

Beware Trump/Democrat Deal

Defend DACA and All Immigrants

**Full Citizenship Rights for All Immigrants
Mass Worker/Immigrant Action to Stop Deportations!**

The following is a leaflet distributed by the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth and CUNY Internationalist Clubs following the Trump administration's cancellation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in September 2017. A week later, Democratic senators Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi announced that they had made a "deal" with Trump, in which DACA recipients could stay in exchange for Democratic support for increased "border security" and immigration enforcement. We had warned that Trump would try to make precisely such a deal with the Democrats, using the roughly 800,000 immigrant youth registered under the program as bargaining chips. Some immigrant activists saw right through the "deal," and threw it back in Pelosi's face at an event September 18 promoting the DREAM Act, chanting "we are not a bargaining chip."

As we go to press, the announced deal between the Republican president and top Democrats has fallen apart, with Trump threatening to veto any year-end spend-

ing bill that included provisions for allowing DACA recipients to get legal amnesty. Meanwhile, a bipartisan bill is being forged in the Senate that would reportedly allow DACA recipients to stay while greatly increasing "internal" immigration enforcement (i.e. even more arrests) and a beefed-up border. Some are calling for a so-called clean DREAM Act that would not include additional security or enforcement provisions, or a military service path to citizenship. Yet the fact is that Democrats and Republicans are united in their support for immigration enforcement – they only disagree on how best to do it.

Since Trump took office, I.C.E. arrests in courthouses have gone up by 900% in New York State alone, and Department of Homeland Security "internal" (as in, not at the border) immigration arrests have gone up 42%. In addition, the Supreme Court has allowed Trump's "travel ban 3.0" to go into effect while legal challenges to different versions of the ban move through the courts. The latest ban bars travel from six majority-Muslim countries as well as Venezuela



Internationalist photo

CUNY Internationalist Clubs at NYC protest last September against Trump's cancellation of DACA.

and North Korea. In order to fight against this anti-immigrant onslaught, the working class must mobilize its social power to stop I.C.E. in its tracks by flooding the streets to prevent immigration arrests, while at the same time demanding full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

On Tuesday, September 5, Donald Trump rescinded the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, leaving an estimated 800,000 young undocumented immigrants in a state of purgatory. Many could face deportation as early as

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Revolutionary Internationalist Youth Founded

The following document is the founding declaration of the Internationalist Group's newly-formed youth section, the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, adopted at its founding meeting on 13 August 2017. The RIY will serve as a transitional organization for radical youth eager to fight for socialist revolution in the process of becoming Marxist cadre. Genuinely revolutionary youth organizations, going back to Karl Liebknecht's International Union of Socialist Youth, have served as training grounds for tomorrow's revolutionary leadership, providing a means for youth to develop their organizational and political skills. As part of the IG/LFI's fight to reforge the Fourth International, the founding of the RIY represents a significant step forward. Along with Class Struggle Education Workers, Class Struggle Workers – Portland and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers), the RIY will develop a new layer of Marxist fighters that will strengthen the common movement for socialist revolution, of which the IG/LFI seeks to be the vanguard party.



Internationalist contingent at New York City May Day 2015 march.

Founding Declaration of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth

We are founding the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth as the youth section of the Internationalist Group, U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International.

One hundred years after the 1917 October Revolution, the RIY will be a training ground for young revolutionaries, as part of the common movement of the IG/LFI, to carry through to victory the genuine communist program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky. To resolve the crisis of revolutionary leadership described in Trotsky's Tran-

sitional Program, it is crucial to win youth to the fight to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution.

The 1989-1992 counterrevolutionary destruction of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state and East European deformed workers states reestablished capitalist rule throughout the region and was a world-historic defeat for the working class. The so-called "New World Order," declared by president George H.W. Bush in 1990 on behalf of the U.S. bourgeoisie, was an assertion of imperialist might that led to the First and Second Gulf Wars, the bombing of Yugoslavia and Iraq (by Democrat Bill Clinton), and the wars and occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq by Bush II, and continued under Barack Obama. This imperialist offensive has been mirrored on the domestic front with a dramatic escalation of repressive measures. The police and other repressive forces of the bourgeois state murder black and Latino people with impunity, terrorize immigrant workers with deportations (over 5.5 million under Democrat Obama),

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Defend DACA...

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as next March. In response, a wave of protests swept New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and other cities. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs joined protests at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, a City University of New York campus with one of the largest populations of DACA applicants on the East Coast. We marched to join protesters at Foley Square, raising the call to *defend DACA and ALL immigrants*, and for mass worker/immigrant action to defeat the racist onslaught.

Trump's neo-Confederate, immigrant-bashing attorney general Jeff Sessions presented the vicious attack on DACA as a means to uphold "the constitutional order." Just days earlier, Trump pardoned that vile poster boy of bigotry, Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Arizona, who made a career out of breaking the government's own laws in order to torture immigrants and others caught in his racist dragnet. As revolutionary Marxists, we point out that in this country founded on slavery, conquest and genocide, the capitalist rulers' "legality" is, and has always been, a screen for the most ruthless and violent suppression of the workers and oppressed. As we've chanted at protests against racist police terror and deportations: *Only revolution will bring justice!*

The DACA program enabled hundreds of thousands of immigrant youth, many of them college students, to get

a temporary suspension of deportation which made them eligible for work permits. However, this required that they "out" both themselves and their parents by giving information to the Department of Homeland Security about their addresses, cell phone numbers, and when and how they entered the country. Now this information, handed over in good faith to the government on the Obama administration's assurance that it would not be given to the Immigration Control and Enforcement (ICE) police or Border Patrol, may be used against them. Immigrant youth who grasped at this opportunity are holding their breath in fear of deportations.

On Tuesday, Democratic Party politicians denounced the Trump/Sessions attack on DACA. On Wednesday, they were all smiles as Democratic leaders Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi joined Trump in announcing their deal on government spending. With the help of many leaders in the "Dreamer" milieu, the Democrats have cultivated illusions that they are the friends of immigrants. Trump, who has ruled by executive order from the moment he set foot in the White House, has thrown the ball into Congress's court. But as bipartisan U.S. imperialism threatens war against North Korea and increases military forces in Afghanistan, Trump may use the 800,000 DACA youth as bargaining chips with the Democrats.

As revolutionary opponents of both capitalist parties, we warn that the Democrats may do a deal with Trump, who fakes concern over "Dreamers," to "save" aspects of DACA at the expense of the millions of supposedly "less talented and deserving" immigrants. The deal being floated would include some watered-down version of the federal DREAM Act in exchange for "increased enforcement" (ICE raids and further militarizing the border) and intensifying the E-Verify program used to fire undocumented workers. That bill, which hasn't made it through Congress in 16 years, would provide legal status to some undocumented youth while excluding most young workers, and would be used to enlist cannon fodder for the U.S. military.¹

¹ See CUNY Internationalists' leaflet, "The DREAM Act Swindle" (October 2010). The 2017 version of the DREAM Act continues to include the military provision. In contrast, the New York State DREAM Act does not include this provision, and is critically supportable.



Lea Suzuki/San Francisco Chronicle

Protesters at September 2017 Democratic Party DREAM Act event in San Francisco tell House minority leader Nancy Pelosi "we are not your bargaining chip," in solidarity with 11 million undocumented immigrants.

The Democrats would try to get immigrant youth to accept such a deal and throw their own parents, families and friends under the bus. We say, Hell no! We demand **full citizenship rights for all immigrants!**

What is the real record of the Democrats? Former deporter-in-chief Barack Obama set record numbers for deportations, over 5.5 million plus 2.7 million "voluntary departures." His DACA program did not provide citizenship rights, nor even a path to citizenship, permanent residence or "amnesty." He openly pitted immigrant kids against their parents, stating: "We should stop punishing innocent young people for the actions of their parents." His secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, organized a coup in Honduras – then, as she revved up her presidential campaign, called for deporting the mothers and children who had fled violence in Central America. Today groups like "Political Revolution" are calling some of the protests about DACA. Yet Bernie Sanders – who claims to be leading a "political revolution" (for the Democrats) – has railed against immigrant workers, calling to "strengthen border enforcement" and prevent "employers from hiring illegal workers and [giving] legal status to foreign workers."

We cannot rely on the capitalist politicians – it is urgently necessary to bring out the power of the working class, immigrants, African Americans and student youth in mass mobilizations to **stop** the deportations. To unchain this power, it is necessary to **break from the Democrats and all capitalist politicians**. We call for building a **revolutionary workers party** to lead a socialist revolution, to put an end once and for all to this system of exploitation, racism and war.

ICE Out of NYC, Now!

The danger of a deal heightening "border enforcement" is highlighted by the way such "enforcement" is used for terrorizing immigrant families, particularly in states like Arizona and Texas. In Phoenix, Arizona earlier this year, immigrant rights activists flooded the streets, blocking the ICE van holding Guadalupe García de Rayos, who had been in the U.S. for two decades since her parents brought her here from Mexico at the age of 14.

In New York, Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo repeatedly sacrificed the state DREAM Act in budget negotiations. "Progressive" NYC Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio, who is campaigning for reelection, has continued the "broken windows" police strategy of his Republican predecessors Giuliani and Bloomberg. This year de Blasio threatened to add even more to the 170 "deportable offenses" for NYPD/ICE collaboration. Over 100,000 people are arrested a year under broken windows and NYPD notifies ICE on court appearances. Meanwhile, there are secret, unmarked immigration jails in NYC and other cities. We demand: **ICE jails out now!** At CUNY, the Internationalist Clubs have called for and taken the initiative in forming committees to defend immigrants and Muslims against the xenophobic onslaught (see next page).

The fact is that the bourgeoisie *needs* immigrant labor, without which major sections of the U.S. economy would collapse. According to the Department of Labor's 2016 statistics, immigrant workers comprise about 17% of the overall U.S. labor force. At the same time, the capitalists need an enemy within, a population to blame for the crippling economic crisis while the government pours trillions into bailing out Wall Street and funding the Pentagon's imperialist war machine.

In contrast, the working class is international: **¡La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras!** (The workers struggle has no borders). The politics of revolutionary internationalism were summed up by Karl Marx in the Communist Manifesto's motto: Workers of All Countries, Unite! The first workers government, the Paris Commune of 1871, granted citizenship to all immigrants. So did the Bolshevik Party of V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky when the workers of Russia took power 100 years ago in the 1917 October Revolution. Today, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, youth section of the Internationalist Group, carry forward that tradition, that struggle and that program. The fight to defend immigrant rights is inseparable from the class struggle of all the exploited and oppressed. It can only be decisively won through our common victory in the fight for a socialist future. **Join us! ■**

Internationalist photo



Demonstrators at protest against immigration raids in NYC. Daniel Ramirez was the first DACA recipient arrested under Trump administration.

**Visit the League for the Fourth International/
Internationalist Group on the Internet**

<http://www.internationalist.org>

**Write to the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth:
revinternationalistyouth@gmail.com**

Write to CUNY Internationalist Clubs: cunyinternationalists@gmail.com

Revolution

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CUNY Internationalists Initiate Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims

By Will

In keeping with his campaign appeals to racism and xenophobia, Donald Trump signed the first version of his “Muslim ban” on 27 January 2017, banning travel from seven majority-Muslim countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) for three months and indefinitely barring Syrian refugees. Protests erupted in cities and airports across the U.S., including in New York, where members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs participated in the demonstration at JFK airport, joining over 2,000 people demanding “Let them in!”

In order to carry out an effective struggle against deportations and racist attacks, defenders of immigrant rights need to build the basis for mass action linked with the power of the working class, which in cities like New York has a very strong immigrant component. To that end, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Internationalist Group (IG) called for organizing “measures for rapid response to *flood the streets to block I.C.E. raids and deportations.*”¹ On January 30 and again on February 2 of last year, the Internationalist Clubs held speak-outs at Hunter College to protest these racist attacks. Over one hundred people attended each time and speeches were given by professors, students and members of the Muslim Student Association, along with members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and IG.

Connected to our call to mobilize the power of the multiracial working class to defeat the anti-immigrant onslaught, we stressed the need to *drive I.C.E. jails out of NYC*. I.C.E. operates secret, unmarked immigration jails in NYC, and has recently secured 33,000 more slots in city and county jails and state prisons to warehouse immigrants. As revolutionary Marxists, we try to implement our program wherever we can, so at the speak-outs we called for the formation of committees of students, faculty and workers for the defense of immigrants and Muslims. Relying on Democratic administrations, like that of Bill de Blasio in NYC, to protect immigrants is a losing strategy. The Democratic Party is responsible for pumping billions of dollars into the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and I.C.E., and de Blasio has even expanded the list of “deportable offenses” for which NYC will collaborate with I.C.E. to 170 (including smoking in a public park).

On 6 February 2017, students from the Hunter College Internationalist Club, along with some faculty members and university staff, formed the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims. Our first meeting was attended by roughly a dozen students and faculty from both Hunter College and City College, and the founding document outlined the Committee’s perspective of independent action in defense of immigrants:

“It is the responsibility of students, faculty and workers to help defend our brothers and sisters who are being targeted by this racist onslaught. The CUNY administration claims that it will protect the student



CUNY Internationalists join march from Borough of Manhattan Community College to City Hall at NYC protest in defense of DACA, 6 September 2017.

body from ICE, unless ICE officers have a warrant or the administration’s permission to enter campus. These conditional declarations show once again the need for us to act independently of the CUNY and college administrations. As students, faculty and campus workers we should take the defense of our fellow students and families into our own hands.”

– “Join the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims,” 23 March 2017

One of the main tasks of the Committee is to help build a rapid response network seeking to defend students and their families against the threat of deportation and racist attacks. The document calls for *schools to shut down* “followed by other [schools] in solidarity” if students or their families are picked up for deportation. “If a CUNY student or a member of their family is seized by ICE, *there should be a city-wide walkout by students, faculty and staff.*” The Committee also demands:

– “That CUNY not give any federal agency any information that directly or indirectly reveals immigration status.

– “That no immigration authorities be allowed on any CUNY campus – whether or not they claim ‘legal’ sanction for their actions.

– “That CUNY personnel engage in no collaboration with immigration authorities – whether or not they claim ‘legal’ sanction for their actions.

– “CUNY must provide lawyers for emergency contact for all immigrant and international students.”

In discussions at Committee meetings, Internationalist activists explained our perspective to mobilize the massive social power of NYC labor to give teeth to these demands. That includes the ranks of the powerful Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 who work in the city’s subways and buses, healthcare workers in over 60 city hospitals, telecommunications workers who have struck repeatedly in recent years and service industry workers in thousands

of restaurants and hundreds of hotels.

At Hunter, the Committee has organized tables offering information on defending immigrant rights, opposing I.C.E. raids, the defense of students covered by DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and fighting the travel ban, in multiple languages (including English, Arabic and Spanish). The Committee has created an “Immigrant Defense Resource Packet” which also contains information detailing Obama’s real record on deportations, the effects of Trump’s policies on the immigrant population, efforts to fight against these racist policies across the country, as well as legal aid and “know-your-rights” resources.

The Committee has been working closely with activists and organizers in the Professional Staff Congress (PSC – CUNY faculty/staff union) and from several campuses, including on plans to build a CUNY-wide Conference in Defense of Immigrant Rights, aimed at connecting activists from all CUNY campuses, and continuing the work of creating a CUNY-wide rapid re-



Internationalist contingent at May Day 2017 march in NYC.

sponse network. The conference is projected for early in the Spring semester.

Capitalist Rulers Target Immigrants

When thousands of people protested Trump’s first travel ban in airports across the U.S. on 27 January 2017, the New York Taxi Workers Alliance led an hour-long solidarity work stoppage during peak travel times to and from JFK, and a Teamsters Joint Council 16 contingent came out to defend the rights of Muslim travelers. As we stated in our leaflet “Let Them In! Smash the Racist Ban on Muslims, Refugees!” (January 2017):

“Expressions of popular outrage are vital, but they are not enough....It is necessary to bring to bear the enormous power of the multiracial working class, including millions of immigrants (documented and undocumented), together with African Americans, Latinos, Asians and students.”

On January 29, over 10,000 people gathered in Lower Manhattan’s Battery Park to protest the ban. Many demonstrators picked up our chants of “Asian, Latin, black and white, workers of the world unite” and “Jew and Muslim, black and white, workers of the world unite!” The signs of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, IG and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (TIC – Class Struggle International Workers) called to *break with Democrats, Republicans and all capitalist parties, full citizenship rights for all immigrants*, and to mobilize the power of NYC labor to smash the racist travel ban. The capitalist class and its state, whether headed by Democrats or Republicans, oppresses and divides the working class along ethnic and religious lines and whips up chauvinist hysteria to support imperialist war abroad.

Since our first speak-out against Trump’s travel ban, that and two subsequent versions of the ban have been blocked by federal judges in Washington and Hawaii. But on December 5, the Supreme Court lifted temporary injunctions on “version 3.0” while legal challenges to the ban worked their way through the lower courts. In this latest version, the White House added North Korea, Venezuela and Chad to the list of countries. In the case of North Korea and Venezuela,

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Outrage Over Fascist Murder and Imperialist Threats

Hunter College Speak-Out Against Racist Repression and War Provocations

The murder of anti-racist activist Heather Heyer on August 12 by an Ohio Nazi was met with widespread outrage. Hundreds had gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia to oppose a fascist mobilization “defending” a statue of Confederate general Robert E. Lee when a car plowed through demonstrators, killing Heyer and injuring many more. In the subsequent weeks, thousands of people poured into the streets across the country to protest the fascist violence and Donald Trump’s statement that “very fine people” were among the Hitlerites and Ku Klux Klansmen. At Hunter College in New York City, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs held a speak-out on August 31 “against racist repression and war provocations,” highlighting the connection between racist terror “at home” and imperialist war abroad.

With white supremacists and fascists emboldened under Trump, liberal pundits see this as an opportunity to shore up support for the Democratic Party. This bulwark of racist U.S. imperialism was originally formed as the party of the slave-owners. After the Civil War, the KKK was essentially the armed wing of the Democrats in the South, waging racist terror against the former slaves and proponents of Radical Reconstruction. As a number of recent studies have pointed out, the system of Jim Crow segregation that followed the defeat of Reconstruction were taken as a model by Adolf Hitler and the Nazis.¹

Shortly before the Charlottesville attack, and just after the 72nd anniversary of the U.S. A- bombing of Hiroshima, Trump threatened to unleash “fire and fury like the world has never seen” against North Korea. While some Democrats criticized Trump’s crazed rhetoric, the fact is that U.S. war provocations against North Korea have been a staple of both Democratic and Republican administrations since the Korean War, in which U.S. imperialism under Democrat Harry Truman killed 3 million Koreans. The August 12 Hunter rally was one of the only public protests to straightforwardly stand up against the horrific threat of mass murder voiced by the current CEO of U.S. imperialism.

The Hunter speak-out was attended by some 50 people. Speakers included activists from the Internationalist Club, Class Struggle Education Workers and Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas (Class Struggle International Workers). One member of the youth group of the Democratic Socialists of America (which campaigns for Democratic Party politicians) attended and gave a speech. Three supporters of the reformist “International Marxist Tendency” stood off to the side, but – despite invitations – refused to have a speaker or join the rally, saying they were “too tired.” In contrast, the dozens of students who participated in the speak-out enthusiastically joined in chanting revolutionary slogans and expressing the determination



Students at Hunter College, City University of New York, at 31 August 2017 speak-out organized by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs against racist repression and war provocations.

to defeat racist terror and imperialist war threats. The article below prints edited excerpts from the speak-out.

The rally began with Will of the Hunter Internationalist Club explaining why the demonstration was being held:

“We need to oppose these racist threats by organizing against these provocations. We need to mobilize the power of the working class to stop these attacks. “We can see that the fascists failed to scare counter-protesters into submission. Yet in their effort to promote racist violence they carried out the murder of Heather Heyer, who was there to protest the Nazis and other fascists. A known Nazi from Ohio drove his car into a crowd of protesters and injured over thirty people, and Heather Heyer was killed. We need to speak out against these atrocities and show our solidarity with the anti-fascist protesters in Charlottesville, in Portland, and in the Bay Area who are fighting against these provocations.”

At this point, the demonstrators chanted: “From Charlottesville to New York, Smash Racist Terror!” Will continued:

“Amid these racist attacks by members of the KKK, by neo-Nazi groups, in Charlottesville, in the Bay Area, in Portland, there’s a president of the United States who continues to make threats against the working class abroad. We have already seen him launch missiles against Syria. And now Donald Trump is saying that ‘all options are on the table’ against North Korea, and that there is a ‘military option’ on the table to overthrow the president of Venezuela.

“We as workers and students in the United States need to show solidarity with workers, students and the oppressed all across the world. The rise of racist terror and fascist provocations here at home is directly linked to imperialist terror

abroad. When the president is making violent threats against people overseas, it emboldens the racists and the fascists at home. If we stand against the KKK and Nazis in the U.S., we also need to stand against U.S. imperialism, and defend North Korea, Syria, Venezuela, against U.S. aggression.”

Internationalist activist Tristán explained this connection further:

“When president Donald Trump threatens North Korea with ‘fire and fury like the world has never seen,’ it is no joke. Let us remember today that the United States is the only country in the world to ever use the atomic bomb against another country; that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were engulfed in a hellish firestorm under a supposedly progressive Democratic President, Harry S. Truman, who (as bourgeois politicians do) appealed to god to help the United States use the bomb ‘in His ways and His purposes.’

“It was Truman who would then launch the Korean War, the ‘Forgotten War.’ Let us remember it. As McCarthyism swept the nation and an anti-communist witch-hunt threatened leftists, labor unionists, civil rights activists and many others during the Cold War, Truman utilized the scorched-earth policy to the max. During the Korean War (1950-53), the country was saturated and flattened with 635,000 tons of conventional bombs. Three million Koreans were killed within a three-year span. This equates to 20% of the Korean population, gone. The United States demolished every single city in North Korea. It’s reported that two lone buildings remained standing among the rubble in Pyongyang.

“The decimation of North Korea exceeded even the destruction in Japan during World War Two. Think about that. 503,000 tons of bombs were dropped in the entire Pacific theater of World War Two by the U.S., whereas 635,000 tons

of bombs pummeled Korea during Truman’s war. This number includes 32,557 tons of napalm. This was Truman’s war to preserve ‘democracy and civilization,’ targeting communists both at home and overseas.

“Why is the Internationalist Club talking about this? Why is it important to know this history? As I said before, we want to emphasize the connection between racist terror at home and imperialist war abroad. During World War Two, 64 cities were destroyed in Japan and the atomic bomb reduced Hiroshima and Nagasaki to ash. At home, Japanese Americans were rounded up and put into concentration camps. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were framed up and executed on the electric chair. More recently, after 9/11, Muslims and South Asians in the U.S. were persecuted, and many were jailed, as U.S. imperialism revved up its Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

“Today, we bear witness to the fascist attack in Charlottesville that killed Heather Heyer, at the same time as the United States gears itself up for war against North Korea, which is what we Trotskyists call a bureaucratically deformed workers state – a place where capitalism was destroyed, and that the U.S. tried and keeps trying to destroy, but that is ruled by a conservative nationalist bureaucracy. To fight against oppression and repression here must mean taking a firm position against imperialist war. Social-patriotism will not liberate oppressed sectors in society. Not here, not anywhere. To rely on the capitalist state for liberation is to hand the bullet and the gun over to the oppressor for one’s own extermination.

“Real revolutionary Marxists said during the Korean War, ‘Hands off North Korea and China,’ and took a side with them *against* the imperialists and for

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¹ See, for example, James Q. Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (2017).

