

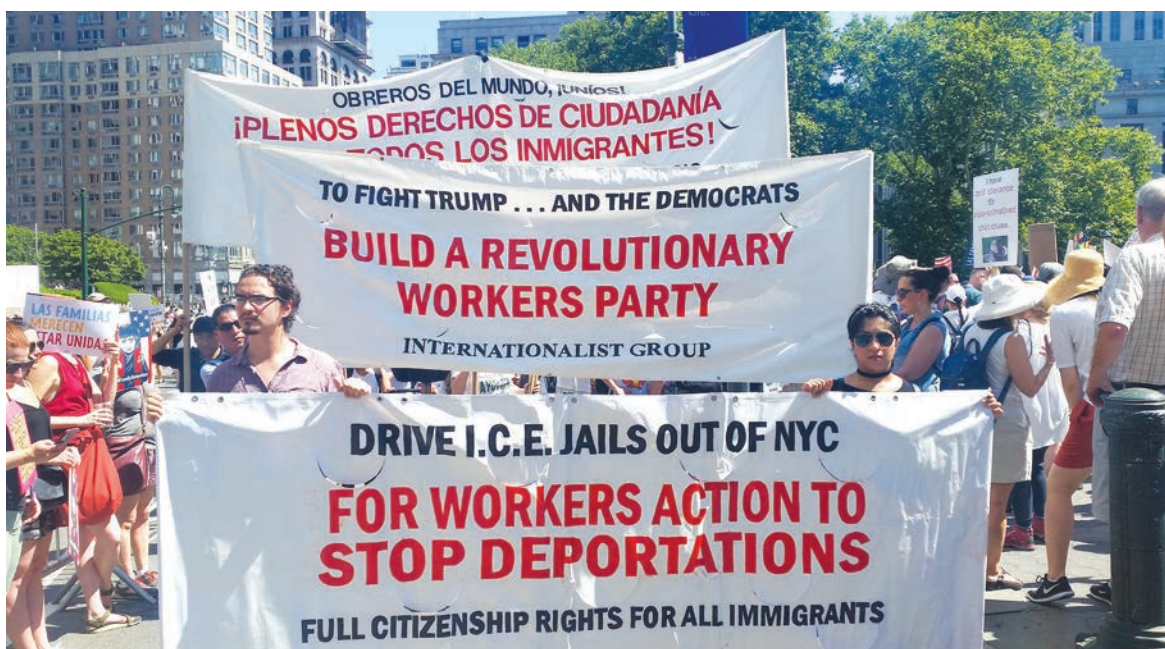
You Can't Fight Trump with the Democrats!

Defeat the War on Immigrants Set Them Free, Let Them Stay!

By Jacob

Thousands of children were ripped from their parents' arms, some as young as five years old. Tears streamed down their faces as Customs and Border Protection agents dragged them away. In "protective custody" they faced abuse and, in some instances, torture. Their parents were shipped off to immigration jails where they awaited deportation. Their "crime"? Seeking refuge from deadly violence in countries devastated by U.S.-sponsored wars, pillage and gang violence imported from the U.S. "I can't go without my son," pleaded Elsa Johana Ortiz as she was forced onto a plane deporting her to Guatemala. "I feel like I'm going to die. I feel powerless," said Angélica, another Guatemalan migrant whose 8-year-old daughter was snatched away at an Arizona detention facility (*New York Times*, 17 and 21 June). "A family was separated at the border, and this distraught father took his own life," wrote *The Washington Post* (9 June) about Marco Antonio Muñoz, an immigrant from Honduras.

One after another, such stories and images caused rage, anguish and indignation among millions of people across the country.



Internationalist contingent at June 30 march in NYC against separation of immigrant families.

Harrowing images of kids in cages, and reports of these children being stripped, bound, beaten, sedated and sexually abused in for-profit detention centers exposed the myth that this is the "land of the free." Large numbers

of youth in the U.S. have been asking themselves: What kind of society do we live in, that inflicts this kind of cruelty on defenseless children and their parents?

Patriotic liberals wave the flag and slo-

gans about "American values," posting memes about the Statue of Liberty and pretending the anti-immigrant onslaught began with the raving bigot Trump. Not us. Revolutionary Marxists tell the truth: this capitalist society has *always* coined profit from human misery. It is a system in terminal decay. Its barbarism and cruelty against the oppressed, here and around the world, continue to escalate, under both Democrats and Republicans. We need to put an end to it, by fighting for *socialist revolution*. Young activists who want to *defeat* the anti-immigrant onslaught need a revolutionary program. Key to this is bringing the huge potential power of the multiracial working class into the fight.

On April 6, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a "zero-tolerance policy" for "attempted illegal entry and illegal entry into the United States by an alien" (sic). Sessions, a living Confederate monument to racist oppression, warned at a May 7 press conference that "if you are smuggling [sic] a child, then we will prosecute you and that child will be separated from you as required by law." (The "law" part was made up for the

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**Smash I.C.E. with
Workers Revolution!**

Imperialist "Murder & Torture Inc." Targets Baruch: A Threat to Us All CIA Out of CUNY Now!

The following is a leaflet distributed by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth at Baruch College and other CUNY campuses, following the revelation that the Baruch administration signed on to the CIA's Signature Schools Program, which aims to recruit would-be spies from colleges with "diverse" student bodies.

The Central Intelligence Agency – U.S. imperialism's infamous "Murder & Torture Inc." – has made an agreement with the City University of New York's Baruch College to implant agents and recruiters on campus. This is a huge national issue sharply escalating the drive to militarize the university and subjugate it to the dictates of the government. The CIA's website (cia.gov) states that "as part of CIA's recruitment strategy," Baruch has been included in the spy agency's Signature Schools Program. This would use



Protest outside Board of Trustees meeting at John Jay College, March 19.

CUNY's diverse student body to further the CIA's "mission" here and around the world.

Since mass opposition and revulsion against CIA crimes and infiltration pushed the murderous spy agency off campuses during the Vietnam War, the CIA was forced to hide in the shadows at universities coast to coast – but now it seeks to come back with a vengeance. Baruch (together with the University of Illinois-Chicago and University of New Mexico) is to serve as a "pilot" campus for this new CIA program targeting universities across the country.

Let's be clear: the drive to make CUNY students, faculty and staff cogs in the imperialist war machine is an attack on us all. The CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth call for *massive protest and exposure to stop the CIA from making our university a base for*

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CIA at Baruch: A Threat, Not an "Honor"

Statement of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth

The following is a leaflet responding to an opinion piece by Baruch student Davon Singh, in the college's student newspaper The Ticker. Our response was first published on May 7 on the website of The Ticker with a few changes by its editors, including a different title.

In his recent opinion piece (*The Ticker*, 16 April), Davon Singh echoes the Central Intelligence Agency's marketing as he claims that the CIA choosing Baruch "to take part in its Signature School Program ... is a prestigious honor." When announcing the deal, the Agency's former director, immigrant-basher Mike Pompeo, cynically claimed the partnership would further "diversity." Now Mr. Singh cites Baruch's "ethnically diverse" composition to claim that "Baruch students must accept CIA's presence." No, students, faculty and staff at Baruch and CUNY should oppose, protest and stop this incursion. Its goal is to further the sinister work of the spy agency, which seeks to weaponize campuses to serve imperialism, not "diversity." It is a threat to our sisters and brothers around the world. It is a danger to us all at CUNY, and to our largely immigrant families, part of New York City's multiracial working class.

Some of these dangers were discussed at the April 24 teach-in organized by the Baruch chapter of the faculty and staff union. A faculty member described how the Baruch-CIA affiliation "puts populations I work with at risk," "puts me at risk," and "may make it impossible for me to get a research visa again." The main speaker, Professor David Price of Saint Martin's University, documented CIA efforts to infiltrate universities, and the threat this poses to basic rights as campus programs are put in the service of repression abroad and at home (including on-campus spying). Others spoke of how family, associates and teachers of unwary students drawn by pitches about "good government jobs" can find themselves being investigated by the world's most infamous spy agency. CUNY Internationalists brought posters showing some of the CIA's massive crimes in Chile, Congo, Guatemala,

Indonesia, Nicaragua and Vietnam.

Mr. Singh's opinion piece was directed against our leaflet titled "Imperialist 'Murder & Torture Inc.' Targets Baruch: A Threat to Us All – CIA Out of CUNY Now!" (see page 1). We distributed it to alert CUNY students, faculty and workers of the danger the CIA poses, and to call for massive protest and exposure to defend all of CUNY against the spy agency's attack.

Admitting that the CIA orchestrated military "coups" and other crimes in one country after another, Singh adds that they carried out "drugging of MKUltra subjects," trafficked "heroin and opium all over Southeast Asia" and use "enhanced interrogation techniques," a/k/a torture. This is all "just business," he says. It must be accepted as part of "how the world works" and "the price to pay for protection."

But just who does the CIA protect? And who pays the price? In 1952, Guatemalan president Jacobo Arbenz signed a land-reform bill making it easier for the rural poor to get small plots of land to help feed themselves and their families. The United Fruit Company (now Chiquita), Guatemala's largest landlord, said no. In 1954, the CIA (headed by major United Fruit shareholder Allen Dulles) helped engineer Arbenz's overthrow. Their property was protected and poor Guatemalan farmers paid the price: decades of military dictatorship, which slaughtered over 200,000 Maya indigenous peasants.

Singh claims the "full context" shows the CIA's work is "incredibly vital." For whom? Channeling Cold War red-menace propaganda, he writes: "if the United States didn't involve itself in other countries affairs [sic], the Soviet Union would have instead." What did this "context" mean in Africa? Congo was a huge Belgian colony that the king of Belgium (backed by U.S. shareholders) had turned into a vast rubber plantation run by forced labor. This was very profitable. After Congo won independence in 1960, the U.S. insisted on and backed a new invasion by Belgian troops, targeting its first democratically elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba. To defend Congo against this aggression, Lumumba expressed

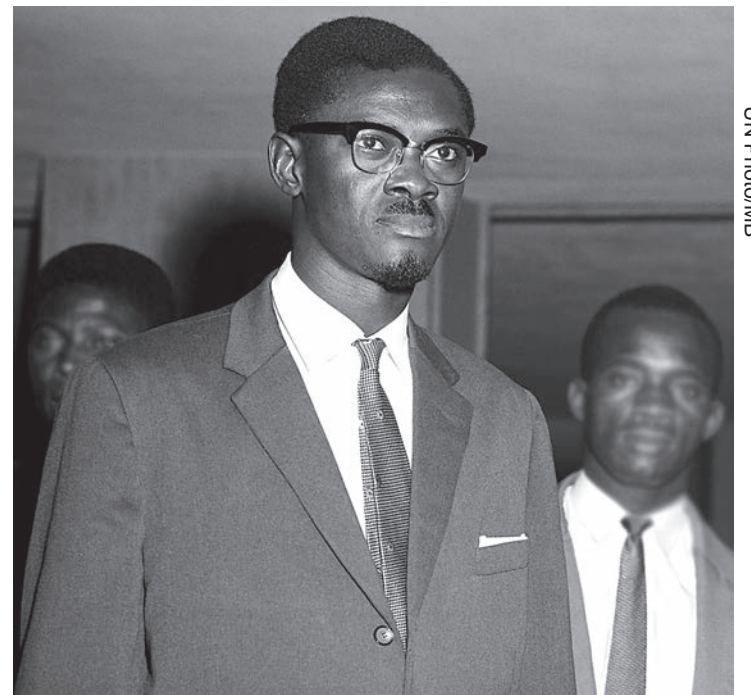
openness to receiving arms from the Soviet Union. The CIA used this as a pretext for his assassination in 1961.

All in the past? Hardly. "Gina Haspel, Trump's Choice for C.I.A." chief, "Played Role in Torture Program," states a *New York Times* (13 March) headline. Yet incredibly, Singh equates opposing the CIA as "an organization" (or considering it "evil," in his words) to espousing bigotry against Muslims and Latinos. Seriously? We all know that bigotry and attacks against Muslims, Latinos and so many others are spewed from and put into practice by the highest levels of the U.S. government. And as our leaflet noted, Muslim-bashing is how former CIA chief, Mike Pompeo, now Trump's Secretary of State, made his name. Latin America and Muslim-majority countries are among the CIA's primary targets.

Our leaflet quoted the CIA's memorandum of understanding with Baruch, including references to "simulations," and asked if prospective recruits would be spying on their classmates. Singh finds such questions "outrageous," "asinine" and "hyperbolic." It's all "highly unlikely," he claims. Really? As our leaflet noted, "this recalls the 'Homeland Security' course the CUNY tops tried to establish at Borough of Manhattan Community College in 2004, which was slated to include 'interrogation techniques' and 'technology for surveillance.'" Books like *The CIA on Campus* (2011) extensively document the Agency's use of spies and informants not only in classrooms, but in meetings of faculty and student groups as well. And can anyone forget the NYPD's use of informants to spy on Muslim students at Baruch and other CUNY campuses?

Embedding the CIA at Baruch continues the drive for militarizing universities that escalated with CUNY's 2013 hiring of ex-CIA chief and Iraq/Afghanistan war commander David Petraeus. While the CIA seeks to use CUNY students against working-class and oppressed people around the world, some argue that Baruch students should at least feel safe from spying here. Singh writes that "the CIA is largely not permitted to collect intelligence on the domestic activities of U.S. citizens, except in certain cases." Can anyone who reads the news believe such claims? The CIA has always spied "at home," including on campuses. Moreover, this got an official stamp of approval in 1982 through a presidential order known as the "Attorney General Guidelines."

Singh writes that under "normal" presidencies, the CIA is used to make "informed decisions." Under Obama, the CIA carried out innumerable drone strikes in Pakistan, Yemen and elsewhere that killed hundreds of people, including children. And under Trump the CIA has continued drone strikes



UN Photo/MB

Congo independence leader and prime minister Patrice Lumumba, 1960.

unabated. The spy agency has carried on its murderous work under successive presidents, Democratic and Republican, since its founding in 1947. Meanwhile, the fact that Trump's nominee to head the CIA has a "record of torture" is not a "deal-breaker" for Democrats, the media has reported.

The Baruch administrators who kept the CIA deal secret from faculty and students until it was signed and sealed may hope for unawareness about what the CIA is, its history and its role today. Students at Baruch and throughout CUNY should indignantly reject the idea that making them cogs in imperialism's war machine is acceptable if it's done in the name of "diversity." As the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth leaflet proclaims: *All cops, spy agencies and military recruiters, from the CIA, NSA and FBI to the NYPD, I.C.E. and ROTC: out of CUNY!* ■

CIA Out Now...

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the torture, terror and mass murder it carries out around the world. CIA OUT OF BARUCH AND OUT OF CUNY, NOW!

The letters "CIA" are synonymous worldwide with racist, imperialist terror – from the assassination of African independence leader Patrice Lumumba to genocidal counterinsurgency in Vietnam and Central America; the overthrow of elected leaders Arbenz in Guatemala, Mossadegh in Iran, Allende in Chile; "extraordinary rendition" and "enhanced interrogation" at CIA "black sites," dungeons and prison camps from Abu Ghraib to Guantánamo under Democrats and Republicans alike. Today under Donald Trump, CIA drone strikes continue to rain death from the sky, after becoming a signature program of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton. In Pakistan alone, these "targeted killings" have killed over 200 children.

How does the CIA describe its pact with the Baruch administration? The spy agency's website quotes CIA Director Mike Pompeo, now slated to become arch-racist Trump's Secretary of State, cynically spouting off about "diversity," using this to promote the CIA-Baruch deal. What does this mean? It means using CUNY students' different national and ethnic backgrounds to more effectively infiltrate, spy on and de-

Revolution

**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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September 2018

Baruch College Teach-In Against CIA Incursion

By Kaitlan

On April 24, the Baruch College chapter of the Professional Staff Congress (PSC) – the faculty and staff union at the City University of New York – sponsored a teach-in on Baruch’s participation in the Central Intelligence Agency’s “Signature School Program,” which openly embeds the imperialist spy agency on the midtown Manhattan campus. Titled “Dance With the Devil? Baruch, the CIA, and the Signature Relationship,” the teach-in focused on the history of CIA penetration of campuses, some of its most notorious crimes, as well as the danger to academic freedom it represents.

With Baruch’s administration (doubtless with approval from the highest levels at CUNY) making it one of the first colleges to spearhead this sinister program nationwide, the City University is targeted yet again by the same imperialist forces that have brought death and destruction to countries around the world – places that the families of so many CUNY students came from. A number of those speaking at the teach-in highlighted the very real threats posed to students, especially those from immigrant and Muslim families, by the CIA “partnering” with campus programs and organizations, spying in classrooms, trying to enroll students to be spies for imperialism, and interviewing their families,

classmates, co-workers and friends.

For decades since the Vietnam War period, the most notorious agency of capitalist repression worldwide could barely show itself publicly on U.S. campuses. Over the past years it has pushed to make its presence “acceptable” once again – for on-campus spy recruitment to again be “business as usual.” Baruch’s compact with the CIA was quietly announced on the agency’s website in August 2017, flying under the radar at first, until it came to the attention of faculty members early this year. “Many here at Baruch were disturbed by the news,” stated teach-in moderator and Baruch PSC chair Vincent DiGirolamo. He noted that faculty and staff members were asking questions

like “How would this affect our research and our reputations abroad? How might it endanger our students and their families? Why weren’t we consulted?”

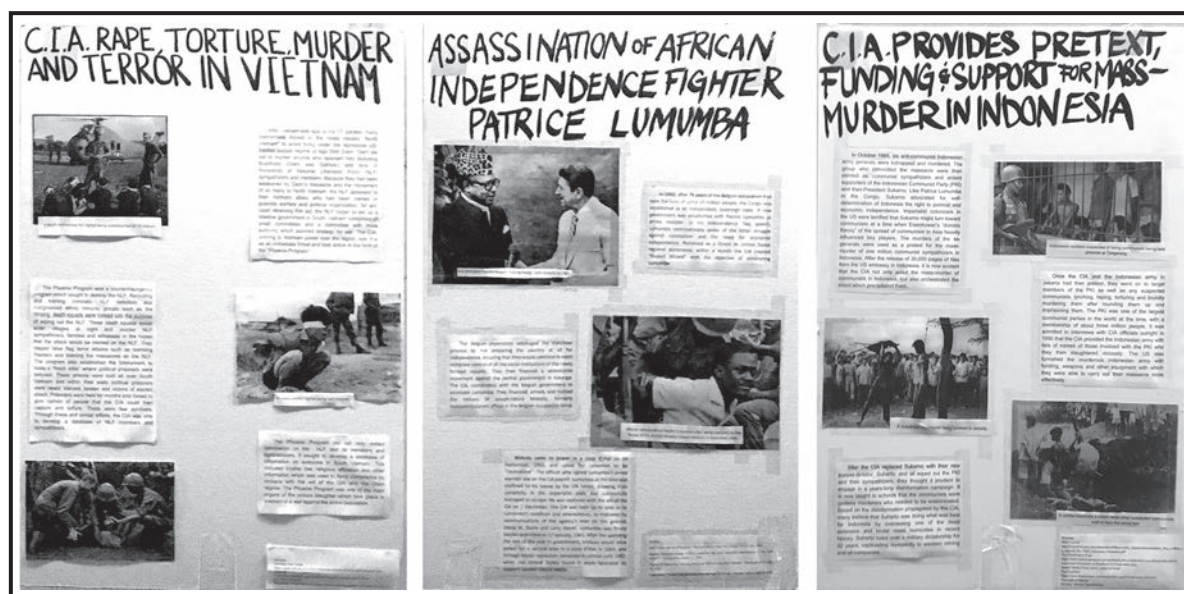
At a time when mainstream liberals pitch the CIA and other blood-drenched spy agencies as friends of “freedom” and allies of Democratic “resistance” against the Trump White House, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth face the task of helping educate a new generation in the ABCs of why “CIA” is and always has been a synonym for imperialist mass murder all around the world. Distributing thousands of copies of our leaflet “CIA Out of CUNY Now!” (April 2018), reprinted in this issue, we emphasized that the Signature

Schools Program is an attempt to turn students and faculty into cogs in U.S. imperialism’s war machine. It is the latest measure to integrate CUNY – the largest urban public university in the U.S. – into the broad expansion of repressive powers undertaken by both the Democrats and Republicans since 9/11.

In 2004, the CUNY tops tried to establish a “Homeland Security” program at Borough of Manhattan Community College, which was to include “interrogation techniques” and “technology for surveillance.” In 2013, four decades after mass protest drove out the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), they reestablished it

at City College, as well as York and Medgar Evers colleges – though a vote by the Medgar Evers College Council ousted ROTC from that campus the following year. In 2013, the CUNY administration also made the deliberately provocative political decision to hire David “Death Squad” Petraeus, former CIA chief and commander of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, to lecture on “public policy” at the Macaulay Honors College. These steps, urged by the right-wing American Enterprise Institute and undertaken by the unelected Board of Trustees that dictates over CUNY, are part of a concerted drive to militarize CUNY. The CIA-Baruch deal is the latest installment.

