

# Pre-convention bulletin #15 / February 11, 2015 for members only

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## **Palestine Work in NYC**

The last decade American Arab and Muslim youth have witnessed the atrocities in Palestine, and have also experienced Islamophobia first hand. Young Jews also find themselves wishing to distance themselves from the Israeli oppression of Palestine. More and more activists join the ranks of SJPs, JVP, labor for Palestine organizations and other Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) focused groups. This radicalization is taking place in a growing but yet small group of activists, but is accompanied by a *global shift in public opinion*. BDS with its simple message - end the 1967 occupation, give equal rights to 1948 Palestinian citizens of Israel and *allow the right of return*, is making *genuine Palestinian liberation* a part of main stream discussion.

BDS is changing the political culture on campuses as well. The connection to free speech and labor solidarity is made clear by the Steven Salaita case, which has both exposed the establishment's deep commitment to Zionism and the potential to fight it.

But in order to actually affect change in the imperial order in the Middle East, at the heart of which Israel sits, BDS must also go further. It must challenge imperialism and war on all fronts. It cannot on the one hand condemn Israel but condone Assad in Syria. Palestine is not a single issue - it is part of the entire region that is dominated by US allies on the one hand, and competitors on the other. This broader political framework guides us; we are however, part of a minority in this regard.

## **Adapting to the changing needs of Palestine work in NYC**

Over the summer we witnessed large turnouts to demonstrations both by people long engaged in work around Palestine and by others who are beginning to recognize parallels between racial oppression in the

US and Israel's apartheid system, as well as those who have been grappling with questions around liberal justifications of Zionism and who are beginning to break with their own allegiance to Israel. This was made evident by the massive surge in membership and interest in Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) that was significant enough to require the group to create new chapters.

Increased interest in BDS was also demonstrated during and after the assault on Gaza. BDS was mentioned from the front at multiple protests, a variety of flyers promoting boycott were being handed out by people, and Adalah-NY's BDS flyers garnered a lot of interest and practically flew out of our hands. Adalah-NY has received requests for speakers/workshop facilitators on BDS, and in recognition of increasing interest, particularly on campuses, Adalah-NY has begun creating relationships with SJP chapters in NY and NJ. Adalah-NY is training its activists to spread the practice of BDS and share the group's long garnered experience in this kind of work and to efficiently respond to requests when they come in.

It's also important to take note of the fact that demonstrations in NYC during the summer were smaller than those in other parts of the country and to consider whether this is a reflection of fractures between organizing groups in NY or whether it's a practical/logistical matter. Also present at the protests were questions and debates about Egypt and Syria. For example, members of MENA Solidarity Network-US (a group in which ISO comrades are involved) carried signs with pictures of Bashar Al Assad side by side with Benjamin Netanyahu, with slogans pointing out that they both kill Palestinians; Netanyahu in Gaza and Al Assad in Yarmouk.

This led a lot of people to stop and ask questions. Some disagreed strongly and described Al Assad as "a good man" and others wanted to delve deeper and understand the connection. Simultaneously there was often a heavy presence of Muslim Brotherhood supporters at the demonstrations. Signs and shirts displaying the raba'a sign (which signals solidarity with victims of the Raba'a/Nahda massacres at the hands of the Egyptian military as well as political support for the Muslim Brotherhood) were displayed prominently.

The elephants of Syria and Egypt were present constantly, and thankfully did not cause conflict at demonstrations or divert away from the urgent task of unified solidarity with Gaza. However, they did present important questions and nuances to the issues of imperialism, US interests and support of dictatorial regimes in the region, the challenges posed to empire and colonialism by movements for democracy in the region, and how this all connects to the Palestinian struggle. **These are questions that will inevitably continue to present themselves and that we in the ISO should prepare to address politically while not challenging unity in the Palestine solidarity movement and instead promoting it on political grounds.**

### **Summer Activity**

The Palestine fraction was formed this summer in response Israel's assault on Gaza, Operation Protective Edge. While there was no single protest the size of London (100,000) or Chicago (10,000), there was a dizzying array of events in which thousands participated, from mock-funerals to 2-3,000 person rallies and marches. ~5 comrades were tasked with cohering a fraction, a strategy for relating to what we could, and trying not to get overwhelmed in the process.

Before the fraction formed individual members had attended events and were unable to do little more than watch the events unfold and report back. These report backs proved immensely useful, revealing large demos were run by groups with enormous resources, populated by demonstrators who were mostly Arab, young, angry, very well informed, instinctively positive towards BDS, but without a particular framework. **Largely missing from the speeches were explanations of why Israel was attacking at that moment, what it was hoping to accomplish, why the US government consistently supported Israel.**

Our strategy responded to these factors. There was no need for yet another action, and we didn't want to compete with other groups that could clearly pull off events we could not. Instead, **we had something unique to offer at this moment, a political framework** that made sense of the questions being posed for so many, and of the many different courses of action on offer. **We headed into each protest with a packet printed SW articles on key questions, and flyers for a) public meetings on Zionism at each of our**

## **branches; and b) a citywide discussion group for Battle For Justice in Palestine.**

When members of ours spoke from the front, which we were able to do on a number of occasions, members in the crowd were able to be more outward. We got into great conversations, handed out fliers and sold papers.

Much of the district mobilized behind this strategy, canceling local paper sales to attend. We led with the meetings and discussion groups, arguing that all of the activity was great, but that we also needed a place to discuss why this was all happening, and cohere a movement against Zionism on the basis of a solid political framework. This message was eagerly received: we had over 80 people at three public meetings, and some 60-80 more signed up for the discussions.

One further note is how incredibly important pre- and post- event meetings were at this time. Being able to communicate our strategy and discuss best ways to implement it meant increasingly stronger, coherent ISO presences. And being able to hear back right after about what worked and what didn't allowed us to make important recalibration.

One small example: we were cautious about bringing a full table to the protest which we first mobilized the district, at which a number of members observed the SA table had sparked some interest, despite having 0 materials on Israel or Palestine. The following protest we made sure to bring a full range of titles on Palestine (and other topics), which created a huge buzz and drew people into conversation with us, resulting in a number of contacts and dozens of signups to our *Battle For Justice in Palestine* discussion.

### ***The Battle for Justice in Palestine Book Club***

The book club drew to its meetings between 10-18 people each time. The participants varied in background and experience. The meetings created a core group of closer contacts that participated regularly and came out to the bar to continue to talk with us. We recruited a new member out of those discussions and continue to maintain a few very close contacts, which we hope to recruit in the future.

Many questions, critical to the movement, came out of the discussions; The relationship between the US and Israel and between the militarization of the police and Israel/imperialism at large; the utility and significance of BDS, and a debate around Chomsky's opposition to BDS; why do we argue for a one state solution and the right of return, etc.