U.S. Imperialism and British Colonialism in the Indian Ocean

By Sharpe

In light of the devastation of Puerto Rico, Donald Trump's announcement that 59,000 Haitians will be deported from the U.S., and his predecessor Barack Obama's "humanitarian" invasion of Haiti – to name just a few crucial topics – it is important for young revolutionaries to understand the reality and history of colonial and neocolonial oppression. The little-known military base at Diego Garcia is a vivid example.

The maxim that when colonialism dies, it dies a slow death, is particularly true in the case of the Chagos Archipelago. The archipelago, also known as the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT), was excised from Mauritius (then a British colony) in 1965. Its largest island, Diego Garcia, has been home to a U.S. military base since 1971. (See map below.) The entire population of the archipelago was coerced into leaving the islands or forcibly removed, with almost 2,500 inhabitants kicked out between 1965 and 1971. The U.S. military base on Diego Garcia is of great geopolitical importance for the British and U.S. imperialists, who wage their racist "War on Terror" in the Middle East, and parts of Africa and South Asia. The archipelago is strategically located in the middle of the Indian Ocean, due south of India's southern tip, and midway between Madagascar (an island off the coast of Mozambique in south-eastern Africa) and north-western Australia. The base is a staging ground for imperialist attacks in the Middle East, as well as a projection of imperialist power in Africa and South Asia.

The situation of U.S. imperialism in the Indian Ocean is somewhat like that in the Caribbean, particularly as regards Puerto Rico. Diego Garcia and Puerto Rico are both colonies (the latter being the world's largest). The former is legally a British colonial possession which has been on lease to the U.S. since 1966. Puerto Rico has served many purposes for U.S. imperialism since the U.S. grabbed it in 1898, most recently as a source of easy profits for Wall Street hedge fund vultures who keep the island in debt peonage. They use its status as a colony to reap massive returns on investment by forcibly depressing wages through the island's financial dictatorship – the six-member Financial Oversight and Management Board, appointed by then-president Barack Obama in 2016 under the PROMESA Act (see page 13 of this issue).

in the Indian Ocean



Demonstrators protest outside British parliament after court ruled that Chagos islanders could not return to the archipelago, 22 October 2008.

Puerto Rico's other main purpose for U.S. imperialism, however, is very much in line with that of Diego Garcia. This is of course the projection of military might in the region. In addition to formerly using the island of Vieques (a small island approximately ten miles east of mainland Puerto Rico) as a Navy bombing range, together with the huge base at Roosevelt Roads on the main island, the U.S. military maintains the colony as a show of force. This is especially true for the deformed workers state of Cuba, which has defied Yankee imperialism in the Caribbean since the revolution of 1959, as well as the colonial and semi-colonial island nations of the Caribbean. Diego Garcia offers a similar benefit to the imperialists in the Indian Ocean, affording the U.S. and U.K. an "unsinkable aircraft carrier" from which to stage all manner of military aggressions in the region.

The naval base on Diego Garcia was grotesquely nicknamed Camp Justice until 2006 (now referred to as Camp Thunder Cove), but is formally called Naval Support Facility Diego Garcia by the U.S. and Permanent Joint Operating Base (PJOB) Diego Garcia by the U.K. Though Chagos is part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, the U.S. was granted a *pro bono* lease in 1966 in return for a discount to the tune of \$14 million on submarine-launched Polaris missiles. This was a win-win for a British bourgeoisie faced with declining profits

which could not afford to operate a military base there on its own, and a militarily-dominant U.S. imperialism then engaged in colonial war against the people of Vietnam.

Formerly part of the British colony of Mauritius, the Chagos Archipelago was excised by the U.K. to form part of the BIOT (which until 1976 also included the islands of Aldabra, Farquhar,

and Desroches, that were excised from the then-British colony of Seychelles), three years before Mauritius became independent in 1968. The construction of a military base on Diego Garcia was part of the U.S.-U.K. Mutual Defense Agreement of 1958, a treaty providing for cooperation on nuclear weapons development between the two states. It was a direct response to the Soviet Union's historic achievement of launching Sputnik-1, the first-ever artificial satellite to orbit Earth. This terrified the imperialists, who hated the fact that the USSR, which despite its Stalinist degeneration still embodied key gains of the 1917 Revolution, could defend itself with nuclear weapons of its own. This is the origin of the so-called "special relationship" between the U.S. and U.K. constantly repeated by bourgeois politicians of both countries.

But to build the military base, the people living there had to be expelled. By 1971, almost all the island had been depopulated. The Chagossians living on Diego Garcia (the largest island in the archipelago) and the outlying islands had either been duped into leaving by the British colonial administration, or had been forcibly expelled under threat of U.S. military aggression. People were not offered compensation or even asked if they wanted to remain. This was a process punctuated by deceit, terror and violence. Some Chagossians, upon travelling to Seychelles or Mauritius for work or familial reasons, were refused return passage. The ships which had carried people back and forth between these islands only went in one direction, transporting people from Chagos but not to it. Those looking for return voyages were told that no ships were going back. This marooned a portion of the Chagossian population in either Mauritius or Seychelles. Those who refused to leave were in for something worse.

Once the U.S. military had arrived in 1971 and since Diego Garcia still had a sizable population, plans were put into effect almost immediately, in conjunction with the British, to push out the rest of the Chagossians. These plans included a campaign of terror designed to frighten the population into submission. An infamous tactic was to herd the pet dogs of Chagossians into makeshift gas chambers, and force their owners awaiting deportation to watch them be killed. A spokesman for the British Foreign Office said "it was the most humane way of dealing

with them [the dogs]." Some Chagossians were even forced from their homes at gunpoint by U.S. and U.K. military personnel. Those on Diego Garcia, if not taken directly to Mauritius or Seychelles, went to either Peros Banhos or Salomon (two smaller atolls in the archipelago), and were then deported a second time to either Mauritius or Seychelles. The imperialists allowed them the "choice" of which country they were to be deported to – a supposed act of magnanimity.

The military base on Chagos has been very useful in projecting imperial power in the Indian Ocean and surrounding regions. A 2012 essay in a joint foreign policy journal of the British and Indian bourgeoisies made this explicit:

"The island facilitates US power projection through the prepositioning of army and marine corps brigade sets, long-range bomber operations, the replenishment of naval surface combatants, and the strike and special operations capabilities of guided-missile submarines that can call at the atoll's wharf....

"Historically the US has been able to deter further military action by...states in the region with only symbolic 'tripwire' forces, such as the elements of the 82nd Airborne that were deployed to Saudi Arabia in the immediate aftermath of Saddam Hussein's 1990 invasion of Kuwait."

– "A Neo-Nixon Doctrine for the Indian Ocean: Helping States Help Themselves," *Strategic Analysis*, 8 May 2012

It was a major staging ground for the imperialist wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It also serves as an outpost against the deformed workers state of China, which receives 85% of its energy imports via Indian Ocean trade routes.

The CIA and U.S. military also used the base as a "black site" during their program of "extraordinary rendition" in the George W. Bush era. This was a practice in which the U.S. government (or CIA contractors) would kidnap people and move them from country to country for the purposes of detention and torture. Additional "black sites" were set up in Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, and other countries. As part of this program, "rendered" individuals from across the globe (Europe, Asia, Africa, the Middle East) were taken to Chagos and brutally tortured, before being hauled off to somewhere else.

The British, ostensibly not wanting to appear quiescent as torture was carried out on their territory, asked the U.S. to cease using the Diego Garcia base for this purpose, a request to which the U.S. military acquiesced, transferring prisoners to other black sites or the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base. The truth is, the British government were full partners in the endeavor, but denied it for years. In 2005, former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw called the notion a "conspiracy" and said that "there simply is no truth in the claims that the United Kingdom has been involved in rendition full stop." But in 2008 they reversed course, with then-Foreign Secretary David Miliband admitting they had lied all along: "contrary to earlier explicit assurances that Diego Garcia had not been used for rendition flights, recent US investigations have now revealed two occasions, both in 2002, when this had in fact occurred."

The British government then tried to
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Map depicting Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.

DSA Dodges Debate

“Socialism: What It Is (and Isn’t)”

Since the election of Donald Trump, the term “socialism” has been on the minds of many, a popular topic of discussion among those disillusioned with the status quo and increasingly insecure about the future. In the last year, the United States has seen repeated rallies by violent racists, one of which resulted in the murder of anti-fascist protester Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Virginia.

We’ve seen unending police violence and attacks by racists against black people, as well as massive Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) arrests of immigrants. We’ve seen a hurricane ravage the U.S. colony of Puerto Rico, which because of the chains of finance capital that bind it to colonial slavery, is still without power on the majority of the island. We’ve seen racist, xenophobic president Trump threaten “fire and fury” against North Korea, whose people were slaughtered by the millions and whose cities were leveled by the U.S. in the Korean War (1950-53). As a result of widespread socio-political instability, many are becoming aware of the nature of capitalism, and the damage done by its exploitation of the working class and oppressed, of whole countries and continents.

Although the word *socialism* has gained attention, still fixed in the minds of many are the lies about socialism propagated by the bourgeois class. Even before the “first red scare” that was launched after World War One and the Russian Revolution, socialism and communism were vilified, frequently leading to investigation, arrest and blacklisting of those suspected of harboring subversive views. Anti-communist hysteria was used to whip up support for imperialist assaults on countries where capitalist domination was challenged. Yet socialism became the banner of oppressed people throughout the world. Colonial peoples seeking freedom from imperialist slavery were painted as their polar opposites – as dangerous enemies of freedom.

Lies about what socialism is still influence many today, and have been passed from one generation to the next. For decades, ruling-class politicians and media used the term “socialist” to discredit political viewpoints even slightly to the left of the status quo. Yet it has also been used cynically by pseudo-socialist groups that want to reform an unreformable system; and by capitalist politicians like Bernie Sanders to funnel disillusioned youth back into the Democratic Party. Therefore, clarity on the matter of what socialism is, and what it is not, is an important part of winning young people to the revolutionary Marxist program. That is, the genuine communist tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, which upheld Marxist socialism against the social democrats who supported World War One – and was the basis for the Bolshevik Revolution, whose 100th anniversary we celebrated last November.

Going back to the *Communist Manifesto* (1847), polemics – political arguments aimed at achieving political clarity on an issue – are an important part of the Marxist tradition. Marx and Engels made arguments against the “utopian socialists,” who believed socialism could be achieved



A chair was reserved for the YDSA to have a political debate with us at the 19 October 2017 forum. Unable to defend pro-Democrat line, junior league social democrats refused debate challenge.

by convincing the ruling class it was a more just and rational way to organize society. Rosa Luxemburg wrote her classic *Reform or Revolution* to demolish the reformist nostrums of early “revisionist” Eduard Bernstein. Lenin exposed social democrats who made their peace with capitalism and became supporters of imperialist war. Trotsky polemicized tirelessly against Stalin’s anti-Marxist dogma of “socialism in one country” and “popular fronts” with capitalist politicians; and against those like Karl Radek who deserted the Left Opposition to become hack writers for the Stalinist bureaucracy.

On September 7, the Hunter College Internationalist Club issued a debate challenge to the Hunter College Young Democratic Socialists of America on the topic “Socialism: What It Is (and Isn’t).” The YDSA is the youth section of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), which has grown to a claimed membership of over 30,000 members since Sanders’ campaign for the Democratic nomination and the massive revulsion at the election of Donald Trump. Many of those attracted to the DSA are unfamiliar with its real politics and record of supporting U.S. imperialism and the Democratic Party.

The YDSA did not write a response to our debate challenge until almost six weeks later. When it finally did so, it was only to dodge the debate with the pathetic pretext that it had “no intention of continuing to engage” (sic) with the Internationalist Club, citing what it called our “unprovoked hostility” towards the DSA – as exemplified by such “inappropriate actions” as “travelling all the way to Chicago” to distribute Marxist literature to DSA members at their national convention. Grotesquely, the YDSA message characterizes setting up a literature table on the sidewalk outside this “socialist” convention as seeking to “harass” them. This smear is consistent with the fact that the DSA called the cops on our comrades, whose offense consisted of distributing a leaflet criticizing their reformist politics. At its convention, the DSA elected police union organizer Danny Fetonte to its leading body, the National Political Com-

mittee. When some members attempted to have him removed from leadership, they were unable to do so, though he later quit. (See “ABCs of the DSA” and “DSA Debacle Over Cop ‘Union’ Organizer” at internationalist.org.)

Fresh from appealing to the cops to seal members off from the “threat” of Trotskyism in Chicago, the DSA was aware that having to “engage” in open debate at Hunter, where the Internationalist Club has long been the leading left group, would reveal its inability to defend its real, *anti-socialist* history and politics. This is the real reason they refused to debate us. Instead, YDSA members devoted themselves to anti-political and anti-communist baiting and sneering. The Internationalist Club went ahead with the event anyway, holding it as a forum/“open chair debate” on October 19. A chair on the platform was left open for the YDSA in case they changed their minds, and we took the opportunity to explain our perspective on socialism and how it differs from the YDSA. We called the forum “Socialism: What It Is (and Isn’t).”

Presenting basic points about the real meaning of socialism and communism, presenters Will and Jacob linked this to such burning topics as how to uproot women’s oppression, the Marxist program for black liberation, why supporting capitalist politicians like Bernie Sanders is the opposite of socialist politics, the importance of defending North Korea against U.S. war threats, and other topics. The presentations were followed by a discussion period where audience members posed further questions and made pertinent comments. Comrades from the Internationalist Group’s recently founded youth section, the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, expanded on what it means when we call for a revolutionary workers party, why Marxists fight for the independence of Puerto Rico and all colonies, and other points.

While refusing to debate, or even to listen to the presentations, members of the YDSA evidently decided to make a bit of a spectacle of themselves. After two lurked in the back for a couple of minutes at the

beginning, they took off – but one then darted into the room, snapped a photo, then darted out. Another came back and stood sneering before leaving again. Finally another came in after the presentations and worked up the courage to make a comment from the floor, stating, to the incredulity of the crowd:

“I don’t see you building anything. I don’t see you going into the street and doing actual organizing work that’s going to fight against the social system that is actually hurting us. What do you think is the point of being so incredibly hostile toward the DSA and all the other groups?”

Comrades politely reminded the YDSAer that, as every politically aware student at Hunter knows, the Internationalist Club is the only left group on campus to consistently organize rallies, speak-outs and contingents in mass protests against racist repression, in defense of immigrants and against U.S. imperialism; and those who know the history of activism at CUNY know the club’s inception successfully mobilizing to defeat CUNY’s “anti-immigrant war purge” back in 2001, all the way down to its role in innumerable recent struggles bringing students and adjuncts out to workers’ picket lines from the Hot and Crusty bakery to the Verizon and Spectrum strikes, and immigrant workers’ union drive at B&H Photo – to mention but a few. Most crucially, we carry out this organizing work on the basis of a program for *socialist revolution*, a far cry from those who can only give socialism a bad name by identifying it with pro-Democratic Party class collaboration.

We publish below edited excerpts from the presentations at the forum.

Will:

The main question we are here to answer is, What is socialism? It’s important to understand that this term can have two types of meanings. One is to refer to a future society, that was mostly formulated by Marx and Engels. They didn’t create the term – that was done by their predecessors, the utopian socialists. The essence of what socialism is, according to Marx, is a society where there are no classes.



Cover of *The Nation* magazine gushing over the DSA’s membership growth in the last year.

Capitalism has developed to such an extent that advances in technology, in agriculture, mass production of products, the global economy, actually provides the capability of producing enough for everyone. But Marx also says that you can't just immediately jump to socialism – you can't just decide 'OK, let's have a classless, socialist society' – and that was one of his biggest critiques of the utopian socialists, who believed that socialism was such a great idea that if we can just teach everybody what it is, then everyone in the world will agree it's a better way of structuring society and we'll just have socialism all of a sudden.

What the utopian socialists failed to understand is that the ruling class – the capitalists who control the wealth of the world – they're not going to simply give up their wealth because socialism is a good idea. There has to be a socialist revolution that overthrows the capitalists that are ruling over society, that are ruling over the working class and the oppressed of almost the entire world. The capitalists are not going to simply hand over the keys to the kingdom to the people who work for them. The workers have to take those resources and create a socialist society through a revolution, and that's a key difference that Marx had with the utopian socialists.

So socialism means the emancipation of all of the working class and the oppressed. One of the key aspects of that is the emancipation of women from capitalist oppression. The root of women's oppression is in the nuclear family. Socialism would abolish the basis for that nuclear family that enslaves women to domestic servitude. It would do so by providing social institutions enabling people to voluntarily socialize the household chores and child-rearing that women are required to do today. By making childcare a free service available to all – freeing women to have leisure time to enjoy culture, which allows society to develop. Under capitalism half of the world's population is stuck in this oppression of domestic servitude. Socialism releases women to be liberated and pursue their own desires and development.

In a similar way, socialism would destroy the material basis for racial oppression and racism. In the United States, capitalism was built upon slavery. The Constitution was written by slaveholders and the bedrock of the wealth that the 13 colonies and the U.S. as a young nation

gained came through the labor of enslaved Africans and African Americans. And that is one of the things that allowed the U.S. to become the capitalist world power, the imperialist world power that it is today. In what we call the Second American Revolution, the Civil War, where slaves fought for their own freedom, they joined the Union army, took up arms and fought for their emancipation. Yet even after the end of chattel slavery, and later the end of legal segregation, the oppression of black people did not end. Everyone in this room knows about the system of mass incarceration where a huge percentage of the people being locked up are black (13% of U.S. population, 40% of incarcerated population) and Latino (16% of U.S. population, 19% of incarcerated population). That is happening because racial oppression is central to U.S. capitalism.

The police are a tool of the capitalist class to maintain the oppression of black, Latino and all working-class people. In a socialist society, however, there would not be a ruling class and an oppressed class, so there's no longer a need to oppress a whole section of the population based on their skin color or their origin. A large reason for racism is to divide the oppressed classes, to divide black workers and white workers and Latino workers. The only way to smash capitalism is through the working class coming together to overthrow the ruling class.

Bernie Sanders, who said he was a "democratic socialist," cannot be a socialist because he is working with a ruling-class party. He ran as a candidate for the Democrats. This is the party that dropped two nuclear bombs on civilian cities in Japan. This is the party that has the record under Obama for more deportations than any other president in history. So Bernie Sanders is by no means a socialist but rather a representative of the ruling class.

We were hoping to have a polemic, a debate with the DSA, but they decided that polemics aren't productive. But I wanted to mention some of the political differences that we have with the DSA. First of all, they endorsed Bernie Sanders. We have said from the very beginning that Bernie Sanders is not a socialist – he is a mechanism to bring young people back into the Democratic Party. But it's more than this.

At the recent convention of the DSA they elected a police union organizer – Danny Fetonte – as a part of their National Po-



Karl Liebknecht, opponent of imperialist war and agitator for socialist revolution, speaking at mass meeting in Berlin's Tiergarten, December 1918. A month later, he was murdered on orders of the Social Democratic government. The DSA stands in the counterrevolutionary political tradition of social democracy.

litical Committee. If you are an organization willing to allow an organizer of cops – one of the tools of racist oppression under capitalism – to remain in your organizing committee you are certainly not socialist.

Jacob:

It is clear that we are living in a time of crisis. There is a real fear the Third World War is looming, with the escalation of imperialist war threats against North Korea, and that millions will be the victims of nuclear annihilation; that our immigrant fellow students will be snatched away by I.C.E., detained in concentration camps and deported; that our black brothers and sisters will be the next victims of racist and fascist violence. What we are seeing is a reflection of the social system in which we live – the capitalist system – in decay. Amid the rise of nationalism, racism, and attacks by fascist groups, many are coming to see that the ills of this society cannot simply be reformed away, but rather that they are intrinsic to the capitalist system; that to fight against oppression is to struggle for socialism.

Revolutionary Marxists fight for the overthrow of capitalism by the working class. Why the working class, and why do we spend so much of our time talking about it? First of all, it is the working class whose exploitation is the basis of the capitalist system. And second, it's the only force capable of shutting the capital-

ist system down. So while reformist organizations like the DSA draw illusions that socialism can come from the Democratic Party – preaching class collaboration – we say that the first step in the struggle against the ruling class is to break from its political parties. The working class must rely on its own independent political power.

When the working class becomes the ruling class, it will immediately begin to transform the structures of society to eliminate oppression, racism and sexism. The productive capacity of society will be used to meet human needs instead of private profit. Under capitalism, millions of people take part in the process to make the things that we require to survive, yet a small social stratum possesses the products of that work, despite not even participating in the productive process. Nevertheless, the capitalists sell these commodities as their own. They obtain luxuriantly higher standards of living than the working class and they make the decisions that decide the fate of millions of people.

In the capitalist pursuit of profit the markets are flooded with commodities, prices drop below the cost of production, and profit can't even be realized. Therefore our society doesn't suffer from crises of scarcity – like famines, crop failures, or even overpopulation. There is a "crisis of abundance," called "overproduction," where commodities just sit around because they cannot be sold at a profit. The latest example of this is the financial crash that began in 2008. During the housing crisis, overproduction of homes led to mass evictions and a rise in homelessness. How can you make sense of that? Why is this the case? Because if the possessing class doesn't at least break even, you can sleep on the street or starve for all they care.

So with the socialist transformation of society, the accumulated scientific knowledge and technological advances of humanity will be applied not for the maximization of profit of the possessing class, but for the true fulfillment of society's wants and needs – uninhibited by parasitic social relations of private property. You can radically reduce the amount of human labor necessary to maintain society. For instance, no longer will automation mean mass layoffs. Instead it will allow for a more rational allocation of human labor.

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Which side are you on? (Left) Black Lives Matter protesters at a march on the Texas state capitol in Austin, September 2015. (Right) Danny Fetonte, together with Bernie Sanders. Fetonte, a long-time leader of the Austin, Texas branch of the DSA, was for years an organizer for a cop "union," the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT). During Fetonte's tenure at CLEAT, an officer raped a handcuffed woman in the back of a police car, and the "union" spent \$1 million to prevent changes to the police contract that would have made it easier to charge the rapist.

Speak-out...

continued from page 4

the defeat of U.S. imperialism's genocidal war. Today, the Internationalist Club stands in that tradition and defends the deformed workers states of North Korea, China, Cuba, as well as other countries the U.S. is targeting such as Venezuela, and says the U.S. should get its bloody claws off Syria, and that U.S. imperialism needs to be driven out of the Middle East."

Trump's call to preserve "our culture" against those rightly protesting against Confederate statues – vile symbols of slavery and rallying points for racist reaction – echoed the race-hate rhetoric of the Klan. The fact that racist oppression is in the DNA of American capitalism was highlighted by the speaker for Class Struggle Education Workers:

"If you came out today, you know why there was a counter-protest in Charlottesville. You know that Nazis literally held a march with torches, like Hitler did in Nuremburg in the 1930s, and they chanted Nazi slogans. And Klansmen and other fascists came out to 'defend' the statue of Robert E. Lee. Who was Robert E. Lee? He was a slave owner who led the slave owners' army that tried to maintain the system of slavery – where men, women and children would be whipped, bloodied and sold. Tortured and sold. That's not culture. That's slavery.

"And why was it that they put up statues to criminals like Robert E. Lee? Because in the Civil War, the so-called Confederacy, which Karl Marx called the slave holders' rebellion, was smashed by the Northern armies. But do you know what was the decisive thing that turned the tide in that fight? It was when 180,000 slaves and free black people took up arms to fight. Lincoln didn't want that to happen for a long time, until he was forced to. And Frederick Douglass said you must arm the slaves, and Karl Marx said that you must arm the slaves. And arms in hand, the slaves and the Union army smashed the slaveocracy.