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Posters prepared by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs were displayed at the April 24 Baruch teach-in, documenting some of the crimes committed by the CIA.

stroy those that racist U.S. imperialism puts on its hit list here and around the world.

The CIA site quotes Baruch president Mitchel Wallerstein touting the “exciting career options” that “the CIA-Baruch” program will provide “both in the US and abroad.” What do “careers” in the CIA mean? Just take a look at who Trump has named to take Pompeo’s place as head of the agency: career agent Gina Haspel, who, as reported in *New York Times* (13 March), has played a key role in the CIA’s “torture program.”

And the Baruch administration? It promises to “coordinate with CIA on all communications related to the program prior to its dissemination to the student body.” So the Baruch tops are volunteering (or are they getting paid?) to serve as a blatant PR agency for the CIA. Their “memorandum of understanding” with the CIA states that the program will use CIA agents as “Campus Ambassadors,” promote “networking activities with student organizations,” “build sustainable relationships with key university staff and personnel,” hold events on “the business of intelligence” and carry out a “campus advertising campaign.” These and other details from the August 2017 CIA-Baruch memorandum were leaked to a group based out of the City University’s Graduate Center, CUNY Struggle, which quotes excerpts in a March 15 posting to its website (cunystruggle.org).

So the Signature Schools Program

would embed CIA agents on campus to present a shiny image of this bloodstained Murder Inc., rope students in, make student organizations complicit in its dirty work, and doubtless develop a network of professional snitches and finks. There was widespread outrage when the NYPD’s spying on Muslim students and campus clubs was exposed. The CIA openly setting up shop at CUNY should be met with an outpouring of opposition. **All cops, spy agencies and military recruiters, from the CIA, NSA and FBI to the NYPD, I.C.E. and ROTC: out of CUNY!**

The memorandum states that along with workshops and other “activities,” the CIA would carry out “simulations” on the Baruch campus. What will they simulate? Waterboarding? Other torture and interrogation techniques? Setting up a “black site” secret prison? More prosaically, will your classmates be spying on you and reporting? This recalls the “Homeland Security” course the CUNY tops tried to establish at Borough of Manhattan Community College in 2004, which was slated to include “interrogation techniques” and “technology for surveillance.” This sinister program was spiked by a protest campaign initiated by the CUNY Internationalist Clubs (see “Militant Protest Sinks BMCC ‘Homeland Security’ Program,” *Revolution*, March 2005).

In November 2011, the CUNY tops showed what they really think of students at Baruch and all CUNY when they had cam-

pus security and the NYPD carry out a cop riot inside the main entrance to the Baruch campus. The CUNY and city cops violently attacked students who were there to protest tuition hikes outside a Board of Trustees meeting, pushing them up against plate glass windows, beating them and dragging women students across the floor by the hair.

In 2013, the CUNY administration made the provocative political decision to hire war criminal David Petraeus, former CIA chief and ex-commander of the Iraq/Afghanistan wars, to “teach” at CUNY’s Macaulay Honors College. Like returning the Reserve Officers Training Corps to CUNY, bringing in “warrior scholars” like Petraeus was urged by the right-wing American Enterprise Institute. A campaign demanding “David ‘Death Squad’ Petraeus, Out of CUNY Now!” was launched by CUNY Internationalists and included a series of united-front protests. Attempts at intimidation, and the CUNY tops unleashing a brutal NYPD attack on student demonstrators, failed to silence those determined to defend the university against the drive for militarization, as the campaign drew widespread support.

Now those who want to subjugate CUNY to the CIA are at it again, and seek to up the stakes. The leaked memorandum excerpts bring out some important information. However, much is still hidden by the university administration, and needs to be dragged into the light. The CIA-Baruch memoran-

dum boasts that the CIA already has a “track record of onboarding [sic] quality talent from Baruch College.” **We demand that all the files on their recruitment activities at CUNY be opened up and published now.**

Teach-ins, resolutions by faculty and student bodies, rallies and demonstrations – these will be crucial in building widespread opposition to the threat posed by this CIA incursion. The faculty/staff union (Professional Staff Congress) must take a stand and bring out its members. Large-scale student involvement is crucial. Today, with immigration cops threatening ever-increasing deportations, and the menace of ever new wars hanging over us all, thousands of CUNY students have a vital stake in opposing the drive to make CUNY a staging ground for CIA terror.

In line with the Democratic/Republican war party’s endless colonial carnage abroad, “The Company” (as the CIA is known) is in the forefront of those seeking to shred the most basic civil liberties here at home. The CUNY administration and Board of Trustees have shown yet again that they are eager partners in the dirty work of trying to turn CUNY into one big “war college.” In defense of our sisters and brothers around the world, and our rights here as well, bring out mass protest demanding **CIA Out of CUNY Now!** CUNY Internationalist Clubs Revolutionary Internationalist Youth 18 March 2018

Learning from Museum Exhibition on the War Vietnam: A Historic Defeat for U.S. Imperialism

By Guadalupe and Maeve

Going to school in the U.S., students learn little about the Vietnam War. What is taught is superficial at best, if not downright false. This is useful for those who want youth to keep believing in the lies of U.S. imperialist “democracy” – not just Trump-style right wingers but the Democrats and reformist left groups that tail after them. After all, most U.S. imperialist wars were mainly brought to you by Democrats, from World Wars I and II (Wilson, FDR) down to Kennedy and Johnson in Vietnam, on down to the Clintons and Obama in our times.

True, most students know the government lies all the time, but even those that know something of the criminal nature of the the U.S. war on Vietnam have seen few of the images bringing this reality home. In school, we are mainly taught that the U.S. war against Vietnam was a “mistake” – as if this genocidal war was just the result of a misunderstanding or conceptual error. The standard liberal version is that U.S. policy makers were led astray by seeing Vietnam through Cold War lenses. In reality, the war resulted from the *system* of imperialism, “the highest stage of capitalism,” which cannot be explained away or reformed away as just some mistaken policy.¹ U.S. imperialism’s war on Vietnam was part of its drive to crush any challenge to its domination, particularly social revolutions like the one waged by the incredibly courageous workers and peasants there.

It was for these capitalist objectives that the U.S. imperialists’ war in Vietnam killed an estimated three million people. They dropped over 7 million tons of bombs, more than twice the amount dropped by all sides in World War Two. This went together with the massive amounts of napalm (jellied gasoline) and Agent Orange they used in the

¹ Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin explained this in depth in his crucial book *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916), published the year before he and Leon Trotsky led the workers revolution in Russia.



Heroic National Liberation Front (“Viet Cong”) and North Vietnamese combatants fought and won against U.S. war machine. This victory against imperialism inspired workers and oppressed around the world.

attempt to burn and poison the Vietnamese into submission. Yet despite the horrendous war of terror they waged – which we learn so little about in school – the imperialists were *defeated* by the heroic Vietnamese. That was a big *victory* for our side, the workers and oppressed around the world, who saw that imperialism was not invincible and were inspired to stand up and fight.

This is a far cry from the story told by many liberals and social-democratic leftists, that U.S. politicians finally understood the “mistake” with the help of the antiwar movement and finally “brought our boys home.” Right-wingers parallel this with claims that America would have won the war but was “stabbed in the back” by liberals in Congress and the media. This goes with rightists’ lying fabrication that protesters supposedly spat on returning soldiers, when the truth is that left-wing activists helped set up innumerable G.I. coffee shops, clubs and newspapers in line with growing opposition to the war among soldiers and sailors.²

² See Jerry Lembcke, *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam* (NYU Press, 1998).

Searing Images of Imperialist Terror

Last school year, members of the Hunter College Internationalist Club and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth went to see the exhibition titled “The Vietnam War: 1945-1975” at the New-York Historical Society. (The oldest museum in the city, founded in 1804, it still spells New-York with a hyphen.) The exhibition offered important historical materials in the form of photographs, videos, posters and letters. In this review focusing on what we saw at the exhibition, we can only touch on a number of points, while encouraging everyone to read a prior *Revolution* article that deals with the war in greater depth: “U.S. Imperialism’s War Crimes and Mass Murder in Vietnam,” in *Revolution* No. 10 (October 2013).

The Historical Society exhibition had many parts and sections, but the searing images of the war made the strongest impact. These included photos of U.S. troops, and those of the U.S.-installed dictatorship of South Vietnam, burning huts in villages suspected of harboring guerrilla fighters from the National Liberation Front (NLF – also known as “Viet Cong”). A part on “The Air War” carried out by the U.S. gave a vivid, horrifying idea of what is meant by phrases like “carpet bombing.” And a sense of what it meant to brave this onslaught was conveyed in a recording called “Women Driving the Ho Chi Minh Trail,” made for the Vietnamese Women’s Museum in Hanoi by Bui Thi Van, who risked her life over and over driving a truck that delivered supplies to the liberation forces. She was one of the many young women who played key roles in the revolutionary struggle.³

Another part of the exhibition was “My Lai Massacre.” Here visitors were confronted with large-scale photos of dead bodies – mostly children – piled one on top

³ One of the most inspiring stories is that of the teenage women of the NLF’s Perfume River Squad, who helped launch the NLF’s rising and battle against the U.S. and South Vietnamese forces in the city of Hue in 1968. See “All-female Perfume River combat squadron helped change outcome of Vietnam War” (Japan Times online, 28 January) and “The Women Who Fought for Hanoi,” *New York Times* (6 June 2017).

of the other from the U.S. Army’s infamous slaughter of up to 500 civilians at My Lai in March 1968. (City College has a center for “global leadership” named for a war criminal who got his start trying to cover up the My Lai massacre: Colin Powell.)

One of the items with the most indelible impact was a short video titled “Napalm Girl,” made from images taken in 1972. (You can watch it on line at vietnamwar.nyhistory.org/videos/napalm-girl.) The viewer sees a plane drop four napalm bombs on a village called Trang Bang, which the National Liberation Front had occupied as part of its fight against the U.S. puppet regime of South Vietnam. Soon you see a 9-year girl, named Kim Phuc, running toward the camera in terror. Her clothes have been burned off, and skin all over her body has been burned by napalm, which was dropped on the Buddhist temple where she and her family were hiding. Running with her are other terrorized children. Nearby, an old woman carries a baby whose skin, charred by the napalm, is hanging off in shreds.

These images were among those that, for millions of people around the world, came to symbolize the horror of the imperialist system. Viscerally affected by seeing them, as young revolutionaries our comrades are more determined than ever to help defeat and overthrow that system. This was further underlined when at a recent session of our Marxist study group we showed *Hearts and Minds*, a documentary on the war made in 1974 which is still considered one of the best made in the U.S.

From the “French War” to the “American War”

The exhibition began with an explanation of events leading up to the war. Four years after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, intended as a direct threat against the Soviet Union, the USSR successfully tested an A-bomb in 1949. That same year, the imperialists “lost” China when the victory of Mao Zedong’s Communist-led peasant army overthrew capitalist rule there. U.S. imperialism was determined to “contain Communism” and roll it back no matter what. The Democratic administration of Harry Truman, followed by Republican Dwight Eisenhower, paid 78% of the costs of the war that France launched in late 1945 in its attempt to keep Vietnam as a colony, seeking to wipe out Ho Chi Minh’s Communist-led independence forces (Viet Minh). The “French War,” as the Vietnamese called it, laid the basis for they later called the “American War” against Vietnam.

In describing this background, the exhibition also dealt briefly with the U.S. imperialists’ Korean War (1950-53), which killed an estimated three million people and was cynically legitimized as a “police action” by the newly-formed United Nations. Some of the anti-Soviet doomsday propaganda from that period was shown, as well as a short film titled *Why Korea?* This Truman-endorsed “documentary”

continued on page 6

Revolution



Famous photo of children fleeing after napalm attack on Trang Bang district in June 1972. Nine-year-old Kim Phuc (naked, center) suffered extensive burns on her back. The U.S. dropped over 400,000 tons of napalm on Vietnam while killing three million Vietnamese.

"Democratic (Party) Socialism" Gets Millennial Makeover

By Angie

Since the 2016 presidential election, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has ballooned in membership. Its rapid growth was fueled by widespread disgust among "millennials" at the blatant racism, sexism and xenophobia of Donald Trump, as well as the business-as-usual politics of Clintonite Democrats. In particular, the DSA benefited from its enthusiastic embrace of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign. The "independent" senator from Vermont who ran for the Democratic nomination had a long record of working closely with the Democrats in Congress, and helped round up votes for Hillary Clinton. Nonetheless, many leftist-inclined youth thought his "democratic socialist" label had something to do with socialism. Thousands joined the DSA and its youth group, the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA).

Some hoped to push the DSA to the left, even wean it gradually from the Democratic Party. In reality, they have been pulled further and further in, as door-knockers and envelope-stuffers for a slew of candidates endorsed or fielded by the DSA. The goal: nudging the oldest and most experienced capitalist party in the world to the left, to give it a new look, new blood and a new appeal. Thus the DSA's purpose continues to be what it always has been: refurbishing and "realigning" the party of Hiroshima, the Bay of Pigs and the Vietnam War. Socialism? Hardly.

A flood of favorable coverage in the big-business media has greeted the DSA's work on behalf of the Democrats. This would seem odd if the DSA were radical, but its fans in the big-business press assure readers, accurately, that it isn't. After all, "as anyone who has paid serious attention to most democratic socialists knows, they aren't talking about seizing the means of production or establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat," notes the Daily Intelligencer (13 August). A revolutionary party running *against* all bourgeois parties could sometimes use the electoral platform to spread its program for overthrowing the dictatorship of capital and establishing a workers state. Counterposed to that, DSA candidates running to help the

Dems administer capitalist rule spread illusions in reforming the capitalist state.

Thus the "socialist candidates" glowingly described by the *New York Times* (28 April) "sound less like revolutionaries and more like traditional Democrats who seek a return to policies in the mold of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal." Repackaging FDR's imperialist liberalism as "socialism," in order to lure people back into the Democratic party, discredits the very word – which since Marx and Engels' *Manifesto* has meant a classless society based on abundance and a radical reduction of human labor time, built through the workers of the world overthrowing the bourgeoisie and all its murderous parties, seizing the means of production, and planning their rational use for human needs, not profit.

New Faces in High Democratic Places

If new DSA/YDSA members had any doubts about diving headfirst into U.S. imperialism's Democratic Party, the leadership expects these to evaporate in the light of recent gains in the quest to rejuvenate the party after massive millennial disillusionment in the Obama/Hillary Clinton years. This quest got a big boost with the victory of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez in New York's 14th Congressional District Democratic primary. After the DSA endorsed her campaign, Ocasio-Cortez joined the group. Her primary victory over House Democratic Caucus chair Joseph Crowley won her mega-media plaudits as "the new face of the Democratic Party." Even Democratic National Committee head Tom Perez said she "represents the future of our party."¹

This was followed by the DSA's endorsement of Cynthia Nixon, the former *Sex and the City* star who is running to be the Democratic candidate for governor of New York. (She too has now reportedly joined the DSA after getting its endorsement.) Nixon is a prominent ally of NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio, who like Democratic mayors across the country is the boss of the cops choking and gunning down black and Latino youth. Social democrats ("democratic socialists") aspire to administer the "special bodies of armed men" of the capitalist state – the opposite of Marx and Engels' call for socialist revolution to smash it.

In February, members of the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (RIY), youth section of the Internationalist Group, traveled to Washington, D.C. for the national conference.

¹ See "Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to the Rescue of the Democratic Party," *The Internationalist* (August 2018).

ence of the YDSA. We wanted to meet youth interested in fighting against the racist, capitalist system but who are new to leftist politics and, in many cases, know little or nothing of any "socialist" group besides the DSA. We had our literature table outside the conference, which was held at the American University Washington College of Law. Featured prominently was the in-depth Internationalist pamphlet about the history and politics of the DSA published last February.² These issues should be of interest to members who want to know the real story of where their organization and its politics comes from – topics DSA/YDSA leaders seek to shield them from.

How much this is the case was shown in August 2017, when some of our comrades went to distribute communist literature to people attending the DSA's national convention in Chicago, Illinois. Here too the goal was to discuss revolutionary politics with new members, many of whom knew little about what the DSA is all about. DSA tops did their best to prevent that, literally leading new members away from our table by the hand. The notorious Chicago police were called on our comrades multiple times, while DSAers did everything from spit on our leaflet "The ABCs of the DSA" (*The Internationalist* No. 50 [Winter 2017]) to march by repeatedly chanting "We killed Rosa!" This referred to Rosa Luxemburg, author of the crucial Marxist classic *Reform or Revolution*, who was murdered on the orders of the German Social Democratic government in 1919.

The DSA's Deputy Director, David Duhalde, boasted on Facebook: "I am a social democratic enforcer extraordinaire." (He has since moved on to become Senior Electoral Manager of Bernie Sanders' "Our Revolution.") Meanwhile the Trotskyists' presence outside the conference brought a veritable social-democratic Twitter storm. The most popular epithet was "newspaper Trots" – apparently reading and/or distributing newspapers is bad. Who knew? The next thing you know, they'll accuse us of reading books!

So while traveling to D.C. this February, we looked forward to talking to some people who actually do want to be socialists, but didn't expect a warm reception from the DSA/YDSA honchos. What was their conference like? Various left groups have spread

² To get a copy of this pamphlet, *DSA: Fronting for the Democrats*, visit www.internationalist.org/orderhere.html.



Revolutionary Internationalist Youth literature table outside YDSA convention.

Yet as I sat through various panels, there was nothing but abject reformism, among them one called "Democratic Socialism on the Ballot." The real focus was exploring the different "tactics" to secure electoral victories for "socialists," generally running openly as Democrats while sometimes donning the independent label while pressuring the Democrats. Basically the only way the working class entered the picture was in discussion on how to get working-class people to *believe* voting for DSA-backed candidates would be in their interests. There was a lot of talk about taking advantage of the fact that working-class people often just vote for the Democratic candidate, even if they don't know them. In line with the claim that whether to run as part of the imperialist Democratic Party (or other bourgeois parties) is "a tactical question," what was striking about this was its overt cynicism.

What "Reformism" Means, and Why Marxists Oppose It

Another panel touched on the nature and role of the state. One panelist went on about "equitable resource distribution" as an alternative to the "historic failure" of collectivized economies. Another said "we will need the U.S. bureaucratic state to get tasks done." This handily encapsulated what Marxists mean by *reformism*: the idea that the capitalist state can be re-tooled to serve the working class, and that capitalism can be reformed (through "tax the rich" schemes and so forth) to be "equitable."

Such notions were long ago demolished by some of the most important works of basic Marxism. Many of these are the kind of hard-hitting polemics that thin-skinned

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Vietnam War...

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trumpeted the claim that the U.S. stood for “freedom and democracy,” while “communism [is] ... predatory, aggressive and in need of military containment.” We noted the murderous hypocrisy of such attempts to brainwash people in the U.S. (where the Korean War was widely unpopular) with claims that millions of Koreans were being killed in order to bring them “democracy.”

In Vietnam in early 1954, the Viet Minh decisively defeated the French at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. (The French government had turned down a U.S. offer of two atomic bombs to prevent this.) At the Geneva Conference held later that year, the imperialist powers pushed through a supposedly temporary division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel. While in the north capitalist rule was smashed (with the establishment of what Trotskyists call a bureaucratically deformed workers state), the southern half was given back to the defeated imperialists’ collaborators, landlords and capitalists. Reunification was promised through elections that would supposedly be held in 1956. This plan was abetted by the Stalinist bureaucracies misgoverning the USSR and China, in line with their anti-revolutionary doctrine of seeking “socialism in one country” (their own) through “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists. The U.S. installed the dictator Ngo Dinh Diem to head the puppet state of “South Vietnam” it created, canceling the promised elections, which Eisenhower said Ho Chi Minh would have won by a landslide.⁴

Subsequent parts of the exhibit showed anti-communist propaganda from the United States Information Agency, the State Department propaganda arm established by Eisenhower in 1954, and traced the origins of the renewed insurgency in the South. This included Diem’s forcible relocation of much of South Vietnam’s rural population, his repression of Buddhists (his local supporters were primarily Catholic landowners), and the onslaught he launched against former members of the Viet Minh who had fought for independence against France. Despite the execution of many Viet Minh veterans and the imprisonment of thousands

⁴ How the U.S. set up “South Vietnam,” with the help of the very same “State Department socialists” that today’s Democratic Socialists of America cite (accurately) as their forebears, is discussed in “‘Democratic Socialism’ in the Service of U.S. Imperialism,” in the Internationalist pamphlet *DSA: Fronting for the Democrats* (February 2018).

What “Social-Imperialism” Looks Like

Republican senator John McCain was an imperialist war criminal notorious for bombing civilians in Vietnam; war-mongering from Indochina to Afghanistan, Gaza, Iraq and Syria; and being an all-purpose racist reactionary.