Because the book club went on for four sessions and included mostly repeat participants we were able to get a very good sense of the contacts around us, and **create long term political relationships with them, while being open about our socialist politics. We centralized the work through a fraction contacts organizer and the study group helped us cohere a practical strategy for the fraction's contact work.**

### **Citywide Public Palestine fraction meetings**

In the months after Israel's attack subsided, reports from our various areas of activist work revealed similar dynamics in both SJP work on campus and in Adalah-NY. One consistent challenge is the tendency to overlook the importance of politics, or actively *avoid* them, instead focusing on an exhausting pace of activity. This strong emphasis on doing a lot rarely leaves any room for political discussion. This means meetings are largely a-political and can tend to look like many 5-minute sections, as tasks get checked off one after the next.

Splits in groups and coalitions are common because political disagreements are not openly addressed, ironically in order to avoid rifts in the movement. Furthermore, the single-issue approach aiming for the lowest common denominator distances the movement from its greatest allies, the Arab working classes in the Middle East. Muslim groups, Stalinist and "campist" groups in the city contribute to the weakness of the Palestine movement around the broader regional questions. Though there is an obvious limitation in not having political discussions in which to frame discussions of what to do, it has not been easy to argue for

spaces for more political discussion inside these meetings, and doing so has in some cases polarized our involvement.

Additionally, we found that a largely decentralized approach of our work citywide (7-8 people involved citywide), meant that our members on campuses were largely isolated in the work they were doing and we were unable to generalize the lessons from both challenges and successes members were experiencing. In thinking through how we can set ourselves up to address our questions and to position ourselves in the movement in order to best help shape its politics, we discussed the need to both **centralize** our work and to have **political discussions** to give our members and our periphery the confidence they need to raise questions that our movement needs to face. We want members and allies to go into a room and be able to raise the political level. And we want members to identify **our audience**, engage and bring people around us and recruit a new layer from the most radical activists we work with to the ISO.

We decided to revamp the idea for citywide discussions. We plan to host open, monthly discussions of contemporary topics (with emphasis on how different political perspectives inform different ideas about what we do practically). We intend to bring to these discussions people who are politically closest to us, while keeping them open to anyone who wishes to participate. We hope they will:

- create space for people closest to us in movement work to engage in ongoing political discussions about Palestine and build a periphery of allies around us in the movement;
- put campus activists in conversation with citywide and long-term activists;
- begin to cohere elements from Palestine activism across the city, laying the groundwork for
- tighter and more effective collaboration;
- and develop members of the Fraction politically in order to be able to address political questions around the BDS movement, Palestine more generally and connection of the Palestinian struggle to democracy movements in the region and their repression.

**DT, JF, and YK**

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## **On the continuities of the Black Lives Matter struggle**

### **Introduction**

During last year's National Convention, a debate arose concerning the ISO's alleged "big bang" perspective of social movements and "turning-points" in the overall class struggle. The Renewal Faction charged that the ISO tended to mischaracterize small upticks in class struggle as "turning points" or as a "New Civil Rights movement" that never became qualitative turning points.

LS's response was an important counter-argument for a more dynamic understanding of the class struggle:

The point here isn't that socialists should see every demonstration or strike is a "turning point," a characterization that is only really known in hindsight. But it is about being prepared for the possibility that a particular struggle could be a launching point for more, or deeper, struggles. Socialists can't hope to contribute to today's struggles if they start from what some might call a "realistic" position—based on an assessment of the balance of forces today—that the struggles are destined to fail, or to be derailed. With few exceptions, the leaderships of today's trade unions and liberal organizations already play the role of convincing their memberships that not much is to be gained from struggle, and to accept whatever employers or politicians are willing to offer. Being a "serious" socialist today doesn't mean adopting the same fatalistic posture to struggle, but justifying it with quotes from Marx, Lenin or Trotsky. We orient to those who want to struggle not because we are evangelists spreading the "Good News" of socialism . . . but because socialists attempt to do their "theoretical and strategic thinking" from inside the struggle.

The Black Lives Matter movement is energetic, unapologetically Black, and often radical. It has raised a number of similar questions: Was Ferguson a turning-point? Is the new movement really a *movement* at all? Is there a movement leadership? How were the movement's politics born out of a seemingly-spontaneous rebellion?

Our goal is to build and strengthen the movement—particularly the revolutionary socialist current within it. Additionally, we should hope that doing our “theoretical and strategic thinking” inside the struggle develops the ISO as well—with more Black cadre members and a better understanding of how to carry out the fight against racism.

### **Objective roots of Ferguson and subjective roots of BLM**

The Ferguson rebellion came as no surprise to us—we've written extensively in *SW* and *ISR* about the conditions of Black America—and we participated in all of the pre-Ferguson stages of the recent movement. Likewise, many of the organizations that we work with today were formed before the Ferguson rebellion. The Black Youth Project 100, for instance, responded to George Zimmerman's acquittal at their founding conference.

Our orientation toward the movement requires an understanding of its roots. We've done this in *Socialist Worker* articles and K's document in Pre-Convention Bulletin #4 is invaluable for this process. The ideas and organizations that inform today's Black Lives Matter struggle have much deeper roots than the protests in Ferguson. As KPS writes in the recent *ISR*,

...it is worth considering a history that stretches even further back to understand today's events. A mass challenge to rampant police killing of Black people emerged in New York City in the late 1990s. The case of Amadou Diallo, a West African immigrant who was gunned down by four NYPD cops in front of his apartment building in 1999, became a lightning rod for resistance to the NYPD. This coincided with the growth of the struggle demanding justice for Mumia Abu Jamal, the former Black Panther who was accused of, and sentenced to death for, killing a Philadelphia police officer. In 2001, the Cincinnati police killing of Timothy Thomas, an unarmed Black teenager, sparked a days-long rebellion in the city's Black community. These protests made an impact. In 1999, 59 percent of Americans said they believed that police used racial profiling, and 81 percent thought that the practice was wrong.

We have also argued that the growing movement against racism, the criminal injustice system, and police terror—like much of the developing Left of the time—was sabotaged by the 9-11 attacks in 2001. Yet, during the two decades between the '92 Los Angeles rebellion and the Ferguson rebellion of 2014, the struggle for Black liberation wasn't just hibernating. Rather, there has been an accumulation and refinement of politics through a number of fights, large and small, in cities across the country. Without denying the very real discontinuities, this document is meant to highlight the subjective *continuities* of struggle and politics since the LA rebellion that have led to today's Black Lives Matter movement.

### **Fuck the police**

The 1992 rebellion in Los Angeles represented the culmination and emergence of two different dynamics: the physical destruction of the Black Power movement and the emergence of a new generation of anti-racist fighters.

Two decades after the destruction of the Black Panther Party, gang warfare wracked LA's Black and Brown neighborhoods. As Mike Davis wrote:

As even *The [Los Angeles] Times* recognized, the decimation of the Panthers led directly to a recrudescence of gangs in the early 1970s. 'Crippin,' the most extraordinary new gang phenomenon was a bastard offspring of the Panthers' former charisma, filling the void left by the LAPD SWAT teams.

