

# Workmen's Circle Leader Urges Stronger Coalitions to Counter Hate

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By Joe Maniscalco

New York, NY - The head of the more than century-old institution founded to help Jewish immigrants make it in the USA is urging stronger, more diverse coalitions between organized labor and other progressive groups to better confront the torrent of xenophobic bile currently spewing out of Donald Trump's White House.



“It’s abhorrent to us — and as Jews, as progressives, and workers we are called to stand up to this at every possible turn and fight back,” Workmen’s Circle Executive Director Ann Toback told LaborPress on an episode of “Blue Collar Buzz” set to air this Sunday night (6/18) on AM970.

Founded in 1900, the Workmen’s Circle was instrumental in the formation of the American Labor Movement of the early 20th Century. A time when Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were largely the group du jour to demonize and hate.

“President Trump and his administration are forwarding language of blame and hatred and scapegoating huge groups of people who truly do make our country stronger and better,” Toback says.

The former assistant executive director of Writers Guild East, says that the fight to raise the minimum wage is a good example of an issue where organized labor was able to successfully partner with many diverse groups — both union and non-union alike — to advance the lives of working men and women everywhere.

Ann Toback.

“We have to find more and more connective issues to join us, and immigration rights are certainly one of them,” Toback says. “There are so many issues that can unite us. And I think the unions are doing a good job at looking for those issues, but we need to do a better job.”



One of the ways Toback is endeavoring to foster the creation of those vital coalitions is through education.

“Too many people graduate college and they don’t really understand why demanding more than they’re getting really is a right; it’s a privilege — and it’s something you need to be doing.”

Education doesn’t have to be devoid of fun, however, It can be tasty, too.

And this Sunday afternoon (6/18), the Workmen’s Circle will host the 4th edition of its popular “Taste of Jewish Culture” series on 6th Avenue between 48th and 49th streets in Manhattan. The tagline? “Diversity is Delicious!”

“This year, in response to the language of hate and bigotry [coming from the White House], we decided to celebrate our diversity,” Toback says.

Vendors as diverse as Harlem Seafood Soul and Mysttik Masala will tempt attendees with delightful ethnic twists on

such Jewish favorites as potato latkes and Reuben sandwiches.

“How much more diverse can you get?” Toback says.

*LaborPress’ “Blue Collar Buzz” airs every Sunday night on AM970 The Answer from 9 to 10 p.m. This week’s episode, as well as every other episode of LaborPress’ “Blue Collar Buzz” is also available on demand at [www.am970theanswer.com](http://www.am970theanswer.com).*