“I admire President Nixon’s courage” for ordering “the mining, the blockade, the bombing” of North Vietnam as part of his escalation of genocidal terror (which included the bombing of Hanoi’s Bach Mai civilian hospital) in 1972.

– John McCain (2008)

When McCain died on August 26, his imperialist colleagues and would-be colleagues fell all over themselves glorifying this enemy of the world’s oppressed. The paeans of praise included:

“John McCain was an American hero, a man of decency and honor and a friend of mine.”

– Senator and Democratic “socialist” presidential contender Bernie Sanders

“John McCain’s legacy represents an unparalleled example of human decency and American service.... He meant so much, to so many.”

– Democratic congressional candidate and DSA member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (25 August 2018, on her Twitter account).

Remember this when you hear Sanders, Ocasio-Cortez & Co. praised by pseudo-socialist groups purveying what Lenin called social-imperialism: socialism in words, imperialism in reality.

more, resistance to Diem’s terror soon grew into a full-fledged NLF guerrilla war.

JFK, LBJ Escalate Imperialist Terror

Taking office in 1961, Democrat John F. Kennedy ramped up backing for the South Vietnamese dictatorship, funneling weapons, money and “military advisors.” These included Green Beret counterinsurgency forces that trained the U.S. puppet troops of the “Army of the Republic of Vietnam” (ARVN) as well as local death squads specialized in murdering opponents of the regime. The fact that the NLF was winning control of much of the countryside, while the flamboyantly corrupt Diem was increasingly detested, led Kennedy to approve Diem being bumped off in a military coup in early November 1963. When Kennedy was assassinated later that month, his vice president Lyndon B. Johnson took over the presidency.

The exhibit portrayed LBJ as having “other things on his mind,” namely his Great Society domestic legislation, in keeping with the liberal fairy tale of a president with good intentions forced into a bad war. Yet the reality was shown in materials in the exhibition on the “Tonkin Gulf incident,” LBJ’s lying pretext for vastly escalating the war. After a series of U.S.-sponsored commando attacks and spying operations along the North Vietnamese coast in early 1964, Johnson claimed U.S. spy ships had been the victims of “aggression.” With this *casus belli* (official pretext for war along the lines of “Remember the Alamo,” “Remember the Maine,” etc. down to today), Johnson got Congress to approve the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution giving him *carte blanche* with no need to formally declare war.

By 1965, Johnson had sent 200,000 troops to Vietnam, and was raining death from the sky both north and south as part of Operation Rolling Thunder. Three years later, the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam exceeded 500,000. In a detailed section on the military draft, the exhibition went out of its way to give the idea that it wasn’t really so bad, and focused on ways people got exemptions (including being in college). Such methods were inaccessible to the working-class youth who were drafted to kill and be killed in this dirty imperialist war. Increasing numbers of soldiers and sailors came out against it, as shown in another documentary we have shown in our study group: *Sir! No Sir! The Suppressed Story of the GI Movement to End the War in Vietnam* (2005).

Opposition was particularly strong among African American and Latino sol-

diers, who linked the genocidal war against Southeast Asian people to racism in the armed forces and “at home.” One of the exhibition displays shows an NLF poster directed to black GIs, stating: “The racists in the States are the very same as those who want Negroes to die in Vietnam!” One of the murals made for the exhibition included a poster based on the famous statement by boxing great Muhammad Ali: “No Viet Cong Ever Called Me N---r.” One of the items on the war’s cultural impact in the U.S. is a short video juxtaposing stark images of the war, and of homegrown racist oppression, with a song by Motown star Marvin Gaye based on the experiences of his brother, who “was fighting ‘for America’ [in Vietnam] and coming back to racism and hostility and segregation and poverty and struggling to get a job.” (The video can be watched on line at vietnamwar.nyhistory.org/videos/whats-happening-brother.)

Another display focused on students living through the war in South Vietnam. A letter by an American teacher in Vietnam described the effects of the war on students at a teachers college, who had become accustomed to the sound of artillery fire and mortars resounding through the night, and the daily letters from family members announcing the death of relatives or the destruction of their homes. Unfortunately, the display did not include materials from these students themselves, let alone students in North Vietnam, which would have added significant historical insight.

The Tet Offensive

The turning point of the war was 1968’s Tet Offensive, a coordinated assault by NLF and Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnamese) forces on U.S. positions in cities and towns in the south. The exhibition describes the brutal retaliation faced by the Vietnamese people, as well as the reaction of the American public. This section included the part on My Lai that we have described above, where hundreds of civilians were murdered by the U.S. military. One of the most harrowing photos was titled “The Execution,” which captures the moment before South Vietnam’s chief of National Police summarily executes a member of the Viet Cong on the streets of Saigon during the Tet Offensive.

There was also a photo showing the aftermath of the Viet Cong’s audacious attack on the American Embassy in Saigon, in which they seized the embassy for six hours. This dramatic and humiliating setback for the U.S. imperialists pointed toward their coming defeat. Around the world, the Tet Offensive inaugurated the series of mass protests and upheavals of 1968. This reached a high point in the May-June events in France that saw 10 million workers raising the red flag over the factories they occupied in a general strike that showed the potential for revolution in countries of the industrialized West together with those oppressed and plundered by imperialism.

The exhibition’s section on the Tet Offensive also included a part on the U.S. presidential elections of 1968. Materials shown



At the Vietnam War exhibition.

there reflected Tet’s effect on U.S. politics: it led Johnson to announce he would not run for reelection, while sectors of the U.S. bourgeoisie came to the conclusion that their side’s victory in Vietnam was highly unlikely and the war was bad for their long-term interests. This “bourgeois defeatism” led some Democratic politicians to posture as “peace” candidates. However, as discussed in the exhibition, Johnson’s vice president Hubert Humphrey was nominated by the Democratic convention in Chicago, as antiwar protesters outside were brutally attacked by cops. Humphrey was then defeated in the presidential elections by Republican Richard Nixon. The section on 1968 also mentioned the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, as well as the Columbia University strike of that year. The NYPD bloodied students protesting Columbia’s connections with the war machine and its plan to build a gym in Morningside Heights, with Harlem residents relegated to a backdoor entrance.

The next portion of the exhibition was titled “Searching for an Exit.” It described ways the U.S. sought to wind down its involvement in the war and quell discontent over the rising death toll of U.S. soldiers. (On display were books open to consecutive pages showing names and photos of U.S. soldiers killed in the space of a week, most of them younger than 21.) In 1969, Nixon began to pull troops out and changed the draft into a lottery that eliminated student deferments. The term “Vietnamization” was coined by Nixon to describe the gradual transfer of operations from the U.S. military to the ARVN, a strategy later employed by the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, Nixon further escalated carpet bombings of Vietnam, and began bombing Cambodia and Laos as well.

The exhibition displayed political buttons and pins showing the polarization between supporters and opponents of the war. Thus, some had slogans like “Victory in Vietnam.” Another was “Support Our Boys” – with reformist left groups like the Socialist Workers Party then trying to spin the patriotic appeal by adding “Bring Them Home Now.” The pacifistic slogan “Bring Peace to Vietnam” then got a more radical spin on one button with the addition of the words “Support the National Liberation Front.” We also saw a button saying “Hunter College Mobilize Against the War.” Various posters urged people to write their senators and representatives urging an end to the war. Much more interesting were the photos and videos about Vietnam veterans, some of whom had become quite radical, speaking out and protesting against the war.

The last section of the exhibition, “Aftermath: 1973 & Beyond,” covered some

Revolution

CUNY Prof. Who Was Tortured by U.S. Military Speaking Out Against the U.S. War Machine

Glenn Petersen is a professor of anthropology in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the City University of New York's Baruch College. He has been a vocal opponent of Baruch's participation in the CIA's Signature Schools Program and other aspects of the drive to militarize CUNY, such as hiring former CIA head David Petraeus and bringing the Reserve Officers Training Corps back to some CUNY campuses.

Petraeus, who is no longer at CUNY, was hired in 2013 to "teach" a public policy course at the Macaulay Honors College. Before he was appointed as CIA director, Army general Petraeus commanded U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, where the Special Police Commando death squads he and his right-hand man James Steele organized were notorious for torturing and "disappearing" people.

In response to calls by sectors of the ruling class to eliminate the "problem" of ROTC's absence from the country's largest urban public university, CUNY tops brought ROTC back to City, York and Medgar Evers colleges in 2013. The American Enterprise Institute, a right-wing think tank, issued a report in 2011 pushing for the military to target the New York region, and CUNY in particular, calling to "make restoring ROTC to the Northeast and urban areas a priority" (On Petraeus and ROTC, see: "David 'Death Squad' Petraeus, Out of CUNY Now!" and "How the Bourgeoisie Brought ROTC and Petraeus to CUNY," *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013.) Early the following year, the Medgar Evers College Council ousted ROTC from that campus.

Petersen's views on these and related issues were shaped by his experiences as a former Navy flyer in Vietnam who was tortured by the U.S. military as part of "training to resist torture." Petersen became an active opponent of war and joined other vets in throwing their medals over the White House fence in a 1971 protest. This June 19 interview with *Revolution* has been edited for publication.

How did you get involved with the faculty opposition to the CIA-Baruch compact?

It's a legacy from the Vietnam War, my feeling about having fought in Vietnam. I've spent the last 50 years in one way or another trying to deal with that. A colleague stumbled upon a memo that the CIA put out saying it had established this relationship with Baruch. He sent it to me, and I immediately went to the Faculty Senate and the [CUNY faculty-staff] union. Together we started working on it.

After the Ramparts¹ report on CIA spying came out, the CIA sort of went underground in terms of campus spying. Now they are pushing to make it more and more OK for the spy agencies to do open recruitment on campus. Can you tell us more Baruch?

In terms of the president of our campus, Mitchel B. Wallerstein, he was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Counterproliferation² Policy in the Clinton administration. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution that Baruch should get out of this Signature Schools Program, that it was inappropriate. We voted 21 in favor and 2 opposed to the resolution.

[Professor Petersen then addressed the issue of the Reserve Officer Training Corps, which was brought back to CUNY in 2013, a political decision made by the administration in response to calls by sectors of the ruling class to "diversify" the military's officer corps.]

I went through this with ROTC. We couldn't get it out of City College because it's just too deeply embedded there because of Colin Powell³ and that's the politics of it.

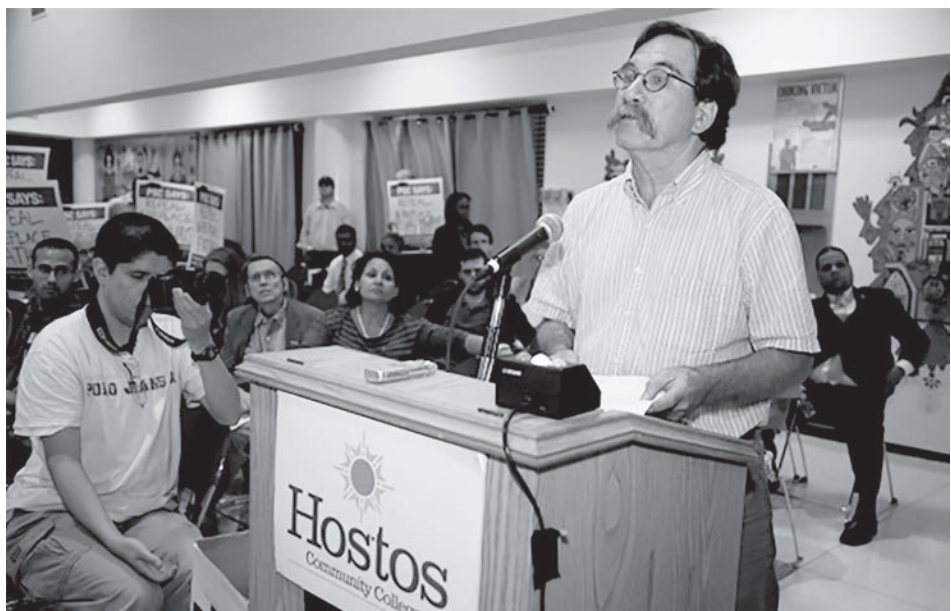
How do you understand the connection of this CIA-Baruch pact to CUNY hiring David Petraeus back in 2013, and to the reintroduction of ROTC?

People were out in front of the Macaulay Honors College protesting Petraeus every time he went there. CUNY finally "solved" that problem by shifting him over to John Jay, where they drove him into the basement so he didn't have to go through that. I teach a course with a psychology professor called "War and the Arc of Human Experience," and it's about what leads people into war and what happens to them – the trauma that comes out of it. We teach it at the Macaulay campus and it's quite consciously portrayed as an anti-Petraeus thing.

¹ *Ramparts* was a New Left magazine that published an exposé in 1967 revealing that the CIA was funding the National Student Association, one of the largest student groups in the U.S. at the time, and using it for U.S. foreign-policy objectives.

² Counterproliferation refers to efforts by the U.S. and other imperialist countries to prevent countries without nuclear weapons from obtaining them.

³ Colin Powell, a City College graduate, became a U.S. Army general. Under George W. Bush, he was the Secretary of State who lied about "weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq as a pretext for launching an imperialist war that killed millions and continues to this day. As an Army major during the Vietnam War, he played a leading role in covering up the 1968 My Lai massacre, in which U.S. troops murdered hundreds of villagers.



Professor Petersen (shown speaking in 2012) has opposed drive to militarize CUNY, CIA "Signature" program, citing his experiences during Vietnam War.

There is something there. They keep going back to that well. The American Enterprise Institute did a study about finding the proper place to reintroduce ROTC in NYC, and CUNY was the place because of our student body. Well, that's exactly what the CIA said about Baruch – it's the student body. There's certainly a pattern of CUNY being excavated. A rich vein of students – Latino students or Arabic-speaking students – who they can use. The Associated Press did a whole series about the NYPD infiltrating Muslim groups on campus.

Yes, they were spying on Muslim students at Brooklyn College and several other CUNY schools.⁴

They did it at Baruch as well. One of our graduates joined the Army to become an Arabic translator. They finished basic training and went to translator school and when they got there, the Army said they couldn't get security clearance. And one of the reasons was that they had prayed with the Muslim students at Baruch.

You spoke before about your time in the U.S. military during Vietnam. So, were you conscripted? Can you describe the circumstances under which you joined?

I ran away from home when I was sixteen – hundreds of miles away – lied about my age and got a job. I've got a tenth-grade education, I'm working on an assembly line, and I've got no future. And I'm thinking "OK, I can go to the military, I can have

⁴ These included Baruch, CCNY, Hunter, La Guardia and Queens College. See, for example, www.cbsnews.com/news/nypd-infiltrated-muslim-student-groups-for-intel/ and "Defend Muslim Students at CUNY," *Revolution* No. 13 (November 2016).

a good travel-around, and I could get some training and come back to this job." So, I enlisted right after my seventeenth birthday. I was still in boot camp in the summer of 1964 when the Gulf of Tonkin happened.⁵

Later, when we left Vietnam, we're flying over these incredibly beautiful little islands and it's paradise. I thought, "How can I find a way to live on one of these little islands?" I said, "I'll become an anthropologist and I can go live on an island like that." When I got out [of the Navy] I got a GED, went to a small state college in California, then got a fellowship to Columbia where I got my PhD. I spent my career working on Pacific islands that were American colonies taken from the Japanese in WWII, and trying to atone for having been in the war.

But the CIA had a big investment in trying to prevent these islands from becoming independent, and I was conscious that the CIA was trying to coopt what I was doing. Finally, the islands of Micronesia got independence, and because I was here in New York City, because I had lived in the villages out there and spoke the language, they appointed me to represent them at the United Nations.

So, there's that aspect on the CIA. The other is that I had to go through prisoner of war training. I was trained, and I was tortured. They made it absolutely clear there that during the Korean War, American prisoners of war had signed all kinds of documents admitting to American use of germ, biological and chemical warfare, and they

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⁵ This refers to the "Tonkin Gulf incident," Lyndon Johnson's lying pretext for escalating the war against Vietnam. (See "Vietnam: A Historic Defeat for U.S. Imperialism" in this issue.)

of the events after the war and changes in the U.S. that came out of it. The draft was eliminated in 1973 and Nixon resigned over the Watergate scandal in 1974. This section also discussed the horrific effects of Agent Orange, with a touch display featuring photos of Vietnamese children with birth defects caused by Agent Orange. Many still suffer the consequences today.

The exhibition did not, of course, really address the biggest outcome of the conflict: the defeat of the U.S. imperialists in Vietnam, and how this reverberated around the world, inspiring struggles against imperial-

ism from southern Africa to Central America. As *Revolution* noted in the October 2013 article on U.S. war crimes mentioned above, the Vietnamese fighters' victory was "a social revolution, without which there could be no genuine national liberation for peoples oppressed by capitalist imperialism." In defeating the imperialists and their local puppets, our article stated, the revolution reunified the country as a single "workers state, albeit one that is bureaucratically deformed." Saluting the courageous Vietnamese fighters, we Trotskyists defend Vietnam (as well as the Chinese, Cuban and North Korean deformed

workers states) against imperialist attack or counterrevolution from within. "Key to this is the working people of those countries carrying out a proletarian political revolution that establishes workers democracy – like the soviets (workers councils) of Lenin and Trotsky's 1917 Bolshevik Revolution – and a policy of revolutionary internationalism to extend revolution worldwide."

The biggest thing we took away from the exhibition is what the U.S. war on Vietnam showed about the barbarism that the rulers of this country are willing to inflict, in order to uphold the interests of capitalism. Our gen-

eration has grown up amidst unending U.S. wars. The imperialists' use of torture, chemical weapons and indiscriminate murder in Vietnam has been repeated again and again, against the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan and so many other countries. Yet in Vietnam, social revolution brought the biggest capitalist power on earth to defeat. We understand that capitalism's unending wars are an inherent part of a global system of imperialist domination – one that can only be stopped through world-wide socialist revolution. Seeing the violent and disturbing images in this exhibit reinforced that understanding. ■

Immigrants...

continued from page 1

occasion.) Tearing children away from their parents was part of this campaign to terrorize immigrants, with Sessions telling Fox News (18 June) “I hope people will get the message.” People got the message, all right. On June 30, tens of thousands marched and rallied across the U.S. demanding an end to the child-snatching policy and denouncing Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) – the agency responsible for rounding up and deporting undocumented immigrants. At least 30,000 marched in New York City, 50,000 in Chicago, a reported 70,000 in Los Angeles. There were protests in every state – over 780 in total.

The June 30 marches were preceded by weeks of public outrage, with numerous demonstrations held in U.S. cities and outside immigrant detention facilities along the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as condemnations from Democratic politicians and even some Republicans. So on June 20, Trump issued an executive order “to maintain family unity” for families newly arrested at the border. How? By locking up entire families on military bases. Then on June 26, a federal court barred the administration from detaining or deporting parents without their children, and ordered it to reunite separated kids under five years old with their parents by July 12 and older children by July 26 – about 2,500 children in total. However, the actual number of separated children is much higher – nearly 4,000 since October 2016 (Reuters, 15 June), not including those arrested in March and the beginning of April 2018. And the total number of immigrant children in government custody is well over 10,000 (*Washington Post*, 29 May).

Given massive indignation against the jackbooted gangs in uniform terrorizing immigrants, the slogan “Abolish I.C.E.” was taken up by an increasing number of Democrats seeking to round up votes in the coming November mid-term elections – and to obscure their own party’s role in repressing immigrants. (See “Smash I.C.E. Gestapo with Workers Revolution,” *The Internationalist*, 14 July.) It was Democrat Barack Obama who deported more immigrants than any prior president (over 5 million, not including 3 million “voluntary departures,” which are not voluntary at all). To unchain

the power of the working class, including its vital immigrant component, together with youth looking for how to struggle effectively against all forms of oppression, it is crucial to break from the Democratic Party and all capitalist politicians. The Revolutionary Internationalist Youth and CUNY Internationalist Clubs work to win students and youth to helping build a revolutionary workers party. Our banners, signs and chants in the recent protests have included these crucial slogans, calling to reunite the separated children with their parents and demanding: **Set them free, let them stay! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Mobilize worker/immigrant action to stop deportations! Smash I.C.E. with workers revolution!**

Immigrants Kidnapped and Tortured

The Trump administration “justified” separating families at the border as the legal consequence of a 1997 court agreement known as the *Flores* settlement. This established that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), I.C.E.’s predecessor, had to release children from immigration custody “without unnecessary delay” to a parent, guardian, adult relative or an entity willing to take legal custody. This mandate evolved into a 20-day limit on federal detention of immigrant families. The agreement also required that minors be held in the “least restrictive setting appropriate to the minor’s age and special needs.” The Office of Refugee Resettlement of the Health and Human Services Department (HHS), which “cares” for “unaccompanied alien children,” including those affected by Trump’s child separation policy, is required to adhere to the terms of the *Flores* settlement. Yet the average stay for immigrant children in HHS detention facilities is 56 days (*San Diego Union-Tribune*, 14 August), more than double the limit, while some languish in HHS custody for months or years (*Vox*, 21 June).