"But they put up those statues after the counterrevolution of 1877, led by the Democratic Party – the counterrevolution that overthrew Reconstruction, in which black people had gained some rights after the Civil War. The Democrats were the party of the slave owners, and they were the party of the Ku Klux Klan. So, they put up those statues not to commemorate 'culture,' so-called, but as a threat of lynching. And they carried out one lynching after another – and the revolutionaries said, 'black people have the right to self-defense.'"

Some of those disgusted and angered by what transpired in Charlottesville have put misplaced faith in the capitalist state to end to such provocations. But the very purpose of police is repression, a point elaborated on by Club activist Maeve:

"At the Charlottesville rally, police refused to aid members of the clergy at a nearby park who were attacked by Nazis. When a car was driven into a crowd of anti-racist protesters, killing Heather Heyer and injuring 19 people, the police turned on the anti-racist protesters who had just been attacked. The capitalist state cannot be trusted to address the problem of fascism. Fascism is an attempt by capitalists to salvage what is left of their system and to implement a dictatorship wherein they maintain power.

"In the South, the police were created to

round up runaway slaves. In the North, to bust unions. These organizations cannot be detached from their violent, racist, anti-worker history and obviously cannot be trusted to dismantle the system that predicated their existence. Legislative bodies may rely on censorship to tackle the problem, which would only be used to deter the dissemination of information by leftists that would aid in mobilizing workers."

Many speakers at the protest explained that the most basic role of fascists is to serve as guard dogs for the system of private property in the face of increasing social instability. Fascists seek to blame capitalist crises on those who are most affected – black people, immigrants and all the oppressed. Jacob of the Internationalist Club drove the point home:

"Across the country, fascists and bigots of different varieties have been emboldened by President Trump to stage provocations and carry out racist attacks. We all remember what happened three weeks ago in Charlottesville, when these racists, rallying against the removal of Confederate statues, killed Heather Heyer and injured anti-fascist protesters. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs say 'Honor Heather Heyer! Solidarity with the anti-fascist protesters! Drop any charges against them immediately!'

"The events in Charlottesville are another example that white supremacists do not seek to 'exercise free speech' – if they had it their way, there would be none. They want blood. Their provocations spawn racist lynchings and murders. We saw this in Portland, where a Nazi previously spotted at ultra-rightist demonstrations killed two men and seriously injured a third for intervening to defend two black women that he, the Nazi, was harassing. One of the women was wearing a hijab.

"This epidemic of racist terror is a threat to us all, whether you are Asian or Latino, Jewish or Muslim, black or white. It is a symptom of the racist political system under which we live, the historical foundation of which is the wholesale enslavement of black people. The decaying capitalist system depends on race hatred and imperialist war to sustain itself. "How do we defeat such racist scum? We look to the power of the working class, which keeps this society running, and has the power to shut it down – the people off whose backs the capitalists build their wealth. Fascists despise the working class, they seek to smash unions, have their members shot, and establish unfettered corporate dictatorship as was the case in Germany and Italy. White supremacists like the KKK see unions as institutions of 'race mixing.' It is clear they fear the power of working-class solidarity."

The speakers emphasized that the fascists are still a relatively small minority and that the repressive state apparatus, significantly beefed up under Democrat Obama, is the central threat. The police, as the armed fist of capital, continue the constant killing of black people under both Democrat and Republican city administrations. And in fact, the Democrats paved the way for a Trump presidency, as Ally of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth explained:

"I want to say that the Democrats are the ones who brought us to this point, who paved the way for Trump and his policies. Eight years of Obama's presidency didn't do anything to curb the murder of black people by the police, did nothing to reduce unemployment, did not end the imperialist wars and the mass murders of people in other countries. Obama deported over five



Internationalist photo

At the speak-out, students, faculty and supporters of the Internationalist Club linked racist terror "at home" to imperialist war threats abroad.

million immigrants and allocated billions of dollars to I.C.E., bolstering and preparing it for Trump's purposes.

"These issues, as my comrades have said, are fundamentally not a question of which party or which individual person is running the show. They are a question of the capitalist state. And a lot of people are worried that Trump, with his psycho Twitter rampages, and his foreign policy decisions, is going to launch World War Three. And indeed, his strategy is doubtless more reckless than some in the ruling class would like. But the truth is that U.S. imperialism under the Democrats had been ramping up the war drive all along, and they are lining up behind this, even if they prefer to carry it out through somewhat different means. The self-proclaimed 'socialist' Bernie Sanders even thinks that Trump has the right idea with regards to North Korea. It's not North Korea that we need to be afraid of."

Arrests and deportations of immigrants by I.C.E. continue unabated while both parties rattle their sabers for another war. The only solution is socialist revolution, a point emphasized by the speaker from Trabajadores Internacionales Clasistas:

"Not long ago a reporter in front of Trump Tower asked me a question: 'What do you think about the fascist regime of Trump?' I answered him by pointing out that we don't have a fascist regime with Trump at the head of it right now. If it were already a fascist regime, we would not be able to protest. It is important to understand this, in order to understand who we are fighting. I am an immigrant and I come from Mexico City. In the 1930s with the fascists on the way to taking power in Germany, they used a scapegoat and that was the Jews. And now they are using a scapegoat, they are choosing a scapegoat, and saying that we immigrants, Muslims, black people, according to them, are the internal enemies....

"When the fascists took over in Germany in 1933, there had already been an economic crash in 1929 that spread throughout the world. And now from 2008 on, there has been the economic crisis which illustrates the decay of the capitalist system. So right now these fascist groupings are rearing their heads. The enemy that we face today is the capitalist system

governed by both of its main parties, both Democrats and Republicans. We have a hunt against immigrants using police power, and we have a hunt against black people using the police power.

"So I want to ask you, what are we going to do? We, the workers of this city and everywhere else – your fathers and your mothers from the working class – we are the people who built these schools from the ground up. We workers do not need these criminals who govern us, these capitalists. We who built everything do not have any need of the capitalists and we need to get rid of, to do away with, to overthrow, this capitalist system. The government, the Democratic Party, the Republican Party do not offer any solutions for the workers. The only solution is to build a party of the working class to destroy this capitalist system. The war cry is: 'Asian, Latin, Black and White, Workers of the World, Unite!'"

As for the speaker from the DSA youth group (Young Democratic Socialists of America), he stated:

"Fascism relies on a hyper masculinity that has no place in a multicultural, multiracial, multigendered society. We must stand together in solidarity against racism, against fascism, and most of all against capitalism. It can only start through unity and solidarity. I implore every student, everybody here, to get politically involved. If you are not angry, you are either not paying attention or don't care. We have to control the situation, we have to control the narrative, and we have to fight for liberty and equality for all."

What "unity and solidarity" means to the DSA is being the biggest builders of Bernie Sanders' "democratic socialist" scam to round up votes for the Democrats. As for imperialist war, the DSA's real political heritage is one of fronting for the Democrats' counterrevolutionary wars in Korea and Vietnam.

To fight racist terror and imperialist war threats means a struggle against the rule of the capitalist class as a whole. In his speech, our comrade Jacob cited the calls for workers actions against the fascists issued by International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 in San Francisco, and International Union of Painters and Allied Trades Local 10 in Portland, Oregon:

Revolution

CLASS STRUGGLE EDUCATION WORKERS

If You Work, or You're an Immigrant – Forget About It!

CUNY: Cuomo's "Free Tuition" Scam

It was a big PR show: At LaGuardia College in January 2017, New York governor Andrew Cuomo, with Bernie Sanders at his side, unveiled a new plan for "free tuition" at the City and State universities of New York (CUNY and SUNY). Sanders proclaimed it a "revolutionary idea for higher education." This might actually qualify as "fake news." If you're a CUNY student, struggling to get by, working part time, skipping lunches, behind in the rent, or were born someplace else, this plan will not help you.

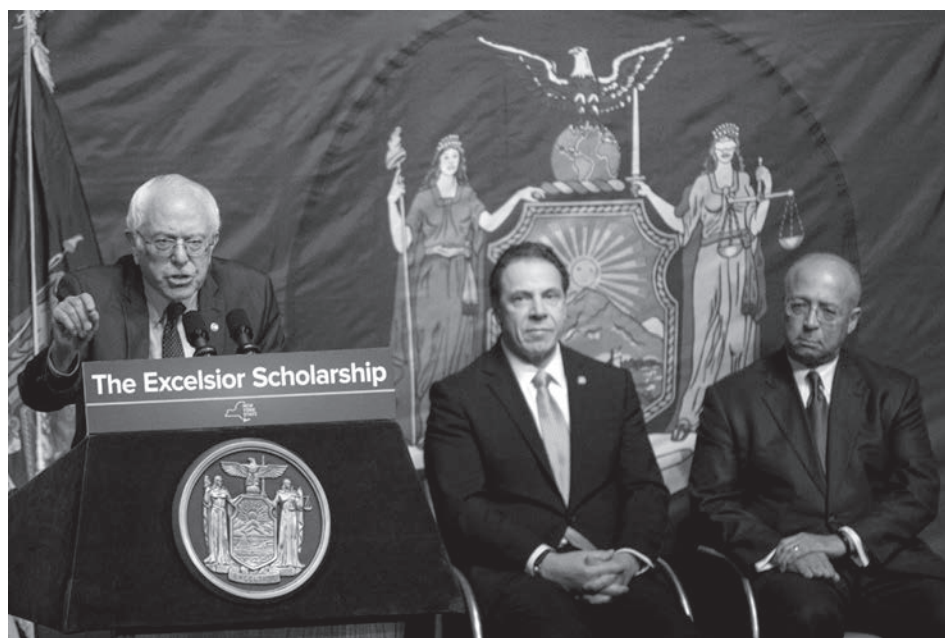
How many things are wrong with it? Let's count the ways:

- The Excelsior scholarship (as it's called) only applies to students enrolled full time. So if you go to school part time (like 33 percent of CUNY students), you are excluded. (That's one-third of CUNY students, or 84,000 students.)
- If you are not a citizen or "eligible non-citizen", you are excluded. (An estimated 8,300 students are undocumented.)
- If you don't meet the 12-month NY State residency requirement, you are excluded. (That's the majority of immigrant and undocumented students.)
- If you have not graduated from high school in the U.S., earned a high-school equivalency or passed the "Ability to Benefit" test, you are excluded.
- If you have gone to CUNY or SUNY but haven't completed at least 30 credits each year (successively), you are excluded. (Some loopholes apply.)
- If you are in default on any student loans, you are excluded.
- An estimated 90 percent of community college students will be excluded because they can't graduate in two years.
- If your family has a combined federal income of more than \$100,000 you are excluded.

But that's not all, folks. There are numerous ways in which the grant can retroactively become a loan.

- If you get the grant but don't graduate in four years, you will have to pay **all** the grant money back. (Thus you'll be

A Racist, Anti-Working-Class Scheme



From left: Bernie Sanders, Andrew Cuomo and William C. Thomson (chairperson of CUNY Board of Trustees) at LaGuardia Community College where the Excelsior scholarship was announced.

- more likely to become indebted.)
- If you graduate and don't stay in NY for as many years as you received the scholarship, the grant becomes a loan. But that's still not all:
- Excelsior is what's called a "last dollar award." That means you only get the money to cover tuition on top of the Pell Grant and TAP. So if you already have tuition covered this way, you can't get the money, even if you desperately need it for all the additional expenses.
- AND, get this, tuition has been increased at \$200 a year for the next five years at all SUNY and CUNY schools. So who does the Excelsior scholarship help?
- What they call "traditional" students, that is, middle-class families where the kids don't have to work, but probably where only one parent works. You know anybody like that?
- Cuomo – in his bid to look like a "progressive Democrat."

- Sanders – ditto.
- Hillary Clinton, who boasted on Twitter: "Let's celebrate New York State getting something important done.... A great step for progressives."

Are You Ready for More Statistics?

If your eyes are not glazed over yet, here are some additional important stats from a survey of CUNY undergraduate students in 2016:

- About 60% of students report annual household income of less than \$30,000. Community college students are more likely to come from low-income families than their counterparts at senior colleges (71% vs 54%).
- Fifty-three percent of CUNY students work for pay. A higher percentage of senior college students work for pay than community college students (54% vs. 50%), but a slightly lower percentage of senior college students work more than 20 hours per week

than community college students who work (49% vs. 52%).

- Of working students, the majority (79%) work to pay for living expenses. More than half (55%) report that they work to pay tuition expenses.
- Total CUNY student population 2016 = 272,957.

We Demand: Free Tuition, Open Admissions

A 14 September article in the *Indyendent* by Queens college student Amir Khafagy said: "What was supposed to be a plan to spread equality, will end up being a plan that is not only pure and adulterated racism but unhinged class warfare." He's right, except that instead of "supposed to be" it should say "was dishonestly pitched as."

Far from Cuomo's plan being "revolutionary," let's remember that up until 1976, CUNY charged no tuition at all. Generations of students from working-class and immigrant families graduated from CCNY, Hunter and the other campuses. So what happened? Answer: Racist reaction and capitalist cutbacks.

In 1969, CUNY was 96 percent white. This was the era of an upswing in radicalizing movements against racist oppression. At City College there was a massive student strike and building occupation, first launched by a couple of hundred black and Puerto Rican students. They initially demanded raising African American and Puerto Rican enrollment and instituting Black and Puerto Rican studies. The struggle was expanded to demand the right to a university education for every high-school graduate.

In one year the number of black, Latino and Asian freshmen at CUNY increased seven times. Everybody benefited – the next freshman class grew by 75 percent, as well as dramatically increased numbers of minorities; white working-class youth benefited as well, making it harder for racists to pit them against doubly-oppressed sectors. (See "How Open Admissions Was Won in 1969 and Debates on the Struggle at CUNY Today," *Revolution* No. 6, April 2009.)

Open admissions was a gain of the black freedom movement. Everybody knew the quality of education students received

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"When fascists announced they would be holding a provocation, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 announced they would shut down Bay Area ports, march to the fascist rally, and sweep it away. After hearing this, the fascists called off their provocation and fled. "Imagine for one moment what would have transpired if the transit workers here in New York, who move millions of people across the city daily, shut down the buses and trains when the fascists held an anti-Muslim rally here on June 10. Then the fascists wouldn't have dared show their faces! ...

"Racist terror can be defeated only when the working class breaks the chains that bind it to the system of exploitation and racist murder. This means a political

struggle against the Democratic Party of the bosses, the union bureaucrats which subordinate the workers to it, and the reformists who exude illusions of Democratic Party 'socialism' and 'realigning' the Democratic Party. Across the country reformists have blocked with liberal politicians, staging love fests in front of city halls. Some have called for revocation of the fascists' permits by the federal government, which would set a precedent for them to shut down leftists. "As Marxists we say: *fascism can only be destroyed once and for all by independent working-class action*. We show our solidarity to Painters Union Local 10 in Portland, which played a central role in the Portland Labor Against the Fascists mobilization alongside members of

14 other local area unions there on June 4. When fascists announced they would go to Portland to spew race hatred nine days after the double murder on the Max light rail, union militants resolved to kick them out of town. The reformist International Socialist Organization and DSA, on the other hand, after the call to mobilize against the racists, divided anti-fascist forces instead, and literally worked with the mayor.

"The action by Painters Union Local 10 presents an example of working-class power. They passed a motion last November saying they would mobilize to stop provocations by the KKK and other fascist groups. Activists from that and other Portland unions rallied for the defense of abortion rights and clinics against reactionary

attacks, and marched under the banner 'Hard Hats for Gay Rights.' In a historic decision last August, Painters Local 10 voted to reject the Democratic and Republican Parties 'or any bosses' party or politicians,' like the Greens or others. In this resolution they 'call on the labor movement to break from the Democratic Party, and build a class-struggle workers party.' "What would such a workers party do? Shut down cities in protest against racist police and fascist murder! Tear down the concentration camps that hold thousands of our immigrant brothers and sisters! Strike against imperialist war! Mobilize in defense of gay rights and women's rights! Fight for socialist revolution! And so we say: Break with the Democrats, Build a Workers Party!" ■

Committee...

continued from page 3

this was in conjunction with the growing threats of imperialist war against them.

When a U.S. District of Hawaii judge blocked the third travel ban, he allowed restrictions on both North Korea and Venezuela to remain in effect. This reflects the bipartisan war drive against the bureaucratically deformed workers state of North Korea and for fomenting a right-wing coup against the bourgeois left-populist government of Nicolás Maduro in Venezuela. Revolutionary Marxists defend both countries against U.S. imperialism, which with its endless wars for profit threatens the very existence of workers, youth and oppressed people worldwide.

While the Muslim ban's "legality" is challenged in the bourgeois courts, it remains in effect and the Trump administration continues its attacks on immigrants. The Department of Homeland Security has ramped up deportations and detentions by I.C.E., particularly targeting so-called "sanctuary cities" like New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland, among others. These are cities with policies that limit the extent to which city agencies can cooperate and share information with I.C.E. In addition, a recent report shows that from January to October 2017, I.C.E. arrests increased by 40% over the same period in 2016.

Trump has sanctuary cities in his crosshairs. He issued a 25 January 2017 executive order denying federal funds to cities that don't fully cooperate with immigration enforcement, which was temporarily halted by a federal judge in April 2017 and permanently blocked by an injunction in November 2017. During its grotesquely named "Operation Safe City" in September, I.C.E. detained nearly 500 undocumented immigrants over a four-day period. In mid-October, I.C.E. director Thomas Homan released a statement declaring that I.C.E. will continue to target undocumented immigrants near schools and increase workplace raids. Most recently, I.C.E. has been targeting immigrants in courthouses, with courthouse arrests up 900% in New York State. And in NYC, court officers have been assisting them, despite the city's regulations against cooperation with the immigration cops.

The head of the court officers' "union," Dennis Quirk, said that "if a fight breaks out and [I.C.E. is] having a difficulty, we would assist any law enforcement person" and "if we are attempting to arrest, and I.C.E. is there, they'd help us. That's what law enforcement does." Yes, that *is* what "law enforcement" in this capitalist society does, which is why Marxists point out that all its branches, including court officers and security guards, are not part of the labor movement but components of the capitalist state's repressive apparatus. In response to the 20 November 2017 arrest of Genaro Rojas-Hernandez by I.C.E. in Brooklyn Criminal Court, members of United Auto Workers Local 2325 (ALAA – the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys) walked out of Brooklyn Criminal Court on 20 November 2017, and demanded "I.C.E. Out of the Courts Now" at a rally on December 7.

On September 5 Trump issued another executive order, this time rescinding DACA, the Obama-era policy allowing 800,000 undocumented immigrants born after 15 June 1981 to work and live in the United States for renewable two-year periods. Trump gave Congress six months to determine what to do about DACA recipients, often called

"Dreamers." Top Democrats Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer immediately jumped from posturing as "resistance" leaders to holding an all-smiles meeting with Trump where they supposedly worked out a deal (quickly denied by Trump) to save DACA in exchange for a mutually acceptable package of "border security" measures. A legislative showdown is set for early 2018, when Democrats in Congress will push to include DACA in a spending bill that will no doubt feature beefed-up borders.

On September 18, outraged DACA recipients interrupted a Pelosi event in L.A., shouting her down and denouncing the deal she and Schumer tried to make with Trump. They held signs reading "Fight for all 11 million" (referring to the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S.) and chanted "We are not your bargaining chips!" They also criticized the Democrats for their role in putting I.C.E. deportations into overdrive during the Obama administration.

Democrats and Republicans even further ramping up "border security" means making the treacherous journey many immigrants take to get to the U.S. even deadlier. Over half the length of the U.S.-Mexico border is fenced or walled-off. Making the border crossing more difficult and perilous means that thousands more people will be forced to take high-risk routes through the desert, where they are likely to die of thirst or starvation and be targeted by racist vigilantes.

Under Obama, over 5.5 million immigrants were deported. He also bolstered the deportation and border patrol machine more than any president in U.S. history. While many hailed the implementation of DACA as a great safeguard for young immigrants, we warned that the bourgeois politicians sought to pit young immigrants deemed "deserving" against other undocumented immigrants, including their parents, and that applying for DACA meant handing over the addresses and names of the applicants and their families to the U.S. government. Now DHS can use this information in its raids and deportations – and they intend to do just that. In the White House's September 5 talking points memo, DACA recipients are urged to "prepare for and arrange their departure."

Our call for mobilizing the power of labor against these attacks taps into widespread revulsion and opposition to these racist threats. An early example is that in February of last year, District Council 37 Local 786 (NYC Health Care Employees) unanimously passed a resolution calling to defend undocumented immigrants, and not comply with any attempts to use a person's citizenship status to deny them healthcare. Several unions, including the United Federation of Teachers, Teamsters Join Council 16 (consisting of 27 Teamster locals in and around NYC) and the National Union of Healthcare Workers, have declared themselves "sanctuary unions." UAW Local 2325's actions and protests demanding "ICE Out of the Courts Now," mentioned above, are also a promising beginning.

Members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth work to unite the struggle on the campuses with efforts of class-struggle activists in the unions to build on these beginnings and make them effective. To unite students and youth dedicated to militant defense of immigrant rights with the massive power of the working class in this struggle, the key is revolutionary leadership. Join us in this fight! ■

Diego Garcia...

continued from page 5

cover up its own role in the program, making the incredible claim that records relating to flight departures and arrivals on Diego Garcia from 2002 were "incomplete due to water damage."

Diego Garcia is one of many instances where imperialist domination is based on colonial subjugation ... and expulsion. In Puerto Rico the fight against imperialism means fighting to break the chains of colonialism and win independence as part of a socialist federation of the Caribbean. On Diego Garcia, only the defeat of U.S. imperialism throughout the region would allow the displaced Chagossians to democratically choose whether and how they wanted to return. Either way, it will take world socialist revolution to get rid of the imperialist criminals once and for all. ■

Socialism...

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The racist institution of the police, which originated with slave patrols here in the United States, will be abolished. All of the vile discriminatory restrictions on immigration will be done away with. The burden of domestic labor, which falls almost entirely on women, will be transferred to society, which will take on the responsibility of childcare, education, cooking and cleaning. Thus collectivized property forms will uproot the material conditions of oppression and the ideologies that stem from it.

We say that the Soviet Union, though initially a healthy workers state, underwent a process of bureaucratic degeneration. In calling the former Soviet Union a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, and China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba bureaucratically deformed workers states, and defending them against imperialism, we are not saying that these countries are workers' paradises or some heaven on Earth. It is an objective understanding of how the property forms and social relations in these countries differ from capitalism, embodying historic gains, and the specific course that must be taken there in the fight for genuine socialism in each of these countries.

With the case of China, many say that China is in fact a capitalist country, citing the expansive capitalist inroads that have been made there. But private Chinese firms have been able to make so much growth in the first place because the state is feeding them so much cheap credit, and because it's placed impediments on foreign companies gaining access to the Chinese market. However, the potentials of planned economies have been limited because of the bureaucratic administrations of these states and the lack of workers democracy, the result, fundamentally, of Stalinism – with its notion that socialism can be created in one country, which is a complete impossibility.

We defend these countries against U.S. imperialism. We call for the military defense of them against American war threats. We call for a proletarian political revolution to kick out the bureaucracy, save the nationalized property forms and establish genuine workers democracy. In the case of North Korea we remember that the United States killed off 20% of the population in the Korean War, that it dropped more bombs on the Korean peninsula than

in the entire Pacific theater of World War Two. And Korea is only a third of the size of Japan. We remember that the U.S. installed a regime in South Korea of former collaborators with the Japanese colonial occupation.

