



The Red Star-Ledger

Winter 2022-2023

Welcome to a New Year Comrades!

Welcome to the winter issue of The Red Star-Ledger, the newsletter for New Jersey Democratic Socialists of America. We're a part of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), the largest socialist organization in the USA. There's no better time to come together and fight for social, racial, environmental, and economic justice!

As we move into 2023 it's clear that we face many obstacles: inflation, high housing costs, increasing medical expenses, ongoing war and a bloated military budget, environmental crisis, a far right Supreme Court that has removed a basic right that had been in place for 50 years by overturning Roe v Wade. and the continued police killing of unarmed Black men. See our [statement on the Murder of Tyre Nichols here.](#)

But we are also seeing for the first time in years a growing labor movement as nurses, education, Starbucks, and Amazon workers are standing up and demanding fair treatment and better conditions.

As NNJDSA hosts it's annual convention this January, we look forward to new leadership and new campaigns and continuing to build on our work like the Right to Counsel campaign in Jersey City, Medicare 4 All, mutual aid, electoral work and more.

All are welcome and all are needed. JOIN US! To find out more, come to a new member meeting, a chapter meeting. Follow us online or email us here: northnj@dsanj.org



Branching out in Essex County

by Brett Roberston

There's a new branch in the North Jersey DSA! Our chapter has expanded by forming an Essex County branch. A branch is a smaller unit of a DSA chapter that can better organize in a specific region. Our chapter, North New Jersey, encompasses many counties spanning a large portion of the state. Forming a branch in Essex County allows us to develop local strategy, leadership, and connections while continuing to build on the work of the broader chapter.

Essex County is one of the most unequal counties in the entire United States. From the sleazy inner-city slumlords who illegally raised rents throughout the pandemic to big polluters continuing to use the Ironbound as a toxic dumping ground to an absurdly corrupt and reactionary county boss system embodied by Joe D and his cronies, the working class of Essex County continues to suffer under the boot of capitalist exploitation while living just miles away from some of the wealthiest zip codes in the state. As Essex County residents we must ask ourselves: Which side are you on?

There are nearly a million people living in Essex County, and it contains New Jersey's largest city, Newark. There are hundreds of DSA members already living in our very diverse and densely populated county so there is a great base for our organization to build upon and a lot of room to grow. The best organizing is done locally. And now we have a structure for chapter members from the Caldwells to Newark to organize in their own backyards for socialism.

So far we have established working groups to map out power structures in Essex County, formed a communications team, and have started a reading group on "No More Police" by Mariame Kaba and Andrea Ritchie. We need more people who want to help build the branch. In particular we need help with communications, member outreach, power mapping, and any other way that people can contribute.

contact us at essex.nnjdsa@gmail.com
Twitter: [@EssexCoDSA](https://twitter.com/EssexCoDSA)
Instagram: [@essexcodsa](https://www.instagram.com/essexcodsa)



DON'T PLAY THE GAME

by Karl Schwartz

On January 2nd, 2023 Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin collapsed after making what looked like a routine tackle in a football game against the Cincinnati Bengals. For nine horrifying minutes the 24 year-old player lay on the field between life and death as medical staff administered CPR. As Damar's teammates cried and prayed on the sidelines and thousands of traumatized fans waited in the stadium for updates, the NFL only cared about one thing: getting the game started again. The NFL makes billions of dollars a year, with all of its massive profits coming from the brutal labor of the players. The toll of playing in the NFL is clear; former players die young and experience debilitating injuries and cognitive impairment at disturbingly high levels.

The callousness of NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, who originally wanted to give players a five-minute warm up after witnessing the near death of their teammate, was shocking to anyone with their humanity intact, but under capitalism, it is unsurprising that a boss would prioritize profits over human life. Ultimately, players on both teams collectively refused to go back on the field, leading to the game's cancellation. This horrific on-field tragedy gave millions of viewers a glimpse of what is possible through labor solidarity. The game cannot go on if the players refuse to play.

Every year thousands of workers die and become permanently disabled at their jobs and unlike the Buffalo Bills, they do not have unions who can intervene or the celebrity to bring attention to their cases. During the holidays at an Amazon warehouse in Colorado, workers reported that management used boxes to cover up the body of a worker who died on the job after suffering a heart attack. Workers were forced to continue their day as if one of their colleagues had not just passed away right in front of their eyes. Last summer, a young UPS driver died of heatstroke in his poorly ventilated truck during an extreme heatwave in California. Drivers all across the country had been reporting the unsafe conditions in their painfully hot vehicles, where temperatures can reach over 130

degrees. Without millions of fans watching, these workers' deaths often do not attract wider attention, but they are no less tragic than what happened to Damar Hamlin.