Following the massive deindustrialization of Los Angeles, Black working-class power was decimated by 1992. Black and brown communities fell to the military-style occupation of the LAPD, which declared war on the only powerful community organizations that survived; gangs. Because they competed in the underground economy, gangs were often at war with one another as well. They certainly weren't radical political organizations like those of the Black Power movement.

Yet, when Black and brown Los Angeles responded to the Rodney King verdict with nights of rebellion, gang organizations became an important conduit for years of pent-up rage. Writing in *Socialist Worker* only a month after the LA rebellion, LS contrasted it to the politics of the 1965 Watts rebellion,

The difference between [the 1965 Watts rebellion and 1992 is that in the earlier period, Black workers' consciousness had been affected—and their expectations had been raised—by a ten-year struggle in the South for civil rights. Then, it was common for rioters to see the rebellions as a political act. In contrast, the 1992 uprising comes after an extremely conservative period. It is an angry, but pre-political reflection of the system. For that reason, it is less likely in the short term to lead to the stable, radical political organizations that flourished in the late 1960s.

Nevertheless, the rebellion showed that it was *possible* to fight back against the cops—and gang organizations drew a range of political conclusions; most importantly, that police were the main enemy rather than each other. As the LA Rebellion unfolded, the Nation of Islam played a prominent role in a momentous truce between the city's main Blood and Crip organizations. Latino organizations were drawn in as well, as indicated by graffiti spotted during the first day of the rebellion which read, "MEXICANS & CRIPS & BLOODS TOGETHER TONITE."

Terrified by the specter of a Blood, Crip, Latino, and Nation of Islam united front, the LAPD actively undermined the truce. As Mike Davis noted in the documentary, *Bastards of the Party*, "As soon as the truce started to happen, they immediately denounced it as a criminal conspiracy." Five months later, Spike Lee's biopic, *Malcolm X*, played to audiences around the country, garnered awards, and sparked a fashion-craze of goatees and Malcolm X t-shirts. George Bush, Sr. was voted out of office, and only a few months later, Black and white prisoners in Ohio's Lucasville supermax prison launched the longest prison uprising in US history.

The LA rebellion succeeded in putting America's nasty truths on the nightly news—second only to Bill Clinton's election as the top news story of the year. It inspired rebelliousness and marked the beginning of a new generation of anti-racist activists. Yet, the immediate organizational beneficiary in the wake of LA remained the National of Islam, which grew spectacularly in the rebellion's aftermath. The Nation's conservative politics did very little to push the movement forward however, and the NOI's influence reached a highpoint with 1995's Million Man March.

### **Civil rights attacks and the war on youth**

The backlash to the rebellion came quickly. The LAPD rapidly militarized and carried out revenge on a daily basis with harassment and murder. The brutality was compounded with attacks on civil rights—California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187 was the first, in 1994. But, the Black and brown alliance of the LA rebellion was fresh in everyone's memory and 70,000 people turned out to protest the law.

The following year, Black Republican businessman Ward Connerly's crusade against Affirmative Action successfully passed in the form of the California Civil Rights Initiative (Proposition 209). Students responded by occupying their campuses and holding protests across California. Since its passage, Black student populations at schools like UC Berkeley have been cut in half. The assault on the Civil Rights movement's gains continued to snowball, as Proposition 227 attacked bilingual education.

The wave of anti-Black youth hysteria culminated in the early 1990s and produced the most rapid expansion of the juvenile justice system in American history. In 1992, the Chicago City Council passed a draconian anti-loitering law, which made it illegal to stand on the street with anyone a cop might

“reasonably believe to be in a gang.” The results were predictable; within two years, more than 45,000 people—overwhelmingly Black youth—were arrested. Similar “sweep” legislation was passed in other cities as the War on Gangs expanded into what activists called the War on Youth.

A massive expansion of juvenile detention facilities was the result. Illinois, for instance, doubled the number of state and county juvenile facilities during the “punishing decade” of the 1990s. As Jeff Chang notes, Black youths were a special target for detention,

The racial effects of all of these sweep laws were lopsided. While white youths made up 79 percent of national juvenile arrests, 62 percent of youths in juvenile detention facilities were of color. Even when charged with the same offense, Latinos and Native Americans were 2.5 times more likely to end up in custody than whites. Black youths were five times more likely to be detained.

### **Rise of the hip-hop generation**

Journalist Bakari Kitwana coined the term “hip-hop generation” in the early 1990s. As part of the post-Civil Rights era, this generation never knew legal segregation, yet experienced de-facto segregation and racism in their every day lives. They were the first generation to experience the explosion of the prison-industrial complex and assaults on the hard-won reforms of the Civil Rights era, like Affirmative Action. While this generation would later be pivotal in the election of Barack Obama, Black politicians of the time offered little for Black youth and often participated in the scapegoating of young people.

In her influential book *From Black Power to Hip Hop* Patricia Hill Collins writes,

“Stated differently, this population has benefited from the Civil Rights Movement to make democracy work for African Americans; from union movements that pressured all levels of government to protect the interests of the most economically vulnerable workers; from Black nationalist–influenced social movements that maintained churches, schools, and other community institutions dedicated to nurturing the next generation of African American leaders; from a women’s movement that demanded rights for women and girls equal to those afforded to men; and from movements for sexual liberation that created political space for new identities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) people. Yet as a group, Black American youth have also routinely been denied structural opportunities to exercise their citizenship rights and to achieve personal goals. In this sense, the status of Black American youth serves as a barometer for the status of American democracy itself.

...Nowhere is this more apparent than in an examination of the life chances of the Black hip-hop generation. Joblessness, illiteracy, unplanned pregnancy, criminal activity, drugs, and alarmingly high rates of HIV infection spark the same response: Black youth are told to “speak proper English, pull up your pants, and take off that miniskirt.”

Against the backdrop of civil rights rollbacks and the criminalization of youth, a new generation of activists and organizations emerged. Often identifying as part of the “hip-hop movement,” these activists mixed cultural and political activism to organize youth especially. The Third Eye Movement, for instance, formed in 1998 when San Francisco police murdered seventeen-year old Sheila Deto and played a critical role in organizing opposition to the racist anti-youth Juvenile Crime Initiative (Proposition 21) two years later. Other hip-hop arts and activist collectives, like Chicago’s Kuumba Lynx, which formed in 1996 by three young women, sought to:

...utilize Hip-Hop arts & culture to increase social consciousness, inner peace, creativity, and universal freedom . . . With roots in poor and underserved neighborhoods, they knew the importance of youth empowerment and felt firsthand the silencing, criminalization and mis-education that is so often inflicted on marginalized communities. For them, Hip Hop was a vehicle for self determination and another future.