In the October Revolution in 1917, amid the devastation of the First World War, the workers of Russia, led by the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky, overthrew the capitalist state. This was the first successful workers revolution in history and with it came full citizenship rights for all immigrants, substantial gains for women like communal crèches and free abortion on demand, and the abolition of laws against homosexuality. The October Revolution was waged on behalf of the working classes of all nations and the Bolsheviks' goal was to extend the gains of October throughout the world.

However, even after being forced into a "robbers' peace" with German imperialism at Brest-Litovsk, the infant workers state was further ravished by civil war and an invasion by 14 imperialist powers, an economic blockade and political isolation. This coincided with the rise of the conservative nationalist bureaucracy that feared the spread of the revolution, which consolidated power in 1923-24 with Stalin at its head.

Today, we say that anyone calling themselves socialists can't take a reformist approach, and that those engaging in class collaboration in reality cease to be socialist. Because in seeking to "work with" the ruling class, in calling it "practical" to reconcile their demands with the ruling class, one foregoes the tasks necessary for socialism.

The DSA, since its inception in the early 1980s, has been dedicated to being the 'left wing of the possible,' and to 're-aligning' the Democratic Party. In the wake of the Bernie Sanders campaign, they have said explicitly that the medium-to-long term goals of the DSA are to establish coalitions both *within* and *with* the Democratic Party.

The documents of the DSA from its establishment say that its tasks will consist in good part of campaigning on behalf of Democratic Party politicians. So they are most definitely not interested in – they oppose – making the break with the ruling class that is necessary for the fight for a socialist society. As Will said, the ruling class won't give up the wealth it has, nor its power. This requires a struggle against the ruling class. It doesn't come through holding hands together and singing kumbaya – it comes from organization.

After the discussion round, Jacob gave a summary, stating:

The difference, fundamentally, between so-called "democratic socialists" and revolutionary Marxists is a matter of principle. These social democrats are fighting for a completely different cause, and definitely not for a classless society. Instead, their program means trying to make minuscule improvements to our current society by making huge concessions to the capitalist class.

In contrast, based on the struggle of the working class, genuine socialism – communism – requires the most thorough break from the capitalist class as a whole, with all its parties and politicians, and a fight for revolutionary working-class politics aimed at overthrowing capitalist exploitation and establishing socialism on a world scale. ■

The Bolshevik Revolution, Leon Trotsky and the New York Public Library

By Müller

Here it was: the 100-year anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution and the New York Public Library had organized an exhibition, “The Russian Revolution: American Perspectives.” All the venerable institutions of the mediocracy were running series like “Communism’s Bloody Century” (*Wall Street Journal*), the *New York Times* series on “The Red Century,” and the like. So when the Library announced a symposium on the Russian Revolution with some academic “experts” for November 18, we in the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth decided to attend the event and bring along some copies of our pamphlet on “How the Soviet Workers State Was Strangled” – maybe that’ll spook the ivory tower stiff a bit. And maybe they would have something interesting to say.

This was not the case. All five of the speakers at the symposium were decidedly against the October Revolution. They recited paeans to the February Revolution of the same year, they loved Kerensky’s bourgeois Provisional Government and lamented the “undemocratic” seizure of power by the Bolsheviks that took place eight months later. It was a high-minded snooze-fest, low on accuracy. Susan Smith-Peter, the exhibition and symposium organizer from the College of Staten Island, talked about “How to Teach a Revolution,” saying that while the Bolsheviks wanted global revolution, “America” just wanted to “make the world safe for democracy, not revolution.” It was Woodrow Wilson, the “liberal” Democratic president and supporter of the Ku Klux Klan, who propagated that slogan about making the world safe for democracy even as he sent U.S. troops to occupy every country around the Caribbean rim.

A grad student at CSI gave a bizarre presentation titled “The Bolshevik of Wall Street,” throwing in an apocryphal story about Lenin calling to compromise with capitalists to get American financing. Even he admitted he was unsure of the quote’s authenticity. Another speaker canonized an American journalist, Bessie Beatty, for transitioning from ambivalence about the Bolsheviks to active condemnation. Ben Whisenhunt from the College of DuPage at least mentioned Louise Bryant, John Reed’s wife and a committed left-wing journalist. But Reed barely got a mention, even though his book was featured in the exhibition and was among the first published eyewitness accounts of October. Definitely too red for this crowd.

Lenin and Trotsky were demonized, misquoted and slandered. The gains of the October Revolution were not mentioned at all. Mainly the speakers went on about how awfully “undemocratic” the Bolsheviks were for seizing power. I got up to challenge their abuse of the word “democracy.” I refuted the claim that the Bolsheviks were being “undemocratic” in leading an insurrection, since they had been *democratically elected* to lead the soviets. I went on to explain that when these learned scholars talk of “democracy” what they mean is *bourgeois* democracy,

January 2018



(Left) Leon Trotsky’s French passport photo from 1915. He was expelled from France the next year. (Right) The main building of the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue in 1917. Trotsky studied in the Slavic reading room, now closed.

whereas the Bolsheviks stood for proletarian democracy – the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Lenin explained:

“The dictatorship of the proletariat alone can emancipate humanity from the oppression of capital, from the lies, falsehood and hypocrisy of bourgeois democracy – democracy *for the rich* – and establish democracy *for the poor*; that is, make the blessings of democracy *really* accessible to the workers and poor peasants, whereas now (even in the most democratic – *bourgeois* – republic) the blessings of democracy are, *in fact*, inaccessible to the vast majority of working people.”

–V.I. Lenin, “‘Democracy’ and Dictatorship” (January 1919)

For all their made-up stories, it was curious that nobody mentioned a real story about Leon Trotsky and the New York Public Library – in fact, about the very building we were in. In *My Life* (1930), the co-leader of the Bolshevik Revolution recalled that when he and his companion Natalia Sedova arrived in New York City in January 1917:

“[Bolshevik leader Nikolai] Bukharin was one of the first people I met in New York.... Although it was late, and we were very tired, Bukharin insisted on dragging us off to the Public Library the very first day.”

Kenneth D. Ackerman wrote about the same event in his recent book *Trotsky in New York, 1917: A Radical on the Eve of Revolution*:

“Bukharin had found something in New York City that he felt Trotsky, as Europe’s foremost socialist writer, would surely appreciate.... ‘[We] had hardly got off the boat when he told us enthusiastically about a public library which stayed open late at night and which he proposed to show us at once,’ Natalya recalled. ‘At about nine o’clock in the evening we had to make the long journey to admire his great discovery.’”

“Bukharin knew Trotsky would adore this site. He and Trotsky shared a passion as deep as politics,” the historian goes on:

“In every European capital either of them visited, one of their first stops had been the library, be it Vienna, Paris, Madrid or Copenhagen. Trotsky had loved libraries since his teens. In his first

prison in Nikolaev, he had sought out the prison library for solace.”

As the lights blazed in the winter night, Trotsky and Natalia marveled at the Library building at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue and the magnificent main reading room, “larger than the entire ship *Montserrat* on which they had just crossed the ocean.” Ackerman continues:

“And books! The library’s seventy-five miles of shelves held more than a million of them, plus newspapers and magazines from around the world! For anyone! For free! To just come and read! Till almost midnight! Even on a Sunday night!”

The Internationalist Group organizer told me about Trotsky’s introduction to the NYPL, saying he first read about it some 40 years ago. What struck him then was that when Trotsky visited it, the library was open till midnight! But by the mid-’70s the city was under the financial dictatorship of Wall Street under the Emergency Financial Control Board and Municipal Assistance Corporation run by investment banker Felix Rohatyn. They were slashing funding to public works left and right – mass transit, infrastructure, public schools, the City University and, of course, libraries. At the time, the New York Public Library only stayed open until 6 p.m. and not at all on Sundays. Today the 42nd Street library never stays open later than 7:45 p.m., and closes at 5 on Sundays.

Bukharin and Trotsky weren’t the only future leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution who had a passion for libraries. Four years earlier, Lenin wrote admiringly of public libraries in the West where “readers can read publicly owned books at home” (“What Can Be Done for Public Education,” July 1913). He continued:

“I have before me the report of the New York Public Library for 1911.... The total number of books is now about two million. In the course of the year the library was visited by 1,658,376 people. There were 246,950 readers using the reading-room and they took out 911,891 books.... Almost *eight million* (7,914,882 volumes) were issued to readers at home....”

Lenin was particularly taken with the fact

that “even *children* can make use of the rich collections.” He wrote:

“The New York Public Library has opened a special, central, reading-room for children, and similar institutions are gradually being opened at all branches. The librarians do everything for the children’s convenience and answer their questions. The number of books children took out to read at home was 2,859,888, slightly under three million (more than a third of the total). The number of children visiting the reading-room was 1,120,915.”

And today? In this period of the U.S.’ terrorist “war on terror” and war on immigrants, in much of the U.S., the children of undocumented immigrant parents are excluded from libraries for lack of a government-issued photo ID (“How Libraries Discriminate Against Undocumented Children,” *Time* magazine, 18 October 2017). Only in the provinces? Try getting a library card in New York today without a photo ID from some government or college (a New York public school ID won’t get a teenager in). Even at the City University, a couple of years ago, an undocumented immigrant comrade was not allowed to take a book out of the Queens College Library for lack of a Social Security number, even though CUNY let him register. They also tried to make him pay out-of-state tuition, but backed down due to a partial victory that had been won by a mobilization launched by the Internationalist Group in 2001 to stop the purge of undocumented students from CUNY following 9/11.¹

The NYPL was built on the cusp of the imperialist era, as capitalism was still prodigiously developing the productive forces, building steel plants and transcontinental railroads. Today, in the epoch of imperialist decay, the U.S. is deindustrializing and public services are cut to the bone and then closed or privatized. In 2010, the NYPL’s Slavic and Baltic division was closed. This is where John Reed’s collections of leaflets and posters from the Bolshevik Revolution were kept,

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¹ See the Internationalist pamphlet, *Defend Immigrant Students, Stop CUNY’s “War Purge”* (December 2001).

Mobilize Labor/Black/Latino Power to Stop the Fascists!

Dangerous Provocateurs: Milo Yiannopoulos and His Fascist Entourage

By the Revolutionary
Internationalist Youth

Hundreds of copies of this statement were distributed as a Revolution leaflet in the days before the 31 October 2017 Yiannopoulos event.

The Milo Yiannopoulos bigotry road show may be coming soon to a city near you. There will be an orgy of racism, patriotism, misogyny, xenophobia, anti-intellectualism. Aboard his bandwagon will be a slew of fascists and white supremacists of varying stripes. This moving festival of race-hate poses a clear and present – and potentially deadly – danger to the working class and oppressed on several fronts. Facing this threat, defense of those who are targeted calls for mass mobilizations based on the power of the working class.

Yiannopoulos is a self-described provocateur and “troll” – not just on the internet – whose shtick is to personally harass and publicly humiliate individuals. It’s “doxxing” (publicizing personal information on people to set them up for attack) with a vengeance. He aims to strike fear in marginalized groups and bring down state repression on leftists. This can represent a serious threat to the well-being of many groups, especially undocumented students who are at risk of being seized and deported. At the University of New Mexico on January 28, Yiannopoulos, wearing a police vest, put up the ICE hotline number on a giant screen with the incitement “Purge your local illegals.”

Currently, Yiannopoulos is on a self-titled “Troll Academy Tour” with upcoming events in Arizona and one scheduled for October 31 at California State University at Fullerton (CSUF). He was invited to campus by the College Republicans, wannabe junior McCarthys (the Wisconsin senator of witch-hunting infamy) whose specialty is setting up, provoking and fingering people for repression. Earlier this year they attacked adjunct instructor Eric Canin and then tried to get him fired with the connivance of the campus administration. But they failed and Dr. Canin is back teaching again. The Yiannopoulos Halloween event looks like an attempt at revenge.

Their counterparts in New York, the Columbia University College Republicans, recently sponsored a Skype speech by Muslim-bashing white supremacist Tommy Robinson, a founder of the fascist English Defence League, which was drowned out and shut down by hundreds of protesters inside and outside the hall. Among those protesting this racist provocation was the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth. Next up, the Columbia Republicans are planning to host Alt-Right conspiracy theorist, accused rapist and convicted woman-beater Mike Cernovich.

While Yiannopoulos’ provocations are themselves a danger, a more serious threat may come from those in his train. He has deep ties to outright fascists, among them Richard Spencer, the Alt-



Los Angeles Internationalist Group joined with several hundred others protesting the October 31 provocation by Milo Yiannopoulos at California State University at Fullerton.

Right founder and wannabe American Hitler (“Hail Trump, Hail Victory”). A video on the Internet shows Yiannopoulos singing “America the Beautiful” while Spencer gives the straight-arm Nazi salute. The white supremacist millionaire plantation owner spoke at the University of Florida on November 19 while hundreds of protesters chanted, “Black lives matter.” After the event, three Nazis confronted a group of protesters, chanted “Heil Hitler” and fired on them. Luckily the shot missed. The Florida Highway Patrol protected the fascist event while National Public Radio gave Spencer a publicity boost, broadcasting his remarks about “free speech.”

Yiannopoulos’ previous gambit was a “Free Speech Week” at the University of California Berkeley campus, scheduled for late September, featuring Milo, Breitbart chairman (and former top Trump advisor) Steve Bannon, Anne Coulter and other Alt-Right speakers. The university reportedly spent \$1 million in security preparations for the event which intended to mock the leftist Free Speech Movement of the 1960s. An idea of what this crowd considers “free speech” is Ann Coulter’s statement that if Donald Trump aided immigrant youth in the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) program, the first response should be “organizing death squads for the people who ruined America” (*Right-Wing Watch*, 21 September).

The threatened week-long hate-fest in Berkeley spawned a movement by faculty to petition campus authorities to cancel classes and call on the chancellor to ban the Alt-Rightists. But the administration which runs the university on behalf of the bourgeoisie should not be able to dictate who can and cannot speak on campus. Moreover, such a precedent would inevitably be used mainly to ban leftists. In the end, the event collapsed, called off by the sponsor, the Berkeley Patriot (an online front for the College

Republicans). Yiannopoulos showed up on Sunday, September 24 to stage a self-aggrandizing 15-minute photo op behind police barricades, accompanied by Cernovich and Muslim-basher Pam Gellert.

Even so, the bogus “free speech” event attracted fascist scum from the West Coast to European “Identitarian” white supremacists. On Sunday night they rampaged through the city streets. A group, including members of the frat rat fascist Proud Boys and an Oathkeeper militiaman and bodyguard for neo-Nazi Tim Gionet, pounded on the windows of Revolution Books. The next day, a clot tried to provoke violence at a homeless camp. On September 26, an Alt-Right march was led by Joey Gibson (the “Patriot Prayer” mini-führer from Vancouver, Washington) and Kyle (“Based Stickman”) Chapman, whose violent attacks on anti-fascist protesters have made him an icon among the Alt-Right. Three

anti-fascists were arrested – we demand all charges against them be dropped!

As at Berkeley last month, Milo Yiannopoulos’ latest tour will bring out a toxic mixture of fascists and crypto-fascists. Their provocations have very real consequences. At the University of Washington in Seattle on January 20, a Milo fan shot and gravely wounded a protester outside of a Yiannopoulos event (the shooter was not charged by Seattle police with any crime). Against those liberals and leftists who criticized Black Bloc anarchists and others in a mobilization of over 1,000 protesters that effectively shut down Yiannopoulos’ attempted appearance at Berkeley back in February, the Internationalist Group wrote:

“By threatening to go after undocumented immigrant students and others he would like to set up for attack, Yiannopoulos posed an imminent threat, and it was correct to seek to drive him out. We are for mobilizing mass action – by students, workers, immigrants and all defenders of democratic rights, including the right to free speech – to thwart such provocations and defend those who would be victimized. But we do not call on the university to ban them.”

–“Milo Yiannopoulos, ‘Free Speech’ and the Assault on Universities,” *The Internationalist* No. 47, March-April 2017.

The same holds for this self-styled provocateur’s Halloween racist fright-night event.

Not Diversionary Liberal Love-Fests But Independent Mobilization of Workers Power

Milo Yiannopoulos achieved Internet notoriety when, as an editor of the Breitbart “news” site, which Bannon billed as the “platform for the Alt-Right,” he got himself banned from Twitter for repeated grotesque racist attacks on actor Leslie Jones. His stage performances consist of belittling and humiliating the powerless and oppressed, whether it is immigrants, *continued on page 18*



CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth at October 10 protest against Muslim-bashing fascist at Columbia University. Revolution

Hurricanes, Colonial Government, Wall Street and Washington

University of Puerto Rico Students, Faculty and Workers Under Siege

DECEMBER 2017 – Following hurricanes Irma and Maria this past September, the University of Puerto Rico (UPR) was left in tatters. Buildings were devastated, windows shattered, trees torn asunder by 174 mph winds, while flooding caused massive water damage. Of the UPR's eleven campuses, only one was left with water and electricity in the aftermath (the medical campus in San Juan). As students, staff and faculty pitched in to remove the debris – often supplying their own gloves, rakes and shovels – campuses slowly reopened at the end of October. But even at the beginning of December, the university has barely begun to recover. At the flagship Río Piedras campus, library service is still partial: although 90-95% of the collections were saved, clean-up is still going on to remove dangerous black mold, while a number of buildings are closed because of problems with lighting, air filtration and air conditioning.

Meanwhile, several thousand UPR students have abandoned the island altogether, continuing their studies in stateside institutions, including New York University, Touro Law Center, state universities in New York and Florida offering in-state tuition, and Tulane University in New Orleans, which itself took six years to recover from enrollment losses due to Hurricane Katrina. This mass migration of youth isn't solely a by-product of the hurricane but a direct result of Puerto Rico's economic crisis, exacerbated by the extortionate demands of Wall Street hedge funds and Washington bureaucrats. Today the bankers and U.S. imperialist government completely control the island's finances through the Junta de Control Fiscal (JCF – Financial Control Board) put in place by Congress

For All-Out Worker/Student/Teacher Action to Defeat the Assault on the UPR!



Striking UPR students and cops face off in march on government offices during 48-hour walkout, February 2017. RIY calls for free, quality public education for all, independence for Puerto Rico and the struggle for socialist revolution from the Caribbean to the U.S.

and then-president Barack Obama under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management, and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA). And the University of Puerto Rico is tops on *la junta's* hit list.

What that means for the UPR is massive budget cuts. Initial plans called for \$300 million in cuts, but then the JCF declared that fully half of the university's \$900 million budget – \$450 million – would have to go. For the 60,000 UPR students, faculty and staff, this spelled disaster. Under the budget approved by the university's Governing Board, tuition has doubled, from \$56 to \$115 a credit, or about \$3,500 a year for a full-time student (*El Nuevo Día*, 31 July). Yet most UPR students are poor and working-class (70% are eligible for Pell grants). The median annual household income in Puerto Rico is \$18,000 a year, barely half that of the poor-

est state in the U.S. (Mississippi, \$36,000 a year) and less than one-third that of New York (\$60,000 a year). Plus costs of basic necessities like groceries are about 15% higher than the U.S. average. The tuition hike will effectively drive thousands of students out of the UPR.

In fact, the university's April 2017 fiscal plan "enrollment goal" aims to *reduce* the number of students from 62,000 to 54,000 by 2022. It justifies this by pointing to the dramatic decrease in the number of college-age youth due to massive emigration. From 2010 to 2015, as a result of the acute economic crisis, the population of Puerto Rico fell by 6.6%, but the number of 15-19 year-olds fell by more than 17% – a figure which the UPR "market projection" anticipates will rise to 22.5% by 2025. Yet even as young people have been fleeing the island, UPR enrollment has increased. No longer. Cutback plans also include reducing the number of classes, slashing the number of "temporary personnel" (notably adjunct faculty), "merging" campuses into three "hubs," freezing pay increases and hiring, postponing new construction and other drastic steps.

Students Fight Back: Strike!

Upon hearing of plans for a budget-ax murder of their school, UPR students took swift action. On February 22, a general assembly of students at the Río Piedras campus voted to hold a 48-hour walkout, marching to the legislature in the Capitolio and on to the governor's office in La Fortaleza. Learning of the even more draconian cuts called for by the junta, Río Piedras voted for an indefinite strike beginning March 28. On March 31 they marched along with the university workers union (HEEND) and the faculty union (APPU) to the PR Convention Center where the

JCF was meeting. On April 5, a National Student Assembly voted for the rest of the UPR to join the strike, which almost all the campuses did. For 72 days students occupied the school, blockading the gates and forming committees to provide meals, build activism, foster outreach and negotiate with university authorities, the governor, legislature and the Control Board.

Among the students who participated in the Comité de Lucha y Acción de Sociales y Empresas (CLASE) at the Social Sciences and Business Administration gate, one of the most militant, were Neyshka Díaz Maldonado and Clara Díaz Maldonado. "The barricades were all as tall as the gates, and, the students used basically everything they could find and use to build them. They used small stuff like wood pieces, tires,

concrete blocks, chains, wires, and bigger things like desks and industrial refuse bins," Neyshka told *Revolution*. The other gates to the Río Piedras campus were also barricaded, and students were stationed 24/7 to prevent anyone from entering. "Every campus was active and militant during the strike in their own ways," Neyshka said, with the second-largest UPR campus, at Mayagüez in the west, getting a lot of media attention because of its militancy.

But a group of law students went to court, filing charges demanding that UPR authorities reopen the school. The interim president of the university then attempted to use the *Fuerza de Choque*, or "Shock Force," of the notoriously brutal Puerto Rico police, to dislodge the students. However, faculty members mobilized and stood in front of the barricades, so the riot cops

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Student strikers barricaded the main entrance to the UPR's Río Piedras campus, May 2017.



Internationalists at demonstration against NYC bank foreclosures on homes in Puerto Rico, December 2017.

RIY Founded...

continued from page 1

and herd scabs against striking workers.

An entire generation of youth has grown up witnessing the continual wars and ongoing economic crisis of the capitalist order. After the Democrats paved the way for President Donald Trump, he has even further ramped up anti-immigrant *migra* arrests and now threatens to unleash “fire and fury like the world has never seen” on North Korea. Large numbers of youth express disillusionment with the state of U.S. society and are seeking an alternative. With numerous youth organizations that claim to be leftist channeling radical-minded youth back into bourgeois politics, there is an urgent need for an authentic Leninist-Trotskyist youth organization, based on the program of world socialist revolution. The Revolutionary Internationalist Youth seeks to carry out this task and become a training ground for future revolutionary cadre.

Many young people active today were galvanized by the election of Barack Obama in 2008, having bought into the illusion of “Hope and Change” that he campaigned on. At the time of his inauguration, the Internationalist Group correctly characterized his presidency as U.S. imperialism undergoing a cosmetic change:

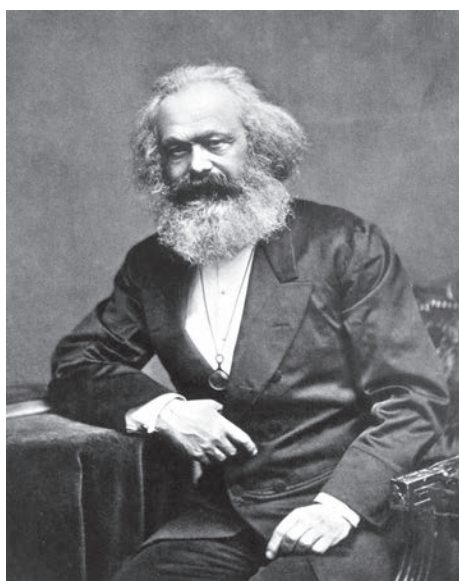
“For the African American Obama to take office in the highest elected position...reflected a considerable social change in this country founded on chattel slavery, where Jim Crow segregation continued into the 1960s – and where in the 21st century blacks and Latinos have still been prevented from voting. But this has not changed the system of imperialist capitalism one iota: with Obama at the helm, the U.S. is bombing Iraq and Afghanistan to hell, marauding in Pakistan, supplying the weaponry for Israeli slaughter in Gaza, throwing millions out of work in the U.S. while enslaving workers with starvation wages around the planet.”

