

# A socialist strategy is needed to defend immigrants!

By the International Youth and Students for Social Equality  
27 January 2018

The bipartisan attack on the rights of immigrants threatens the livelihoods of millions of people. It is an assault on the democratic rights of all workers, regardless of race or immigration status, and must be urgently opposed.

Through the crackdown on “illegal immigration,” an army of police, border guards, and immigration agents are descending on cities and towns across the country. The government is separating parents from their children, spouses from each other, and workers from their jobsites, forcing them back to countries where poverty and violence are the by-products of decades of corporate exploitation and US-led imperialist war.

The Trump administration’s move to end the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, affecting 800,000 people, and Temporary Protected Status for Salvadorans (262,000), Nicaraguans (2,500), and Haitians (57,000) puts another 1.1 million people at risk of deportation. Trump and his fascist advisers, like Stephen Miller, are expanding a network of immigration detention camps to prepare for mass arrests and deportations on an unprecedented scale.

Millions of people, immigrant and non-immigrant alike, are horrified by the use of Gestapo-like tactics.

Mass demonstrations, school and workplace protests, and public meetings are urgently needed, but the experiences of the past 10 years make clear that any effort to defend immigrants must be completely independent of, and in opposition to, the Democratic Party.

For all the Democrats’ cheap talk, recent negotiations over the federal budget have once again exposed the Democrats as opponents of immigrant workers and youth. The Democrats...

- Passed the 1996 law making it harder for millions

of undocumented immigrants to win legal permanent residency

- Launched programs to militarize border crossings in El Paso and San Diego, forcing immigrants to cross in the desert where up to 27,000 have died in the last 20 years
- Voted to build an expanded border wall in 2006, with the support of then-Senators Obama, Clinton, Biden, Schumer, and Kerry
- Deported 3 million immigrants under Obama and jailed tens of thousands of parentless children escaping violence in Central America

For the past year, Democrats have worked to divert and smother the mass opposition to Trump’s immigration policy, while they pursue their own reactionary and militarist agenda. Now, the two parties are negotiating over a plan to dramatically reduce family immigration petitions, end the visa lottery system, and further militarize the US-Mexico border. If some form of DACA protections are extended in ongoing negotiations, this will only come at the cost of even more right-wing, anti-immigrant measures.

There is no “progressive” wing of the Democratic Party that can be pressured or made to fight to defend immigrants. Earlier this month, Senator Bernie Sanders declared: “I don’t think there’s anybody who disagrees that we need strong border security. If the president wants to work with us to make sure we have strong border security, let’s do that.” Congressman Luis Gutierrez said he would support building a wall in exchange for protections for DACA recipients, saying, “I’ll build the wall myself.”

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) advances a socialist strategy based on the following fundamental principles:

- 1. Break with the Democrats and Republicans!**

## **Mobilize the working class and youth attack on immigrants!**

Both the Democrats and the Republicans represent the interests of the corporate and financial oligarchy. It is the working class, the exploited majority of the world's population that produces society's wealth, which must be mobilized to defend immigrants. As in the 1930s and 40s, the effort to pit workers against each other through the promotion of nationalist poison goes hand-in-hand with the assault on social programs, the immense growth of social inequality, the destruction of democratic rights and, above all, the drive to world war.

There is hardly a workplace in America that is unaffected by the threat of deportation. A substantial portion of the US labor force works alongside an undocumented worker, whether on the assembly line, in a warehouse, or on a construction site. No worker, regardless of immigration status, stands to benefit when a coworker is dragged off the job by the government.

The same is true at schools and colleges across the country, where 365,000 DACA-eligible youth are enrolled in high school and another 241,000 in college. TPS recipients from El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Haiti have over 200,000 children in the US, many of whom are in school. Workers and youth must organize committees to transform their workplaces and schools into information networks, to mobilize in defense of families under threat of deportation.

### **2. Oppose imperialist war!**

The defense of immigrants means opposing the US-led wars that have forced millions to flee their homes in recent years. The US-backed dictators and death squads laid waste to countries like Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Guatemala in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Middle Eastern and African immigrants fleeing to the US and Europe from Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and Somalia are escaping countries that have been devastated by US invasions and bombing campaigns in the last quarter century alone. The combined death tolls from these wars are in the millions as a result of the US ruling class' efforts to secure the world's resources and cheap labor for Wall Street through military plunder.

### **3. For open borders! For the socialist reorganization of world economy!**

~~to~~ The ~~oppose~~ exodus of millions of people from their homelands is an expression of the contradiction between the international character of the world economy and the outdated nation-state system. The globalization of economic life, the development of the Internet and the rise of giant transnational corporations have created an unprecedented level of international integration. But under capitalism, the world economy remains trapped within the confines of the nation-state, the political instrument of the ruling class and the breeding ground for war and repression.

The fight to defend immigrants must be based on a fight to bring the world's productive forces into harmony with the needs of the international working class. This requires socialist revolution. The banks and corporations must be placed under public ownership and their wealth expropriated. The nation-state system must be abolished, and the world economy rationally reorganized on the basis of social need, not private profit.

Against the militarization of borders and the persecution of immigrants, the IYSSE stands for open borders: the right of all workers to live in the country they choose, with full citizenship rights, including the right to work and travel without fear of deportation or repression.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) calls on all students, workers, and youth who agree with this program to contact us and join the IYSSE today.

To contact the WSWP and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wswp.org>