Hundreds of other collectives formed around the country and utilized the vehicle of hip-hop to spread its ideas. As Andrea Clay wrote in her popular book *The Hip-Hop Generation Fights Back*,

Hip-hop music often acts as a base for social protest among today's youth . . . Music has been a useful organizing tool for social and political protest because it reflects the lifestyles and values of youth . . . Hip-hop has been a particularly important site for youth of color to understand and define themselves and their experiences. Moreover, hip-hop can be a powerful tool in communicating to an outside audience what it means to be a youth of color in the particular historical moment.

When global justice protesters shut down the meetings of the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999, among the participants were the hip-hop group Company of Prophets and the Blue Scholars went on to record the Seattle protest experience in their song *50,000 deep*:

On the last day of November, swellin' in ranks,  
Went to chant down the mighty IMF and World  
Bank, A gathering of people in peaceful assembly,  
Onward to Westlake to disrupt the entry

The new generation didn't only use music to talk politics. Just two years after the LA rebellion, self-styled Chicago graffiti writer William Upsi Wimsatt wrote the hip-hop activist classic, *Bomb the Suburbs* and followed it with *No More Prisons* in 1999. These two books were both reflective of and influential in the developing movement and served to politicize the hip-hop generation further, despite their anarcho-liberal framework.

A renewed generation of activists, sparked by the LA rebellion matured, created its own organizations, and developed political conclusions about racism, imperialism, and globalization. Many inside the movement challenged the two-party system and lent their support to Ralph Nader's insurgent presidential campaign; underground hip-hop gods Company Flow opened his Madison Square Gardens super-rally with 15,000 people. Still, the most important aspect of the hip-hop generation's activism was its grassroots focus. As Jeff Chang wrote,

. . . the most compelling work was happening at the local level, outside of the traditional institutions. In Chicago, Brooklyn and Oakland, hip-hop activists used graffiti, b-boying, and DJing to educate and organize around education, gentrification, and juvenile justice issues. In Louisville, they fought book bans and youth curfews. In the Bay Area and the Bronx, they organized to stop the expansion of the juvenile detention facilities. In Albuquerque, they tossed out city council members who supported the building of a highway through sacred Native lands. On campuses across the country, they fought for labor unions, living wages, and against sweatshops and companies that invested in the prison industry.

### **Black rage**

An epidemic of police violence continued to spark rage in Black communities—and the organizing has continued ever since. Mostly localized and unable to turn the tide of daily police violence, the protests took many forms—from street protests and reform initiatives like civilian police review boards, to urban rebellions like Ferguson.

When Indianapolis police arrested and beat a 20-year old Black man named Danny Sales, the city's Black neighborhoods rebelled for two nights in 1995. Two years later, 30-year old Abner Louima, a Haitian immigrant, was brutally sexually assaulted by New York cops and thousands of New Yorkers marched in a "Day of Outrage Against Police Brutality and Harassment."

Less than two years later, Amadou Diallo was shot 41 times by NYPD cops. Again, thousands of New Yorkers marched in the streets and 41 rappers collaborated for the "Hip Hop for Respect" project to protest the murder. The project followed in a long tradition of rappers speaking out against the police, like KRS-One's classic "Sound of tha Police", which was recorded in New York during the LA Rebellion.

Frustrated with endless police violence, Black communities in Cincinnati and Benton Harbor, MI rebelled at the general state of affairs. It's hardly a surprise that the vast majority of Black people saw the cops as racist. A 2001 Gallup poll found:

"Racial profiling" is believed to be widespread by 55% of whites, but by 83% of blacks. This large gap in perceptions between whites and blacks underscores the broad sense from our data that the law enforcement establishment is associated with perceptions of racial division. This question was asked first in 1999, and while perceptions of whites have not changed in the intervening year and a half, perceptions of widespread racial profiling among blacks have inched up from 77% to 83%.

In addition to the rebellions and protests against police brutality, other aspects of the anti-racist fight were under way in the South. During the first month of 2000, 50,000 people protested the confederate flag in South Carolina. Three days later, police attacked members of Charleston's International Longshore Association on a picket line; sparking the Charleston 5 defense campaign. The fight to defend Affirmative Action continued in Michigan and other states as another 50,000 activists coalesced in Washington DC in April of 2003.

### **Hip Hop and the Democrats**

Florida voter disenfranchisement in the 2000 election wasn't just another civil rights attack. It was an attack on the basic right to vote—and it was broadcast on news stations across the country for weeks. The fiasco widened the ideological fissures of racism in America and gave further impetus to political protest. As *Socialist Worker* reported at the time,

As it became clear how many Blacks had been stopped from voting, about 500 students from historically Black Florida A&M University organized a sit-in at the state capitol in Tallahassee . . . the sit-in was a natural outgrowth of protests they participated in earlier this year--against Jeb Bush's "One Florida" plan to ban affirmative action in state government and college admissions. The demonstrators camped out for 22 hours and demanded a meeting with either Secretary of State Katherine Harris or Attorney General Bob Butterworth. Neither showed.

As a result, electoral strategy became the dominant discussion within the hip-hop movement. Partially as a result of the disenfranchisement of Black voters in Florida, but also as the Democratic Party tried to pin down the "youth vote." Hip-hop industry mogul Russell Simmons, together with the NAACP, the Nation of Islam, scores of hip-hop artists and activists, and Congressional Black Caucus members organized the Hip-hop Summit Action Network (HHSAN) Conference in 2001. While Black radicals like Cornel West and Manning Marable were given the final words during the main plenary, then-Network CEO Ben Chavis articulated the real purpose of the event:

There will be a massive get out the vote campaign for the 2002 election...and it's not too early also to start planning for the 2004 elections. So, mayors of the cities, governors of the states, members of congress, and the President of the United States, look out. Hip-hop is coming strong.

Other, grassroots, forces within the movement began to strategize about electoral power as well. *Bomb the Suburbs* author William Upski Wimsatt released *How to Get Stupid White Men Out of Office* and it became the organizing manual for many in the hop-hip movement. The League of Pissed-Off Voters, which based itself on the book, was a central component of the 2003 Hip-hop and Social Change Conference that brought together 3,000 artists and activists together in Chicago to strategize.

But, there still remained an activist base within the movement. After balking repeatedly, music mogul Russell Simmons agreed for the HHSAN to co-sponsor mass protests and organizing against the notorious Rockefeller Drugs Laws in New York City. By 2009, the movement made modest gains, including the removal of mandatory minimum sentences. As the *Nation* noted, "Today, the Rockefeller Drug Laws era is finally over and the contribution of the hip-hop community can't be denied." Yet in the years that followed, New York City skyrocketed to the cannabis-arrest capital of the world.

Still, the turn to the Democratic Party and its satellite organizations steered the movement into a cul-de-sac. Despite years of mobilization and organization-building, the movement was largely unable to make qualitative gains in the fight against racism and the 2008 campaign of Barack Obama became movement priority number one.