–“Obama Presidency: U.S. Imperialism Tries a Makeover,” *The Internationalist* No. 28, March-April 2009

Instead of “Hope and Change” there was unrelenting war, privation and racist terror under Wall Street’s hand-picked Democrats. The high-profile murders of Oscar Grant by Oakland cops, Trayvon Martin by racist vigilante George Zimmerman, Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri, Freddie Gray by the Baltimore PD, Eric Garner by the NYPD, and countless others highlighted that the system is racist to its very core, including with a black president at its helm.

The world capitalist economic crisis of 2008 that continues today flung millions of people into desperate conditions. Young people, many with college degrees, struggle to make ends meet by working multiple part-time, low-paying jobs and saddled with unpayable college debt. Meanwhile the capitalist government spared no expense in keeping the parasitic financial institutions responsible for the crisis afloat – to the tune of trillions of dollars. As the working class and poor took the brunt of the damage, the glorified thieves on Wall Street got golden parachute severance packages and millions of dollars in bonuses and raises.

The Obama administration oversaw the continued U.S. military occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, an increase in “death-from-above” drone strike executions in



Karl Marx

Pakistan and Yemen, and the toppling and lynching of Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, leaving the country in the throes of a bloody civil war. Meanwhile, Obama earned the nickname “Deporter-in-Chief” by deporting over 5 million immigrant workers over the course of his two terms (over 7 million if those caught at the border are included) – more than any president in U.S. history. To accomplish this, Obama drastically increased the budget of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which surpassed that of all other federal police agencies combined (FBI, DEA, ATF and the Secret Service). He bolstered the state’s repressive apparatus at the local level as well, providing “law enforcement” across the country with military-grade weaponry, and stood by them time and again as they carried out racist killings and used violent repression against demonstrators. The last eight years have taught large numbers of youth – the hard way – that racial oppression is bred in the bone of U.S. capitalism.

The economic crisis in particular has contributed to significant shifts in a country where virulent anti-communism was once the norm and even “socialism” was long considered a dirty word. A 2016 Harvard Institute of Politics poll found that 51% of people aged 18-29 now say they “do not support” capitalism, and 33% say they “support socialism.” While what this means is doubtless ill-defined for most, these figures do represent a growing desire among youth for an alternative to the chaos, violence and increasing destructiveness of capitalism in the age of imperialist decay.

Development of Internationalist Youth Work

After the Internationalist Group’s foundation in 1996, it won an important layer of immigrant worker activists, but initial efforts at systematic youth work faced many obstacles. This began to change with the largely successful Internationalist-initiated campaign in Fall 2001 to defeat the “war purge” undertaken by the administration of the City University of New York, which sought to drive thousands of undocumented students out of CUNY by massively increasing their tuition, as part of the “post-9/11” anti-immigrant witch hunt and preparation for the Afghanistan war. (See Internationalist pamphlet *Defend Immigrant Students! Stop CUNY’s “War Purge”!* [2001].) The CUNY Internationalist Clubs were born from this campaign, largely as a result of which this attempt to charge discriminatory tuition was rolled back. Having helped build the campaign against the anti-immigrant war purge, in 2003 the Revolutionary Reconstruction

Club at Bronx Community College became part of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, which in September 2003 began publishing their newspaper, *Revolution* – which will now be the political organ of both the Internationalist Clubs and the RIY.

Through much of the 1990s and early 2000s, CUNY student activism was dominated by groups like the Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM), which used “Third Worldist” and “student-vanguardist” rhetoric to form a layer of ambitious bureaucrats that moved on to bigger pursuits when SLAM lost student government elections and university funding. Rejecting the “movementist” and deeply opportunist outlook of such outfits, the Internationalist Clubs undertook the task of educating students and youth drawn to radical politics in the program, theory and history of revolutionary Marxism. Together with *Revolution*, the IG’s newspaper *The Internationalist*, and the press of other sections of the LFI, this included public talks on a wide range of issues as well as the weekly Marxist study groups that have been crucial to our development.

U.S. imperialism’s bloody occupation of Afghanistan and onslaught against Iraq – prepared with one of the imperialists’ classic government/media Big Lie campaigns, claiming its invasion was against mythical “weapons of mass destruction” – defined the political context for the following period. In one way or another, virtually all the “left” used revulsion against Bush to ally with rather than break from U.S. imperialism’s Democratic Party, paving the way for their wholesale capitulation to, and promotion of, illusions in Barack Obama. Swimming against the stream, Internationalist youth activists combated any support to the Democrats, the party of Hiroshima, the Bay of Pigs and the Vietnam war; and fought for the Leninist principle of defeat of “one’s own” imperialist ruling class and defense of the semi-colonial countries oppressed by imperialism. This included promoting the IG’s call for workers strikes against the war; dismissed by the opportunist left at the time, it proved key to the May Day 2008 longshore workers strike that shut down all 29 West Coast ports in protest against the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

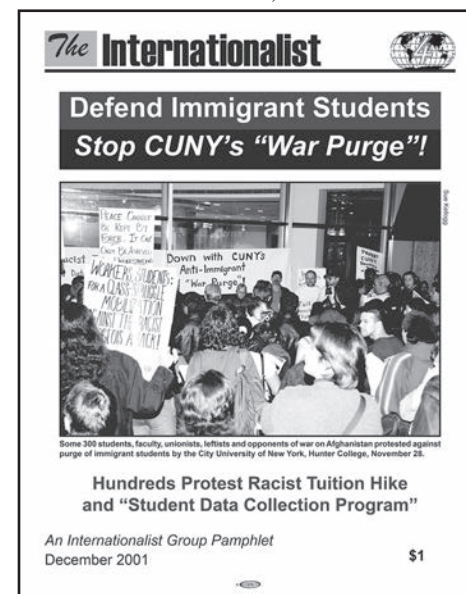
The fight to put the revolutionary-internationalist program into practice meant intensive political struggle against a panoply of social-patriotic and popular-front groups pushing class collaboration with hoped-for “antiwar” sectors of the bourgeoisie. This included the various “antiwar” fronts promoted by the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Workers World Party and its split the Party for Socialism and Liberation, Bob Avakian’s cultish Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, Socialist Action, and many others. Key to the development of Internationalist recruits in this period was the struggle against the rightward-moving centrist politics of the Spartacist League, which, demoralized by the destruction of the USSR, had abandoned Trotskyism and now raged hysterically against the Internationalist Group for upholding the call to defeat U.S. imperialism and carry out workers strikes against the war.

As Revolutionary Internationalist Youth comrades learned in our study of the history of Marxist youth organizations, from their inception the struggle against imperialist militarism has been a crucial part of their work. This was reflected in the formative years of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs, which waged a successful campaign

to drive military recruiters out of Bronx Community College where they sought to prey on the predominantly immigrant, black and Latino student population. Our successful campaign to spike a sinister “Homeland Security” course at CUNY’s Borough of Manhattan Community College further cemented the Clubs’ reputation as effective Marxist organizers, as did the intensive defense campaign for Hostos Community College student leader Miguel Malo, who was brutally arrested and subjected to a frame-up trial for holding up a sign protesting cuts and fee hikes in bilingual and English as a Second Language courses.

As imperialist war abroad brought stepped-up repression and witch hunts against “enemies within,” youth comrades were active in many other protests against attempts to revive McCarthyism at CUNY and elsewhere. They also learned much from their work, together with the cadre of immigrant worker Trotskyists the IG has been unique in developing, in innumerable union organizing and immigrant-rights campaigns, and in protests defending Muslim and South Asian victims of “war on terror” round-ups, immigrant taxi workers, the 10-month strike at Mexico’s National University (UNAM), striking Oaxaca teachers, the 43 “disappeared” students of Ayotzinapa, and people of Haitian descent targeted by a racist onslaught in the Dominican Republic – to mention just a few examples. In contrast with the patronizing liberalism of most of the left, Internationalists brought the program of revolutionary class struggle into these protests, highlighting their indissoluble connection with the fight against black oppression – key to workers revolution in this country founded on chattel slavery – and against every form of bigotry, prejudice and backwardness bred by capitalist society.

This accumulated experience proved invaluable when Internationalist youth activists faced the challenge of organizing protests against the CUNY administration’s provocative political decision to hire former general David Petraeus, ex-commander of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars and former CIA chief, to teach an “honors” course (on ethics!) in the Fall of 2013. The Internationalist Clubs launched a campaign of protest and exposure that led to the establishment of the united-front Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY, which carried out



The story of the November 2001 united-front protest, initiated by the Internationalist Group, against the attempt to drive immigrant students out of CUNY as part of the “war effort” after 9/11. As a result of the mobilization, the exclusionary tuition increase was largely rolled back.

Revolution

protests demanding “War Criminal Petraeus, Out of CUNY Now!” Throughout the course of this struggle, which faced brutal police repression, activists attracted to the Internationalist Clubs learned valuable lessons about state repression and the nature of academic institutions as training grounds for future state and corporate functionaries.

Most of the “left” (notably including the ISO) essentially boycotted the campaign against war-criminal Petraeus. However, the now-defunct Maoist Revolutionary Student Coordinating Committee (RSCC) was part of the Ad Hoc Committee Against the Militarization of CUNY and a number of its supporters were on the receiving end of police and university repression. Internationalist comrades vigorously defend RSCC against this, including by gaining support from the faculty-staff union for defense efforts. At the same time, it was repeatedly necessary to reassert the principled basis for united-front actions and resist attempts to replace this with a “propaganda bloc” for populist nostrums about “CUNY for the people” pushed by the Maoists. The experience was an important opportunity for new comrades to deepen their understanding of key differences between revolutionary Marxism (Trotskyism) and Stalinism, including in its Maoist variant.

Thus comrades found themselves polemicizing on the counterposition between the Bolshevik program of world socialist revolution and Stalin’s nationalist dogma of “socialism in one country,” which in 1972 provided ideological cover for Mao’s alliance with Nixon; Trotsky’s permanent revolution vs. the Stalin/Mao program of “two-stage” collaboration with the “national bourgeoisie”; Lenin’s *State and Revolution* vs. Mao’s ultra-revisionist theory of “New Democracy”; and the ways in which “radical” populist phrases and student vanguardism are used today to cut against revolutionary class politics. In a polemic that RSCC proved incapable of answering, we stated:

“Under capitalism, ‘the people’ doesn’t exist. The starting point for a Marxist understanding of the world is that society is divided into classes whose interests are irreconcilably counterposed. It is not enough to lay claim to this understanding or pay lip service to it: for any Marxist, this fact [is] the foundation of your political program which must be applied concretely in every aspect of political work. And the

conclusion is that only a proletarian revolution can end imperialism and its wars, or make it possible to eliminate racism and racial oppression, or the oppression of women, by undertaking the construction of a socialist society in which for the first time social equality and the emancipation of all can be possible.”

– “The Struggle at CUNY: A Trotskyist View,” *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013

CUNY’s violent repression against Petraeus protests followed the notorious police attack on students protesting tuition hikes in 2011. Together with the administration’s attempts to ram through an “expressive conduct” policy to stop student protest, this highlighted the importance of our demands to *abolish the administration and Board of Trustees* and establish democratically elected student-teacher-worker committees to run the schools, which are linked to our call for *open admissions with no tuition and living stipends* so students from working-class and poor families can afford to study. For these demands to be met, the power of the multi-racial working class must be brought into the fight, together with massive mobilization by students, faculty and campus workers and immigrant, African American and other key sectors with a vital interest in defending public education for their daughters and sons, from kindergarten through college. Public education is a crossroads of class and race in capitalist America; here too the fight to unchain workers power from all bourgeois parties, and build a revolutionary workers party that can champion the cause of all the oppressed, is key to the Trotskyist program.

Marxism vs. the Opportunist Left

As discussed below, Bernie Sanders’ presidential campaign set off a frenzied race by the opportunist left to determine who would be the best at building illusions in this bourgeois politician, whom they claimed as a fellow “socialist,” while hailing his “political revolution” to revitalize the Democratic Party. With a sliding scale of opportunism, Socialist Alternative (best known for its entirely reformist “socialist city councilperson” in Seattle) openly built the Sanders campaign; the ISO hailed Sanders as a “socialist” while urging him to run as an independent; and numerous smaller groups tailed along.

However, it was the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) that came out ahead, going from a marginal force to claiming 25,000 members as a result of the Sanders campaign and Trump’s election. Having operated as part of the Democratic Party since its inception in the Max Shachtman-Michael Harrington “Realignment Caucus” of Norman Thomas’ State Department Socialist Party, the DSA exemplifies the counterrevolutionary politics of social democracy, and exults in calling the cops on communists. Given the

large number of raw youth drawn to the group, it is necessary to explain these long-established facts to those who mistakenly believe joining the DSA or its youth affiliate may have something to do with socialism.

Dwarfed by its brethren in the DSA but still a significant opponent of revolutionary Marxism is the ISO, whose lineage goes back to Tony Cliff’s “state capitalist” tendency in Britain. This is a variant of the “Third Camp” social democracy pioneered by Max Shachtman, who renounced the

Fourth International’s defense of the gains of October and – despite its bureaucratic degeneration under Stalin – of the Soviet workers state, moving inexorably to openly embrace “democratic” imperialism.

At CUNY as elsewhere, the ISO has done its best to siphon off students interested in struggling against the capitalist system into tailing after Democratic liberalism via the social-movement-of-the-month. Far from Trotsky’s principle of telling the truth to the masses, the ISO can be counted on to embody the most shameless forms of opportunism. After building student support for anti-immigrant bourgeois politician Ralph Nader, the ISO repeatedly declared Barack Obama a “breath of fresh air” during and after his 2008 campaign. Like Workers World and many other opportunist groups, the ISO giddily celebrated Obama’s election, hoping to cash in on widespread illusions in his presidency. (At Hunter College this included plastering the campus with posters using Obama’s “Yes We Can” campaign motto.) Thus its enthusing over the Sanders campaign was a repeat performance, while it formally supported the bourgeois Green Party’s candidate Jill Stein, who, after the election, launched a campaign for a recount in three states with the intention of getting war hawk Hillary Clinton into office. In line with its “Third Camp” pro-imperialist heritage the ISO hailed the destruction of the USSR, claims the remaining bureaucratically deformed workers states (China, Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam) are capitalist, and complains that U.S. imperialism is not giving enough support to “democratic” forces in Syria (cut-throat jihadists) and Ukraine (outright fascists).

Smaller opportunist groups pursue their particular variations on the theme of tailing and pressuring the Democrats, asking Sanders to head up a new party of the “99%,” etc. One eccentric variant that we encounter in our work is the semi-Maoist Progressive Labor Party, distinguished for combining low-level reformism, integration into the pro-Democratic Party union bureaucracy (including its decades-long role in the ruling caucus of the CUNY faculty-staff union), and its trademark “theory” that Marx and Lenin



CUNY Internationalist Clubs speak-out against racist police terror, 30 August 2016.

didn’t understand that with enough willpower you could supposedly go straight to a communist society. PL’s absurd contradictions were shown in its newspaper simultaneously denouncing Obama as a “fascist” and retailing anecdotes of its members campaigning for him in order to be with the masses.

Proletarian Revolution and the Struggle Against Special Oppression

With the murder of Michael Brown and Eric Garner by police in the summer of 2014, a wave of protests, led primarily by the Black Lives Matter movement, swept the country. A series of militant speak-outs at Hunter College led by the Internationalist Clubs, together with vibrant Internationalist contingents in the demonstrations that fall and the following spring, attracted a new layer of activists, many of whom now form the founding membership of the RIY. Our slogan “Only Revolution Can Bring Justice” was often taken up by others during these demonstrations, and was sharply counterposed to pseudo-leftists’ calls for “justice” through the bourgeois courts and illusory recipes to reform the armed first of the bourgeois state. Our forthright *communist* position on these burning questions attracted students who subjectively wanted to end racist oppression, but had up until that point only encountered the various reformist outfits.

As radicalizing young people sought to identify the roots of racist repression, the Marxist program for black liberation through socialist revolution has been front and center in our work. Students attending their first demonstrations, seeing with their own eyes how the police were “serving and protecting” racist capitalism under the first African American president, would often go straight from the protests to our 16-session “Marxism and Black Liberation” study group. The experiences of the day helped illustrate the Marxist program to mobilize workers power in the revolutionary fight to uproot the material basis of oppression. This was a good example of the motto “Clarity and Action,” raised by our forebears in the first U.S. Trotskyist youth group, the Spartacus Youth League of the 1930s.

We uphold the perspective proclaimed



“Only Revolution Can Bring Justice!” CUNY Internationalist Clubs, Class Struggle Education Workers and Internationalist Group protest racist grand jury verdict letting off NYC cops who murdered Eric Garner, December 2014. January 2018

by the Internationalist Group in the main document adopted by the IG's first National Conference:

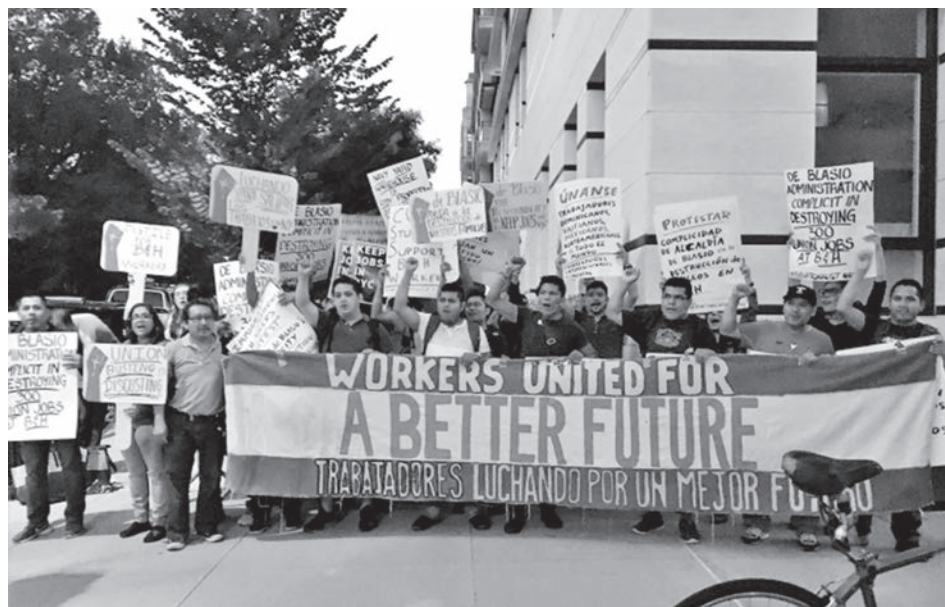
"Black oppression has been key to U.S. society since its foundation through the expropriation and genocide against native peoples and the rooting of capitalist development in chattel slavery. On this basis there arose the characteristic American system of racial oppression, producing the poisonous ideology of 'race' and racism central to dividing the working class and holding back its consciousness. For the Internationalist Group, the understanding that the struggle against black oppression is key to socialist revolution here 'in the belly of the imperialist beast' has been not only a central tenet of our program but a central part of politically winning and training activists recruited amongst deeply exploited immigrant workers and a new generation of youth."

—"The Trotskyist Struggle for International Socialist Revolution," *The Internationalist* No. 40, Summer 2015

Mobilizing youth to protest racist police terror; organizing forums and study series on the Marxist program for women's liberation through socialist revolution; holding a speak-out honoring Sandra Bland and others murdered by the racist police and protesting the killings of transgender women (predominantly African-American and Latina) throughout the U.S.; bringing students to the picket lines of immigrant workers at the Hot and Crusty bakery and supporting the organizing drive at B&H Photo – through these and other struggles our *revolutionary* working-class politics have contrasted sharply with *reformist* "identity politics" which serve as a glue for "unity" with Democratic Party politicians.

This form of bourgeois ideology feigns a fight against oppression through "check-your-privilege" liberal idealism and is systematically imbued among university students, including many of those who see themselves as radical. It is used to deepen the wedge between different sectors of the workers and oppressed, claiming to unite those who share a sectorally defined identity, including members of the exploiting class. The long-standing feminist slogan "Sisterhood is Powerful" is a classic example, as if Hillary Clinton or former First Lady Michelle Obama could be the "sisters" of women workers in the Clintons' Haitian sweatshops, immigrants deported by Barack Obama, mothers whose children were killed by his drones, or strikers targeted by the anti-labor laws the bourgeois politicians enforce. Ostensibly radical versions (including the phantasmagorical "proletarian feminism" some Maoists go on about) give left cover to this bourgeois ideology rather than forthrightly explaining how it can never be a program for actually winning liberation.

The liberal/reformist program of class collaboration is manifested both in the form of "color-blind" Sanders-style populism and in the form that undercuts real struggle against oppression by presenting it as a matter of atomized identities. Both are diametrically opposed to the Marxist program, integral to proletarian revolution, to unite the exploited and oppressed in *revolutionary class struggle* to uproot *every* form of "special" or double (and triple) oppression. As Lenin stressed in *What Is To Be Done?* (1902), the workers party can be genuinely revolutionary only if it serves as the "tribune" or champion of all the oppressed, carrying out special work to combat special oppression, and making the fight against it the cause of the entire



Internationalist Clubs join B&H warehouse workers and their supporters outside Gracie Mansion, protesting NYC mayor Bill de Blasio's complicity in closing of B&H warehouses, 8 August 2017.

proletariat – the class whose "radical chains" can only be destroyed through emancipation of *all* the oppressed. This communist vision of internationalist proletarian struggle is viscerally hated by all manner of aspiring bourgeois politicians and careerists practicing variants of the old Democratic Party recipe (traditionally called "pork-barrel" politics) of divvying up favors and resources between interest-group constituencies.

One of the strongest points of the Internationalist Clubs has been the development of a multiracial core of young communist women activists. This is partly the product of our many activities centered on the Marxist program for women's liberation, including intensive study group series and forums, presenting the historical materialist analysis of women's subjugation in the family. This can be overcome only by creating social institutions freeing women from age-old domestic servitude, a key aspect of the overall program of socialism going back even before Marx and Engels. To carry out this task requires overthrowing the capitalist system and building a society based on human needs, not profit.

Our recent forum on women and the Russian Revolution featured the launch of an extensive new Internationalist pamphlet, *Marxism and Women's Liberation*, which supplements one of the most popular items on our literature tables: *Bolsheviks and the Emancipation of Women*. The importance of explaining the counterposition between the Marxist program for women's liberation and the bourgeois ideology of "sisterhood" called feminism came to the fore as Wall Street militarist Hillary Clinton enlisted massive feminist support for her election campaign for Clinton-Obama Democratic continuity. With eight years of Democratic rule opening the door to the ranting misogynist, racist and Muslim-basher Trump, Democrats' early vows to work with the new imperialist chief gave way to "Women's Marches" in which "resistance" was depicted as wearing pink hats and waving "Stronger Together" Hillary Clinton signs.