The treatment immigrant children have received in some of these detention facilities amounts to torture. Court documents from an October 2017 lawsuit revealed that children at the Shenandoah Valley Juvenile Center in Virginia were stripped naked, handcuffed, strapped to chairs, had bags put over their heads, were beaten, put in solitary confinement and called racial slurs by guards there. At the Shiloh Treatment Cen-



Ross D. Franklin-Pool/Getty Images

Immigrant children held in cages at the Nogales Placement Center in Nogales, Arizona, June 2014. Many of best-known images showing migrant children in cages are from Obama’s 2014 immigration crackdown.

ter in Manvel, Texas, psychotropic medication, intended to treat seizures, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia and other conditions, was being forcibly administered to children detained there (*Texas Tribune*, 20 June). In addition, an investigation by *ProPublica* (27 July) reviewed police reports concerning more than 70 of the approximately 100 shelters under the purview of HHS, revealing many allegations of sexual abuse of immigrant youth interned there in recent years.

Here too, it’s a bipartisan story of capitalist cruelty that didn’t start with Trump. Under Obama, there was “a pattern of intimidation, harassment, physical abuse, refusal of medical services, and improper deportation” of children in Customs and Border Protection custody, as found by an investigation on conditions in CBP facilities from 2009 to 2014 carried out by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the University of Chicago Law School (“Neglect and Abuse of Unaccompanied Immigrant Children by U.S. Customs and Border Protection,” May 2018). Even the Department of Homeland Security’s own Inspector General’s office reported in December 2017 that immigrants detained in I.C.E. facilities suffered widespread abuse and were intimidated by guards into not filing complaints.

This brutality is not limited to those entering the U.S. between ports of entry, i.e., “illegally.” The ACLU lawsuit that resulted in a court order to reunite separated families (*Ms. L. v. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement*) was originally filed on behalf of a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, whose 7-year-old daughter was stolen from her after they arrived at a port of entry near San Diego last November, long before the “zero-tolerance policy” was decreed. In another instance, CBP took a Honduran woman’s 18-month-old son away at the Brownsville, Texas port of entry in February. Numerous such cases have been reported, showing that even “legal” entry has been no guarantee against the separation of immigrant families.

Since the June 26 federal court order, how many children affected by the “zero-tolerance policy” have been reunited with their parents? The *Washington Post* has been keeping a running tally, stating that as of August 10, 1,992 children had been “reunited or released.” (This number includes those who turned 18 while in custody, at which point they are handed over to I.C.E. and prosecuted as adults.) In late July, the Trump administration admitted that 463 of the parents are no longer in the country, following this up by saying the ACLU, not the government, should

reunite the families. Another 719 parents were served with deportation orders, forcing them to choose between being deported with their children or leaving them alone in the U.S. And while 120 parents “waived” their right to reunification, many were coerced into doing so, or simply did not understand what they were doing, reported the *Texas Tribune* (26 July). Thousands of immigrant kids are still in HHS custody, while many children who are U.S. citizens have had their immigrant parents ripped out of their lives by I.C.E. under Trump’s stepped-up “internal” immigration enforcement.¹

All the while the potential resumption of family separations looms ominously. The administration has been trying to modify the *Flores* settlement to allow for the indefinite detention of immigrant families. On July 9, its request to lift the 20-day *Flores* limit on family detention was denied by a federal court, but the judge ruled that the government can, in some cases, make parents choose between indefinite detention with their children, or releasing the children back to HHS, which would eventually place them with another adult. While a “legal” basis now exists for the administration to begin separating families again, for the time being it prefers to detain families together indefinitely, arguing that the July 9 ruling “handicaps our ability to detain and promptly remove unaccompanied alien [sic] children and family units,” thereby encouraging “catch and release.” (This vile, dehumanizing term is what Border Patrol agents, Trump, et al. call the practice of releasing immigrant families into the U.S. while their cases go through immigration court.)

The family separation policy may be out for now, but it has caused irreparable harm to the children. Some kids younger than five years old no longer recognize their parents. Others are psychologically scarred, suffering from anxiety and other mental health issues. One three-year-old boy “has been pretending to handcuff and vaccinate people around him,” while another pretends to “[pat] down and [shackle] ‘migrants’ with plastic cuffs” (*New York Times*, 31 July). This is the grim reality faced by many of the immigrant families reunited and released into the U.S. with ankle bracelets as a form of “alternative detention” while they await

¹ I.C.E. made 984 workplace arrests from October 2017 to July 2018, more than five times the number of arrests made in the previous fiscal year (October-September). See “ICE Steps Up Workplace Arrests of Undocumented Immigrants Under Trump,” *Huffington Post* (25 July).

“Chaos” and Hellish Bureaucracy

The policy of separating migrant parents and kids is viciously cruel – and the process of reuniting (some of) them has been a bureaucratic hell. “Chaos Marks Effort to Reunite Separated Families,” reported the *New York Times* (26 July), chronicling what some immigrant children detained at Cayuga Center in Harlem were forced to go through to see their parents. It was part of the trauma inflicted on them, within a pattern not of coincidental chaos but deliberate cruelty.

“Some 80 youngsters were on a list to be released from Cayuga Centers.... More than a dozen white vans had lined up outside the East Harlem center in the evening But the list turned out to be incorrect, Mr. Cuomo said, with many children on it not even in Cayuga’s care.

“Cayuga later received a new list with only 14 names on it. Those children

were then driven to La Guardia Airport for a flight departing after midnight. But when the children arrived at the airport, the Cayuga personnel discovered that only seven of them had been booked on the flight....

“The group was then directed to drive to Westchester County Airport for a different pre-dawn flight. At that airport, they learned that only two children could travel. The remaining five went back to Cayuga after being driven around in the middle of the night.... “[T]he five children were told they could not fly because their parents had criminal convictions, and so were not eligible for reunification. But by 9 a.m. on Thursday [July 26] ... the government said it had made an error about their parents, and that those five children were cleared to fly.”



Japanese Americans being interned at Manzanar concentration camp in California, 1942, one of many such camps set up by Democrat FDR in WWII.

trial. And as I.C.E. continues to escalate its military-style raids, more families will be separated, and more children with undocumented parents will be left traumatized. On top of this, on November 2, Temporary Protective Status² for Sudanese immigrants and refugees is scheduled to expire, which may result in yet more deportations.

Democrats: “Families Belong Together” – In Cages

The Democrats have been posing as friends of immigrants as a ticket to electoral gains in the November midterm elections, in which they hope to regain control of the House of Representatives. In this they are aided by the pseudo-socialists of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Alternative (SAIt) and others who enthusiastically join with liberal Democrats by raising essentially the same slogans in an effort to push this capitalist, imperialist party to the left. And the Dems have been at it since September 2017, after Trump rescinded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), a program that enabled hundreds of thousands of immigrant youth to get temporary suspensions of deportation to work and study in the U.S. In our leaflet “Defend DACA and *All Immigrants!*” (7 September 2017, reprinted in *Revolution* No. 14, January 2018), the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth wrote:

“As revolutionary opponents of both capitalist parties, we warn that the Democrats may do a deal with Trump, who fakes concern over ‘Dreamers,’ [beneficiaries of DACA] 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’ (I.C.E. 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. 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!*”

Just as we warned, the Democrats’ congressional leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer promptly announced a “deal” with Trump, supposedly allowing DACA recipients to stay in exchange for Democratic support for increased “border security” and immigration enforcement. “We are not a bargaining chip,” immigrant activists chanted against Pelosi at an 18 September 2017 event promoting the DREAM Act. Having handily played the Dems and their so-called resistance, Trump then spiked the announced deal. The status of DACA remains in limbo. (See box on page 11.)

Then as outrage grew in the spring of 2018 against Trump’s brutal policy of kidnapping immigrant children, the Democrats sought yet again to strike a pro-immigrant pose, with a range of “NGOs” (foundation-funded “non-governmental organizations”) and front groups organizing the June 30 “Families Belong Together” demonstrations. Protestors expressed visceral anger at the Gestapo-style assault on migrant parents and children. Yet the cynical way this was being channeled into a “get out the vote” drive for the party of deporter-in-chief Obama, Pelosi, Schumer and the rest was symbolized by images that many demonstrators carried. Some of the most famous photos of children in cages that went viral in June 2018 were *from 2014, under the Democratic administration of Obama*. The May 2018 ACLU report on the abuse of immigrant children in detention centers from 2009 to 2014 details how kids were “stomped on, punched, kicked, run over with vehicles, tazed, and forced to maintain stress positions by CBP officials,” *under the Democratic administration of Obama*.

And what do the Democrats actually mean when they say “Families Belong Together”? They mean together *in family detention*. It is hardly mentioned that immigrant families are now being locked up together in family detention centers, set up by Obama in Texas and the New Mexico desert. The fact that they must be released within 20 days is a thorn in the administration’s side, which is why Trump yearns for indefinite detention. But so did Obama! In 2014, his administration was sued for implementing a “no-release” policy for families seeking asylum, openly targeting them for indefinite detention as an “aggressive deterrence strategy” to scare people out of trying to immigrate (“ACLU Sues Obama Administration for Detaining Asylum Seekers as Intimida-

tion Tactic,” aclu.org, 16 December 2014).

The following year, even the Human Rights Council of the United Nations (itself an imperialist den of thieves) called on the Obama administration to “halt the detention of immigrant families and children.” In fact, the court that denied Trump’s request to revise the *Flores* settlement had actually established the 20-day limit on family detention in a ruling against *Obama’s* “no-release” policy. Yet the Obama administration’s massive expansion of family detention centers went forward. A huge new center was built in the middle of the New Mexico desert, two in Texas, etc. (See “The Shame of America’s Family Detention Camps,” *New York Times Magazine*, 4 February 2015.)

From Manzanar to McAllen – The Democrats’ Real Record

In a powerful recent essay, prominent literary critic Michiko Kakutani wrote of how her family was among the 120,000 Japanese Americans that Democratic icon Franklin D. Roosevelt imprisoned during World War Two, in concentration camps like Manzanar and Tule Lake in California and the “Topaz Relocation Center” in the Utah desert, where her family was held.³ Kakutani drew chilling parallels to current events:

“They were described as vermin who were infesting America. They were deemed a national security threat to the United States, rounded up and sent to internment camps.... [T]ens of thousands of men, women and children were subject to ‘removal’ because, as one government report put it, ‘an exact separation of the ‘sheep from the goats’ was unfeasible.’” – “I Know What Incarceration Does to Families. It Happened to Mine,” *New York Times* (13 July)

Kakutani’s article recalled another moving essay, by Satsuki Ina, describing how she was “born behind barbed wire” after her parents were imprisoned at Tule Lake. Ina’s piece was written three years ago, to condemn the new immigrant family detention centers that the Obama administration was opening then. In fact, the Border Patrol’s “central processing center for unaccompanied children” in McAllen, Texas,

³ Remember this when you hear “Democratic (Party) socialists” harking back to FDR and calling for a “new New Deal,” “green New Deal” (Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez), etc.

origin of some of the horrifying photos of children in cages, was opened in July 2014.

Ina wrote that one of Obama’s new detention centers, at Dilley, Texas, was just 45 miles from the prison camp where she and her family were sent after their “release” from Tule Lake at the end of WWII. Opened in late 2014, the vast Dilley concentration camp was being billed as “the nation’s largest family detention center.” Ina pointed out that Obama’s Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson used the Dilley center’s dedication ceremony to “announce that the purpose of this facility was to deter families from fleeing to the United States and to send a message that ‘if you come here, you should not expect to simply be released’.” In spring 2015, Ina visited “the euphemistically named Karnes County ‘Residential Center’,” another of Obama’s new family detention camps in Texas. The visit brought “distressing associations of my own experience as a child,” she wrote.

“We too lived in a constant state of fear and anxiety, never knowing what our fate would be. We too were forced to share our living space with strangers, line up for meals, share public latrines, respond to roll call, and adjust to ever-changing rules and regulations with the eyes of the guards constantly trained on us.”

– “I Know an American ‘Internment’ Camp When I See One,” www.aclu.org (27 May 2015)

In 2016, 22 detained asylum-seeking mothers, held for periods ranging from 272 to 365 days at the “Berks County Residential Facility” in Pennsylvania, began a hunger strike demanding their release. They sent Jeh Johnson an open letter, stating:

“We are already traumatized from our countries of origin.... While here, our children have told us they sometimes consider suicide, made desperate from confinement. The teenagers say that being here, life makes no sense. One of our children said he wanted to break the window to jump out and end this nightmare. On many occasions, our children ask us if we have the courage to escape. They grab the cords that hold their ID cards and tighten them around their necks, saying they want to die if they don’t get out.”

– Madres de Berks, “Mothers to Homeland Security: We Won’t Eat Until We Are Released,” 12 August 2016

This is the real legacy of the Democratic

I.C.E. Targets Citizens Too

Think the racist immigration cops only target immigrants? Think again. “Since 2012, ICE has released from its custody more than 1,480 people after investigating their citizenship claims,” reported the *Los Angeles Times* (27 April), noting that there are “hundreds of additional cases ... in which people were forced to prove they are Americans and sometimes spend months or even years in detention.”

Davino Watson was one of these people, a Jamaican-born U.S. citizen who was arrested by I.C.E. in 2008 and detained for three and a half years. “Even after ICE realized the error ... federal lawyers refused to free [him] ... seiz[ing] on a new U.S. reading of Jamaican law to argue Watson should be deported because his father was not his legal guardian when they left” Jamaica.

Then there’s Ada Morales, a U.S. citizen from Guatemala who was detained by

I.C.E. *twice*, once in 2004 and then again in 2009 when she spent a night in jail. “The mother of five, who cleaned houses and offices for a living, was strip-searched and her anxiety medications were confiscated.”

And Sergio Carrillo, a Mexican-born U.S. citizen arrested in a Home Depot parking lot in Rialto, California in 2016. “When his son rushed to the downtown booking facility with his father’s passport and citizenship certificate, ICE officers refused to consider the documents.” He was held for four days, and recalled how other inmates said “in here, you don’t have any rights.”

Such incidents show yet again how defending immigrants is inseparable from defending the rights of us all. As the ruling class tries to divide and pit workers “with papers” against the “undocumented,” Karl Marx’s watchword is more crucial than ever: *Workers of all countries, unite!*

² Temporary Protected Status (TPS) was set up to allow immigrants to stay in the U.S. when some disaster hit their country of origin. The Trump administration put an end to TPS for immigrants and refugees from El Salvador in January, and canceled TPS for Haitians in November 2017. See “Los Angeles: Salvadorans Mobilize Against Cancellation of TPS,” *The Internationalist* No. 51 (March-April 2018) and “LET HAITIANS STAY!” *The Internationalist* (January 2018).

Party, which two-faced liberal politicians attempt to obfuscate. Amid the protests against Trump, the very same Jeh Johnson joined the chorus, claiming that the separation of families was “just something I couldn’t do,” not long after admitting that in the Obama administration “we ... expanded family detention, which was, I freely admit, controversial” (*Washington Post*, 25 June; MSNBC, 21 June). In fact the Obama administration aggressively fought to keep children locked up, supporting the “child-care” licensing of family prisons by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, a move which sought to sidestep the Flores ban on detaining children in family jails (*Alternet*, 11 December 2016).

Contrary to what the Democrats want us to believe, the jailing of immigrant families together in I.C.E. prisons is no “alternative” to ripping families apart. It is another of the ruling class’s cruel means of terrorizing immigrants, deprived of rights by the capitalist class that keeps them vulnerable in order to profit from their super-exploitation.⁴ Revolutionary Marxists call to tear down the concentration camps where they are detaining our immigrant brothers and sisters. We say, *set them free, let them stay!* and demand *let the refugees in!* We call for *full citizenship rights for all immigrants*. To win even this democratic demand, we need to fight for workers revolution as in the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1917. (See article on next page.)

Smash I.C.E. Gestapo Through Workers Revolution

As noted above, the “Abolish I.C.E.” slogan has been taken up by various Democratic Party politicians, many of them associated with the party’s Bernie Sanders wing. Sanders himself, a proponent of economic nationalism, was hesitant to embrace the slogan, dodging the question in a CNN interview by saying he wanted to “create policies that deal with immigration in a rational way.” But after being criticized by anguished supporters, Sanders backpedaled (sort of) and called to “abolish the cruel, dysfunctional immigration systems we have today and pass comprehensive immigration reform,” stating: “That will mean restructuring the agencies that enforce our immigration laws, including ICE” (@SenSanders, 3 July 2018). Eventually, over 100 state and local officials joined the “Abolish I.C.E.” call in a joint statement.

Many people who chant “Abolish I.C.E.” are seeking to express a sincere revulsion against the racist immigration police, and a desire to *do something* to put an end to the daily atrocities committed against immigrants. But the illusion peddled by Democratic politicians amounts to replacing I.C.E. with another immigration police agency. Among the more prominent voices is Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Democratic activist who joined the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) after it endorsed her in the primaries for New York’s 14th Congressional District, where in June she beat ten-term incumbent Joseph Crowley. The DSA is an organization that recruits young people revolted by Trump

⁴ “Super-exploitation” refers to capitalists squeezing out more profit by paying extra-low wages (in Marxist terms, below the normal value of labor power).



Internationalist contingent at June 30 march in NYC against separation of immigrant families.

and interested in socialism, in order to channel them back into U.S. imperialism’s Democratic Party. Growing rapidly in the wake of Sanders’ “political revolution” campaign (which funneled votes to Hillary Clinton), it is now roping youth into seeking to “revitalize” the Democrats through politicians like Ocasio-Cortez and Cynthia Nixon, the former *Sex and the City* actor challenging Andrew Cuomo in the New York gubernatorial primaries. Tailing after the DSA and the candidates it promotes are several smaller social-democratic groups such as the International Socialist Organization, the International Marxist Tendency and Socialist Alternative, best known for having a city council member in Seattle, Kshama Sawant (who just voted to confirm the city’s new chief of police!).

Massive news coverage of Ocasio-Cortez as a rising political star and “new face of the Democratic party” has included her identification with the “Abolish I.C.E.” slogan. But what does she say this does and does not mean? She says that if elected (which she will be, as the district is overwhelmingly Democratic), she will work to replace I.C.E. with a “humane agency,” while insisting that “abolishing ICE doesn’t mean get rid of our immigration policy” and that “we need to make sure that people are, in fact, documented,” telling CNN that “we do need to make sure that our borders are secure.”⁵

Not long after Ocasio-Cortez won the primary, the nature of the Democrats’ “Abolish I.C.E.” call was put to an early test. Democrats drafted a bill to supposedly fulfill the slogan – actually, the bill was called the “Establishing a Humane Immigration Enforcement Act.” But then the Republican leadership said it would put the bill up for a vote in the House, at which point the Democrats, including the bill’s own sponsors, said they would vote against it. It was just a ploy to round up votes in the November elections. In reality, there can and will be no “humane” immigration system under capitalism. The Democrats tacked the word “humane” onto “immigration enforcement” since together with the Republicans they enforce the system of exploitation based on private property and nation-state boundaries. These institutions, historically entwined with the rise of capitalism – which became a reactionary obstacle to human progress over a century ago – can only be overcome in an international socialist society.

Today, many immigrants come from countries where U.S. imperialism has

⁵ See “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to the Rescue of the Democratic Party,” *The Internationalist* (August 2018).

wrought havoc through interventions, invasions and “free-trade” pillage. “Seven of the ten largest immigrant groups (Filipinos, Salvadorans, Vietnamese, Cubans, Dominicans, Koreans, and Guatemalans) come from countries the U.S. invaded or where it had a large military presence,” notes the *New York Review of Books* (16 August), adding that the actual number is “eight – if you go back far enough to count Mexico.” In Latin America, the Central Intelligence Agency is synonymous with coups and assassinations, deposing elected governments in favor of strongman dictators willing to carry out U.S. imperialism’s *diktats*. In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, CIA-trained death squads and counterinsurgency units murdered hundreds of thousands of workers, peasants and students, ripping society to pieces and generating the widespread violence people are fleeing today. As for the MS-13 gang that Trump constantly refers to as a pretext for insulting and threatening immigrants, it started in Los Angeles and spread to El Salvador when some of its members were deported.

To uphold its system of exploitation, the ruling class needs organized repressive forces – what Karl Marx’s comrade Friedrich Engels called the “special bodies of armed men” that are the core of the capitalist state. It cannot otherwise secure its property from the working class that makes up the majority of the population. This repressive apparatus is key to maintaining immigrants’ position as pariahs who can be super-exploited, a cheap labor force to be brought into production and thrown out again according to the shifting needs of the profit system. Immigration detention itself is a huge industry, with operators of family detention centers receiving up to \$298 dollars each day per person detained.⁶ In 2017 Geo Group, one of the largest for-profit prison firms in the U.S., which has contracts with I.C.E., the U.S. Marshals and Bureau of Prisons, reported \$2.26 billion in revenues. Geo’s competitor CoreCivic (formerly the Corrections Corporation of America) reported \$1.8 billion in revenue that same year (*New York Times*, 10 April).