## **Conclusion**

Since 1992, there has been a long-term, sustained movement against racism in the United States. Initially “pre-political”, the LA rebellion showed that the Black liberation struggle required new organizations to carry it out. As Manning Marable wrote in 2002,

“While art and politics are indeed connected, it is not the case that cultural workers, musicians, and even entertainment entrepreneurs like Simmons, coming out of hip hop culture represent a new political leadership. Yvonne Bynoe, one of hip hop culture’s most insightful observers, paraphrased Chuck D by saying that “we do not need hip-hop doctors or hip-hop politicians. The leadership that will come from the post-civil rights generation must be able to do more than rhyme about problems; they have got to be able to build organizations as well as harness the necessary monetary resources and political power to do something about them.”

New organizations developed within the cultural milieu of hip-hop, reflecting the general retreat of working-class organization as well as the hegemony of identity politics in the 1990s. By-and-large, the organizations were locally-focused, only informally connected to national networks, and largely appropriated by Democratic Party forces.

The politics that inform today’s movement: the Black, queer feminism of organizations like the Black Youth Project 100; movement elders, like Pittsburgh’s Jasiri X, St. Louis’s Tef Poe; and former Hip-hop caucus director Rosa Clemente all have their roots in the political radicalization of the hip-hop movement.

Clearly, this is a very schematic exploration of the movement’s continuities. Although beyond the scope of this document, the role that Hurricane Katrina played in shaping the broader consciousness of systemic racism, for instance, is quite important. Likewise, the infusion of Black feminism within the movement can’t be underscored enough; in 2005 the Center for Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago (ground-zero for the Black Youth Project) held the first national conference on feminism and hip-hop with some of the leading voices in the movement including Imani Perry, Tricia Rose, and Rosa Clemente.

The Black Lives Matter movement has deep roots. The previous generation of “hip-hop” activism served as a bridge between the destruction of the Black Power movement and today’s young radicals. It is not “pre-political” like the LA rebellion. Rather, it has developed leadership, organization, and is not going anywhere. Further, it has raised new questions: how to overcome the Democratic Party obstacle, how to resolve the “police question” (ie, a world *without* police), and how to develop a national movement for Black liberation.

Doing our “theoretical and strategic thinking inside the struggle” means grappling with the roots of the movement’s politics, preserving the memory of the struggle and its continuities, and winning a new layer of Black militants to the ISO.

**EK**

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## **Assessing the Response to Sexual Misconduct**

Several members wrote a powerful document in PCB#19 [for Convention 2014] titled “Addressing Allegations of Sexual Misconduct Made Against Members of the ISO”. This document discussed at length the response to allegations by the members and leadership including the Steering Committee (ISOSC). This

was an important assessment of the response and detailed numerous mistakes that were made. Such an assessment is rare and is invaluable for an organization striving to learn and improve. I cannot commend the SD comrades enough who wrote this document I'm sure this document was instrumental in opening the eyes of numerous members to the complexities of such allegations.

I don't feel that the role of the steering committee has been resolved though. After the initial accusations a steering committee member was aware. The document relayed information that the ISOSC member responded "I was told in September 2012 that the issue had already been resolved because [the victim] wanted to move on with her life and didn't want to press charges." The document goes on stressing that there was a failure to get the victim's account that was made by "every member...regardless of their position". Later on the document describes that

In March 2013, a member of the San Diego branch contacted a member of the ISOSC to report the fact that a third party had accused "Daniel" of attempted rape. The ISOSC member said that they assumed the accusations were false and did not connect the San Diego member with the ISODC(Disciplinary Committee). In the meantime, the San Diego member spoke to the accuser, who said that he would ask the victim if she wanted to talk to an ISO member about the issue. The ISOSC member communicated that they brought the issue to the ISOSC, that the ISOSC discussed it and deemed it a local issue.

And finally the accused was expelled from the ISO in Feb of 2014.

After convention the Steering Committee and the National Committee wrote an article in Socialist Worker titled "A response to slander". The article leads off saying that it is a lie to claim that the ISO exhibited "indifference" and "inaction" toward allegations of a sexual assault." This statement is in conflict with the events described in PCB#19, which describes just this sort of behavior by the ISO branch, but also by the Steering Committee. I ask the Steering Committee to affirm the PCB#19 document and to discuss lessons learned.

ER

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## Reply to "Assessing the Response to Sexual Misconduct" [above]

In the document "Assessing the Response to Sexual Misconduct," ER asks "the Steering Committee to affirm the PCB#19 document and to discuss lessons learned."

We cannot do so for the following reasons:

1. Eric is re-raising an issue that was first raised over a year ago and was resolved at the 2014 convention;
2. From the beginning, the Steering Committee disputed as *factually incorrect* the claims contained in the document about the leadership's handling of this case. **We believed then, as we do now, that the original documents' authors were sincerely attempting to correct what they believed to be mistakes made in the case. The Renewal Faction, however, deliberately and destructively misrepresented the facts of this matter, accusing the Steering Committee of engaging in a "cover up" of sexual assault.** In addition, the Renewal Faction chose to post the original document (and numerous other internal ISO documents) online a year ago, *seriously compromising the privacy of the accuser in this case.* For this reason, the Steering Committee chose not to respond to the accusations in our internal publications and instead issued a public statement at [socialistworker.org](http://socialistworker.org).
3. We continue to stand by the public statement of the Steering Committee and the National Committee, "A response to slander." (<http://socialistworker.org/2014/02/19/a-response-to-slander>)
4. *Our foremost concern in this matter is to protect the privacy of the accuser,* which has already been compromised, as described above. We believe it would be inappropriate to continue to discuss this case among those not already familiar with the details.

## **Report of NYC Hawkins/Jones Fraction on Statewide 2014 New York Governor's Race and Green Party Campaign**

In the spring of 2014, the New York City ISO was contacted by the New York State Green Party to seek our support for the planned run for Governor of well know upstate socialist activist and trade unionist Howie Hawkins. Hawkins and a small group of Green Party activists run the statewide Green Party, which is small and politically diverse, ranging from socialists, environmental and drug reform activists, progressives, and some who appear to be members solely out of alienation from the two party system. It has a small formal membership with limited structures, focused on electoral campaigns, but with a leadership strongly committed to the need to build independent, left political organization which has consistently hewn to that line over the last 15 years of debates within the Green Party.

The Green Party base in New York City ("NYC") was very small, and apart from two small branches in Brooklyn, which were led by the two statewide Green Party Chairpersons, were either no longer existent (e.g. Queens) or were hostile to the statewide leadership, and constituted by small factions whose politics were less clearly left or socialist. On the other hand, Hawkins himself had a significant political base of support in Syracuse, and there were other small pockets of support throughout the state. The small size of the active membership makes an attempt at a class analysis of its membership somewhat meaningless, though there are lessons regarding where it has drawn its base of support (see below). However, it is important to note that the profile of the Green Party is very "white" and part of the effort of the Hawkins Jones campaign, as well as some related NYC campaigns in 2014 was directed at trying to change this.