"Back to work" is one of the defining mantras of the capitalist class. When COVID-19 interrupted work for millions of people around the world in 2020, bosses immediately began plotting how to get their workers back on the job as quickly as possible with little regard to the health of their staff. The US is one of the only countries in the world not to guarantee paid sick leave. When massively overworked rail workers pushed to add sick time into their contracts, President Biden and the Democratically controlled House and Senate instead threatened to compel the workers to accept a contract without these protections. While the capitalist economy pushes us to work ourselves to death, our for-profit healthcare system wages a systematic war on the health of American workers. Every other wealthy nation in the world besides the US guarantees healthcare to all. Between the unchecked greed of the bosses and the shockingly expensive and woefully inadequate healthcare in the US, it is unsurprising that even before COVID-19, life expectancy in America had been declining.

Every worker deserves a job where they are treated with dignity and their bodies do not become physically or mentally damaged due to the toll of their work. In my own union, we are given at least 15 paid sick days per year and we have rules (although often inadequate) governing the health and safety of our workplace. Millions of workers in the U.S. are denied these basic protections and that is why it is so important for socialists to rebuild the labor movement. Even in unionized workplaces, bosses fight tooth and nail against the most meager safety measures. A union alone does not guarantee a safe workplace. Like the players on the Bills and Bengals learned on that awful day, sometimes the only way to guarantee a safe workplace is by sitting out and not playing the bosses' game at all.

RTC CAMPAIGN PACKS THEATER FOR TOWN HALL EVENT

by Rory Pasquariello

Six months into the campaign for tenants' right to counsel in Jersey City, nearly one hundred people convened at the Jersey City Theatre Center for a town hall organized by the the North Jersey Democratic Socialists of America (NNJDSA) to share tenant stories and examine the issue at hand – whether tenants should have free legal representation to stand up for themselves in court. The answer from the crowd of organizers, tenants, and coalition partners was affirmative and resounding.

The right to counsel (RTC) ordinance, advocated by NNJDSA's Hudson County branch and its coalition partners, would provide free legal representation to all tenants in Jersey City, where 72% of people rent their homes, the rents of which landlords have raised by about 50% from 2021 to 2022. The ordinance will be funded through a tax or fee on landlords and development rather than the general budget, which comes from a property tax levy or federal grants.

“Let's make sure the people responsible for the housing crisis are the ones who pay for this,” said Jake Ephros, co-chair of the campaign. “The bill for a just right-to-counsel ordinance should be footed by developers, rather than pinning it all on the average taxpayer.”

Campaign volunteers have been canvassing every neighborhood of Jersey City for months, gathering hundreds of signatures intended to demonstrate to the political establishment and the Jersey City Council specifically that mass support for such a policy exists among residents.

After countless meetings and hours spent strategizing, phone banking, and canvassing, NNJDSA is now in position to pack a theater and chart a path forward with coalition partners and other organizers.

Coalition partners who shared their organizing stories included Make the Road NJ, an Elizabeth-based immigrant rights organization, and members of the Portside Tenants Union, which represents tenants of Portside Towers and has been lobbying the Jersey City Council to enforce rent control laws.

“A synergy formed, a focus on law and regulation, and what we had the ability to change by working together. That's been our fighting point,” said Jess, a tenant-organizer at Portside Tenants Union who, along with other (cont.)



tenants in the building, has seen substantial rent hikes and neglected essential services in recent years. “We’re all aligned in that. It all went back to issues – the water intrusion, the elevators, the lack of safety. It was empowering. Now I’m excited to be here to help others in the same situation.”

Many others’ stories distilled a collective experience of anxiety and powerlessness, a common thread among the mostly working class attendees.

“I come into my apartment and see eviction notices. That’s intimidation, to be honest. It makes me feel uncomfortable,” said John Acosta, who moved from the Bronx to Jersey City last year. “If all we’re doing is building luxury apartments, where are the rest of us going to live? I don’t want this for my daughter.”