Civics classes have long taught that the U.S. is a “land of opportunity” for immigrants, a cultural “melting pot.” But the treatment of immigrants in this country has always reflected the material basis of racist

⁶ Eileen Traux, *We Built the Wall: How the U.S. Keeps Out Asylum Seekers from Mexico, Central America and Beyond* (Verso, 2018). A 2015 report by Human Rights Now put the daily cost of detaining a family of three at \$1,029 per day (*Los Angeles Times*, 23 October 2015).

U.S. capitalism. This is a long and bloody history of ruthless exploitation and oppression going back to the immensely profitable trade in African slaves, with its deadly Middle Passage, laying the basis for the system of chattel slavery that gave birth to U.S. capitalism. And among slavery’s cruelest horrors was brutal separation of families, on a massive scale. Waves of impoverished Irish immigrants, together with Chinese “coolies” and black workers, built the railroads as an engine of industrialization. Then came the vicious Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

World War One and the backlash against the Russian Revolution brought raids against immigrants and radicals

throughout the U.S., and in 1924, a ban on Asian immigration (except from the Philippines, then a U.S. colony) and drastic restriction on entry by Jews, Italians and others from Eastern and Southern Europe. During the Great Depression, 300,000 Mexican and Mexican American workers were deported from the U.S., and in World War II FDR interned Japanese Americans and refused asylum to Jews trying to flee Hitler’s terror. The Bracero Program (1942-64) brought Mexican workers in to toil in the fields, while the vile “Operation Wetback” brought mass deportation of up to a million in 1954. Dominicans fled repression under Rafael Trujillo, the mad dictator imposed by Washington, while Haitians and so many others were driven from their countries of origin by repression, poverty and the ravages of neocolonial regimes... The list is endless. As we come down to relatively recent times, a massive wave of repression against people from Muslim-majority countries followed 9/11 as part of George W. Bush’s terrorist “war on terror,” and was revved up again with Trump’s despicable racist “Muslim ban.”

And now this onslaught against the most vulnerable immigrants of all. We say, Enough! “Stop the Deportations – I.C.E. Out of New York,” “Set Them Free, Let Them Stay,” “*Ni criminales, ni ilegales, somos obreros internacionales*” (Neither criminals nor illegals, we are international workers) chanted the Internationalist contingent as we marched across the Brooklyn Bridge with thousands of others denouncing the child separation policy. In Los Angeles our comrades raised the call to win *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* as they marched with “Transport Workers Against Deportations”; in Portland, Oregon they raised the call as they worked to mobilize labor against fascist provocations; in New Hampshire they brought it to the fore in their protest against bus companies’ collaboration with the immigration cops. Everywhere, we link the fight to defeat the war on immigrants to the defense of women’s, gay, lesbian and transgender rights, and to the struggle for black liberation, which is central to socialist revolution in this country. For revolutionary Marxists, immigrants are not helpless victims but a vital and vibrant part of the multiracial working class whose *power* can, must and will be unleashed to smash not only I.C.E. but this whole racist system and build a socialist society, fit for human beings. Then cages for migrant children will be but a memory from a distant, barbarous past. ■

Paris Commune and Russian Revolution – Historic Gains for Immigrants

The Workers' Struggle Has No Borders: Immigrants' Rights and Revolution

Since Donald Trump took office in January 2017, his administration has pursued a xenophobic offensive, using the anti-immigrant machinery of repression built up by his predecessor, Barack "Deporter-in-Chief" Obama. At demonstrations against the barbaric practice of separating immigrant families at the border, members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth raised the slogans "*La lucha obrera no tiene fronteras*" (The workers' struggle has no borders) and "Full citizenship rights for all immigrants," emphasizing that for this democratic right to be achieved, the workers and oppressed must take power in a socialist revolution. This past school year, the CUNY Internationalist Clubs held two forums at Hunter College presenting historical and present-day aspects of how revolutionaries fight to defend immigrant rights. Club activists had worked together on research projects that they presented on a number of topics, including historic gains made by immigrants in workers revolutions, specifically in the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Russian Revolution of 1917, and on concrete actions that must be taken to defend immigrants today. Sections of these highly informative presentations, edited for publication, are printed below.

Historically, revolutionary Marxists have fought for internationalism, understanding that the working masses of every country share a common enemy – the capitalist class. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels famously wrote that the working class "has no country," highlighting the international character of the proletariat and of production under capitalism. Capitalist appropriation of private profit is national, so profits made by U.S. companies go to their U.S. capitalist owners. But capitalist production is social (involving large numbers of workers) and increasingly international. For example, in many industries, products are assembled in one country from parts manufactured in others. Being the first truly international class in human history, the proletariat or working class has the power to unite humanity on a global basis. And when the working class has taken power in the past, it extended democratic rights to *all* workers, regardless of national origin.

This manifested itself in the first workers revolution in history, which took place in 1871 and led to the establishment of the short-lived Paris Commune. This first instance of the proletariat taking power was the result of a power vacuum in a Paris abandoned by the bourgeoisie in the midst of the Franco-Prussian War. Unfortunately, the workers lacked a clear revolutionary leadership, a working-class party to push the revolution forward; the Commune remained isolated and was defeated. After the successful Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, Leon Trotsky wrote that "we can thus

thumb the whole history of the Commune, page by page, and we will find in it one single lesson: a strong party leadership is needed" ("Lessons of the Paris Commune," 1921).

Many of the Commune's leading members were immigrants. Many were also members of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) such as Leo Frankel, a Hungarian Jewish socialist who had worked to organize Hungarian and German workers. He was elected to be the Commune's head of the commission of labor and exchange, and had fought bravely on the barricades as a member of the National Guard. Immigrants were highly active in the organization and mobilization of the Parisian working class, particularly women who not only worked as nurses and at the canteens but fought against the Versailles troops.¹

Among them were women like Elisabeth Dmitrieff, a Russian-born socialist and co-founder of the Russian section of the International. She was sent to Paris by Karl Marx to report on events, and with several other women published the "Appeal to the Women Citizens of Paris," rallying them to fight for the Commune. Dmitrieff became the general secretary of the Union des Femmes (Women's Union), which was an organization of working-class women responsible for organizing women to help defend the Commune. Another of the women revolutionaries whose struggle inspires us was Anne Jaclard, also a Russian immigrant and member of the International. She helped organize the food supply of Paris and was on a committee overseeing the education of girls.

The Paris Commune happened, as mentioned above, in the context of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71, waged by Louis Napoleon III of France against the North German Confederation led by the Kingdom of Prussia. One of the historic tasks of what Marxists refer to as "bourgeois-democratic revolutions" was the establishment of a national economy, which meant establishing a unified nation-state. Before 1871, there was no nation-state called Germany. (Fearing the masses, the bourgeoisie had stabbed the 1848 democratic revolutions in the back.) Instead there was a collection of German-speaking kingdoms and principalities of which Prussia was the most powerful. Under Prussian chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the nascent German bourgeoisie sought to unify the German-speaking statelets from above, through war, into a single nation-state to compete with France and Britain.

Under Louis Napoleon III, France sought to snuff out German unification. When he was captured by the Prussians, the French bourgeoisie established the Government of National Defense. From December

¹ The heroic role of women in the Commune struck fear into the hearts of bourgeois reactionaries, and is the subject of several books, including *Unruly Women of Paris: Images of the Commune*, by Gay Gullickson (Cornell, 1996), and *Women in the Paris Commune*, by Caroline Eichner (Indiana University, 2004)

1870 to January 1871, Paris was besieged by the Prussians, who by then were waging a war of plunder. The siege caused widespread famine and anger among the working masses of Paris over the government's handling of the war. Since much of the French army was either defeated or taken captive, the organization defending Paris was the National Guard, which was independent of the army and composed mainly of working-class men who provided their own weapons.

On 18 March 1871, as the regular army withdrew from Paris, which would have handed it over to Bismarck, a newly formed central committee of delegates of the National Guard took power and ordered elections. The Paris Commune was formally declared on 28 March 1871, with members of the municipal councils being subject to recall at any moment and paid no more than a worker's wages.

This was an example of *workers democracy*. The municipal council granted *full citizenship rights* to all Parisians, regardless of national origin. It abolished the standing army, allowed members of the National Guard to elect their own officers, and proclaimed the separation of church and state. Popular education was made secular and teachers received salary increases, with equal pay for men and women. Workers were encouraged to form associations to take over and operate factories and workshops abandoned by their owners.

This was one of the most important events in the history of the workers movement. The Commune made no distinction among citizens based on nationality – only class, representing the exploited and oppressed, not their exploiters and oppressors. It called upon the workers of Paris, regardless of their country of origin, to live and fight for the Commune. Drawing a crucial revolutionary lesson from its experience, Engels later wrote:

"From the outset the Commune was compelled to recognize that the working class ... could not manage with the old state machine; that in order not to lose



"The Dead of the Paris Commune Have Risen Again Under the Red Banner of the Soviets." 1920 poster by Vladimir Kozlinsky, part of the avant-garde art movement that flourished in the early years of the Soviet Union.

again its only just conquered supremacy, this working class must ... do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself.

"Of late, the Social-Democratic philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

– "On the 20th Anniversary of the Paris Commune" (1891)

But, lacking a revolutionary leadership to carry the revolution through to the *expropriation* of the bourgeoisie by a revolutionary workers state, and isolated in Paris at a time when capitalism was still on the upswing in Europe, the Commune was defeated. Its heroic example would inspire those who led the victorious Russian Revolution.

From the Lessons of Paris to the Lessons of October

As World War One approached four decades later, the proletariat had become even more international. Russian Marxist V.I. Lenin developed a systematic explanation that capitalism had entered its highest stage: imperialism, characterized by the export of finance capital and the subjugation of foreign markets by force of arms. Always violent and oppressive, capitalism

had nonetheless once been a force for economic, technological and cultural development. Now, it had become a reactionary obstacle to human progress, keeping whole continents in subjugation while dividing and re-dividing the world between the imperialist powers. Lenin called this epoch of imperialist decay an “era of wars and revolutions.”

In the course of developing his theory of imperialism, he argued:

“Capitalism has given rise to a special form of migration of nations ... dragging [immigrant workers] forcibly into its orbit ... and [bringing] them face to face with the powerful, united, international class of factory owners....There can be no doubt that dire poverty alone compels people to abandon their native lands, and that the capitalists exploit immigrant workers in the most shameless manner.” – “Capitalism and Workers’ Immigration” (29 October 1913)

He understood that to inspire unity and forge bonds among workers of different countries, the defense and support of immigrants was critical. When World War One broke out in 1914, the working classes of different countries were set against each other to be used as cannon fodder for the imperialists. While Social Democrats in parliament voted for war credits in many European countries, Lenin’s Bolsheviks and their supporters put the program of internationalism – Marx’s *Workers of all countries, unite!* – into practice.

In those few places where revolutionaries could use the parliamentary tribune, this meant voting against funding the imperialist war, as Karl Liebknecht – who had won fame in the world socialist movement as a revolutionary anti-militarist – did in Germany. Insisting that “The main enemy is at home!” Liebknecht was drafted and then imprisoned for his call “Down with the war! Down with the government!” Lenin’s Bolsheviks called for workers in



Louise Michel, a leader of the Paris Commune and member of the National Guard who fought heroically to defend the Commune on the barricades. During her trial by the bourgeois government of Versailles after the Commune’s defeat, she boldly declared: “If you let me live, I shall never stop crying for revenge and I shall avenge my brothers. I have finished. If you are not cowards, kill me!”

all the imperialist countries to practice “revolutionary defeatism” against “their own” imperialist ruling classes. They agitated for turning the imperialist war into civil war, calling on the working masses of Europe to wage war on their exploiters, not each other.

The centuries-old tsarist monarchy fell in March 1917 (February by the old Russian calendar), ending a decrepit institution that had anchored Russia to backwardness. It was replaced by a Provisional Government that attempted to consolidate bourgeois rule, a coalition of class collaboration formed by Menshevik Social Democrats, populist “Socialist Revolutionaries” and a handful of liberals whose role was to embody the sanctity of private property.

But the weakness of Russia’s bourgeoisie and its ties with the landlords and imperialist investors, together with the devastation caused by the war, made Russia the “weakest link” in the chain of world capitalism. Having assimilated the lessons of the Paris Commune, Lenin and Trotsky called for “All power to the soviets,” the workers councils formed after tsarism’s fall that became powerful institutions of workers democracy as the masses elected the Bolsheviks to the soviets’ leadership. Led by Lenin and Trotsky, on 7 November 1917 (25 October by the old calendar), the working class of Russia, backed by the war-weary, land-hungry peasants, took power in a world-shaking socialist revolution. This established the world’s first workers state.

Under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR),² **enshrined full citizenship rights for all immigrants in its constitution:**

“§ 20. In consequence of the solidarity of the workers of all nations, the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic grants all political rights of Russian citizens to foreigners who live in the territory of the Russian Republic and are engaged in work and who belong to the working class. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic also recognizes the right of local soviets to grant citizenship to such foreigners without complicated formality.

“§ 21. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic offers shelter to all foreigners who seek refuge from political or religious persecution.

“§ 22. The Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic, recognizing the equal rights of all citizens, irrespective of their racial or national connections, proclaims all privileges on this ground, as well as oppression of national minorities, to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the Republic.”

– Constitution of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (1918), Article II: “General Provisions of the Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federated Soviet Republic”

The Bolsheviks also moved to put into practice their international call to end the imperialist world war through workers revolution. They published the secret treaties of Russia, Britain and France and exposed the criminal designs of the imperialists to carve up the Near East and re-divide subjugated and colonized nations amongst themselves while pretending the war was for “democracy.” They called

² The RSFSR of 1917 was a predecessor and constituent of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics established in 1922.



Meeting of metal workers at the Putilov Works in Petrograd, 1920. Putilov was the hotbed of revolution in 1917, launching a mass strike in solidarity with women garment workers that led to the overthrow of the Tsar.

on the working classes of the belligerent countries to turn imperialist war into civil war to overthrow all the capitalist classes, and in 1919 founded the Communist International (Comintern) on the program of world revolution.

Workers and oppressed people did rise up in many countries, but the task of building real revolutionary parties on the Bolshevik model had only just begun. In Germany, Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and other revolutionaries were murdered at the behest of the Social Democrats who took over from the Kaiser at the war’s end. Meanwhile, Soviet Russia was besieged and invaded by armed forces of 14 countries that helped tsarist/bourgeois forces try to strangle the infant workers republic. The Russian workers and peasants, organized by Trotsky in the Red Army to defend the revolution, finally won the Civil War (1918-20), but at a terrible cost in lost lives and horrific devastation.

Many of the most experienced and politically conscious members of the working class had died protecting the revolution. Russia’s economic backwardness and poverty, horrifically worsened by four years of WWI, was accentuated by the devastation caused by the Civil War, imperialist intervention and encirclement. This isolation and acute scarcity laid the basis for the consolidation of a conservative, bureaucratic caste led by Joseph Stalin. This nationalist bureaucracy usurped political power in what Trotsky called the “political counterrevolution” of 1923-24. Intent on maintaining and deepening their privileges in what was now a bureaucratically degenerated workers state, the Stalinists moved to crush (and then murder) the Left Opposition formed by Trotsky and his co-thinkers.

Betraying the

program of world revolution, Stalin proclaimed the nationalist, anti-revolutionary dogma of “socialism in one country,” pursuing the illusion of “peaceful coexistence” with the imperialists and eventually liquidating the Comintern altogether. To defend the USSR and the gains of October, it was crucial to reestablish soviet democracy and Lenin’s internationalist program through workers “political revolution” against the bureaucracy.

But as Trotsky had warned, Stalinism’s betrayals paved the way for capitalist counterrevolution. The counterrevolutionary destruction of the USSR in 1991-92 unleashed a tide of nationalist bloodletting and attacks on workers, women and oppressed peoples in one country after another. The most vulnerable sectors of the working class – such as immigrants – have found themselves more and more in capitalism’s crosshairs.

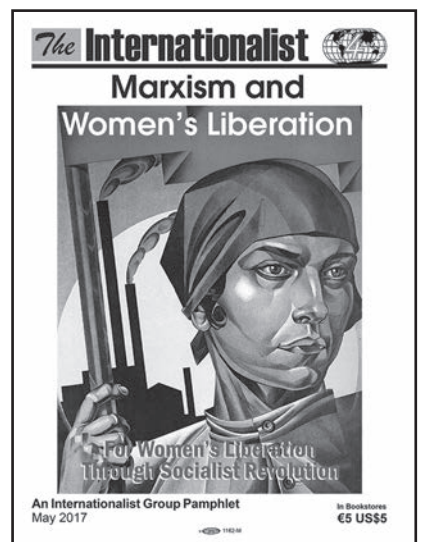
The internationalist program that raised its red banner on the Paris barricades in 1871 and brought the proletariat to power in Russia in 1917 is what we fight for today. With attacks on immigrants increasing in the United States and Europe, the lessons of the Paris Commune and October Revolution show that socialist revolution is the only hope for liberating immigrants and all the oppressed – this is our historic task. ■

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CUNY-Wide Conference in Defense of Immigrants Held at Grad Center

By CUNY Internationalist Clubs

The following article was published in The Advocate (Spring 2018), the City University of New York Graduate Center student newspaper, and reprinted in Marxism & Education No. 5 (Summer 2018), the journal of Class Struggle Education Workers.

On March 3, 80 CUNY students, faculty and staff members came together with immigrant rights activists and labor organizers for a conference in defense of immigrants. Attendees participated in intensive discussion and organizing, and the conference included a panel aimed at creating the framework for a university-wide rapid response network against the threat of deportations.

The conference opened with reports on two recent cases of repression against immigrants. The first exemplifies the urgency of the conference: the detainment of Aboubacar Dembele, a prospective Bronx Community College student who was detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) agents on February 8. Dembele's attorney, Monica Dula of the Legal Aid Society, told the conference that plainclothes I.C.E. police told Dembele, who has been in the U.S. since the age of three, they were detaining him because his DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) renewal was rejected after the program was rescinded by Trump. Conference participants made plans to attend Dembele's bond hearing as well as his court appearance on April 15. The second case was that of Juan Esteban Barreto, who was recently detained by I.C.E. in collusion with the NYPD.

Greetings from activists at Latin America's largest public university were read to the conference in Spanish and in

English translation. The message, from the Internationalist Committee at the National University of Mexico (UNAM), connected the defense of immigrants on both sides of the border to the fight against capitalist repression, as in the case of the 43 "disappeared" students from the Ayotzinapa rural teachers' college. (See box on page 14.)

The first conference panel was entitled "DACA and TPS: Where Do We Go From Here?" Among the speakers were Janet Calvo and Matías González, respectively a professor and student at CUNY Law. Their presentations provided detailed information on the present legal situation of DACA as well as legal cases in a number of states related to DACA. Kaitlan Russell of the Hunter College Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims spoke on DACA as well as the revocation of Temporary Protected Status for Haitians and Salvadorans. She warned against any kind of reliance on the Democrats, who, under Obama, deported a record number of immigrants and under de Blasio have



A representative of the Hunter College Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims addressing the conference.

permitted collusion between the NYPD and I.C.E..

The next panel was "Opposing Islamophobia and the 'Muslim Ban'." It featured Naz Ahmad, staff attorney from CUNY CLEAR, Debbie Almontaser of the College of Staten Island and Muslim Community Network, and Chaumtoli Huq of Borough of Manhattan Community College and Law@theMargins. Speakers traced the three versions of the Trump "Muslim bans," noting that these built on a history of anti-Muslim measures long predating the current administration. Panelists also spoke on the revelations of NYPD's spy-

ing on Muslim students at several CUNY campuses, as well as other topics. Speakers from the floor noted that when CUNY student Saira Raifee was stranded by the ban in February 2017, protests by students and unionists highlighted her case, helping facilitate her return; and also underlined the significant presence of workers from a number of majority-Muslim countries in several sectors of the NYC working class.

The third panel was "Immigrant Workers' Struggles: Lessons For and At CUNY." It featured Mahoma López of the Laundry Workers Center, as well as three activists from Trabajadores Internaciona-

DACA: Still in Limbo

The fate of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA) has hung in the balance since Trump rescinded the program in September 2017. It was supposed to be phased out completely by March 2018, leaving DACA recipients vulnerable to deportation and detainment. In January, the federal government shut down for three days as Republicans and Democrats wrangled over a spending bill. Republicans wanted funding for Trump's border wall while Democrats called for a "path to citizenship" for DACA recipients in exchange for beefed-up "border security." In the end, no DACA measures were passed and the government reopened.