The specific political conjuncture for a prospective electoral campaign in New York State was decisive for the NYC district while we debated our support and a possible role in the campaign.

- The standing governor, Andrew Cuomo, was - and remains - extremely unpopular among the obvious base for such a Green Party campaign. In the spring, Cuomo had decisively intervened on the side of pro-charter school activists to undermine an effort by incoming NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio with regards to a proposal to fund access to pre-K schooling through a tax in the rich. In exchange for certain expansion of the pre-K school, Cuomo forced through a whole series of "reforms", including expanding the total number of charter schools and ensuring charter schools could operate rent free in the public school buildings. In other words, Cuomo showed himself to be active opponent of public education, teachers unions, and efforts to challenge Obama's "reform" efforts.
- Cuomo had also previously alienated huge swathes of the public sector unions through a series of actions over his first term. This included pushing through major give backs on pensions, and strong-arming the leadership of statewide AFSCME into accepting brutally concessionary contracts.
- Given the first two issues, the question of Cuomo - and how to relate and deal with the governor - had resulted in major ructions inside the New York State Teachers Unions ("NYSUT"), which created possible political openings for raising more fundamental questions about the role of the Democrats in the fight to defend public education.
- For the environmental movement, in the context of a major state-wide struggle over fracking, the governor had failed to act against the interest of the big energy companies, and had engaged in a variety of bureaucratic maneuvering to avoid decisively putting a block on tracking in New York State.
- In the context of the low wage worker organizing, Cuomo had also shown his administration hostile to attempts to allow NYC to set its own minimum wage, and had presented the mildest reforms despite pressures for a fifteen dollar minimum wage.
- Cuomo had also failed to act or dragged his feet on any number of other legislative efforts, around immigration reform, educational aide to Dreamers, labor law reform for farm workers, and a variety of reform efforts directed at the criminal injustice system.

- More generally, Cuomo was demonstrably a big friend to the finance and real estate sectors of capital. Had forced through vicious austerity in failing upstate municipalities, and was trying to position himself as a right wing (“Centrist”) Democrat in the hopes of running for president of the country.
- Given the enormous antipathy with which huge sections of the “progressive base” of the New York State Democratic Party saw Governor Cuomo, it was clear in the spring of 2014 that the Working Families Party (see < <http://socialistworker.org/2014/10/27/the-working-families-party-charade> >) was going to be placed in an excruciating political position should they - as we expected to be likely at the time - call for a vote for this well-hated right wing Democrat.
- The lack of a strong Republican contender meant the “lesser evil” effect was greatly diminished. Cuomo was sure to win by a landslide, which meant it was unlikely a Green campaign would face a shit-storm of “spoiler” accusations.

This was the context in which the NYC district decided both to endorse the Howie Hawkins campaign, but also to offer Brian Jones as the Lieutenant Governor’s candidate. Aside from the political process internal to the Green Party campaign, there were a series of concerns that we raised with the Green Party in negotiating our participation and Brian Jones potential candidacy.

First were a series of personal concerns, given the enormous investment of time and energy which was about to be asked of Brian, having to do with ensuring that he would be able to meet his personal and familial obligations, and ensuring in this regard that there was a plan for providing support to him and also ensuring that there was time formally set aside that could be sacrosanct. Politically, we made sure that the there was going to be no hiding of our politics nor Brian’s political affiliations. The intention was for Brian to run as an open socialist and for the ISO to be known and an open partner with the Green Party in this effort. There was ready agreement reached on this point, and in fact, Howie Hawkins also saw himself as an open socialist running for office, and this made that aspect of the negotiation a non-issue.

## **OUR EXPECTATIONS GOING INTO THE CAMPAIGN**

The NYC district went into the campaign with eyes wide open regarding some of the challenges we would face given the organizational weakness of the Green Party, especially downstate (i.e. in NYC).

Nonetheless, our hope at the start of the summer was that the campaign in NYC was going to be driven through campaign committees in each of the boroughs. In our minds was the experience of the presidential campaign in 2000 (and 2004) of Ralph Nader but also the recent success of the Kshama Sawant campaign in Seattle. What we hoped was that we would be able to build broad activist committees that would operate not as direct arms of the Green Party, but rather as committees of movement activist, leftists, Green Party members and supporters. While this was not fully hashed out at the start of our efforts in the early summer, this turned out to a mis-estimation and the differences between the political moment - and the relative quiescence of the movements - in the summer of 2014, and the difficulty in mobilizing activists, when compared to the Nader campaign in 2000 as a reflection of the Global Justice movement, served to disorient the work of the fraction for a period of time between June and September.

## **DIVISION OF LABOR**

In practice, there was a division of labor of the ISO’s work in this campaign. Brian Jones, with JG acting as his campaign manager, operated full-time as a candidate. And this required early on an enormous expenditure of time and effort on fund-raising calls, and going forward for house parties and other fund-raising efforts.

In the late summer, NS was hired by the campaign to work on the upstate effort and to focus on the campuses

The majority of the fraction - accounting for another 8 to 12 comrades - worked within the borough committees, with many of the challenges that were manifest there. Aaron A. (along with Brian J. and Julian

G.) aside from acting as the point-person on the Queens Campaign Committee also represented the ISO on the state-wide campaign committee.

### **CAMPAIGN COMMITTEES**

The Queens Campaign committee had very few independent folks as most of the committee was held together by the ISO, long time Queens Greens, a couple of very new members of Socialist Alternative and a few allies. The committee was able to develop relationships within the Queens Left. The Queens branch was able to recruit one new person and legitimized our branch, and the perspective of the ISO, in the eyes of new members because of our involvement in the campaign. It was able to hold a small but successful campaign event in October.

The Uptown Campaign Committee had a few long time Greens and a couple of other folks but represented the most difficult experience of the three borough committees, and represented the best example of the failure of our hopes to build broad based campaign committees to come to fruition. Nonetheless, the committee, through the hard work of the active fraction members, were able to organize regular outreach for the campaign as well as a successful public meeting with Brian.

The Brooklyn Campaign Committee involved five branch members over the course of the campaign. The Brooklyn Committee was unique in that it was working with a strong Park Slope Green chapter leadership but also managed to develop relationships with Jacobin, Rank and File Park Slope Greens and with the local Socialist Alternative branch. The Brooklyn ISO branch recruited one person and has another in the close periphery of the branch as a result of our involvement in the campaign. The election fraction successfully argued in the South Brooklyn campaign committee for issue-oriented discussions as part of the weekly planning meetings in order to politicize the work. Of course when running a campaign a major portion of the work ended up being logistical in nature. But it was essential for the political culture and development of members of the committee to have these issue-specific discussions.

Individuals within the fraction also successfully built and strengthened relationships involved in teacher activism and played important roles in organizing and building a public meeting on education, which drew 50-70 people and was the only public campaign event. This was an important step in bringing movement activists into the campaign. Committee members attended several Palestine solidarity protests where they were received well and were at the Eric Garner protest in Staten Island.