As Trump sought to impose his vile anti-Muslim and anti-refugee ban, and anti-immigrant attacks multiplied, our youth comrades were heavily involved in the massive airport protests and street demonstrations, putting forward the Internationalist call to mobilize the working class while warning that "you can't fight Trump with Democrats." At CUNY and elsewhere this work included initiating committees in defense of immigrants and Muslims; holding speak-outs and orga-

nizing meetings on this issue; and helping build and publicize crucial mobilizations like Portland Labor Against the Fascists in June 2017 and class-struggle contingents in other protests against the escalating racist and white-supremacist provocations.

Revolutionary Class Independence Key

Both in the period leading up to, and after the 2016 election, the political experience we gained as young communists was crucial to our ability to expose the bourgeois politician Bernie Sanders and his opportunist cheerleaders. Sanders' presidential campaign cynically played on the desperation felt by many, channeling youth *back* into the Democratic Party in support of Hillary Clinton when he lost the nomination. The same youth who took part in Occupy Wall Street in 2011, demonstrated against the racist police murders of Michael Brown, Eric Garner and Freddie Gray, and again against the police occupation of Ferguson and Baltimore, were played by this capitalist politician spouting populist rhetoric about "the 99%." Throughout, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs unmasked "Bernie" as a capitalist politician shepherding people back into the Democratic Party, when *breaking with the Democrats* and all capitalist politicians and parties (including minor-league ones like the Greens) is the urgent task of the working class and oppressed.

Explaining the bedrock Marxist principle of the *political independence of the working class*, we underlined Karl Marx's declaration in a September 1871 speech to the First International: "Our politics must be working-class politics. The workers' party must never be the tagtail of any bourgeois party; it must be independent and have its own policy." The following year, he and Friedrich Engels wrote: "Against the collective power of the propertied classes the working class cannot act, as a class, except by constituting itself into a political party, distinct from, and opposed to, all old parties formed by the propertied classes" ("Resolution on the Establishment of Working-Class Parties," September 1872)

In the age of imperialism the revolutionary political independence of the working class requires the construction of a revolutionary vanguard party like Lenin's Bolsheviks. The rise of opportunist "socialism" nourished by the pro-imperialist labor aristocracy and bureaucracy exploded in chauvinist support to "their own" fatherlands by the main parties of the Second (Socialist) International in WWI. The principles of the

Third (Communist) International, embodied in its early congresses, were defended by Trotsky's Left Opposition and the Fourth International against the Stalinist program of popular-front class collaboration, the corollary to "socialism in one country."

Founding the RIY

The time to found the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth is now. On the basis of the struggles and experience of the preceding years, which cohered a nucleus of Marxist revolutionaries in training who are dedicated to fighting for socialist revolution, we began systematic preparations in Fall 2016. The founding comrades have carried out a systematic study of the history and important documents of past Marxist youth groups. This has included the pre-WWI international socialist youth movement and the emergence from it of the early Communist youth movement; how Stalinization turned youth groups attached to the Communist Party into popular-frontist auxiliaries to the Democratic Party; Trotskyist youth work in the 1930s; the origins and development in the late 1950s and early '60s of the Young Socialist Alliance, out of which the founding cadre of the once-revolutionary Spartacist League (SL) emerged; and key aspects of the SL's own youth work in the period when it still upheld the Trotskyist program.

The history of the socialist youth movement goes back to Karl Liebknecht, who recognized that to struggle against the patriotism and militarism being whipped up by the ruling class in preparation for World War I, it was necessary to win over young workers to the cause of socialism. He also saw the importance of organizing the youth in independent organizations in political solidarity with the adult party, but run independently by the youth themselves. His work among German youth led to the foundation of the International Union of Socialist Youth. Later the Young Communist International, founded in 1919 (after the historic betrayal of the Second International), based itself on the tradition of Liebknecht. The YCL renounced the social democracy's tactic of keeping the youth occupied with routine educational and social activities and out of real political struggle, instead asserting the Leninist principle of combining theory with action.

The first U.S. Trotskyist youth organization was the Spartacus Youth League of the 1930s, which mainly oriented toward recruiting CP youth to the Left Opposition and then the movement for the Fourth International. However, it wasn't until the temporary entry of the Trotskyists into the Socialist parties, seeking to win over new forces in the turbulent mid-1930s, that a large section of leftist youth began to be won over to Trotskyism. In 1938, when the Trotskyists were expelled from the SP, the majority of the Young People's Socialist League (the SP's youth group) formed the YPSL (Fourth Internationalist), becoming the youth section of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) led by Trotsky's close associate James P. Cannon.

However, the 1940 split in the SWP had unfortunate consequences for this budding youth movement. Shachtman's "petty-bourgeois opposition" took most of the youth with it when it departed the Trotskyist movement in its trajectory toward outright "State Department socialism." The SWP then essentially gave up on the task of creating a revolutionary youth movement for seventeen years.

In 1953, the Shachtmanite youth fused with the former SP youth to form the Young

Revolution

Socialist League under the leadership of the infamous Michael Harrington. Reacting against the Shachtmanites' drive to merge into Norman Thomas' Socialist Party, and under the impact of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution (which demonstrated that the Stalinist bureaucracy was a brittle parasitic caste, not a new ruling class as Shachtman claimed), an opposition arose within the YSL led by Tim Wohlforth, Shane Mage and James Robertson, who eventually formed the Left Wing Caucus. They attempted to lead the YSL in a revolutionary direction, began to work closely with the SWP, and after Shachtman and his lieutenant Harrington initiated a purge against them, established the *Young Socialist* newspaper.

This involved important work in the fight against Jim Crow segregation as the Civil Rights movement took off, emphasizing that capitalism and racist oppression were "two sides of the same coin," and taking on a leading role in Woolworth's sit-ins. Polemics against reformism and the Shachtmanites' embrace of the social-democratic theory of an "all-inclusive party" were also important in educating members. This work was vital to gaining supporters and laying the groundwork for the Young Socialist Alliance, which, founded in April 1960, became the youth group of the SWP.

By this time, however, the SWP was feeling the effects of the long isolation produced by the McCarthyite red purge in Cold War America. While late and partial, Cannon had waged a fight to resist "Pabloism," the revisionist current that organizationally destroyed the Fourth International in 1951-53 as it adapted to Stalinist, social-democratic and bourgeois nationalist leaderships and liquidated the fight to build Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard parties in every country. By the early 1960s, the SWP was embracing the same methodology in its uncritical adulation of Fidel Castro and refusal to bring Trotskyist politics into the burgeoning black freedom struggles in the U.S.

Facing criticism from founding YSA leaders who formed a minority, which was to become the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP, the SWP leadership moved to bureaucratize the youth organization. Party members within the youth group were now expected to stick to the party majority line in internal discussions within the youth group, as they would in an outside organization – a policy which explicitly overturned the long-established Leninist conception of youth-party relations.

The Leninist conception, an important topic of study in the period leading to founda-

tion of the RIY, has been summed up as follows: "This position, in brief, is that a youth organization should be *autonomously* related to the party, being *organizationally independent*, but *ultimately politically subordinate*."

"The distinct character of the revolutionary socialist youth movement is necessary but is subordinate to its place as a section of the international revolutionary movement. The Marxist revolutionary party embodies the historical experience of the working class and is alone capable of leading the struggle for socialism."

– Preface and 1961 "Resolution on Party-Youth Relations," in *Marxist Bulletin* No. 7, *The Leninist Position on Youth-Party Relations*

The leaders of the Revolutionary Tendency were expelled from the SWP in 1963, and went on to found the Spartacist League. The SL youth group, the Revolutionary Communist Youth (whose name was later changed to Spartacus Youth league), was established in 1970 as the break-up of the 1960s New Left led new layers to be won to Trotskyism, which the SL represented at that time. Codifying key aspects of the political tradition of Trotskyism, the RCY's founding documents, published in the pamphlet *Youth Class and Party* (1971), provide an important basis for the program and organizational practice of the RIY.

For nearly three decades, the Spartacist tendency upheld the legacy of revolutionary Trotskyism. This was expressed on a very wide range of burning issues – among them the struggle against popular-front class collaboration; the central role of the Leninist party in the fight against "special oppression," upholding the centrality of black liberation to the fight for proletarian revolution in the U.S. and specifically Richard Fraser's program of "revolutionary integrationism"; defending the degenerated and deformed workers states against the anti-Soviet war drive of Carter and Reagan; and insisting, against the federated blocs of myriad pseudo-Trotskyists, that revolutionary internationalism required forging a democratic-centralist world party of socialist revolution. A key test came in the struggle against the capitalist reunification of Germany, in which it uniquely fought against the counterrevolutionary destruction of the DDR (East German deformed workers state), followed by the fight against capitalist counterrevolution in the USSR itself.

Having fought to put Trotsky's program into practice, the SL and the International Communist League it led were profoundly



Internationalist Club forum on women in the Russian Revolution, Hunter College, 7 November 2017.

demoralized and disoriented when the imperialists succeeded in destroying the Soviet bloc, triumphantly proclaimed a "New World Order" and declared the "death of communism." Having lost faith in the working class's ability to make a revolution, the SL bought into the imperialists' propaganda offensive and has adapted itself to life under capitalism. They turned their back on the historic work in Germany, adopting the Shachtman-like line that the Stalinist bureaucracy itself "led the counterrevolution"; vilely accused the IG of "anti-Americanism" for upholding the Leninist position to defeat U.S. imperialism; renounced the elementary Leninist call for the independence of Puerto Rico and all colonies; *supported* the U.S. imperialist invasion of Haiti in 2011 (later renouncing this as an admittedly social-patriotic betrayal while refusing to discuss its origins in their other capitulations to their "own" imperialist rulers); and now refuse to call for rights of asylum for Syrian refugees trying to enter Europe (or the U.S.). The Spartacist League is now a shadow of its former self, having abandoned the revolutionary perspective over two decades ago.

We recognize "the youth" do not form a distinct class, and therefore do not possess independent social power. The principal division of society is the *class* division, and young people may align with one of the two principal classes – proletarian or bourgeois. As Marxists, we understand that in capitalist society only the working class has the power to uproot the causes of exploitation and oppression by taking power through a socialist revolution, and such a revolution can only be led by the *revolutionary vanguard party* – the Leninist-Trotskyist party. As the U.S. section of the League for the Fourth International, the Internationalist Group (IG) seeks to build the nucleus of that party here in the "belly of the imperialist beast."

Society's middle layers, the petty bourgeoisie, largely find themselves ground into desperate conditions, leading to large-scale discontent, which expresses itself in both left-leaning and rightist forms. Insofar as students are engaged in their university education, they often represent the most volatile layer of the petty bourgeoisie – some of which is prone to influence by radical ideas and can be won to the cause of the exploited and oppressed.

A disaffected, debt-ridden and significantly impoverished layer has emerged with few prospects of a "stable" life and time to ruminate on the causes of their discontent. This layer can be the source of what the Marxist movement has historically called "declassed intellectuals"

who can be won to devoting their skills and energy to the cause of socialist revolution. For them to do so effectively, they need training and experience in revolutionary program, organization and discipline within the framework of a youth organization that does not seek to substitute for the revolutionary party, but instead to provide an organic link for young people ready to come over to the side of the proletariat and commit themselves to the revolutionary cause, but in many cases not yet ready to be fully-fledged members of the party.

The organizationally independent but politically subordinate nature of the RIY means it will be organizationally distinct from the IG and other "transitional organizations" aligned with our common movement (such as the Class Struggle Education Workers, Class Struggle International Workers, etc.). It will have a separate executive body, treasury, local committees, etc., and its own newspaper, *Revolution*, published together with the CUNY Internationalist Clubs. Debating and deciding on its tasks and perspectives through the best practices of the revolutionary movement, the RIY's members will be responsible for carrying them out in a disciplined way as the youth section of our common movement.

Thus the RIY is hereby established on the basis of the founding program of Trotsky's Fourth International (*The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, known as the Transitional Program [1938]); the founding declarations of the Internationalist Group (1997) and League for the Fourth International (1998); *Marxist Bulletin* No. 7 on youth-party relations (1967), as well as the basic programmatic and organizational conceptions and guidelines put forward in *Youth, Class and Party* (1971); "The Trotskyist Struggle for International Socialist Revolution," adopted by the First National Conference of the Internationalist Group (2015); and "International Perspectives of the League for the Fourth International" (2015).

The founding of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth is an exciting and important step forward at a time when capitalism's threat to humanity's very survival confronts millions of young people with the need to take their place in the fight for international socialist revolution. Our task of recruiting and training young people to be life-long revolutionary Marxist cadres is a vital part of this fight to win lasting victory over capitalist barbarism, for the working class and all the oppressed throughout the world to open the road to a society without war, oppression or poverty, the classless society of the communist future. ■



Internationalist Club literature table at forum on women in the Russian Revolution, November 7, 2017. Pictures of leading Bolsheviks were prominently featured, including V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky and Alexandra Kollontai. January 2018

Yiannopoulos...

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Muslims, women, African Americans or lesbian, gay and transgender people. Such actions are not the exercise of free speech, but deliberate provocations, targeting individuals or groups of people with the intent of causing harm to them.

The response of many mainstream liberals and university officials to Yiannopoulos, as well as to genuine fascists, has been to join with conservatives in accusing those who would stop these dangerous racists of violating their right to “free speech.” Others, including the mayors of Portland, San Francisco and Berkeley, under pressure from an alarmed public, have sought to use the power of the state (i.e., the police) to ban marches and rallies. Similarly, as at UC Berkeley, some call on university administrations to cancel the events. And when administrators refuse, these liberals and their “left” tails seek to undercut militant protest by holding rallies for “love not hate” far from their events.

At Cal State Fullerton, liberal faculty and Students for Quality Education (SQE), launched an Internet petition which received some 5,000 signatures calling on the university to cancel the Yiannopoulos Halloween event. A CSUF spokesman refused, claiming in a September 12 statement that while his words may be “offensive” and “distasteful, if not wholly objectionable,” the Alt-right provocateur’s incitements to harm vulnerable populations are “protected speech.” So the SQE and others have organized a “Unity Block Party” explicitly aimed at *discouraging* people from confronting Yiannopoulos and the fascists. The folly of this approach was shown at Berkeley where even as the “free speech week” went bust, the fascists went on a rampage.

Currently, the student government (Associated Students Inc.) is considering a “symbolic” resolution mildly criticizing the Yiannopoulos event and endorsing the “alternative” block party. Even this has drawn the ire of conservatives and liberals, from the College Republicans to *O.C. Weekly*. But a L.A. United Front Against Fascism has called a protest at CSUF for October 31, declaring, “No fascist Milo in SoCal! No racist, sexist, anti-trans hate!” and calling to “repel this attack on the democratic rights of the people.” And while a letter by the CSUF Provost talks piously of “our campus values of tolerance, inclusion and diversity,” hun-



Internationalist photo

Hundreds came out to say no to Yiannopoulos, hundreds of cops acted as bodyguards for the racist provocateur. RIY said that for anyone committed to defense of the oppressed, there can be no doubt that Yiannopoulos’ ghoulish Halloween hate-fest should be shut down by mass action. That requires labor/black/Latino mobilization.

dreds of cops may be brought in to ensure “safety” and “non-violence” by violently repressing anti-fascist protesters.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Youth says that for anyone genuinely committed to defense of the oppressed, there can be no doubt that Yiannopoulos’ ghoulish Halloween hate-fest should be shut down by mass action. The history of Europe in the 1930s underscores that the fascists must be smashed while they are still small. But how? It is crucial to understand that provocations by small numbers of fascists, along with their fascistic fellow travelers like Yiannopoulos, seek to bring the power of the capitalist state – the courts and cops – against any and all who oppose their genocidal politics. **We need to mobilize a greater power, that of the working class leading all the oppressed, to stop the fascists in their tracks.**

Defend Freedom of Speech Against State Repression and Campus Witchhunters!

The election of raving all-round bigot Donald Trump put wind in the sails of racists and fascists. The presence of the white supremacist in the White House has led to a ramping up of the “culture war” to “cleanse America” of “foreign” elements. Yet ultimately this is a class war, which the capitalists have been winning centrally because the working class and its allies are chained to the capitalist Democrats. And since November 2016, the misleaders of labor, black, immigrant, women’s and gay rights movements have been channeling revulsion against Trump into a phony “Resistance” led by the same Democratic Party that paved the way for the billionaire Republican with its racist repression and anti-working-class policies.

Today, instead of an independent class mobilization to actually stop racist terror, a slew of reformist pseudo-socialist groups call for liberal love-fests far away from where the fascist hate-fests are taking place. They are staging these diversions in tacit or open cooperation with the Democratic mayors, who in big cities across the country are the bosses of the racist killer cops, who in turn protect the fascists, blocking anti-fascist action. This was what the social-democrats did in Portland

on June 4, to undercut mobilizations called by antifa and Portland Labor Against the Fascists.¹ The result of this conscious sabotage of militant mass action is to let the fascists/racist provocations proceed.

Along with this, the reformists have been echoing the liberal/conservative attacks on antifa, which just so happens to be the focus of the fascist campaign to disguise their racist provocations as “free speech.” Last February, the International Socialist Organization (ISO) published an article condemning “black bloc” protesters for “disrupting” and attempting to “provoke the police attack” on the protest against Yiannopoulos in Berkeley on February 1 (*Socialist Worker*, 8 February). These shameless reformists went so far as to praise the cops for their “remarkable restraint”!

At Fullerton, the ISO is promoting the Unity Block Party along with the DSA (Democratic Socialists of America) and the Maoist RCP (Revolutionary Communist Party) front group, refusefascism.org. The Block Party is a “popular-front” which seeks to “unite” leftists with a wing of the capitalist class, namely the Democratic Party. This “alternative” event aimed at defusing militant anti-fascist protest is co-sponsored by the North Orange County Democrats and includes Democratic former Fullerton mayor Sharon Quirk-Silva. The Block Party is relying on the Fullerton cops to protect them, the same police force that beat a homeless man, Kelly Thomas, to death in 2011 and then tried to cover it up. Naturally, the killer cops got off.

A slightly more left position is taken by the centrists of the Spartacist League (SL), which criticized the ISO’s pro-police statements, but came out for Yiannopoulos’ “freedom of speech.” They wrote that “Far from a victory against the forces of reaction and repression, the result of shutting down this creep was to strengthen them” (*Workers Vanguard*, 24 February). Wrong! The SL hides its abstentionism behind the argument that Yiannopoulos is not technically a fascist, and dismisses the danger he poses by pointing out that the *Daily Stormer* came out against him. By calling only to “protest and expose his reactionary

¹ See “Portland Labor Mobilizes to Stop Fascist Provocation,” *The Internationalist* No. 48, May-June 2017.

ideology,” the SL pretends that Yiannopoulos is an ideologue instead of what he calls himself and clearly is, a provocateur.

This is hardly the first time that the latter-day SL has joined the liberals in whitewashing dangerous racists. A decade ago, when the co-founder of the nativist fascist Minutemen came to Columbia University to speak, the SL opposed driving him out on the bogus claim that they were only fascistic. Refuting *WI*’s claims, the Internationalist Group documented how these anti-immigrant vigilantes ran armed patrols hunting down border crossers in Arizona. As we wrote then, “What the SL is really trying to do here is provide a veneer of pseudo-Marxist rhetoric to cover its latest lurch to the right, which consists of a grotesque, social-democratic opposition to a policy of militant mobilizations against these racist gangsters” (“Drive Out Racist ‘Minuteman’ Vigilantes!” *The Internationalist* No. 26, July 2007).

In contrast to the latter-day SL, which has step by step abandoned the class politics of revolutionary Leninism and Trotskyism it once embodied, the Internationalist Group wrote that the self-promoter Yiannopoulos “is not a fascist, but he is still a dangerous racist, sexist demagogue who posed an imminent threat to those he targeted.” The IG pointed out that Yiannopoulos’ appearance at Berkeley was part of an offensive against “sanctuary campuses” coordinated directly with the White House (as Trump himself made clear with a 3 a.m. tweet threatening to cut off federal funds to UC Berkeley). *The Internationalist* emphasized:

“But the Yiannopoulos campaign aiming to bring down cop repression and reprisals by the federal government is only one prong of a broader repressive assault. Leftist student groups are being harassed, in particular those critical of Zionism, in a drive to squelch protest on American campuses. Simultaneously, rightist witch-hunters are gearing up a sinister offensive to get student fink squads to record, harass and turn in leftist professors. And this goes hand-in-hand with the escalation of deportations of immigrants and plans to step up racist police repression against black people and Latinos. To defeat them what’s needed is militant defense of the oppressed through powerful working-class action.”

–“Milo Yiannopoulos, ‘Free Speech’ and the Assault on Universities”

Pseudo-socialists who complain that the tactics of the anarchist Black Bloc and antifa “put the rest of us in serious danger” (ISO), and ex-Trotskyists who say shutting down Yiannopoulos is “handing him the flag of ‘freedom of speech’” (SL) are feeding into the bourgeois campaign justifying repression of anti-fascist protests. Our differences with antifa are rather that endless inconclusive brawls, smashing a few windows or tossing fireworks are utterly inadequate for defeating the hodgepodge of fascists, white supremacists and fascistic provocateurs *backed up by the most powerful and bloody ruling class in the world*. But workers and the oppressed wield enormous potential social power that can be mobilized to sweep the fascist scum off the streets.

How to do that? Fullerton is in Orange County, once the home of racist Reagan reaction. But times have changed. Today non-Hispanic whites are a minority of the

Revolution



Self-described provocateur Yiannopoulos aims to provoke repression against immigrants and universities. Above: At University of New Mexico, January 28, where he put I.C.E. hotline number on screen, urging people to finger immigrants.

county's population while a majority are Latino or Asian. Latinos are over half the residents of Anaheim, next door, and almost 80% in nearby Santa Ana, the county seat. And while the racists can still mobilize, particularly in filthy-rich enclaves like Irvine, they can be outmobilized. On August 22, an anti-immigrant demo of a few dozen America Firsters at Laguna Beach was dwarfed by over 2,500 anti-racist demonstrators in a protest called by the Orange County DSA. The Alt-Rightists could have been driven off, but that's not what the DSA social democrats are about.

What's required is above all revolutionary leadership. The Revolutionary Internationalist Youth call for **labor/black/Latino mobilization to stop the fascists**. A small taste of that potential was seen in San Francisco in August. In the face of a threatened "free speech" rally by the fascist "Patriot Prayer" group planned for August 26 in SF, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 voted to march to stop the fascist rally. This news galvanized Bay Area workers and leftists. Facing the prospect of squaring off with thousands of anti-fascists backed by the city's most powerful and historically militant union, and realizing that cops might be reluctant to beat the heads of longshoremen who can shut down the ports, the linchpin of global commerce, Patriot Prayer cancelled.

A successful struggle to drive out the fascistic provocateurs and outright fascists would have to mobilize powerful support from beyond the campus, which is entirely possible. The heavily Latino population of northern Orange County is directly threatened by Alt-Right racist attacks on immigrants, in league with the detentions by the I.C.E. immigration cops. And the Port of Long Beach with its concentration of dock workers is barely 20 miles away – you can see the cranes from the California State University headquarters, the site of many student protests. But the key is building a revolutionary workers party that fights for all those under attack – African Americans, Latinos and Asians, immigrants, women, lesbian, gay and transgender people.

Fascism is a poisonous by-product of imperialism. The fascists are a bulwark of capitalism in its last stages of decay. They feed off the economic crisis that has produced tens of millions of unemployed. Contrary to the illusions of many liberals and some reformists like the Maoist refusefascism.org, we are not currently living under a fascist regime. That only underscores the urgency of combating the various fascist groups and their fascistic fellow travelers who have been emboldened by Trump's presidency. The main enemy is the state, and the fascists are acting as auxiliaries to the police – capitalism's repressive apparatus, which was heavily bolstered by Democrat Obama.