Meanwhile the Trump administration has been fighting a legal battle challenging the constitutionality of DACA, using the cynical argument that the program oversteps executive authority. On August 19, a U.S. District Judge ruled that the administration must continue to pro-

cess DACA renewals but is not required to accept new filings while the case is being appealed. With the confirmation of Trump's Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh all but assured, DACA could be ruled unconstitutional within the next six months, after the case makes its way through the appellate courts.

As the Democrats head toward the November midterm elections, they may once again try to use the issue of DACA to gather votes. It is crucial to draw the lessons of what they did last time around, when they used it as a "bargaining chip," announced a "deal" with Trump, and when that fell through cynically kicked their so-called fight to the curb. (See main article.) While professional misleaders while once again preach reliance on this racist capitalist party, we fight for mass worker/immigration action. As we headlined in *Revolution* No. 14 (January 29018): "Defend DACA and All Immigrants!"



Internationalist contingent at June 19 rally against family separations in Union Square, NYC. The Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims calls to free Papadame Diop, the husband of a CCNY student, and Aboubacar Dembele, a prospective Bronx Community College student, both detained by I.C.E.

SALUDOS DESDE LA UNAM A LA CONFERENCIA EN DEFENSA DE LOS INMIGRANTES

El siguiente saludo fue leído en la conferencia celebrada en la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York.

3 de marzo de 2018

Compañeros y compañeras,

Desde la mayor universidad pública de América Latina, la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, enviamos saludos solidarios a la Conferencia de activistas de la City University of New York en defensa de los inmigrantes.

Las luchas en defensa de los inmigrantes en Estados Unidos son tal vez el tema de las noticias internacionales al que mayor seguimiento se da en México. Los noticieros de radio y televisión y los periódicos suelen cubrir con detalle los ataques antiinmigrantes: las espeluznantes redadas de la policía del ICE, las constantes provocaciones y amenazas lanzadas por el presidente Donald Trump, sus funcionarios de gobierno y los racistas antiinmigrantes

que se han envalentonado con el nuevo gobierno. Pero las familias trabajadoras siguen con particular urgencia las luchas para resistir los ataques. La conexión entre las familias trabajadoras en uno y otro lado de la frontera es bien real. El futuro de los de un lado depende estrechamente del de los del otro.

Muchos de los que migran de México a Estados Unidos provienen de familias campesinas e indígenas que en el marco del TLCAN de rapiña imperialista contra México han perdido sus tierras o están imposibilitados para hacerlas producir. De este vasto sector empobrecido por las políticas de los patrones mexicanos que ofrecen ante el altar del “libre comercio” la miseria de los trabajadores mexicanos provienen nuestros compañeros estudiantes normalistas de Ayotzinapa, que en septiembre de 2014 fueron atacados brutalmente por la policía en Guerrero, y que hasta el momento siguen “desaparecidos”.

Lo que ustedes discutirán el día de hoy es muy importante para los trabajadores y los pobres en México. Es de vital importancia discutir no sólo cómo resistir, sino también cómo derrotar la andanada antiinmigrante producto de los políticos burgueses norteamericanos de todo signo. Como marxistas revolucionarios sabemos que hay un poder social capaz de derrotar el ataque patronal: se trata del poder de la clase obrera, que es la que hace que el sistema capitalista funcione y que puede, por eso mismo, pararlo en seco. La clase obrera norteamericana es un gigante multirracial y multiétnico cuya movilización es la clave para defender a los inmigrantes y sus familias. ¡Todos los inmigrantes deben tener derechos plenos de ciudadanía!

México no es sólo un gran “expulsor” de migrantes, sino que es también un país de tránsito de migrantes que desde diversos lugares del mundo pretenden llegar a EE.UU. El gobierno mexicano, mientras

dice que defenderá a los asediados inmigrantes mexicanos en el norte, realiza redadas en contra de inmigrantes de otras nacionalidades. En las últimas semanas el número de inmigrantes centroamericanos, caribeños e incluso africanos detenidos y deportados por la migra mexicana se ha multiplicado. Para muchos de los que abandonan su país y se embarcan en el peligroso tránsito en La Bestia, atravesando grandes extensiones a pie y siempre bajo el peligro de ser capturados por la migra y por bandas criminales, es de vital importancia contar también en este país con derechos plenos de ciudadanía. La defensa de los inmigrantes exige la movilización internacional —e internacionalista— de los trabajadores de México y EE.UU.

Con esta convicción, les enviamos saludos revolucionarios, esperando escuchar de ustedes de vuelta.

Comité Internacionalista de la UNAM

FROM THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO: GREETINGS TO THE CUNY-WIDE CONFERENCE IN DEFENSE OF IMMIGRANTS

(Translation)

The following greetings were read at the conference held at the CUNY Grad Center:

March 3, 2018

Compañeros and compañeras:

From the largest public university in Latin America, the National Autonomous University of Mexico, we send greetings of solidarity to the conference of City University of New York activists in defense of immigrants.

Of all international news topics, struggles in defense of immigrants in the United States may be the one that receives the most attention here in Mexico. Radio and TV news programs, as well as the daily papers, provide detailed coverage about the anti-immigrant attacks: the horrific raids by the ICE police, the constant provocations and threats issued by President Donald Trump, by his government officials and by anti-immigrant racists who have been emboldened by the

new administration. But it is with particular urgency that working-class families follow the struggles to resist these attacks. The connection between working-class families on one side of the border and on the other is very real. The future of those on one side closely depends on the future of those on the other side.

Many of those who migrate from Mexico to the United States come from peasant and indigenous families, who, within NAFTA's framework of imperialist pillage against Mexico, have lost their land or find that it is now impossible for their land to be productive. This vast sector is impoverished by the policies of the Mexican bosses, who offer up the poverty of the Mexican workers on the altar of so-called free trade. That is the sector that our *compañeros* of the Ayotzinapa rural teachers college come from. These are the Ayotzinapa students who were brutally attacked by the police in the state of Guerrero in September 2014, and who to

this day remain “disappeared.”

The things that you will be discussing today are very important for the workers and poor people of Mexico. It is of vital importance to discuss not only how to resist, but how to defeat the anti-immigrant onslaught that is the product of the North American bourgeois politicians of every kind. As revolutionary Marxists, we know that there is a social power that is able to defeat the attack by the employing class: that is the power of the working class, which makes everything in the capitalist system run, and which can, for that reason, bring it all to a halt. The United States working class is a multiracial and multiethnic giant whose mobilization is the key to defending immigrants and their families. All immigrants must have full citizenship rights!

Mexico is not only an enormous “expeller” of migrants; it is also a country of transit for migrants from different parts of the world seeking to reach the U.S. At the same time

that the Mexican government says it will defend besieged Mexican immigrants in the North, it carries out raids against immigrants of other nationalities here. Over the past weeks, the number of Central American, Caribbean and even African immigrants detained and deported by the Mexican “Migra” (immigration police) has multiplied. For many of those who leave their countries and set out on the dangerous voyage on what is known as “La Bestia” (the Beast), going long distances by foot and always facing the risk of capture by the Migra or criminal bands, it is of vital importance to have full citizenship rights here in this country as well. The defense of immigrants demands the international —and internationalist— mobilization of the workers of Mexico and the United States.

It is with this conviction that we send you revolutionary greetings, hoping to hear from you in return.

UNAM Internationalist Committee

les Clasisistas (Class Struggle International Workers). The panelists spoke powerfully about their experiences in the restaurant, garment, taxi and domestic-worker sectors, and their activity in organizing campaigns at the Hot and Crusty bakery, B&H Photo, Liberato Restaurant, and in solidarity with Ayotzinapa. Particular emphasis was given to connecting immigrant rights struggles to a working-class strategy for uprooting women's oppression, which, as one of the TIC speakers stressed, “falls with triple force on immigrant working women.” During the discussion, conference participants emphasized the need for CUNY activists to “break with ivory-tower approaches” and connect up with the living struggles of the multinational, largely immigrant working

class that makes NYC run.

The final panel was called “Building a CUNY-Wide Network.” Marjorie Stamborg, public school teacher, United Federation of Teachers delegate and member of Class Struggle Education Workers, talked about the determination of NYC teachers to stand up against any threats by the immigration police against their students or the students' family members. Maeve Campbell, a CUNY Internationalist Club activist who chairs the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims at Hunter College, made the case for building a rapid response network throughout CUNY, and cited recent examples of direct action against deportations from several parts of the U.S., as well as the “Transport Workers Against Deportations” in Los Angeles.

Campbell stated that the tasks of such a network include alerting students, faculty and staff of any I.C.E. presence on or near CUNY campuses, and systematically laying the basis to “mobilize students, faculty and workers” to actually block attempted deportations, and “shut down CUNY schools in response to a deportation or detainment.” She emphasized that this is counterposed to illusions of collaboration with the administration, and some headway was made in building this network.

The conference was called by the CUNY Sanctuary Committee, which has been meeting since early 2017 at the Professional Staff Congress union hall. Bringing together student and union activists from across the City University, these meetings have worked towards building a university-

wide rapid response network. At the March 3 Grad Center conference, it was noted that a letter sent by the CUNY Sanctuary Committee resulted in Kingsborough Community College officially eliminating restrictions it had applied to undocumented students receiving grants from the College Foundation. This was cited as a small but relevant example of organizing at CUNY to fight all kinds of anti-immigrant measures.

Organizers of the March 3 conference expressed the hope that participants will return to their campuses with redoubled dedication to the ongoing work of organizing in defense of immigrants and the rights of us all. To get involved in these efforts, please write to: Committeetodefendimmigrants@gmail.com ■

PL, from Stalin to Obama: “Revolutionary” Reformism

By Maeve

Since Trump’s election, groups like the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) have capitalized on widespread revulsion at the Republican president’s racism, xenophobia and sexism, attracting thousands of youth looking for an alternative to mainstream capitalist politics. But this “alternative” has – as we warned – been shown yet again to mean harnessing these youth to the Democratic Party.¹

Some youth rightly repelled by the abject reformism of the DSA and groups tailing them, like the International Socialist Organization (ISO), Socialist Alternative (SAlt) and others, find it refreshing to encounter a group that talks about revolution and is not afraid to utter the dreaded “c-word:” *communism*. The Progressive Labor Party (PLP, generally known as PL) seems to fit that bill, claiming to build “a revolutionary movement for communism.” In an article about the June 30 “Families Belong Together” marches against Trump’s child-snatching operation at the border, in its newspaper *Challenge* (13 July), PL accurately wrote that “the main message of the march was to vote Democratic” and claimed that PL “reject[s] the Democratic Party’s plan to co-opt working-class anger.”

Yet an acid test for genuine revolutionaries is the unity of words and deeds. Does PL’s political activity actually match its revolutionary-sounding rhetoric? The short answer is: no. PL’s politics operate at two levels: 1) claiming to be more communist than anyone ever (what did Marx or Lenin know?), while 2) “uniting” endlessly with pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and tailing existing (bourgeois) consciousness. The first level serves to justify and prettify the second one, where the real day-to-day action occurs.

We see this at the City University of New York, where PL supporters have been an organic part of the “New Caucus” that has run the faculty-staff union, the Professional Staff Congress (PSC), since 2000. Like the rest of the U.S. labor bureaucracy, the “progressives” of the New Caucus regularly turn out the vote for the Democratic Party, chaining labor to this party of U.S. imperialism. Meanwhile it is the New Caucus that sells out adjuncts and others in CUNY’s “contingent majority” with each contract it negotiates.

A striking example of how the two faces of PL’s idiosyncratic form of Stalinism are shown was its response to the 2008 presidential campaign of Barack Obama. Echoing the rhetoric of Stalin’s “Third Period” circa 1933, it claimed the mainstream Democrat Obama represented “fascism.” Yet Obama’s presidential run was highly popular among youth and workers PL wanted to court, so PL called to “actively participate in [his] campaign” (*Challenge*, 26 March 2008). This (unlike the “fascism” claim) was not just rhetoric: PL boasted of its members going out to round up votes for the capitalist politician Obama, who would go on to become U.S. imperialism’s war commander and deporter-in-chief.

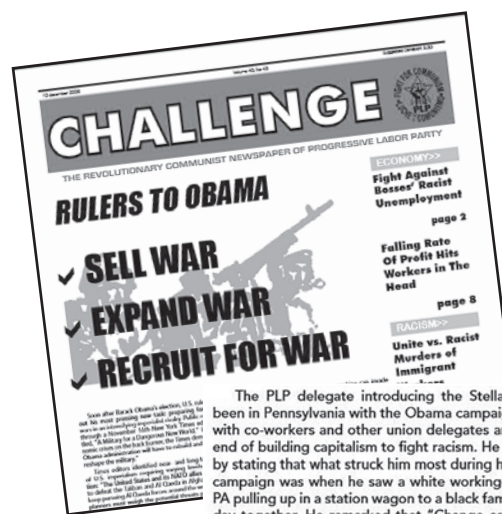
For example, right after Obama was

¹ See “Democratic (Party) Socialism Gets Millennial Makeover,” on page 5 and “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to the Rescue of the Democratic Party,” *The Internationalist* (August 2018).

elected, *Challenge* (10 December 2008) ran a front-page headline accurately blaring: “RULERS TO OBAMA: ✓SELL WAR ✓EXPAND WAR ✓RECRUIT FOR WAR.” Yet what did *Challenge* readers find when they turned to page 4 of the very same issue? In a story on the strike by Stella D’Oro bakery workers in the Bronx, it praised the way a Pler put forward a support resolution in his Service Employees International Union local. After noting, “The SEIU leadership had spent the previous hour and a half extolling the virtues of the Obama electoral campaign,” *Challenge* rhapsodized:

“The PLP delegate introducing the Stella D’Oro resolution had been in Pennsylvania with the Obama campaign working to build ties with co-workers and other union delegates and to expose the deadend of building capitalism to fight racism. He prefaced the resolution by stating that what struck him most during his time with the Obama campaign was when he saw a white working-class family in Chester, PA pulling up in a station wagon to a black family’s home to spend the day together.”

This was supposed to be a heart-warming anecdote of “unity” on the campaign trail, justifying the “tactic” of “uniting with” the “masses” being recruited for imperialist war via Obama’s “Hope and Change” roadshow. And it’s all supposed to wind up fine with the feel-good punch line, “He [the PLP delegate] remarked: ‘Change comes from the workers, not from the top.’” There’s nothing remotely communist about all this,



PL campaigned for Obama in 2008, despite noting (see above) that capitalist rulers used him to put a new face on imperialist war.



Trotskyist press denounced Stalin’s murderous purge of Bolshevik Central Committee of 1917 that led the October Revolution.

it’s just standard-issue opportunism.

For Revisionists, History Is an Enemy

But you wouldn’t learn about any of this from PL today, which buries such inconvenient truths in the tradition of “The Stalin School of Falsification.” Progressive Labor originated in 1962 as a left split from the Soviet-line Communist Party USA. Under the impact of the Cuban Revolution and the deepening divide between Mao Zedong’s China and Nikita Khrushchev’s USSR, it sought a more militant and radical path. Long story short, soon enough this led it to collide with the limits of Stalinist ideology and get branded by Mao loyalists as “Trotskyites in disguise.” Insisting that no, it was more Stalinist than Stalin, PL kept re-revising its own “revolutionary” brand of Stalinist reformism, which has led to the contortions (or political split personality) described above. As of last count, it has gone through four fundamental revisions of its programmatic manifesto, now called “Road to Revolution IV.”

Air-brushing out the past is a Stalinist tradition going back to Joseph Stalin himself, leader of the conservative, nationalist, bureaucratic caste that usurped political power in the Soviet Union after the Civil War of 1918-20.²

² A book that shows this vividly is David King’s *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin’s Russia* (Canongate, 1997). Also see “Visiting the Early Soviet

Against this, the co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution and founder of the Red Army, Leon Trotsky, formed the “Left Opposition.” Defending the gains of October and the Soviet workers state, the Left Opposition fought to uphold Lenin’s program of international socialist revolution. Against this, Stalin’s anti-revolutionary, revisionist doctrine of “socialism in country” meant sacrificing revolutions abroad on the altar of “unity” with “democratic” imperialists like arch Bolshevik-hater Winston Churchill and Democratic imperialist icon Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Thus Trotsky and his supporters posed a fundamental challenge to the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose privileges derived from its role as a parasitic caste that usurped political power from the working class, and that lived off the collectivized economy that was a key gain of the revolution. Intransigently defending the Soviet workers state and the gains of October, the Left Opposition, and the Fourth International Trotsky founded as a result of the titanic struggles of the 1930s, called for workers political revolution in the Soviet Union to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy, reinstate workers democracy and fight to spread the revolution, which could not survive in isolation. (This prediction was proven true in 1991, when the USSR fell to counterrevolution after decades of bureaucratic degeneration.)

So why did Stalin need lies, cover-ups and fabrications on such a massive scale, linking his name so indelibly with the vilest techniques of falsification? These became Stalin’s stock-in-trade as weapons of the political counterrevolution he headed in the privileged bureaucracy’s attempt to blot out the program, methods – and people – who led the Bolshevik Revolution. This culminated in the infamous Moscow Tri-Photography and Film Exhibit,” *Revolution* No. 12 (March 2016). For genuine communists, historical truth is a weapon in the class struggle!



New York Times (23 August 1936) at height of the Moscow Trials.

als of 1936-38, part of the massive purges against the revolutionary generation of October. As noted in the Internationalist pamphlet *What Is Trotskyism?* (2012, reprinting the 1973 exposé “The Stalinist School of Falsification Revisited”), Stalin framed up and wiped out “virtually the entire Bolshevik Central Committee of 1917,” including all the remaining members of Lenin’s Political Bureau except himself. He “purge[d] the entire leadership of the army” (over 30,000 officers), decapitating the Red Army founded by Trotsky just as World War Two was looming, posing a deadly threat to the USSR. And today Stalin’s remaining apologists (like lunatic-fringe falsifier Grover Furr, whose ravings are peddled by PL) have the chutzpah to claim that *Trotsky* was the counterrevolutionary?!

Rebooting the Moscow Trials

This spring, PL published a throwback to the Moscow Trials, a string of stale slanders titled “Trotsky: Staunch Anticommunist” (*Challenge*, 6 April). As usual, this repeated and recycled the standard old Stalinist litany of lies, distortions, and truly nauseating justifications for the anti-revolutionary slaughter of Bolsheviks through which Stalin sought to gain the “friendship” of imperialist leaders. Glorifying in the extermination of the heroic generation that had ripped one sixth of the world from capitalism’s talons, bourgeois leaders fawned and cooed over Stalin’s anti-Bolshevik killing spree.

For a sense of this, look up the hit Hollywood movie, *Mission to Moscow* (1943), based on a book by FDR’s former ambassador to the USSR glorifying the Moscow Trials. The U.S. Stalinists, then busy enforcing the “no-strike pledge” for Roosevelt, loved the film – in contrast to the documentary *Tsar to Lenin*, which they picketed when it opened in New York in 1937 because it showed real footage of the October Revolution and its central leaders, Lenin and Trotsky.

Students at CUNY and elsewhere can lean quite a bit by checking out how the *New York Times*, voice of imperialist liberalism, raved and ranted against “Lenine and Trotsky” during and after the 1917 revolution. One of the favorite smears it found “fit to print” as good coin, against the Bolshevik leaders, was the tsarist calumny that they were “German agents.” This was the real precedent for the grotesque claims that Stalin was making in the Moscow Trials. In fact the prosecutor in the trials was Andrei Vyshinsky, who as a Menshevik official of the capitalist Provisional Government in 1917 had signed an order for *Lenin’s* arrest on charges of being a “German spy,” and then gone on to side with the White (counterrevolutionary) armies in the Civil War against Trotsky’s Red Army. (After the Reds won, Vyshinsky joined the

Bolsheviks, eventually becoming Stalin’s attorney general.)

“TROTSKY THE REAL ENEMY,” declared the *New York Times* (23 August 1936) during the Moscow Trials, noting that the murderous frame-ups were “a clean sweep of the men who sat closest in Lenin’s counsels. In their place remain intensely practical, realistic, iron-willed executives who never let a theory interfere with a condition.” Like so many others who had beat the drums against the “Bolshevik menace” since 1917 – such as imperialist mass murderer Churchill, who infamously called to “strangle the Bolshevik baby in its cradle” during the Russian Civil War – the *Times* praised the “practical, realistic” standpoint of Stalin and his followers. Why? Because they understood this was counterposed to the “theory” and program of world socialist revolution, on the basis of which Lenin and Trotsky had led the Soviet workers to power.

Why does PL scrape the crusted filth of Moscow Trials slanders from the trash cans of Stalinism and endlessly recycle these completely discredited lies? Because it cannot *politically* answer the actual *program* of genuine Bolshevism, which Trotsky and his comrades died to defend.

Liberal Idealism in Communist Costume

In a political dead end for decades, PL’s claim to fame is the “discovery” that Marx, Engels and Lenin were dead wrong about socialism, and that this has been the basic problem besetting the communist movement ever since. Thus PL says that it is and has always been both possible and necessary to jump straight over the “socialist” or “lower phase” of building a communist society (as the founders of Marxism described it) – and straight into full communism. All that needs to occur, says PL, is for everyone to understand this idea – and join PL.