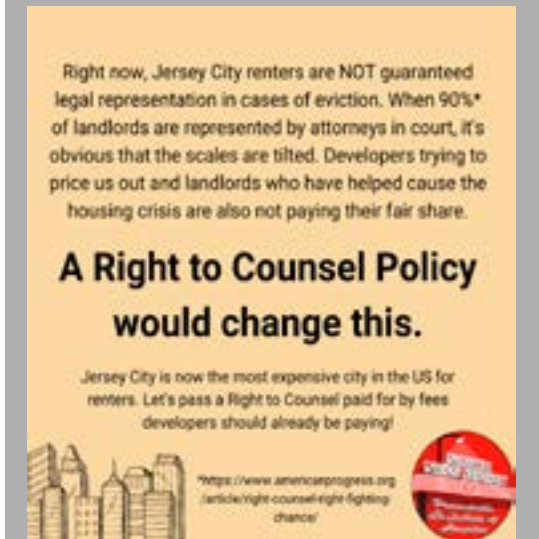
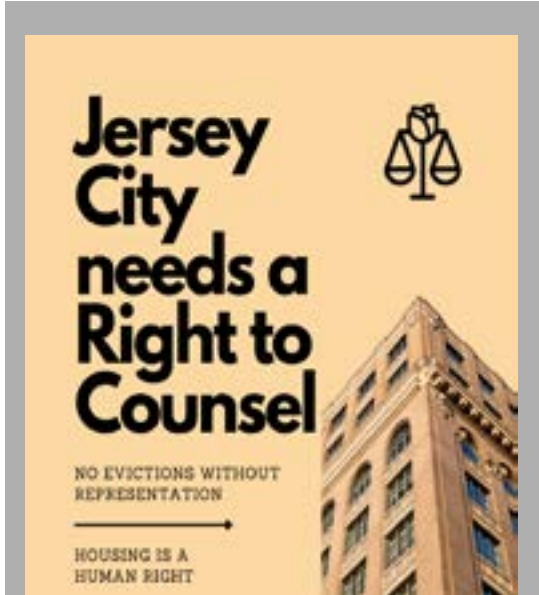
“As democratic socialists, we believe housing is a human right and shouldn’t be a commodity or speculative asset,” said Julia Tache, chair of the campaign’s media and communications subcommittee. “The for-profit housing system is the root cause of the issues we are facing today. The city works for developers and landlords, not everyday, working class people. We need to redistribute power to the renters and it starts with strong tenant protections like RTC.”

“A union is a group of workers who fight harder than the boss,” said Joel Brooks, a union organizer, NNJDSA member, and 2021 candidate for Jersey City Council. “It would be great to see a group of tenants who fight harder than the landlords here in Jersey City.”

“ As democratic socialists, we believe housing is a human right.”

The RTC campaign is issuing a call to action for supporters to attend a February 8 city council meeting. Readers interested in joining the Right to Counsel Campaign can contact:

righttocounseljc@gmail.com, visit our website at www.rtcjc.org, and follow us @rtcjc201 on Twitter and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/righttocounseljc).



NNJDSA RED ALL-STARS: AN INTERVIEW WITH STAN SHEATS

by Julia Tache

North New Jersey DSA is filled with members with a wealth of knowledge and experiences on the left. Through a series of profiles in the Red Star Ledger, I wish to highlight their years of organizing, share their thoughts on how the chapter has changed, and convey what they hope to see for the future. For the winter edition, I spoke with Stan Sheats, an organizer and attorney active in our Medicare for All working group who began as a member of DSA's predecessor organization.

How long have you been a DSA member? What has your experience been like?

I started with the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee in the mid-1970s, which merged with the New America movement to form DSA. When I came back to Jersey in the 90s after moving away for work, I saw a DSA advertisement in *In These Times* and found out there was a local chapter. In those days the chapter was more or less a study group before it became more activist focused. At most, about sixteen people would attend meetings, then things petered out in the late 90s.

Some of those members formed a regular group of about 5 people in the late 2000s after being asked if we wanted to attend the national conference. I called people up to see if they were interested in creating a group and going to the convention. At the time, we were hosting speakers and panels at libraries and held campaigns around establishing a living wage and fixing campaign finance. The chapter really took off again about 8 years ago when Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump were running for president, and DSA sent an organizer from national to help get us going. Now, we regularly have chapter meetings where over 30-40 people are present. We are much more organized and are really accomplishing things.

What other organizations and movements have you been part of?