The Brooklyn fraction also intervened in the most active Downstate committee, and built strong political and organizational respect for the ISO among leading Brooklyn Greens. That said, the fraction found it difficult to put the necessary time into thinking through how to bring the campaign into the branch and also the branch into the activity of the committees. Certainly some of early pessimism among the fraction as a result of the committees not meeting our initial expectations, and after the slow summer months, made it more difficult for the fraction to play its role alongside the branch.

### **STATE-WIDE CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE**

The State-wide campaign committee largely operated through weekly conference calls and it was difficult to wield any leverage on the direction of the campaign in this way. Ultimately, much decision making was located between the candidates (primarily Howie) and the state-wide campaign manager. Otherwise, it was often ad-hoc, or less formalized which represented a challenge for the ISO members. However, when issues of particular political importance arose – such as the arguments over the character of the statements around Palestine or Eric Garner (see below), the ISO was able to engage in hard arguments which concretely shifted the position of the campaign.

### **DAY-TO-DAY CAMPAIGN**

For Brian and Julian, the day to day work of the campaign consisted mainly of making hundreds of phone calls, writing or revising drafts of statements, arranging meetings with allies and organizations, and occasionally showing up to an event to make a stump speech (although, in the later stages there was more

of that). There is a feedback loop between how prominent a campaign appears to be, how much confidence people have in it, and how much money you can and are raising. The campaign hired a professional fundraiser who trained Julian and Brian in the tools of the trade. The good news is that the campaign raised, in its first few months, as much as Howie raised in the entire 2010 campaign. The bad news is that the demands of “being the candidate” took Julian and Brian mostly out of a more political and dynamic relationship with the committees and even with the ISO fraction.

## **SUCCESES**

In terms of electoral politics, and in particular given the relatively weak organizational state of the Green Party in NY, the Hawkins/Jones campaign achieved some critically important successes. Hawkins/Jones raised a record amount of money for the Greens, albeit still very modest for mainstream electoral politics.

The campaign benefitted from an extraordinarily propitious political landscape. The collapse and discrediting of the Working Families Party (“WFP”) was combined with a left-liberal challenge by law professor Zephyr Teachout that ultimately failed, but it meant that left liberals spent the summer -- following Teachout’s lead -- cataloging the failures and crimes of Cuomo.

In the final tally the Hawkins/Jones ticket got 180,000 vote (5%) -- three times what Howie got in 2010 and a percentage that hasn’t been matched by a NY statewide left electoral campaign in 90 years. The campaign did very well in a number of upstate constituencies which have been particularly hard hit by state-wide austerity, and in NYC in managed to build on it strength in areas with an existing activist base. Unfortunately, though not surprising, in the context of ever lower voter turn-out and alienation from the electoral process there were no real break-throughs in the most working class areas on NYC.

The NYC District of the ISO also ran a Summer Studies Series which was important in developing branch members on questions concerning the Democratic Party and socialists in elections. The study series ran over four or five meetings, and primarily focused on reading Lance S.’s book, “Democrats, a Critical History” which helped give context to some of the specific challenges facing our campaign (WFP, local community based organizations, the Green Party).

The campaign challenged the Democratic Party stranglehold among left and liberal circles and gave confidence to the project of building independent politics within a range of struggles. This has been most developed inside the education justice work where the ISO has the most roots and where anger at Cuomo was probably at its highest. Due to a near-civil war inside the state union (NYSUT), a former NYSUT executive recruited himself to the cause and was hired by the campaign. His networks, plus the network of teacher activists that we have been collaborating with through the Movement of Rank and File Educators (the opposition caucus we participate in in NYC) meant that we had contact with angry teachers statewide. So, in addition to the endorsements from the Badass Teachers’ Association (led by Mark Naison), from parent groups and Diane Ravitch, we got unprecedented union support from six teacher unions, including the Port Jefferson Stations Teacher Association and the Buffalo Teachers Federation.

The ISO also played a critical role in getting the campaign to take up the question of Palestine and put forward a strong statement in support of BDS with an Open Letter to the BDS Movement. This meant that there was a Hawkins/Jones presence at the major Gaza rallies this summer. The campaign was also the only one to be at the rally in support of Eric Garner on Staten Island and put out a very strong statement in solidarity with Ferguson (written mostly by Julian). Due to the dominance of NGO’s and their institutional ties to the Democrats, it was harder to push the campaign into criminal injustice circles, but we were able to get Howie and Brian onto a candidates’ forum sponsored by the Campaign to End the New Jim Crow.

Though less tangible, there is no doubt that Brian’s candidacy was seen and understood, on the left, as an effort of the ISO as an organization. This is much to our credit — and seen as such — as representing the concrete, putting into practice, a strategy we talk a lot about, ie. building the Left, building the movements, and helping build real organizational (and electoral) capacity independent from the Democratic Party.

## **MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**

We failed to hold an ISO district-wide forum on the campaign that was focused on why we are supporting this campaign, the centrality of independence from the Democrats, the debate around the WFP and situating the campaign. Brian did something like this uptown, and a public meeting was also held featuring Brian in Queens. But a district meeting in October could have really allowed us to put forward our perspectives on the campaign to a much broader audience, built an impressive meeting and could have shown what it means to have a base, cohered our membership and brought our best contacts around to hear our arguments. A district meeting could have involved the whole membership and been a springboard to the excellent work comrades did in the final weeks with “get out the vote” and might have been a lesson learned about how to balance the coalition work with chances to utilize our own strengths and infrastructure as well as project our distinctive arguments.

## **LESSONS**

In hindsight we believe that we made the right decision by running Brian Jones in this campaign. We learned a great deal about electoral campaigns, strengthened relationships with allies and made new ones. By all reports, the campaign is perceived on the left in NY to have been a big success, which is great for the ISO and for the Greens.

Were we to run another campaign, we have some ideas about what we would do differently. We would certainly want to change the overall relationship between the candidate and the campaign committees to allow for more dialogue and discussion. We would want committees to spend more time building up their knowledge and discussion of political issues that are central to the campaign. While Howie and Brian both ran as open socialists, the campaign wasn't widely perceived as promoting socialist ideas or organization; in the future we may want to think about whether/how to change that dynamic.

We would also want the committees to have more democratic input into the campaign. Even in Brooklyn, with statewide Green Party chair Gloria M. in the committee, it felt like the central campaign committee and the borough committees were operating almost entirely independently. This also worked to depoliticize some of the work of the committees - for example, it would have been great to have more systematic discussions in the local committees about the campaign's position on Palestine (although some of this did take place). Obviously this would have been more important if the local committees were larger and more vibrant but it was a frustration (in particular, in Brooklyn). Part of the challenge is that the campaign lacked a NYC "field organizer" in any meaningful way, to work with committees, communicate back and forth with the campaign etc. This is something we would want to change if we were to do it again.

