for protecting vulnerable communities?

Speakers

Tefere Gebre, AFL-CIO
Dominique John, DGB Faire Mobilitaet
Ligia Gualpa, Workers Justice Project
Salvo Leonardi, Fondazione Di Vittorio, Italy
Mark Bergfeld, Queen Mary University

Chair: Patricia Campos-Medina, Worker Institute at Cornell

3:45 PM Coffee and Tea Break

4:00 PM Session 4

Forging Solidarity and Addressing Racism at the Workplace – What Role for Political Education?

Racism, Islamophobia, and xenophobia divide workplaces and communities, pushing certain groups to the margins. One approach that trade unions use to confront these problems is the education of workers and worker representatives. Does political education need to be adapted in the context of social media networks and new online news sources? Or is there a fresh demand for political education, and can it be adapted to the current times? We will hear from educators and German and US trade unionists about promising political education strategies and what they know about how effective these strategies are at building solidarity in divided times.

Speakers

KC Wagner, The Worker Institute at Cornell University's ILR School

Joe Tarulli, Communications Workers of America Local 1102 and **Sonji-Ann**

Roseborough, Communications Workers of America Local 1106

Uwe Teichmann, DGB Bildungswerk Trade Union Education

Phyll Opoku-Gyimah, Public and Commercial Services Union

Chair: Birgit Kraemer, WSI/HBS

6:00 PM Break

7:30 PM Dinner at Restaurant Opportunity Center's COLORS Restaurant, 178 Stanton St, NYC

Speakers from ROC - ROC's Sanctuary Campaign

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2017

8:00 AM Breakfast

9:00 AM

Session 5

Going on the Offensive: Best Practices for Multi-Racial Organizing and Movement Building

As right wing forces seek to divide workers and social movements, how can the labor movement go on the offensive? What new strategies are being developed to organize and protect workers, negotiate for just and inclusive workplaces, and build alliances across movements focused on immigrant/refugee, environmental/climate, and racial justice? At what scale are these campaigns operating (local to national) and how effective are they at challenging the neoliberal order and its commitment to austerity?

Speakers

Carinne Luck, Independent Organizer and Campaign Strategist

Peter Bescherer, University Tuebingen

Romin Khan, Ver.di

Valery Alzaga, formerly with Change to Win

Chair: Mike Fichter, The Free University Berlin

10:45 AM

Tea and Coffee Break

11:00 AM

Session 6

Economic Nationalism and Transnational Labor Coalitions

The rise of right-wing populism has been associated with economic nationalism and rejection of international trade deals and institutions (such as the EU). These policies often exacerbate divisions in the labor movement within and across countries. In this session, we will discuss union efforts to build and sustain transnational labor coalitions within multinational institutions and firms in the face of these challenges. What are the conditions that support successful coalition building, based on inclusive forms of international labor solidarity? What are the challenges these coalitions face in countries and communities experiencing growing support for far right parties or anti-EU policies? What new tactics are necessary to counter these trends?

Speakers

Amy Masciola, Masciola Campaign Consulting

Carsten Hübner, Transatlantic Labour Institute

Roland Erne, University College Dublin

Marissa Brookes, UC Riverside

Chair: Virginia Doellgast, Worker Institute at Cornell

12:30 PM **Final, Closing Session**

**Concluding Remarks and Next Steps: The Function of Research in Divided Times -
Where are the Gaps in Knowledge?**

A few selected TSD participants will provide concluding remarks, highlighting important points from the previous day's discussions. This session will especially focus on opportunities for future, collaborative work. Where are the gaps in knowledge and research that TSD-related individuals and institutions might want to pursue?

Maria Jepsen, European Trade Union Institute

Lowell Turner, Worker Institute at Cornell

Michaela Kuhnhenne, Hans Boeckler Foundation

1:30 **Lunch**