This is not Marxism but *liberal idealism* – according to which ideas are the basis of material reality (so convince good people of good ideas and you’re set) – in “communist” costume. But Marx and Engels called their *historical materialist* program for communist revolution “scientific socialism” for a reason. Before them came the “utopian socialists,” who thought an egalitarian so-

ciety could be created through the triumph of abstract ideas of justice and freedom, thereby taking liberal idealism to a radical conclusion. No, wrote Marx and Engels in their pioneering work *The German Ideology* (1845-46), “‘Liberation’ is an historical and not a mental act, and it is brought about by historical conditions,” above all the “development of industry” and productive forces. This makes it possible, for the first time, to eliminate material scarcity (the basis for social classes). This means using technology to radically reduce the amount of human labor time needed for production, and to provide abundance for everyone, everywhere. Without this “development of productive forces” on a “world-historical, instead of merely local” basis, they stressed, “scarcity would just become general, the need-driven struggle over necessities would recommence, and all the old crap would inevitably return” (Marx and Engels’ emphasis).

These ideas were further developed in classics of Marxism ranging from Marx’s *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875) to Engels’ *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (1880) to Lenin’s *State and Revolution* (1917) and “Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat” (1919). If they want to be communists, radical youth drawn to PL have the duty to read these works for themselves. There they will find that what the founders of communism wrote is what Trotsky *defended*, against the nationalist revisionism of Stalin’s “socialism in one country” dogma at the cost of his life, in indispensable works like *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936).

Marx and Engels held that proletarian revolution would establish a workers state (dictatorship of the proletariat), unchaining production from capitalist property relations and using proletarian democracy to plan the economy in the interest of human needs. As emphasized in Engels’ “Principles of Communism” (1847), this could not take place “in one country alone.” The dictatorship of the proletariat would be a period of transition overcoming the “old crap” accumulated on the basis of scarcity since the dawn of class society, and laying the material basis for a classless and stateless socialist society. This would still, Marx explained in “Critique of the Gotha Programme,” only be the first or lower phase of communism, “economically,

morally, and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it comes.” Marx continued:

“In a higher phase of communist society, after the enslaving subordination of the individual to the division of labor, and with it also the antithesis between mental and physical labor, has vanished, after labor has become not only a livelihood but life’s prime want, after the productive forces have increased with the all-round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly – only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois law be left behind in its entirety and society inscribe on its banners: From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!”

Not for nothing did Lenin highlight this famous passage in *State and Revolution*, as part of his work of unearthing Marx’s real ideas from the pile of rubbish heaped up to obscure them by the social-democratic “revisionists” of the day.

What It Comes Down to in Real Life

Today, PL’s more-communist-than-Marx posturing is more than a little tired, as it plods endlessly along behind “progressive” union bureaucrats, church ministers and one reformist “movement” after another. It still uses r-r-revolutionary rhetoric as a cover for this reality.

PL’s year-in, year-out *modus operandi* – endless “left-center coalitions” with pro-Democratic bureaucrats – has real consequences in the real world. (See accompanying box.)

Most of those drawn to PL over the years have sincerely wanted to fight for communism, and many have shown themselves capable of courage and dedication. But the contradiction with its daily reformist practice is a breeding ground for demoralization. The anti-Marxist “straight-to-communism theory” is a consoling daydream for some, cynical window-dressing for others. None can find a real road to communism without coming to terms with the truth about Stalinism, and investigating the genuine Bolshevik tradition that Trotsky defended. This is upheld today by the Internationalist Group/Revolutionary Internationalist Youth, which fights to put the communist program of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky into practice. ■

Chicago, NYC: Opportunism in Practice

PL’s role in the CUNY union bureaucracy is writ large in the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU). There, PL helped build the “Caucus of Rank and File Educators” (CORE), headed by pro-Democratic bureaucrats. In 2010, CORE won elections to the CTU leadership. *Challenge* (7 July 2010) boasted that “PLP members have been active in the CORE caucus since its beginning two years ago.”

At the time, the Class Struggle Education Workers (a class-struggle union tendency in solidarity with the Internationalist Group) wrote:

“CORE ... and similar groups in other unions all have pretty much the same program. They basically oppose the leadership’s sellouts and want to go back to the trade-union reformism of the past. CORE’s election platform consisted of things like ‘get members on board with a common strategy,’ ‘mobilize the union against budget cuts,’ ‘develop a legal

strategy,’ ‘develop a political strategy,’ and similar meaningless phrases. They’re going up against [Education Secretary and ex-mayor] Arne Duncan’s hand-picked successor, in Barack Obama’s hometown. Is the CTU membership ready for the blast they are going to get accusing them of selfishly sacrificing kids’ education and other hogwash straight from the White House?” – “Obama, Democrats Spearhead Teacher-Bashing, Union-Busting Corporate Education ‘Reform,’” *The Internationalist* No. 31 (Summer 2010)

In contrast, the CSEW insisted that “only class-struggle unionism that openly fights against capitalism can defeat the class war on workers and oppressed.” In 2012, CORE led a strike of 30,000 teachers and school personnel, a battle against corporate education “reform” spearheaded by the Democrats. But while the eight-day strike was huge, the sell-out contract pushed by the union tops was a disaster, caving in on every key point. Then

in 2013, CORE participated in drawing up and backing a terrible education “reform” bill in the Illinois Senate, which gutted the right to strike and attacked seniority, as well as other hard-won rights.

And in New York City, CORE’s sister organization, the Movement of Rank-and-File Educators (MORE):

“grotesquely *refused* to support an August 2014 march against the police murder of Eric Garner on Staten Island. Instead, it scandalously called to ‘unite’ with ‘our brother and sister officers’! (As in Chicago, the ISO, Socialist Alternative, Progressive Labor and other left groups are active in MORE.) In contrast CSEW marched with a contingent, calling to ‘Mobilize Labor/Black/Immigrant Protest Nationwide Against Racist Police Terror’.”

– “Chicago: ‘16 Shots, 400 Days,’” *The Internationalist* (January 2016)

YDSA Con...

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pseudo-socialists falsely label “sectarian.” In these works, the founders of the Marxist movement unmasked reformism: the idea that the capitalist system, and the capitalist state that protects it, can be reformed away. They emphasized that even to wrest actual reforms from the exploiters, the workers must rely on their own class power and understand that any reforms can be taken away (as we vividly see today) unless and until the proletariat takes power into its own hands in a socialist revolution.

Anyone who really wants to fight for socialism should familiarize themselves with these basic works. In *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875), Karl Marx explained that talk of “fair distribution” was no more than bourgeois ideology presented in “socialist” guise. Friedrich Engels’ *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) described the rise of the state, reflecting the irreconcilability of counterposed classes, as the “special bodies of armed men” protecting the property and interests of the ruling propertied class. Of enormous importance was his discussion of how the rise of private property was intimately linked to women’s subjugation, and what this means today for a real program to achieve women’s emancipation.³

Rosa Luxemburg’s *Reform or Revolution* (1900) ridiculed fantasies of “turning the sea of capitalist bitterness into a sea of socialist sweetness, by progressively pouring into it bottles of social reformist lemonade.” No reforms can break down the wall between capitalism and socialism, Luxemburg emphasized; only the “hammer blow of revolution ... the conquest of political power by the proletariat,” can do that. One of the most important Marxist books ever written is *State and Revolution* (1917) by V.I. Lenin, in which the Bolshevik leader polemicized against the “democratic socialists” of the day, who prettified capitalist “democracy” while burying the scientific socialism (communism) of Marx and Engels. In particular, Lenin highlighted the lesson that Marx drew from the Paris Commune, that “the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes,” but must in-

³ See the Internationalist pamphlet *Marxism and Women’s Liberation* (May 2017), which can be ordered at www.internationalist.org/orderhere.html.

SALT’s Sawant Backs Seattle’s Top Cop

A “socialist” voting to support the chief of police? Yes, it just happened in Seattle, Washington, when city council member Kshama Sawant of Socialist Alternative (SAlt) “stunned” observers by voting on August 13 to confirm the city’s new chief of police. As capitalism’s guardians in blue murder black and Latino people every day, this shows how low fake-socialist groups are willing to go as they immerse themselves in bourgeois politics.

One of the opportunist organizations most avidly purveying “Sanders socialism,” SAlt has faced big problems with the growth of the Democratic Socialists of America. Hyping the Vermont senator’s “political revolution” for Democratic renewal was supposed to help it hit the big time, but it was the DSA that reaped the benefits, while SAlt has been left in the dust. This has meant increasing upheaval, with chunks of the organization decamping to the DSA.

In contrast, some members repelled by SAlt’s “Bernie turn” have sought to understand the roots of its opportunism. This led former leaders of its New Hampshire branch to investigate the politics of the Internationalist Group, and fuse with the IG in June. (See “Class Struggle Education League Fuses with Internationalist Group” and “An Open Letter to Socialist Altern-

tive Oppositionists, Past and Present,” *The Internationalist* No. 52, May-June 2018.)

Kshama Sawant is SAlt’s political superstar who gave a “socialist welcome to Bernie Sanders” when he campaigned in Seattle (promoting a revival of FDR’s New Deal on the anniversary of Social Security). Her alliances with local Democrats have caused unease among some SAlt members, but the group is determined to move further and further into Democratic Party terrain. As a badge of social-democrats’ aspiration to administer the capitalist state, SAlt pretends that cops are “workers in uniform.” Sawant already praised the process of hiring the previous police chief, Kathleen O’Toole, back in 2014, saying it was “positive ... that a woman will be at the head of what has been and still is a male-dominated bastion,” and calling the new chief’s call for a “tiered approach for policing protests” a “welcome change” (sawant.seattle.gov, 23 June 2014).

Now Sawant has taken the next step. When O’Toole stepped down last year, she was replaced on an interim basis by Carmen Best, a 26-year veteran of the Seattle PD, who was then confirmed for the top cop job at the August 13 city council meeting. “Stunning the crowd, Councilmember Kshama Sawant voted ‘yes’ in support of Best,” reported KOMOnews.com. Sawant justified her backing of Best to become the chief of capitalist cop

repression with the claim that since Best is African American, Sawant’s support was “a vote of solidarity with my black and brown fellow community members” (Seattle City Council Insight, 13 August).

No, Sawant’s vote was a pledge of allegiance to the racist capitalist state. Since ghettos and barrios across the country erupted against racist police terror in the 1960s, the ruling class has allowed some black faces in high places, insultingly hoping this could piece off the black population that continues to face cop terror. This racist repression goes on today, regardless of whether the person heading up the institution enforcing it is black, a woman, or both. Just look at Baltimore, where there was a black woman mayor and black police chief, and almost half the cops on the force were black, when the police murder of Freddie Gray shook the city and the country. As members of the CUNY Internationalist Clubs and Revolutionary Internationalist Youth chanted in protests against the racist police murders of Freddie Gray, Eric Garner, Sandra Bland, Philando Castile and so many others: **Only revolution can bring justice!** Part of building the party to lead that revolution is relentless exposure of the opportunists that sully the word “socialism” with their obeisance to the bourgeoisie. ■

stead “break up, smash” the bourgeois state and create its own, workers state.

Reformism is a political program which upholds the existing, bourgeois state and the property relations that state exists to defend. Hence the derisive DSA claims about the “historic failure” of collectivized economies. It wasn’t collectivized production to fulfill human needs rather than to produce capitalist profits that failed. It was the Stalinist bureaucratic caricature of socialism. In *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936) and other works, Leon Trotsky explained that proletarian democracy is essential for the correct functioning of a planned economy, and showed how scarcity and capitalist encirclement led to the degeneration of the Soviet workers state and the rise of the privileged, nationalist Stalinist bureaucracy. Presciently, he insisted that proletarian political revolution, restoring the rule of workers soviets and revolutionary internationalism,

was crucial to defend the gains of the October Revolution from capitalist counterrevolution. The Trotskyists’ defense of the degenerated/deformed workers states is highlighted by the fact that the collectivized economies, despite gross bureaucratic mismanagement, lifted millions out of poverty, brought enormous gains for women, and were the result of historic defeats for imperialism.

Outside the YDSA conference, RIY comrades set up our literature table, hoping to speak to attendees about the class nature of the state, the need for a revolutionary party, the history of the DSA and other important issues. Some YDSA members were genuinely interested in our politics, so we had some interesting discussions.

One was with a young woman wearing a Mao Zedong t-shirt, though she said she didn’t know much about Mao or the politics of Maoism. This led to a long discussion about the “bloc of four classes,” Mao’s version of Stalin’s policy promoting “popular fronts” of class collaboration subordinating the workers and oppressed to supposedly “progressive” representatives of their exploiters and oppressors. One of the things we talked about was what happened when Mao’s program was applied by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which in the early 1960s was the largest Communist party outside the Soviet Union and China. The PKI’s support to the “progressive” nationalist Sukarno regime led directly to its destruction, and the slaughter of a million of its supporters, in the 1965 coup led by Suharto, one of Sukarno’s own generals. Key to the Indonesian coup was support from the CIA under Democratic president Lyndon Johnson, who in 1965 also sent 42,000 troops to occupy the Dominican Republic while escalating the genocidal U.S. war on Vietnam. These are the consequences of class collaboration, we explained. The DSA’s founders funneled votes to LBJ’s Democrats then, and that’s what the DSA does today, we pointed out.

In contrast to those who actually wanted to talk politics, some did their best to merit the “Bernie bro” sobriquet, or what might be called frat-style social democracy. More than a few claimed “I can’t read” when offered literature (a testament to the importance of public education). Others retailed vile “ice-pick jokes,” a reference to the murder of Leon Trotsky in 1940 by Stalinist agent Ramón Mercader, who used an ice axe to kill the co-leader of the Russian Revolution. Still others made the ridiculous claim that we (the IG and RIY) “don’t actually do anything,” which might be evidence that in fact *they* don’t actually *read* anything or care much about the numerous struggles we’ve played a leading role in, from Los Angeles to Portland to New York and New Hampshire, to mobilize labor to defend immigrants, stop fascist provocations, and how the RIY has brought youth and students out to aid immigrant workers’ organizing drives. Perhaps such junior anti-communists are just too busy licking those envelopes for Democrats and dreaming of jobs (or at least internships) in some future White House.

In contrast, a lot of youth actually *are* repelled by capitalist oppression, and want to find a way to sweep it away. Some of them mistakenly thought joining or orienting to the DSA/YDSA might be a way to help do that. Experience keeps showing that this isn’t the case, as we Trotskyists have always stated honestly (unlike groups that opportunistically flatter and tail the DSA). Some of the more thoughtful leftist-minded youth are not convinced that what they want to do with their lives is help reinforce that pillar of capitalist oppression and imperialist war, the Democratic Party, let alone that this means advancing “socialism.” For those comrades, it’s certainly time for some serious reading, discussion and action in order to advance the cause of socialist revolution, not reformist betrayal. ■


DSA For Kamala Harris?

DSA website sells “Kamala Harris 2020” pins and legacy Kamala Harris for U.S. Senate t-shirts. Democratic senator Harris is the former attorney general (i.e., top cop) of California. As such, she failed to fully implement court orders to reduce overcrowding in state prisons which the Supreme Court ruled constituted cruel and unusual punishment. One of the arguments her lawyers presented in court to justify not releasing required number of prisoners early was that without these inmates, who earn between 8¢ and 37¢ an hour, the prison system would lose an important labor pool.

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Get your Kamala Harris 2020 button and show your fighting spirit with this 3" union-made button. This celluloid button measures 3" with a safety pin back. The magnetic back features the safety pin back along with a magnet so you can wear the button or stick it to a refrigerator.

Why I Joined the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth

We are in a period when significant numbers of young people are becoming interested in socialism, but a lot of confusion persists about what that really means. The following excerpted and lightly edited letter of application to the Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (RIY) from comrade Guadalupe, who joined earlier this year, is a useful examination of some of the things that draw youth looking for genuine revolutionary politics to the RIY.

I was never really inclined to any political tendency before I attended college. I always felt that politics were too convoluted and too difficult to follow. In the history classes I had taken in high school we were taught what was necessary to pass the Regents exams. I was never really exposed to any literature related to Marx and Engels that accurately described communism.

Being the daughter of immigrants but born as a citizen, my only concern [regarding immigration] was that neither of my parents get involved in a situation with law enforcement, because there was always the possibility that one of them could be deported. I was never actively aware of what the legal policies were on immigration or what other people had to go through as long as my parents were safe. It was only after I got to college that I gained more exposure to politics.

In college I became disillusioned with society. In the United States, one is taught that if they work hard that they will be rewarded. One is fed these ideals of the American Dream, of owning a house, a car and other material things that will enhance your happiness. If people cannot achieve this then they are supposedly indolent, unproductive, and not hardworking enough. One is also raised with ideologies concerning race, gender and other categories used to justify segmenting the working class into different groups. In thinking of internationalism, it is always framed in a business sense, not in the sense that “the workers have no country.”

The society that I saw did not offer any real freedom, only the illusion that one had it.

When I first started to think about political tendencies, I felt inclined towards feminism because of my family experience. My grandmother, a divorcee with a child from her previous marriage, was thrown out of the family home by her younger brothers and took jobs in the city to support her subsequent children. My mother suffered abusive treatment from my biological father. These and other examples made me view men negatively and I felt that feminism best represented what my thoughts were at that time.

Besides my family experience, some of the English classes I took in college made me believe in feminism. One of my hobbies is to read Victorian and Gothic literature, and for the sake of better understanding the novels that I was reading I decided to take an English minor. The subject of women’s social status was often brought up. We read *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* [by Mary Wollstonecraft] and other literature that called for the emancipation of women from the burden of the home and the right to an education. However, our discussions rarely ever addressed the strife of the working class.

In a Caribbean Diaspora literature course, the professor encouraged us to read the *Communist Manifesto*, though we never got around to discussing it. However, novels we did read, such as *No Telephone to Heaven* by Michelle Cliff, often discussed colonialism, racial and class oppression and the superstition of religion. We also saw documentaries on Jamaica and the impact that the International Monetary Fund has on its economy, although we didn’t get too involved with capitalism in our discussions.

In a history class called “Death, Sex, and Memory in 20th-Century Western Europe,” the film *Kameradschaft*¹ had an impact on me. In the film, German miners come to the aid of French miners trapped in a mine that is

¹ *Kameradschaft* (“comradeship”); 1931 French-German production directed by Austrian G.W. Pabst.

shared between their borders after World War One. The tearing down of the wall that separated the miners from one another, the militant action and organization they exhibited as well as the fraternization that occurs after the rescue efforts demonstrated internationalism to me. The most disappointing thing in the film was the subsequent installation of a stronger fence by officials of each country, which once again separated the miners on the border of Germany and France. We also briefly discussed decolonization, particularly the Algerian War. After getting interested in Latin American history, I started to learn about the Comintern, the theory of permanent revolution, the popular front in Chile, the Mexican Revolution and U.S. imperialism. I began to think more about politics and world history.

After graduating, I was passing by Hunter College when a member of the Internationalist Club handed me a flier for a forum on International Women’s Day. The presentation on women in the Russian Revolution and the gains it afforded them, such as abortion, were things I had not been aware of. The discussion that followed showed me that the club’s members were well informed because they actively studied this topic. From there on I attended the weekly study group, and I found myself agreeing with the politics of the Internationalist Group (IG), especially the theory of permanent revolution and class struggle. My understanding of materialism, communism and economics expanded. As someone whose major was biology, I appreciate the fact that the IG approaches things in a scientific way, and that its members read and analyze literature to better understand important historical events.

At various protests I heard union and political leaders speak about “uniting the people” and encouraging them to vote for Democrats, who would supposedly listen to their woes and enact some reforms. At my first May Day event I heard people chanting “*El pueblo unido jamás será vencido*” – the slo-

gan of the popular front in Chile that was ultimately defeated and saw Pinochet installed as dictator. I saw other groups espousing feminism, anarchism and capitulation to the Democratic Party. I would hear that reforms are needed, but never did any of the speakers call for a socialist revolution. I heard that the people must cooperate with their democratically elected officials, not that these elected officials serve the interests of capitalism, regardless of political party.

At the Women’s March to the Polls, which was filled with petty-bourgeois women, I recall a young woman laughing at the word Marxism that was on the pamphlet I was holding up. Does she even understand what Marxism is? Or does she even understand that marching to encourage other women to vote a Democrat into office will not liberate her, because that representative will only serve capitalism? These were the questions I had in my mind that day. Many of these leftist groups only serve identity politics, and completely fail to realize that the fight to end oppression must be carried out as a class struggle.