The biggest lesson is that the way to build a genuine statewide campaign is either to have millions of dollars (somehow) or to have statewide cadres. Traveling around the state, you realize how valuable it is to have local organizers with political judgment and perspective, organizational experience, and who know how to bring in new people and build something. Neither the ISO nor the Green Party have enough cadres statewide to give the Democrats a run for their money, yet. Both organizations are attempting to use the success of the campaign to build their respective bases.

**Submitted by NYC ISO Hawkins/ Jones Fraction**

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## **How can we as a national org work on educating comrades on Indian Country?**

1. Three year local indigenous history project
2. Lead in presentations on various struggles indigenous people face today
3. Formalization of a National Indigenous Fraction
4. Partnering with Idle No More (INM) Newsletter

(1)

Through written and oral research, each city with branches can develop a better understanding of their local indigenous history. This project can include pre colonization history, treaties, relocation, reservations, and what the local tribal relations are today.

### **Questions for research**

Pre colonization: what tribes were located on the land, what was the social and economic structure, what were their relationships with surrounding tribes like, what were the local commodities and trade?

How were decisions made within the tribes? Were there class/social hierarchies? What was sacred and what was taboo?

Treaties and Relocation: when was the first contact with non-indigenous peoples? What treaties were made? What did the resistance look like? How did the Indian Wars affect the tribes in your local area?

What lead up to relocation and reservations for the local tribes? How large originally was the allocated reservation? How was the reservation organized? Were there boarding schools and missionaries, and when did those end? After the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, what did tribal governance look like?

What did the tribal constitution look like? If your tribe was not federally recognized, why not? Did they appeal to be federally recognized?

Contemporary Relations: What tribes are represented in your city today? Did relocation or the Urban Relocation Act of 1956 influence the change of indigenous demographics? Over time looking at official recorded census and collected stories, what were the indigenous demographics of your city? What jobs did natives (who came to the city with the Urban Relocation Act program) work? How did your city's indian center begin? What neighborhoods were natives located in? Did that change over time? Was practicing native religions legal in your city? What struggles did natives face off and on reservations in your area?

How did the American Indian Movement affect your cities native population? Was/is foster care and adoption a concern for natives in/surrounding your city? What economic initiatives are the local tribes taking in your area? Are there casinos? What does per capita look like? What are the blood quantum percentages the surrounding tribes? What does land management look like for the surrounding tribes-agriculture, mining, waste management? What other economic initiatives? What are the local tribes relations like with the city? With corporations?

These questions already have indigenous people who are putting in serious time and research. Not all of these questions apply to the local tribes. Many of these questions will not have answers, but more questions. This is alright.

These histories will help develop comrades in Indian Country politics. To help understand indigenous governance and political structures, a book list to help with this project is suggested below (a).

Collected, the native fraction can form an indigenous methodological framework (b), develop Marxist theoretical and historical analysis of Indian Country. Here we can formulate nuanced views on reservation capitalism, pre-colonial indigenous trade networks and economies, “primitive” socialism, international economic nation to nation partnerships, native pride in the military industrial complex, assimilation tactics beyond education and genocide, conservatism in IC, sovereignty, federal recognized tribal system, blood quantum, per capita, and treaties. This work can potentially provide a basis for an Indian Country and Socialism book.

This project will raise concerns. Even today, many non-Indians unethically study indigenous people, misunderstand our culture, misrepresent our lives, and without consent. Even in our org, we will ask, is this ethical for non-Indians to be doing this research? The short answer is most likely no. The long answer is that while many people see the history of indigenous research being done unethically by non-Indians, there

is a new generation of researchers, academics, historians, and theorists who are doing this research. This new iteration is filled with indigenous people writing about indigenous people.

With long histories of being exploited, by science and politically, Internal Bulletin #2 from September 2013 laid out really well that IC has conservatism and prominent tribal members who have written against radicalism. So as comrades, and as the International Socialist Organization (ISO), we will be asked why do we care, why are we interested, and what are our intentions. And we need to have a darn good answer.

As to why this is a proposal that every branch should take on this project, and not a suggestion: it would be better to be a serious project, to show IC that the ISO is dedicated to being ethical and consistent.

This research, being a three year project, will not take up too much time in branch life. The answers to these questions aren't incredibly hard to find, it is already written, it is all there. It is just on a national level, a few comrades could not do this. 1000+ people can. Also, even if each branch doesn't answer every question, just by answering a few, branches will learn so much more.

Our project will not be the beginning of writing on local tribal histories. There are indigenous people who are already writing these histories from an indigenous methodology. We will collaborate and build connections to our local native communities. This is not an entirely easy or short process, which is why the proposal is that this be a three year project. Under capitalism, there will always be crisis and calls to struggle. We need to find a better balance, because IC is teeming with activity, and we are missing it.

(2)

Throughout the project, branches can have lead ins sharing updates, report backs, and due to the stronger connections to local indigenous communities- presentations on current and struggle. Branches can also work through presentations on topics suggested (but not limited) below. Each of these will have many articles written by natives in which comrades can source and cite in their presentations.

Urban relocation Act of 1956

Indian Reorganization Act of 1934

Red Power Movement

Police brutality on the rez

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

Foster care

Homelessness in IC

Chemical Dependency

Oil towns and and sex slave trade

Thanksgiving/Columbus Day

Indian Wars

(3)

Formalization of a national indigenous fraction would give comrades who are interested in IC a way to consistently share what we are working on, give report backs, discuss readings, and debate.

(4)

The new INM newsletter will feature report backs and articles internationally on indigenous resistance.

Through the close work we have done with Erica VL, she has suggested that SW republish the newsletter, or selections from it. At the moment, comrades cannot keep up with and write about all the massive amounts of happenings in IC. This is a great way to get more indigenous stories, and to continue building our solidarity with INM. “The goal of the #INMroots newsletter is to share news stories that promote Indigenous rights and sovereignty and the protection of land and water. The newsletter will share our stories, actions, and honour resistance while celebrating the world that we are protecting.”

<http://www.idlenomore.ca/inmroots2>

(a)

*Re-creating the Circle: The Renewal of American Indian Self-Determination* by Stephen M. Sachs

*Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* by Linda Tuhiwal Smith

*The Rights of Indians and Tribes* by Stephen Pavar

*American Indian Politics and the American Political System* by David E. Wilkins and Heidi Kiiwetepinesiiik Stark

*Nation to Nation: Treaties between the United States and American Indian Nations* edited by Suzan Shown Harjo

*Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience (1875-1928)* by David Wallace Adams

*Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* by Sandy Grande

*Red Skin White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* by Glen Sean Coulthard

*Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* by Joanne Barker

These books are not necessarily pro or anti capitalist. But they are informing the debates from within Indian Country.

(b)

What is indigenous research methodology? Wilson, Shawn. Canadian Journal of Native Education; 2001; 25, 2; pg. 175

**CG**

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