Any effective action to *stop* racist terror requires breaking with the Democrats and ousting the sellout bureaucracy that chains labor to this capitalist party that, aided by its left hangers-on, yesterday opened the door for Trump and today stands in the way of a real fight to smash the fascists. Ultimately, the threat of fascism cannot be ended short of overthrowing the capitalist system that spawns it. It will take international socialist revolution to do the job. ■

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Tuition Scam...

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under what was called the system of "educational apartheid" depended on your race, class and zip code. Students in underfunded, overcrowded, neglected areas of poverty got the worst deal. So to overcome this, civil rights advocates said: if you somehow managed to get through high school, no matter who, no matter where, you had a right to an equal chance at CUNY.

Then the backlash began, spurred on by Wall Street bankers and carried out by Democrats through a financial dictatorship embodied in the Emergency Financial Control Board (EFCB) and Municipal Assistance Corporation (nicknamed Big MAC). It was linked to an attack on the city budget in the mid-'70s that included deferring maintenance on public infrastructure and forcing CUNY to charge tuition.

By 1976, tuition was imposed at CUNY, and it has risen every year. Important programs such as writing labs and ESL classes to assist students have been cut back. The army of "adjunct" teachers and professors, with miserable low pay and no job protection, has risen nationwide.

The assault continued through the Reagan years and then, under racist mayor Rudolph Giuliani, backed up by the cops, there was a campaign to roll back open admissions. Student protesters fought this every step of the way, but with union leaders tying city labor to the Democrats, the power of the working class was not brought into the fight – and our side lost.

In 1998, the NYPD locked down central Harlem against protesters demanding the right to march in the Million Youth March, and in 1999 CUNY Board of Trustees meetings were barricaded at LaGuardia Community College. This was the same year that the NYPD gunned down African immigrant Amadou Diallo in the doorway to his Bronx home. Students were arrested at CCNY at a conference demanding freedom for black radical death-row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal.

As we wrote at the time, "The aim of the war on CUNY is to *eliminate what remains of 'open admissions'* in this huge institution of 200,000 students on 20 campuses" ("Smash Racist Purge of CUNY – Fight for Open Admissions, Free Tuition," February 1999, reprinted in *Internationalist* special supplement, *Marxism and the Battle over Education*).

In the turmoil after the 2016 elections, some politicians tried to play up their alleged "pro-working-class" credentials in the interests of revitalizing the capitalist Democratic Party. There is the Campaign to Make CUNY Free Again, which is pressuring Cuomo, NYC mayor Bill de Blasio, and the City Council to make CUNY tuition-free through "a tax on the richest 1% of New York City." They are trying to hitch their wagon to left-talking bourgeois politicians like Bernie Sanders, who uses populist rhetoric to make people believe that all but the richest 1% have the same immediate interests, and get disillusioned youth to vote Democrat in 2018.

This is precisely what the Bernie boosters did as the presidential campaign was heating up in late 2015 with the Million Student March organized by Socialist Alternative and the youth group of the Democratic Socialists of America, along with a plethora of pro-Sanders student groups from various colleges. The

march was ostensibly about the outrageous cost of higher education and the poverty wages paid to campus workers. But in large part it was about shoring up youth support for the Democrats. As we wrote at the time:

"The official demands – tuition-free public college, cancellation of all student debt, \$15 minimum wage for campus workers – are supportable in themselves. But why is this coming up now? Because election season has begun – for elections a year from now! – and this latest would-be movement is designed to pressure the Democrats."

–"Getting An Education Seems Almost Impossible? It's the Capitalist System!" *Revolution* No. 12, March 2016.

The truth is, open admissions was won in 1969 through a joint mobilization of black, Latino, and radical white students, with the demand for free higher education endorsed by regional unions, including the powerful subway and bus workers. This points to what's required to win today, amid an all-out capitalist assault on public education, with union-busting charter schools and a multi-tiered CUNY that leaves working-class students high and dry.

You don't have to take Marxism 101 to know what fighters from Frederick Douglass to Malcolm X knew: the fight against the bedrock of racial oppression in the USA



CCNY student center ablaze on 8 May 1969 as students resist brutal police attack on campus occupation by black and Puerto Rican students.

will be fought out in the streets, not at the ballot box, let alone by backing the capitalist parties and politicians who've administered this racist system from Day One. And key to this is winning the support of the ranks of the powerful NYC city unions that brought their weight into the struggle for open admissions back in the day. That includes the TWU Local 100 subway and bus workers that can shut down the city cold; the huge 1199 (hospital workers) and DC37 city work forces, and others. To win we need students and workers in joint struggle. And first and foremost, we must break from all parties of the exploiters and oppressors – in a massive class struggle led by a revolutionary party. Interested students should come to a study group or literature table of the Internationalist Clubs at CUNY. ■

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Puerto Rico...

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never showed up. During a demonstration at the Capitolio on April 23, two students, Adriana Quiles and Josué Román, were arrested by undercover cops who threw Quiles into the back seat of an unmarked car, keeping her sequestered for hours. On April 27, dozens of students showed up at a meeting of the UPR Governing Board to demand that university leaders oppose the crippling cutbacks. Several were hauled before court for this “crime.”

Meanwhile, the UPR announced that Pell grants and other federal financial aid would be suspended because of the student strike, and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education threatened to withhold accreditation (although this was due to the projected cutbacks, not the walkout). Despite the threats and repression, the students persisted. At the same time, the Puerto Rican government intensified the onslaught against public education by closing dozens of schools. After shuttering 168 elementary and secondary schools since 2013, the PR Department of Education, led by Washington, D.C. management consultant Julia Keleher, announced that another 184 schools would close in order to meet the demands of the New York-based Oversight Board. Thousands of teachers working on yearly contracts will lose their jobs.

So on May 1, International Workers Day, students joined with teachers, members of the UTIER electrical workers union, and other public and private sector unions in a *paro nacional* (national work stoppage) to protest “labor law changes, budget cuts, the refusal of the government to audit the debt, school closures, measures affecting the UPR budget” and environmental issues, *El Nuevo Diario* (2 May) reported. Over 150,000 marchers took to the streets in the largest protest Puerto Rico had seen in years. The demonstrations began at 4 a.m. in front of the Fortaleza when cops used pepper spray to disperse a feminist collective picketing outside the governor’s offices. At 6 a.m., hundreds of demonstrators blocked the highway into the international airport. By noon, marchers from five starting points converged on the Milla de Oro (Golden Mile) of bank headquarters in Hato Rey.

Once again, the response of the Puerto Rican government was repression. Even as union leaders were speaking from a platform, police began firing off tear gas. Some demonstrators responded by throwing rocks, others confronted the cops, yelling “¡Policía, fuera!” (police get out). The Fuerza de Choque stayed. As the event was breaking up, some protesters started throwing stones and water bottles at the UBS and Banco Popular. Clara Díaz recounted: “As everybody started running to leave, many people went to the train station. Police blocked the entrance, closed the gate with a crowd inside, and began tossing gas grenades. By the end of the day, the police pushed the front line back to the university campus some 10 miles away. People were panicking because many got arrested along the way for no reason.”

Over the next month, striking students joined a Multisectoral Dialogue Commission set up by the interim rector of the Río Piedras campus. In a 5-to-1 vote on May 10, 2,500 students on the Río Piedras campus defied a judicial order to



May Day 2017 demonstration in Puerto Rico.

reopen the campus. Two weeks later, a series of “*preacuerdos*” (pre-agreements) were established by the Dialogue Commission. However, in the meantime the interim rector of the Río Piedras campus, the interim president of the UPR and three members of the Governing Board resigned and were replaced by hard-line supporters of the pro-statehood PNP (New Progressive Party) named by Governor “Ricky” Rosselló. Students voted on May 28, by a much smaller majority, to continue the strike until the UPR Governing Board approved the “pre-agreements.” An advisory University Council gave its OK, but not the new UPR administrators. On June 5, the Río Piedras students voted by 2,209 to 82 to call off the strike.

Subsequently, the new president of the UPR Governing Board, Walter Alovera Jiménez, and its vice president, Zoraida Buxó Santiago, have launched a witch hunt against student strikers. Alovera Jiménez refused to support the “pre-agreements,” saying that dropping charges against student strikers would “exonerate” those who had committed “crimes” (*Pulso Estudiantil*, 8 July). At the end of July the fiscal plan doubling tuition was approved. In late August, Board members demanded an investigation of the strikers to see who could be brought up on charges for the “illegal strike.” After a pause following the hurricanes, the UPR is now threatening to gut the pensions of university employees, and arrest charges have been filed against four students who “disrupted” the April 27 Governing Board meeting (*Pulso Estudiantil*, 2 December).

Mobilize Workers Power to Defeat Assault on Public Education

Thousands of students on ten of the eleven campuses of the University of Puerto Rico fought back against an assault that puts the future of the UPR in question. They fought hard, but they lost this battle. That is the hard truth. Right-wing, pro-government groups like the “Coalición Universitaria por el Progreso” (CUP), the student auxiliary of Rosselló’s PNP, called strikers leftists and radicals. In reality, they were a cross-section of students concerned for their future, led by student governments rather than the organized left. The strikers faced powerful capitalist, colonialist and imperialist forces, and they lost above all because the strike lacked a strategy to mobilize more powerful forces to defeat the onslaught. Yet the struggle in defense of public education continues. This is a *class* war, and it will take a revolutionary program to win it.

In any war you have to know first of all who are your friends and allies, and who are your enemies. Many of the student demands were calls on the university authorities to refuse to implement budget cuts and tuition hikes, take a stand against privatization of the university, etc. Yet the Governing Board of the UPR and the Board of Trustees are bodies selected by the ruling class with the mission of *administering the university in the interests of capital*. Calling on them to lead a struggle against privatization and in defense of students and faculty only builds illusions in a non-existent “university community,” and illusions help prepare the way for defeat. The administration was never going to fight the Puerto Rican government and the bankers’ junta: that task falls to the students, faculty, campus workers and the workers movement as a whole.

Equally illusory are programs for “student power.” Students have limited social power and no economic clout, but with revolutionary leadership they can be a spark to launch a working-class struggle for power. In the context of our militant solidarity with such inspiring struggles as those at the UPR, instead of futilely seeking to pressure campus authorities or calling on students to go it alone, we of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth seek to change the nature of the struggle on university campuses from a purely or essentially student movement into a *class* fight that unites all those who make the university run, against the bosses who preside over it on behalf of the bourgeoisie. A strike council centered on the students that also includes full-time and “part-time” faculty, together with administrative staff, maintenance workers and others, could be the base for a fight to *abolish the administration* and implement *student-teacher-worker control of the universities*.

The RIY calls not only to oppose tuition increases, but to demand *open admissions* and *no tuition*, as well a *living stipend* to make possible *free higher education for all*. The present system combining a heavy burden of tuition with some financial aid for students from the poorest families results in the de facto exclusion of working-class students while condemning many middle-class students to years of debt servitude paying off student loans. In the present situation, facing a solid front from La Fortaleza in San Juan to the White House and U.S. Congress in Washington and their masters on Wall Street, all demanding a tuition hike that will drive thousands of

students out of the UPR, a fight to abolish tuition is no more utopian than opposing the exclusionary tuition hike. It all comes down to a question of power, *class power*.

The futures of the 60,000 students enrolled in the UPR are hanging by a feeble thread in the wake of hurricanes, cutbacks and a massive tuition increase. After giving their all in 72 days of hard struggle, many veterans of the strike may be discouraged. Some may join the mass exodus from the island. But analyzing the lessons of the 2017 UPR strike can be an antidote to that defeatist perspective. Students do not produce profits for the capitalists. The bourgeoisie can just wait out a student strike – it costs the bosses little or nothing. The same is true of teachers strikes, as the epic 2008 Puerto Rican teachers strike showed.¹ However, a struggle of the working class, not just a march or one-day work stoppage, but shutting down production and mobilizing to throw out the privatizers and union-busters – that has real potential power.

Today, with students, teachers, electrical workers and all government workers in Puerto Rico under attack, with the mass of the population in desperate straits deprived of the basic necessities of modern life, the immediate struggle is for survival. But if that fight is waged with a political perspective taking aim at the ruling class that has condemned them to misery, this calamity can be a clarion call and starting point for militant class struggle. The Rossellós and Carrións and Kehelers should be driven out of office and off the island, the banks should be occupied, and workers control of the electrical industry could restore power and launch a viable program of supplying the energy needs of working people.

As the CUNY Internationalist Clubs wrote in an open letter to striking students of the UPR in 2010, “Joint mass action by the students and workers – in Puerto Rico, the U.S. and elsewhere – is key to winning. ‘Student power’ is an illusion, but together with the working class we have the power. In our view, the demand for free, quality public education for all, along with other democratic demands (including for the independence of Puerto Rico) will only be assured when those who produce the wealth take power and extend socialist revolution internationally” (“Victory to University of Puerto Rico Student Strike!” *Revolution* No. 7, April 2010). In that strike, as in earlier Puerto Rican student and teachers struggles, the UTIER electrical union expressed its solidarity. But much more is needed: it will take militant industrial action to bring the bosses to their knees.

Can it happen? Yes. What’s needed is revolutionary leadership.

In 1999, the students of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) occupied the huge Ciudad Universitaria (250,000 students on one campus) in a strike against the introduction of tuition, ordered by the World Bank. The Grupo Internacionalista (GI) advocated a joint strike of UNAM students and the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), who were fighting against privatization of the electrical industry, together with the CNTE primary and secondary school teachers. The GI called for *worker-student defense guards* to counter the government’s threats of repression.

¹ See “Puerto Rican Teachers: Unbought and Unbowed,” *The Internationalist*, June 2008.

I Am Not Your Negro: James Baldwin in Racist America

By Sarafina, Dan and Abram

I Am Not Your Negro is a documentary film based on two works by the great black gay novelist, playwright and essayist James Baldwin (1924-1987). Members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs went to see the film when it reached New York movie theaters last spring. The film is important for young revolutionaries to see. It powerfully combines dramatic historical footage and Baldwin's stirring, courageous denunciation of the centrality of racism to U.S. society. Thus, while the movie doesn't put forward a revolutionary program – nor does it claim to – what it does do is dramatize crucial issues, including many we studied in our 16-part study-group series on "Marxism and Black Liberation" not long before it came out. So we highly recommend it. In a short review like this, we can only touch on some of the reasons why.

The film is about black oppression in the United States, told through Baldwin's perspective, and is directed by Haitian-born film maker Raoul Peck. Peck directed the film *Lumumba* (2000), which tells the story of Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba, from the last months of the bloody Belgian colonial rule in mid-1960 up to Lumumba's murder by an imperialist-sponsored death squad in January 1961. Peck is also the director of *Le Jeune Karl Marx* (*The Young Karl Marx*), which came out in 2017 and portrays the political collaboration and friendship between Marx and Friedrich Engels up to the time they co-authored the Communist Manifesto in 1847.

I Am Not Your Negro is based on James Baldwin's unfinished manuscript, "Remember This House," which tells the story of Baldwin being a "witness to the lives and deaths" of three leading figures in the movements against racist oppression that broke out in the 1950s and '60s: Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X. Peck also uses Baldwin's book-length essay, "The Devil Finds Work," which uses American cinema as a through-line for Baldwin's analysis of what the pundits called "race relations." The documentary is guided by a narration drawing on these two pieces, combined with images from the films he critiqued, video clips and pictures of the civil rights movement and Black Lives Matter protests, as well as footage of Baldwin himself to illustrate his thinking on the problem of racism and its origins.

As a black man living through the age of Jim Crow segregation, Baldwin was particularly concerned with the concept of race in the United States. After spending many years in Europe, he felt obligated to return

to the U.S., where racist rampages against integration included white children with signs saying, "We Won't Go To School With Negroes," as shown in the movie. In stark contrast, the film shows the striking courage of young black students who were the first to attend a formerly all-white school after segregation *de jure* (by law) was formally ended through the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision.

During the film, there is a clip of Louisiana Democrat Leander Perez saying, "the moment a Negro child walks into the school, every decent, self-respecting, loving parent should take his white child out of that broken school." Perez was one of the leading Southern Democrats (called "Dixiecrats") who supported arch-racist Alabama Governor George Wallace of Alabama in his 1968 presidential campaign. Wallace was the "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever" Dixiecrat, who was infamously known for attempting to stop the enrollment of black students at the University of Alabama by physically blocking the front entrance with police.

Racism's Roots in Soil of American Capitalism

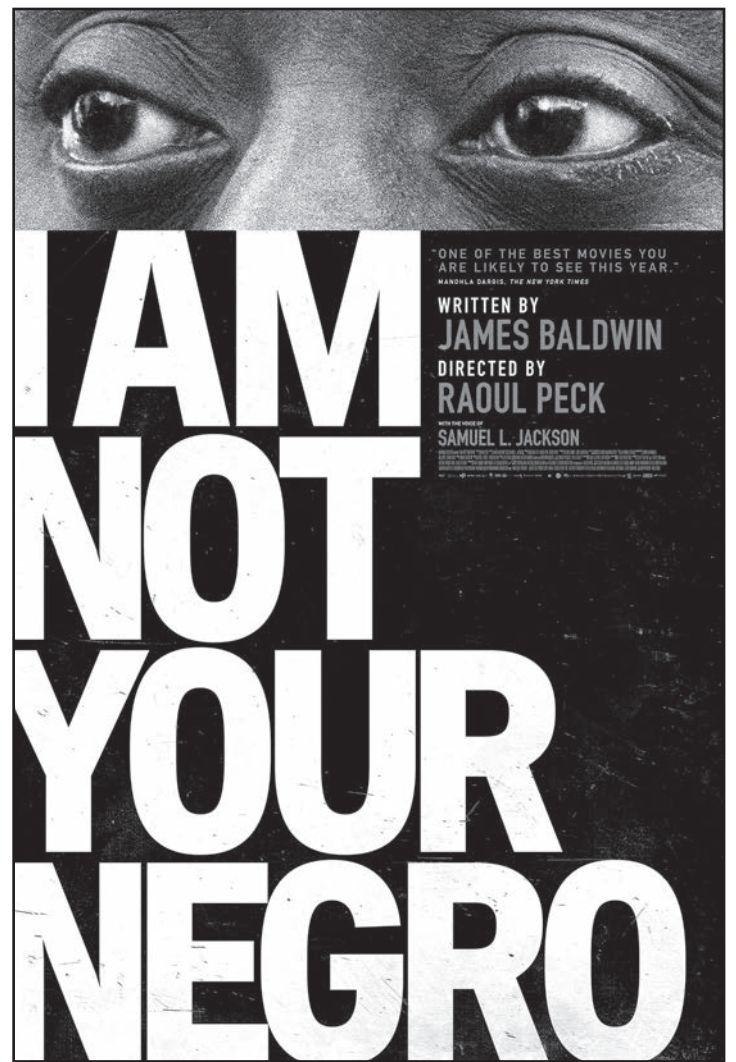
Among the best parts of the film are those showing the blistering intensity of James Baldwin as a speaker and debater unafraid to tell the truth about racial oppression. This, together with his homosexuality, made him a "threat to national security" in the eyes of the FBI. The title of the film changes the N-word to "Negro," from a 1963 television appearance in which he repeatedly denounced racist America, both North and South, for being unable to answer "why it was necessary to have a 'n-----' in the first place, because I'm not a n-----, I'm a man."

In another scene, filmed three months after the assassination of Martin Luther King, liberal talk-show host Dick Cavett asks Baldwin why black people aren't "optimistic," pontificating: "There are Negro mayors. There are Negroes in all of sports. There are Negroes in politics." Baldwin responds that "it's not a question of what happens to the Negro here or the black man here" as token or individual figures. He continues, "the real question is what's going to happen to this country." Another scene is from the 1965 Cambridge University debate where Baldwin demolished sneering rightist William F. Buckley. Showing that this odious "father of modern conservatism" had plenty in common with Democratic liberal icons like Robert F. Kennedy, Baldwin paraphrased RFK as saying, "in 40 years, if you're good, we may let [a black man] become president."

As for what's happened to this country since that time, the election of black Democratic president Barack Obama most certainly did *not* stem the astronomical rise in the number of black people being thrown in jail and the entrenchment of de facto segregation in big cities. Today, Baldwin's home town, New York City, has the most segregated school system in the country.

Meanwhile, as Peck highlights in the film, the racist police murder witnessed by Baldwin and denounced by Malcolm X as part and parcel of "the American nightmare" persists today – Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile and countless others have been murdered by police and racist vigilantes. On this subject as on many others, the writings of James Baldwin resonate as strongly today as they did during the Civil Rights era.

One of the film's strengths is its portrayal of Baldwin's understanding of the interplay between race and class. This included an acute familiarity with how class distinctions within the black population manifested themselves. For example, Baldwin was scathing on how the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the main civil rights organization when he was growing up, "was fatally entangled with black class distinctions, or illusions of the same, which repelled a shoe-shine boy like me." He was well aware of the difference between black working-class people and black members of the middle and upper-middle classes. Without such an understanding it would be impossible to tackle the double oppression of black working-class people: being ground down and exploited as workers, with all that comes along with that in a capitalist society run for profit, while on top of this being subjugated on the basis of "race."



Movie poster for *I Am Not Your Negro*.

For U.S. capitalism, though, black workers' strategic place in capitalist production, transport and communications can be a fatal Achilles heel. Why? Because it's a source of enormous potential *power* – which revolutionaries seek to bring to bear in struggle by the multiracial working class to put an end to all oppression.

The film is quite effective in portraying Baldwin's understanding that racism in the U.S. was not simply a matter of individual prejudice or an innate evil of white people, saying he "did not believe that all white people were devils, and I did not want young black people to believe that." Baldwin highlighted the fact that the oppression of black people is a systemic phenomenon rooted in the whole history of capitalist America. As a child, he "began to suspect that white people did not act as they did because they were white, but for some other reason." Though he did not become a Marxist, Baldwin was clearly strongly influenced by the historical materialist outlook. In another clip from the Cambridge debate shown in the film, he points to the material basis of racial oppression

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Many student strikers dismissed this call as pie-in-the-sky dreaming, but in July 1999 the SME dispatched hundreds of union members to Ciudad Universitaria, where together with students and campus workers they blocked a threatened army occupation. The strike lasted ten months, there were over 1,000 arrests, including several GI comrades, but the strike won: to this day there is no tuition at Mexico's National University.

Ever since the Córdoba university "re-

January 2018

form" movement of 1918 – with its call for no tuition, open admissions, university autonomy and student-teacher co-government – student struggles in Latin America have been linked to revolutionary politics. Puerto Rican students have a powerful history of militant struggle going back to the fight during the Vietnam War to expel the ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) from the UPR ... and martyrs including Antonia Martínez Lugares, murdered by the police in 1970 in that heroic battle. The

situation facing UPR students today – and Puerto Rican workers and teachers – cries out for an internationalist workers party built on the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution. That is key to the fight for international socialist revolution to *expropriate* the banks lining the Golden Mile and *repudiate the imperialist debt*, as the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky did in Red October exactly a century ago.

Los imperialistas yanquis quieren fuego – ¡hay que darles candela! A los bu-

itres de Wall Street y su Junta de Control, al supremacista blanco en la Casa Blanca, a sus socios menores en La Fortaleza y el Capitolio, y a sus títeres en la UPR les decimos: ¡Fuera!

(The yankee imperialists want fire – **so give it to 'em!** To the Wall Street vultures and their Junta, to the white supremacist in the White House, to their junior partners in La Fortaleza and the Capitolio, and their puppets in the UPR, we say – **throw them out!**) ■

Black Athletes...