The Revolutionary Internationalist Youth (RIY) is important in raising revolutionaries who will not falter in the time of crisis. The importance of revolutionary leadership continuously comes up in our readings, on the Russian Revolution, on the labor movement, and at this moment when other supposed leftist groups claim that it is not leadership, but the workers’ consciousness that has degraded. I see RIY as an organization that will build the leadership that will become professional revolutionaries. RIY is not an organization that simply wants to gain membership for the sake of having numbers like other leftist groups. The Revolutionary Internationalist Youth is serious in carrying out its duties, is serious in its political program and is serious in fighting for a socialist revolution. I want to be part of an organization that actively works to carry out this political program. ■

CUNY Prof....

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didn’t want that to happen again. So, they were training us to withstand torture to “protect America’s honor.” I was tortured there to protect America’s honor. Then I find out that the CIA used that training to develop their own techniques for torture. So, I was a guinea pig for Abu Ghraib, for Guantánamo, for all those black sites.

I’ve been working for the past few years on a book that tries to explain why I went to Vietnam, and what happened to me and what happened afterwards. The typical portrayal of somebody in combat is of an infantryman and the typical notion of PTSD is from a fire fight. But the fact is there are huge numbers of people in the military doing stuff that’s causing PTSD and you don’t realize you have it until much later. I’m trying to show that a higher rate of PTSD is going to evolve as time goes by from these [Iraq and Afghanistan] wars.

You spoke about Micronesia. I understand that you were also somewhat involved with the Puerto Rican independence movement.

Well, I taught at the University of Puerto Rico for a year, because I had seen how the Micronesians [gained independence] and was curious why Puerto Rico was having so much trouble doing so. I thought I was going to do longer-term research down there, but I realized that virtually everybody in Puerto Rico does research on Puerto Rico’s political status and they didn’t need me down there. But I did work with people – with various independence programs down there. I worked in Nicaragua as well, in the ‘80s. My wife went down to Nicaragua to study the literacy crusade after the revolution⁶ and I went with her.

How do these experiences shape your understanding of what the CIA-Baruch deal means for students who are largely working-class, many of whom who have immigrant parents from the parts of the world affected by U.S. imperialism?

When CUNY students have to scramble so much for their education and for what happens afterwards, there is a significant percent-

⁶ This refers to the overthrow of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979 by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

age who are going to be attracted by offers of being a military officer or being in the CIA. Just talking statistically, there are going to be students – we’ve got 250,000 undergraduates in the CUNY system – who are just not going to understand what it is that they’re opting into. That’s all the CIA has to do – find that small percentage of people.

I grew up in a climate – this is a part of my book, the anthropological part – when I was a kid going to Catholic school. It was at the same time the “Davy Crockett” show was on television. I was learning in Catholic school about being a martyr and that if you die for your faith you go right to heaven. Davy Crockett gets killed at the Alamo fighting for Americanism – except that he went down to kill brown-skinned people, and stole their land from them, that’s what the Alamo is about. But I was taught that he was this hero. So, I’m going to Vietnam, reliving Davy Crockett, and if I die I go right to heaven. To me, it made complete sense when I was eighteen, nineteen years old fighting in Vietnam. Now I look back at it with terrible shame and I don’t want my students to have to go through that. ■

Teach-In...

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“Weaponizing” Campuses for Imperialism

The keynote speaker at the Baruch teach-in was David Price, professor of Anthropology at Saint Martin’s University in Washington State. Price has authored four books investigating how the CIA and other intelligence and military agencies have “weaponized” academic research, notably in the field of anthropology, from the Cold War to the “war on terror.” His presentation explored some of the history of collaboration between academia and the CIA, noting that from the end of WWII until the early 1960s, the deepening symbiotic relationship between universities and intelligence agencies largely went unchallenged. During WWII, many professors had worked with the CIA’s precursor organization, the Office of Strategic Services, and many of these relationships continued after the war.

In the ‘60s, with outrage against the CIA’s role in the U.S. war against Viet-

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nam, as well as exposure of its infiltration and manipulation of the National Student Association, universities began to “distance” themselves from the spy agency, he stated. (In fact, mass protests made things too hot for it to appear openly on one campus after another.) After 9/11, Price noted, efforts to cast the CIA in a positive light gained traction, and there was a push for the CIA to establish closer ties to universities. These links were key to preventing “intelligence deficits” according to the “*New York Times*’ party line in the early 2000s,” he said.

Price stated that universities have historically been “troubled” by these relationships with the CIA, given its “real history” of torture, promoting coups and interfering in other countries’ elections. He also called it “highly problematic” when “you find out your administration, without telling you, has made an agreement” with the CIA. Concretely, he cited the extensive background checks on academic applicants to the CIA that “open doors into classroom discussion in very real and meaningful ways.” He recalled “Freedom of Information Act documents where in the interviews, [the CIA] specifically asks about people who were in their classes that may have been Marxists.”

Following Price was Baruch History professor Johanna Fernandez, who has carried out extensive research on state repression, suing the New York Police Department when it claimed to have “lost” surveillance files on the Young Lords Party and other radical groups in the 1960s and ’70s. Fernandez began by answering a question about what happens to students targeted by the CIA abroad. The question was posed by an Internationalist Club member who had helped make the posters we put up at the teach-in, graphically showing key episodes of the imperialist terror carried out by the CIA.

“You might have heard about Chile in 1973,” Fernandez said, when “the CIA contributed to the coup” that overthrew elected president Salvador Allende and installed the military dictatorship

of Augusto Pinochet. Large numbers of students were among the thousands who were “marched into a stadium and executed.” She stressed that the CIA’s “mission is to advance the interests of U.S. imperialism around the world by hook or by crook.” This has included “abductions and assassinations,” training and backing death squads “to suppress popular movements through torture ... the deployment of terror against civilians on a mass scale,” from “the Tontons Macoutes in Haiti” under the dictator François “Papa Doc” Duvalier, “the Contras in Nicaragua” (funded by CIA drug-running operations depicted in the 2017 film *American Made*, starring Tom Cruise), to funding, training and supporting the mujahedeen in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union and the left-wing nationalist regime in Kabul it supported. “There are many reasons we should oppose the CIA,” concluded Fernandez, but given that the university should be a place to explore the “frontier of knowledge,” an “affiliation with the CIA is a sure step in the direction of killing this project.”

Speaking from the floor, a faculty member said that Baruch’s deal with the CIA would endanger their ability to do ethnographic research abroad, and perhaps make it impossible, while emphasizing that by far the biggest danger could be to populations she and others conduct research with. Another audience member focused on the threats posed by CIA background checks and other measures, emphasizing that these can expose students’ family members, especially those who may be undocumented, to intensive and dangerous government scrutiny.

The large crowd of students and faculty at the teach-in was overwhelmingly opposed to the CIA’s incursion into Baruch. Nonetheless, a handful of those speaking from the floor echoed the cynical marketing by the CIA and its Baruch administration partners about supposedly promoting “diversity” through “job opportunities” in imperialism’s Murder Inc. One made the claim that going along with

as “We came, we saw, he died.” Given this bloody history, which continues to the present day, the film’s portrayal of a CIA-backed coup as a blow for justice is a grotesque insult.

It’s quite a disappointment coming from the same director, Ryan Coogler, who directed *Fruitvale Station* (2013), a powerfully moving film about the real-life murder of Oscar Grant by a transit cop in Oakland, California. That movie, also starring Michael B. Jordan, paints a vivid picture of how the day-to-day racism faced by black people in the U.S. can so often mean an instant death sentence. (See “*Fruitvale Station* and the Fight for Black Freedom” in *Revolution* No. 10, October 2013.) Obviously, *Black Panther* is a work of fiction, but what audiences take away from these two films could not be more different.

We will leave it to the liberals, fantasizing nationalists and reformist fake-socialists to chime in with “Wakanda forever.” To this we reply: Black liberation through socialist revolution! The real Africa will finally win its freedom, not under the scepter of kings or the mysticism of meteoric metals, but the red banner of world workers revolution. ■

the Signature Schools Program could be a way to “move [CIA personnel] in a more progressive direction.” While this sought to obscure the fact that the CIA is a “command organization” carrying out the directives of U.S. imperialism, as detailed in remarks by both Price and Fernandez, the ludicrous pitch was in line with Democratic liberals’ grotesque depiction of today’s CIA as an “ally” of “progressive resistance.” This speaks volumes to the nature of imperialist liberalism, heir to the Kennedy brothers who unleashed CIA terror against insurgent workers and peasants from Cuba and Congo to Vietnam.

No Ivory Tower

During the discussion, a Hunter College student active in the Internationalist Club and the Committee to Defend Immigrants and Muslims said that “to simply ignore or omit all the CIA has done for the sake of a ‘good government job,’ as it’s being labeled” by apologists for Baruch’s deal with the CIA, “is a major betrayal to students.” She noted that “Baruch is next on the list of CUNY schools that the government is attempting to militarize” and that “the Signature Schools Program only wants to use the ethnically diverse population at CUNY to legitimize its role as a repressive apparatus, and once that capacity for surveillance and repression is set up at our schools it will doubtless be used against us” throughout the CUNY system. Mobilizing to oppose this sinister CIA incursion is part of the whole struggle against U.S. imperialism.

It’s not just CUNY that faces the drive for militarization – this is happening at colleges across the country. Before Baruch, Florida International University and the University of New Mexico became “Signature Schools.” (There are some indica-

tions that the program may not be renewed at UNM.) In February, the University of Illinois at Chicago signed on too. An article in the *Village Voice* (30 May) quotes Daniel Golden, author of a recent book on intelligence agencies’ “exploitation” of universities, *Spy Schools* (2017), stating that the CIA/Baruch deal is “another sign of the intimate relationship between the CIA and American academia.” Golden noted that openly “trumpeting this partnership would have been unlikely or unthinkable back in the Sixties and Seventies,” when “CIA recruiters were anathema on college campuses.” This has changed considerably with intelligence agencies’ increased “popularity...following the 9/11 attacks,” and the “growing dependence of universities...on military and intelligence agencies for research funding.”

Marxists fight against every measure aimed at further subordinating the campuses to the imperialist rulers’

military, police and intelligence apparatus. But we do not base this on the illusion that the university is or can be some kind of liberated zone or oppression-free “safe space” under capitalism. For the capitalist class that owns and operates this country in the service of profit, a key function of universities is to train future functionaries and managers of the bourgeois state. Elite universities were traditionally the recruiting grounds for the CIA, which now sees a need to tap into a more “diverse” demographic for the same sinister purposes. In fighting against their drive to turn our campuses into spy schools, Marxists point out that defeating and uprooting the whole system of imperialist oppression requires a *socialist revolution* here and around the world.

In distributing our leaflets at Baruch, Internationalist activists found that many students were still unaware of the administration’s pact with the CIA, and many knew little about the history of the spy agency’s crimes. The April 24 teach-in was an important part of building awareness and opposition to the CIA incursion. Moreover, the teach-in was followed in May by the Baruch Faculty Senate overwhelmingly approving a resolution for Baruch to end its participation in the CIA’s Signature Schools Program. Still, despite these significant steps expressing growing opposition, the arrogant Baruch administration, like the rest of the CUNY tops, don’t give a damn what anyone thinks except for the ruling elite that appoints and employs them. As our March leaflet stated, what’s needed is “*massive protest and exposure to stop the CIA from making our university a base for the torture, terror and mass murder it carries out around the world. CIA OUT OF BARUCH AND OUT OF CUNY, NOW!*” ■

Black Panther...

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When Everett Ross is aiding T’Challa’s bid for the throne, the audience is meant to be rooting for the CIA. For anyone aware of the CIA’s role in Africa, this is a particularly noxious part of the film. The CIA has been helping overthrow governments in Africa and other parts of the world since its founding in 1947. Among its most notorious crimes on the African continent was its role in the overthrow and assassination of Congolese independence leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961.¹ Then there’s the CIA’s support to apartheid regimes in South Africa and Namibia, its efforts to destroy national liberation movements fighting Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique and Angola, on down to the conquest of Libya and lynching of its leader Muammar Gaddafi, which Hillary Clinton, then Obama’s Secretary of State, gloatingly described

¹ For more on the CIA’s murderous history, see “CIA Out of CUNY Now!”, “CIA at Baruch: A Threat, Not an ‘Honor,’” and “Baruch Faculty and Students Resist CIA Incursion” printed in this issue of *Revolution*.

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“Wakanda Forever”? Review of *Black Panther*

By Sharpe

Superhero movies have been box office mainstays for the last decade. Fantastic beat-'em-ups pitting super-powered “good guys” against equally-endowed “bad guys,” the fate of the world hanging in the balance. With a pinch of romance, a dollop of comic relief and a generous serving of bright lights and flashy colors, the formula is a proven winner. What’s not satisfying about watching a sympathetic protagonist overcome the odds to vanquish evil? The day-to-day oppression of capitalist society can leave people feeling powerless and exhausted – especially for those who face the double and triple oppression of racism, sexism and homophobia – and fantasy stories can be a welcome respite.

Marvel Studios’ *Black Panther* (2018) does all of that. Based on the comic book with the same title, it’s a fun fantasy about a mythic, ultra-powerful African country called Wakanda. The protagonist is Wakanda’s monarch, King T’Challa, the Black Panther (Chadwick Boseman). The Black Panther must protect Wakanda’s most precious natural resource from falling into the hands of a racist South African arms dealer, and then the power-mad cousin who seeks to usurp T’Challa. Along the way, viewers are treated to images of a futuristic black society suffused with technological optimism, whose chief scientist is a woman, and of powerful black women beating the hell out of racists and male chauvinists. Likewise, seeing the piggish arms dealer, who refers to Wakandans as “savages” and repeatedly addresses the central antagonist as “boy,” get his just deserts was quite satisfying.

The film has been widely lauded as a significant African American cultural achievement. “‘Black Panther’ fully embraces its blackness – and that’s what makes it unforgettable,” headlined *The Washington Post* (12 February). *The New Republic* (13 February) hailed “The Liberating Visions of Black Panther” and *Rolling Stone* (18 February) called it “the most radical superhero movie of all time.” The film has even been compared to the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense (BPP), founded in 1966 as a militant response to racist police terror in Oakland, California. “The only stark difference here between T’Challa and the [BPP] is the fact that he is fictional,” claimed *The Root* (30 January).

For a lot of viewers, including many black youth and plenty of others, there is something very gratifying about this fantasy. In a society where African Americans are constantly being put down, where the president refers to black people he doesn’t like as “dogs,” “lowlives,” and “low-IQ,” where the police gun down black people with impunity, a movie where super-powered Africans save the day is an attractive consolation. Coupled with the fact that most of the cast and production crew are black, it’s not hard to see why *Black Panther* won the hearts of many. And while it’s important to understand why many viewers found the film exhilarating, this reviewer loathed it, and here is why.

Far from being revolutionary, the film

is characterized by the reformist “identity politics” widely imbued in university students, including many of those who see themselves as radical. Instead of any real fight against the multiple forms of oppression proping up this capitalist society, this form of bourgeois ideology strikes a pose of “woke-ness” with “check-your-privilege” liberalism. It’s more than safe for the ruling class, which is why some of their more intelligent ideologues promote it. Worse still, in the film a CIA agent, Everett K. Ross (Martin Freeman), is key to saving the day. (As Ross is on his way to becoming one of the film’s heroes, the chief of a Wakandan “tribe” and his subjects bark at him like animals, in a scene as racist in presentation as it is flat-footed politically.) Evidently the problem is *not* that he’s a CIA agent but that he lacks the “lived experience” to chime in on Wakandan issues. As we will discuss below, many African peoples’ real experience – a history everyone should study and learn from – is that U.S. imperialism, with its CIA “Murder Incorporated,” is their most ruthless and deadly enemy.

Yes, having a black director, stars and cast, many of whom are women, make a highly-acclaimed blockbuster is socially significant in Hollywood’s own history, no doubt. But precisely because *Black Panther* is all about identity at the expense of historical truth, the film propagates a brand of politics antithetical to social liberation. Identity politics claims to unite people in sectorally defined groups across the class divide, a classic example being “Sisterhood is powerful” – as if Hillary Clinton could be the “sister” of the Haitian women working in her sweatshops. Such illusions stand in the way of uprooting the actual racist and sexist oppression enforced by the ruling class. In real life, it means “unity” with Democratic Party politicians – the same politicians who are the bosses of the racist killer cops across the U.S. and who, under Obama, deported over 8 million immigrants. Is it surprising, then, that a #WakandaVote voter registration drive, meant to shore up support for the Democrats in the 2018 elections, accompanied the release of the film?

Liberating? Radical? Not a chance. The liberal press has been fawning over *Black Panther*, which encourages not radical revolt but identification with kings, queens and nobility who rule by “divine right.” T’Challa is depicted as a benevolent king who has “his people’s” best in-



Nothing to do with real Black Panthers. Film’s “King T’Challa” allies with imperialist CIA to regain throne.

terests at heart. But a king is a king, and T’Challa crushes challenges to his rule by any means, even working with the CIA. Do the Wakandan masses, the people whose labor T’Challa and the nobility presumably live off, play *any* role in the film? No.

Technologically, Wakanda is the most advanced country in the world, with clothing, vehicles and buildings made from indestructible material, and medicine that can easily heal fatal wounds. Such technological optimism would be refreshing if it weren’t enmeshed in so much reactionary nonsense. Turns out it’s all made possible by “vibranium,” an extra-terrestrial metal that fell to Earth as a meteor in the distant past, which the Wakandans have hoarded and hid from the rest of the world for centuries, doing nothing to intervene against the trans-Atlantic slave trade or any other historic atrocity. The real Black Panthers fought, and many died, for the right of black self-defense, as they were targeted by the FBI’s deadly COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program). Among those still in jail is former Philadelphia Panther Mumia Abu-Jamal, the courageous “voice of the voiceless” who has been in prison for 36 years on frame-up charges. Yet *Black Panther* the film is a parable *against* resistance to the racist status quo, depicting those who would use vibranium to help the oppressed as at best, misguided, and at worst, demented mass murderers.

Black Liberation or a Fantasy of Royal Despotism?

In the introduction to the film, the fictional land of Wakanda is shown as being located around where South Sudan, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo meet (and they speak Xhosa, one of the languages of South Africa – go figure). After vibranium crashed into the African continent, the “tribes” of Wakanda unified under a monarch, the first Black Panther. Besides that, history developed in *Black Panther*’s world much as it did in ours. Yet while the

rest of the world was on fire, Wakanda used its technology to hide itself and prevent the dissemination of its all-powerful metal.

The central antagonist of the film is Erik Killmonger (Michael B. Jordan), a fiery U.S.-born Wakandan who teams up with Ulysses Klaue (Andy Serkis), the South African arms dealer, to steal vibranium from Wakanda. While Klaue is only interested in selling it to the highest bidder, Killmonger has greater ambitions. We learn that Killmonger’s father N’Jobu (Sterling K. Brown) was murdered by the previous Black Panther, T’Chaka (his brother), for plotting to arm the oppressed black populations of the world with vibranium weapons, having lived as a spy in Oakland, California and witnessed the horrors of racism. N’Jobu wanted to unite them under the Wakandan banner and establish an empire on which “the sun would never set.” Killmonger seeks to avenge his father and carry on this campaign by overthrowing T’Challa.

Killmonger eventually dispenses with Klaue and arrives in Wakanda to challenge T’Challa. In Wakanda, royal succession is decided by combat (no one person, one vote here), and the sitting monarch must entertain any challenge from within the ruling family. In the scene where the two first meet, Killmonger boasts of having killed hundreds of people in Iraq and Afghanistan as a CIA agent, refining his talent for murder over many years while keeping his Wakandan origins a secret. He defeats T’Challa and becomes the new Black Panther. Aided by the Dora Milaje, Wakanda’s elite all-woman special forces required to guard whoever occupies the throne, Killmonger secures his position and begins mobilizing Wakanda’s forces for world conquest.

T’Challa manages to survive, and rallies a small group of supporters around him to overthrow Killmonger, enlisting the help of CIA agent Ross. The reclusive, traditionalist Jabari tribe back T’Challa, who had spared their chief M’Baku’s life in a previous royal challenge. A final battle ensues, in which T’Challa and his forces defeat Killmonger, foiling his plot in a successful *coup d’état*. Addressing the United Nations as “the sovereign ruler of the nation of Wakanda” in the movie’s final scene, T’Challa reveals his country’s true nature and vows to “no longer watch from the shadows.”

Black Panther wants to render Wakanda as an Afro-futurist paradise where people and culture flourish, but there is no semblance of democracy (even bourgeois democracy) in Wakanda. The political regime is akin to the Kingdom of Eswatini (Swaziland), a tiny southern African country that was a British colony from 1906 to 1968, and is now ruled by an absolute monarch, Mswati III, and his mother Ntfombi Tfwala (the country’s ritual and spiritual figurehead). Mswati III is a real-life despot who has continually quashed struggles for elementary democratic rights since his ascension to the throne in 1986. *Black Panther*’s T’Challa is also an absolute monarch, who fundamentally rules by decree with a bit of input from a tribal council.

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