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of capital. As we wrote in our article on Colin Kaepernick, “only the international revolution of the working class, at the head of all the oppressed, can uproot forever the legacy of slavery symbolized by the ‘Star-Spangled Banner,’ and end the present-day nightmare of unending racist repression.”

The Kaepernick Effect in 2017

Football players “taking a knee” is all about racial oppression, and the athletes protesting know this very well. There is a proud tradition of black athletes protesting racism – from John Carlos and Tommie Smith raising their fists on the podium at the 1968 Summer Olympics, to boxing legend Muhammad Ali going to prison for refusing to fight in the U.S. imperialist war against Vietnam. It’s the oldest trick in the book for reactionaries to play the patriotism card in their attempt to stop people from telling the truth about the *systematic racism* being protested.

Karl Marx famously wrote in the *Communist Manifesto* that “the workingmen have no fatherland.” The capitalists need the working class to identify its own interests with those of capital in order to sustain bourgeois class rule. As we wrote in our article on the Kaepernick protests:

“In reality, one of the key purposes of sports spectacles has been to whip up patriotism, in order to divert the working class. We just saw that again with the Olympics, when people chant ‘U.S.A., U.S.A.,’ athletes like Simone Biles drape themselves in the American flag, and the media count how many medals ‘our country’ has won. Then there are the endless brawls by fans of the British, French, German and other soccer teams, with ‘soccer hooligans’ providing recruiting grounds for rightist goon squads.”

In a totally cynical, transparently opportunistic gesture NFL commissioner Roger Goodell called Trump’s “SOB” comment against the protesting players “divisive” – a criticism frequently levelled by Democrats and liberal commentators. He wasn’t the only one. Nearly every NFL team owner, CEO or president denounced Trump’s remarks in one form or another. But this was hardly due to any kind of opposition to racism, police violence or to Trump.

No, it was about cold, hard cash. An environment where the owners and their employees – the players – are publicly pitted against each other is bad for profits. The NFL Players Association (NFLPA) has a combative history and has caused headaches for the owners in the past. The players went on strike in 1974, again in 1982 (disrupting most of the season) and again in 1989. There was a lockout in 2011: the owners wanted a bigger cut of NFL revenues at the expense of the players’ share, to extend the season from 16 to 18 games, and to impose a rookie salary cap.

At one point this fall the owners tried to co-opt the protests: some of them symbolically locked arms with their players before a Sunday night game on September 24, two days after Trump made his racist comments. But two weeks later, after Trump’s incessant scolding of the league and team owners, they reversed course, with Cowboys owner Jerry Jones in the lead saying he would bench any player if they “disrespect the flag.” This came one week ahead of a meeting between the owners and NFLPA to discuss the “social issues” pertaining to protests.

NFL: Players Are Expendable, Profits Are Not

While Donald Trump claims that player protests are hurting ratings and attendance in the National Football League, basketball Hall of Famer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar recently predicted that the brutality of football will drive people away from the NFL toward the National Basketball Association (NBA). Safety was a major issue for the NFL Players Association (NFLPA) going into the 2011 lockout, and the specter of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) still haunts the League and its commissioner Roger Goodell. Seeing how the owners have considered players’ brains as expendable, you get a sense of how much they consider the players virtually a form of property to be tossed aside on a profit/loss basis.

CTE is a neurodegenerative disease found in people who have experienced repeated head trauma. It can lead to behavioral problems, cognitive impairment, depression and dementia. Former NFL star Dave Duerson suspected he may have had CTE when he committed suicide in 2011, and left a note requesting that his brain be donated to researchers studying the condition at Boston University School of Medicine. It turned out that he had CTE.

In 2012, retired NFL player Junior Seau also committed suicide, and studies of his brain showed that he too had been suffering from CTE. A study published in the medical journal *JAMA* found that CTE was present in 99 percent of donated brains from ex-NFL players (“Clinicopathological Evaluation of Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy in Players of American Football,” 25 July 2017). Another study published in *Neurosurgery* (November 2017) confirmed a diagnosis made four years ago in a then-living retired player.

The ability to diagnose CTE while people are still alive is a key scientific

breakthrough, as diagnoses were previously only possible through autopsies. One of the scientists behind the *Neurosurgery* paper is Dr. Bennet Omalu, a Nigerian American forensic neuropathologist who first discovered CTE in former Pittsburgh Steelers Hall of Famer Mike Webster in 2002, while working for the Allegheny County Coroner’s Office. In fact, the NFL had tried to hide the connection between repeated head trauma and brain injury for years.

In 1994 the League formed the Mild Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI) committee to study brain injuries in NFL players amid increased public awareness about concussions. In 2005, former Pittsburgh Steeler Terry Long committed suicide. When Omalu examined his brain and found CTE, the MTBI committee tried to discredit his findings linking Long’s suicide to CTE. For years, the committee had sponsored bogus studies claiming NFL players were not at greater risk for head injury and disputed the negative effects of repeat concussions. In 2004 they went so far as to claim that NFL players had somehow developed a greater resistance to head injuries:

“certain individuals undoubtedly are more prone to MTBI than others.... It is likely that many of these individuals will stop playing organized football before reaching the professional level.... [T]hose players who ultimately play in the NFL are probably less susceptible to MTBI....”

–“Timeline: The NFL’s Concussion Crisis,” PBS Frontline, 8 October 2013

The NFL changed its tune in 2009, when after a series of PR disasters culminating in a House Judiciary Committee hearing on concussions in football the League was forced to accept the overwhelming scientific evidence linking repeated head trauma to brain injuries.

Since then, it has settled a \$765 million class-action lawsuit with 4,500 players

and their families and adopted some cosmetic changes, but the problem of head injury remains.

Crises over player safety in football are not new. There were calls to ban the sport entirely in the early 1900s, when the game was so brutal that it was likened to a killing field. According to *The Washington Post*, at least 45 players died from 1900 to October 1905, 18 of them in 1905 alone (and at least 45 players were injured playing the game that year).¹ Universities began suspending their football programs (Columbia, Duke and Northwestern for example). President Theodore Roosevelt stepped in to “save” football, calling in coaches from Harvard, Yale and other schools to the White House “with a view to such modifications of the rules as would eliminate its brutal features.”

In 1939, plastic helmets became required for college football players, which in 1956 were redesigned to include face masks. In the 1960s plastics were improved so that helmets did not shatter as easily, and in the 1970s inflatable bladders were added to the inside of helmets for shock absorption. These innovations made it less common for players to fracture their skulls and/or die while playing the game, but long-term damage is obviously still a major issue. The American Academy of Pediatrics called to ban tackling from youth football in 2015. That same year 17-year-old high-school football player Andre Smith in Chicago died because of injuries sustained in a game.

Whether or not football can really be made safe is a matter of controversy. What’s for sure is that in a rational society, people’s brains would not be merchandise to be discarded after too much profit-generating wear and tear. ■

¹ “How Teddy Roosevelt Helped Save Football,” *The Washington Post*, 29 May 2014.

A joint statement by the union and the league said “NFL executives and owners joined NFLPA executives and player leaders to review and discuss plans to utilize our platform to promote equality and effectuate positive change.” The owners want to diffuse the protests by generalizing them with talks about “promoting equality.”

As capitalists, their solution is always to throw money around. They proposed a payout of \$90 million to be donated over the course of five years “to social causes deemed important by the players, focused in particular on African American communities,” according to a *Washington Post* (30 November 2017) report. This is essentially hush money, offered to the players’ NGOs of choice to try to curb protests. The deal was approved by the Players Coalition, a group representing protesting players in the NFLPA, and will be taken up by the owners in their annual March meeting.

The rank hypocrisy behind this maneuver is hard to miss. Jacksonville Jaguars owner Shahid Khan linked arms with his players before a game in London in September. But Khan donated \$1 million to Trump’s presidential campaign. Robert Kraft also donated \$1 million dollars to Trump, and was a vocal supporter during his presidential bid.

Some players saw this hush money for what it was and resigned from the Play-

ers Coalition, including Miami Dolphins safety Michael Thomas and 49ers safety Eric Reid, who had knelt side by side with Colin Kaepernick in August 2016. The negotiations between the League and Players Coalition were carried out on behalf of the players by Philadelphia Eagles defensive back Malcolm Jenkins and former 49ers receiver Anquan Boldin. Reid was angry with how Jenkins carried out the negotiations behind the membership’s back, and also how he unilaterally cut off Kaepernick from the Players Coalition.

While popular culture portrays professional athletes as being larger than life, the fact is that their work on the field, with all the pain and wear-and-tear that are packed into their relatively short careers, make possible the extravagant profits reaped by NFL team owners. In 2016, the league brought in \$13 billion in revenue and distributed \$7.8 billion to its 32 teams, which is about \$244 million per team. The owners are making big bucks, and Trump figures he can whip them into line by threatening them in the pocketbook.

Black Athletes – A Favorite Target for Racist Reaction

Part of the racist backlash against these players is the argument that they should be “grateful” for being “given” the opportunity to make good money – something the racists

believe should be reserved for “their own kind” – and be adored by the masses. This timeworn argument in the arsenal of racist apologia amounts to telling professional athletes they could have easily ended up dead, in jail, or living paycheck to paycheck, so they better shut up and act happy. This takes for granted *exactly what the players are protesting*, which is the racist oppression endemic to U.S. capitalism.

The fact that the protests have continued has left Trump fuming, and he has turned his vendetta against black athletes into a hobby horse. Trump went ballistic when basketball star Stephen Curry of the Golden State Warriors told the media on September 22 he didn’t want to go to a White House meeting honoring the championship team, for which the date had not been set. In response, Trump “rescinded” his invitation to Curry and the Warriors, for which LeBron James called Trump a “bum.”

James has taken the lead in protesting racial oppression ever since he brought out the whole Miami Heat team in hoodies at a 2012 game to protest the murder of Trayvon Martin by a racist vigilante. In December 2014, LeBron (by then back on the Cleveland Cavs) wore an “I Can’t Breathe” shirt during warmup before a game with the Brooklyn Nets, recalling the last words of Eric Garner as he was be-

ing choked to death by an NYPD cop. The game was attended by Prince William and Kate Middleton of the British royal family.

The media claimed to be outraged over James breaking “protocol” in a photo-op with the royals. But what really got them was the message on his shirt. However, they were afraid to make a stink about it directly in the heart of downtown Brooklyn, in the middle of a winter of protests that brought out tens of thousands enraged by the choke-hold murder of Garner. Many of the protests were led by his courageous daughter Erica who recently died of a heart attack, directly related to the trauma that she had been put through.

Many people angered by Trump’s racist tirades are looking to the Democrats for a solution. But Eric Garner was murdered by the NYPD under Democratic mayor Bill de Blasio, who appointed the infamous Bill Bratton as his police chief. Bratton was the godfather of “broken windows” policing – the policy of aggressively enforcing laws against “quality of life” crimes like public drinking and begging. It was the original rationale for “stop and frisk,” which codified the racist practice of random searches of African Americans and Latinos on the street. Freddie Gray was likewise killed under the Democratic city administration of Baltimore, headed at the time by Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, the city’s second black woman mayor, who railed against “rioters” as “criminals” and “thugs” in the 2015 protests following Gray’s murder.

The protesting athletes of the NFL are using their place in the public eye to draw attention to the oppression faced by black and Latino people in this racist country. But symbolic protest alone will only go so far – to uproot racism requires the revolutionary mobilization of the multiracial, multiethnic working class, bringing together all the fights against oppression to bring down the capitalist system, which breeds and lives off racism. To defeat racist oppression once and for all – and to put a stop to the monstrous plague of racist police murders – will take nothing short of a socialist revolution. ■

Trotsky & NYPL...

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where Trotsky toiled in the reading room during his few months in NYC. More recently they closed the Asian and Middle East division. Now the Library’s former main building with its iconic lions has been renamed the Steven A. Schwarzman Building, after the CEO of the Blackstone Group, a top private equity fund, who was chairman of President Donald Trump’s Strategic and Policy Forum.

Capitalist development was achieved through barbaric means including chattel slavery and the extermination of the Native American population, but also brought public schools and libraries. Even then, “public” libraries were funded in good part by the barons of industry. The NYPL was founded with money from the estate of John Jacob Astor, the German American fur trade and real estate mogul, and dozens of branches were funded by several million dollars from steel magnate Andrew Carnegie. Today public services have been starved for funds for decades while top capitalists like Bill Gates and the Walton and Koch families are spending billions to privatize public education. Meanwhile, “net neutrality” regulations have been repealed, so that Internet service providers

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can (and will) charge whatever the traffic will bear.

As we wrote in 1999, at a time when the last vestiges of open admissions were eliminated at the City University of New York:

“In the rising period of capitalism, the U.S. was a pioneer in mass public education, with free public libraries, land-grant colleges and other innovations unknown in Europe. The name of Horace Mann is famous worldwide as an architect of progressive education (and opponent of slavery) along with that of the liberal educator John Dewey. The Russian Bolsheviks paid great attention to public education in the U.S. Lenin wrote articles on U.S. schools and in praise of the New York Public Library, pointing out that ordinary workers could go there after work to gain knowledge, and vowing to introduce such institutions in a workers Russia. Today, in the era of capitalist decline, many European countries still do not have public libraries, the NYPL is closed most evenings, and now the New York city government is planning to ‘blow up’ the City University by cutting its size in half.

“The bourgeoisie and pro-capitalist reformists seek to adjust the educational system to the needs of capital. This produces the spectacle of cutbacks in enrollment in higher education, particularly of black and Latino youth, at a time when technological developments require more skills not less. A chauvinist drive is underway against bilingual education and English as a Second Language instruction just as the immigrant population is exploding. In opposing the butchering of CUNY, liberals argue for a more ‘rational’ educational policy. Yet the offensive against mass public higher education is an expression of the fundamental irrationality of the capitalist system, which destroys millions of jobs in the name of profitability and educates youth only to use them as cannon fodder in its wars.

“Today, as 150 years ago with the dawn of scientific socialism, it is the communists who are the only consistent defenders of free public education for all.”

—“Smash Racist Purge of CUNY – Fight for Open Admissions, Free Tuition!” *The Internationalist* No. 7 (April-May 1999)

Capitalism in the imperialist epoch is a cannibalizing force, eating away at what the working class has built bit-by-bit in its frenzy over ever-shrinking profit margins. Only through socialist revolution is it possible to provide public works with no strings attached, works that truly exist to serve the interests of the working class rather than catering to the ivory tower clique of the bourgeois academy. Only through international socialist revolution is it possible to bring about *proletarian* democracy. ■

Baldwin...

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sion, going back to chattel slavery, the historic crime that supported U.S. capitalism’s birth. Racism has its roots in slavery, but it persists long after slavery’s abolition because of the deep-going, systemic inequalities of capitalist America. This has gone on “for so long, so many generations,” Baldwin says, and this material reality continually generates the racist ideology that America’s rulers use to divide the working people. In the face of those who lyingly claim capitalism means freedom, Baldwin points out that “the harbors and the railroads of the country, the economy...could not conceivably be what it has become if they had not had, and [did] not still have...cheap labor.”

Today, the likes of Bernie Sanders pretend this can be overcome through “color-blind” liberalism and tepid reform schemes for a “juster” capitalism under a refurbished Democratic Party. Revolutionary Marxists tell the truth, that *only revolution can bring justice*, pulling up capitalism’s system of racial oppression by its roots. This requires learning the lessons of history. The Civil War brought the defeat of the slave owners, in large part through 180,000 slaves taking up arms in the Union forces in what Marxists call the Second American Revolution. But after the Northern bourgeoisie sold out Reconstruction, the brief period in which the former slaves won democratic rights, black oppression took on new forms. (See “The Emancipation Proclamation: Promise and Betrayal,” *The Internationalist* No. 34, March-April 2013.) The system of formalized Jim Crow segregation that consolidated in the late 19th century was targeted by the civil rights upsurge led most prominently by MLK, over half a century later. In the midst of the Cold War, and with U.S. imperialism vying to spread influence in newly decolonized countries of Africa and elsewhere, much of the U.S. ruling class decided that Jim Crow had become a liability.

As part of the program of liberal integrationism and working with the White House, King and other official leaders pledged “non-violence,” even in the face of KKK terror like that which took the life of Medgar Evers. Against this, Malcolm X – who is powerfully though partially evoked in the film – upheld the right of black self-defense and denounced illusions in the Democratic Party. Malcolm’s courageous stand paved the way for the Black Panthers and others who sought a radical answer in light of the clear reality that ending Southern-style legal segregation was very far from ending the racial oppression woven into the economic and social fabric of U.S. society. While many headed into the dead-end illusions of “black nationalism,” a crucial programmatic

basis for the struggle to uproot racism was provided by the strategy of “revolutionary integrationism” outlined by veteran Trotskyist Richard Fraser. As summarized the year after Obama’s election, at a time when most of the left was pushing illusions that “black faces in high places” really did mean “hope and change”:

“As opposed to conservative accommodation and liberal integrationism, we Trotskyists fight for a program of *revolutionary integrationism*. We stress that the fight for black freedom and equality in capitalist America can only succeed by overturning the economic foundations of black oppression. We recognize the radical impulse of many black nationalists who were breaking from the liberal preachers, but emphasize that the oppressed black poor and working people can only achieve power through common struggle together with their class sisters and brothers of all races. We stand for *black liberation through socialist revolution*.”

– “Barack Obama vs. Black Liberation,” *The Internationalist* No. 28, March-April 2009

In fighting for this perspective, which is key to building a revolutionary workers party, we are inspired by another aspect that comes through clearly in Peck’s film. That is the passionate, honest search for *clarity*, the dedication to honest and angular expression, and the aversion to diplomatic hypocrisy embodied by James Baldwin. Hopefully the film will lead those who haven’t done so to read some of his books like *The Fire Next Time*, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *Giovanni’s Room*, *Another Country* and *Notes of a Native Son*. When you read them you see, as you do in the film, how despite the many dangers he faced as a black gay man and anti-racist writer very much in the public eye, James Baldwin did his best to find and tell the truth. ■

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For Labor/Black Mobilization Against Racist Cop Terror

Trump's Racist Vendetta Against Black Athletes



Elaine Thompson/AP

Black players on the Houston Texans “take a knee” to protest racist repression during the national anthem before a game on 29 October 2017.

By Dan

An expanded version of this article is available at www.internationalist.org.

Donald Trump has been on a racist tear this season, engaged in a furious vendetta against protesting black athletes of the National Football League (NFL). It started in 2016 when Colin Kaepernick, then quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, refused to stand for the “Star Spangled Banner” in protest against the ongoing racist police murders of black and Latino people. As we wrote at the time:

“It never stops. As protesters chant ‘say their names,’ the list is unending of those killed for the ‘crime’ of being black in the racist U.S.A. No wonder what the media call the ‘Kaepernick effect’ keeps spreading.”

–“Courageous Kaepernick Protest Inspires Youth Defying Racist Repression,” *Revolution* No. 13, September 2016

Kaepernick was joined by a number of other players, which started a chain reaction, with athletes from professional soccer teams, college and high-school football teams joining the protest.

This was followed by a predictable racist backlash, with analysts browbeating protesting players to “focus on football” instead of speaking out against the police murders of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Michael Brown, Eric Garner and so many others in this country built on slavery. Kaepernick did not back down, and is out of a job as a result. After being kept on the bench all season, he “opted” to become a free agent so that he might have the chance to play somewhere else. According to 49ers General Manager John Lynch, he would have been released anyway:

“Yes, he was not going to be here under the construct of his contract. We gave him the option: ‘You can opt out, we can

release you, whatever.’ And he chose to opt out, but that was just a formality.”

Kaepernick has been blacklisted by the NFL – no team signed him in 2017 because of his activism, even though having such a top quarterback could have been transformative for many teams in the league. Despite this blatant attempt to silence him, the “Kaepernick effect” hasn’t gone away. From the start of the season, players from multiple teams refused to stand for the national anthem, angering Trump and eliciting near-weekly tweets about how they should be penalized or fired.

On September 22, the racist-backlash president asked a crowd at a GOP primary rally in Alabama if they’d “love to see one of these NFL owners, when somebody disrespects our flag, to say ‘Get that son of a bitch off the field right now, he’s fired!’” The racists went hog-wild and were energized by this. But protesting players were galvanized.

By September 24, scores of players on just about every NFL team were taking the knee, including 32 from the Denver Broncos and 27 from both the Baltimore Ravens and the Jacksonville Jaguars at a game in London, England. High-school football players from New Brunswick, NJ to Vancouver, WA joined in the protest, as did cheerleaders at a number of schools.

But there were also reprisals: protesting student athletes in Texas were kicked off their team, while schools threatened others. On October 8 Trump sent his toady, VP Mike Pence, to his home state of Indiana to walk out of an Indianapolis Colts game to “protest the protestors.” When Oakland Raiders running back Marshawn Lynch sat for the “Star-Spangled Banner” and stood for the Mexican national anthem at a November 19 game in Mexico City, Trump foamed at the mouth, insisting that he be suspended.

In contrast to black players protesting racist police murder, Trump notoriously said there were “very fine people” among the fascist, white-supremacist Klansmen, Hitler worshipers, Confederate slavocracy defenders and racist trolls at the Charlottesville, Virginia “Unite the Right” rally a month prior. Stoking his racist vendetta against black athletes, on September 25 he tweeted “the issue of kneeling has nothing to do with race. It is about respect for our Country, Flag and National Anthem.”

When Houston Texans owner Robert McNair said “we can’t have the inmates running the prison” at an owners’ meeting in October, referring to the players, what he was saying is “we can’t have the slaves running the plantation.” It is obvious that the protest against police murder has *everything* to do with racist repression. What Trump has shown is how patriotism is whipped up in the service of racist reaction.

The protests of 2017 were not just a replay of 2016. They became more widespread in response to Trump and his blatant racism. There were also attempts by team owners and others to “broaden” the protests in order to soften the impact and to take the focus off police brutality. A prime example was two black police locking arms with Cleveland Browns players before a September 10 game. There were attempts to reinterpret the meaning of the protests – linking arms is different from kneeling, which is different from sitting out the anthem altogether. Some of those kneeling are pro-military, and Kaepernick originally changed his protest from sitting to kneeling as a way to “show more respect” to the military. As we wrote in 2016:

“Showing ‘support for the troops’ is a standard way that the powers that be try to ‘mainstream’ protests and channel them into expressing loyalty to the im-

perialist rulers who lure youth from the working class and oppressed communities into their armed forces to kill and die for their profits.”

The owners tried to divert attention from the original meaning of the protests by offering to donate \$90 million to charities. From the high point in week three of the season, when over 100 players protested, the numbers dwindled. But some held out alone, including Olivier Vernon of the New York Giants. The hard core (like Miami Dolphins wide receiver Kenny Stills) insisted that their courageous act was “to raise awareness about police brutality and other systemic injustices, and the fact that those problems disproportionately affect black Americans” (Bleacher Report, 3 January).

In fact, the number of killings of civilians by the police has remained almost identical year after year. Last year there were *1,188 people killed by cops* – that’s more than three a day – and those are only instances which have been reported in the media: the actual number is doubtless substantially higher. *Part of the reason for the prominence of protests by black players has been the dearth of mass protests like those in 2014 and the beginning of 2015.* Why? A key factor is that *many of the main leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement have channeled support into the Democratic Party* and diverted the protests into electoral politics (like DeRay Mckesson running in the Democratic primary in Baltimore and Tishuara Jones in St. Louis).

There should be tens of thousands in the streets mobilized against racist police murder. The black players of the NFL should not be alone in carrying the torch of protest. But to actually have an effect requires much more, above all breaking the political stranglehold of the partner parties

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