I moved to Syracuse in the 80s where I was part of the Syracuse Peace Council and a member of the Rainbow Coalition. In New Jersey, I worked with the group Solutions to End Poverty Soon (STEPS) in the mid 2000s, which has remained active in Lakewood.

In the 1970s I was also involved with an organization focused on growing cooperatives, using the Mondragon cooperatives in Spain as a model. There were movements for socialist economic restructuring like creating government owned factories, but I favored worker's co-ops where workers actually have control. Co-Op America was a leading magazine and organization at the time, but eventually gave up on worker's co-ops in favor of reforming companies to be more "liberal" by taking on environmental responsibility principles.



What kind of organizing work do you primarily take part in?

Right now, I am concentrating on Medicare for All. Conservatives are so much into the narrative that the poor are responsible for their own poverty that they don't even want them to have medical coverage. To me, this is the height of cruelty because no one deserves to suffer or die because they don't have insurance.

Initially, we were mostly canvassing and getting people to sign a petition for M4A. This year, we are working on getting a price cap on insulin, epi-pens, and asthma inhalers passed, a bill which is sponsored by Murphy and currently in the state assembly. We have a telephone campaign to put pressure on elected officials and want to get unions involved. We also advocate for abortion protections like the enforcement of New Jersey's sanctuary state law, reviving legislation for funding abortion clinics, and state-level Medicare for All.

Ahead of our convention, what are some issues you hope our chapter takes on this year?

Supporting the revived labor movement and strikers, immigration following the chapter's great accomplishments against ICE since Biden will likely keep acting out Trump's policies, and feminist actions like pushing for an abortion clinic in Jersey City.

Organize with NNJDSA for health justice in New Jersey!

- Pass Rx price caps for insulin, asthma inhalers and epi-pens
- Protect and expand reproductive care
- Build a health justice coalition with patients, health care workers, unions and communities
- introduce "NJ GardenCare," a state-level single payer bill, to the New Jersey legislature

DON'T SPECTATE, ORGANIZE!

by Walter Keady

A member from another DSA chapter once complained to me, "It's hard to debate organizing tactics without everyone agreeing on the same principles first." If only everyone shared his perspective, we would all agree about what DSA should do. It was like he thought DSA was a printer, while others saw it as a sewing machine. From his perspective, DSA was something to *use*, not *to be part of*.

Being member-led means DSA can be a radically democratic group, a place where, unlike jobs, non-profits, or existing political parties, the average member actually has power. The problem is that anything DSA does depends on you. You can't *use* DSA because you *are* DSA. This is an insight from labor organizer [Jane McAlevey](#), who tells union organizers to never "third-party" the union.

For her, it's not "the union" that goes on strike. If you're a member of "the union," *you* go on strike in solidarity with the other members. This is more than semantics. When members see "the union" as a third party, they stop participating. Their personal connections and the sense of shared purpose fade away. Then, when collective action problems like layoffs arise, members call for "the union" to act. Unfortunately, they can't simply hit the "strike" button. It becomes clear

that the "union" is just a collection of individuals and their social bonds. Union members then have to build trust, shared purpose, and solidarity from scratch.

Similarly, I think NNJ DSA's potential hinges on building more trust, purpose, and solidarity. In our context, we "third party" ourselves when we argue with the words "DSA should..." Instead of an organization you're a part of. When you think this way *you* do a disservice to yourself and to your comrades. It's like pretending DSA is a football team and yelling your play calls at the TV. You become just a spectator. Meanwhile, you leave all the work to others.

Imagine a contentious argument like "DSA should merge with the Democratic party." This is not an organizing proposal, it's a political strategy. The member wishes that the current organization was a simple tool for this particular strategy. The implication is that *you* should desire the same thing. What starts out as a debate over politics morphs into one over your heart. It's no wonder that political discussions frequently leads to hurtful conflict. Beyond weakening the bonds between members, "DSA should..." creates a trap of endless debate in which "[disagreements over what is to be done never cease, taking time and energy away from doing anything.](#)"

By design, DSA is a big tent full of competing tendencies. How can we ever agree when we have differences in principle? I think we have to ground our competing ideologies into concrete organizing proposals instead. For example: "NNJ DSA delegates will introduce a proposal for DSA to merge with Democratic party at DSA's 2023 National Convention." Of course, one's ideology still shapes this idea, but it's a proposal for action instead of just a theoretical proposal. Members can debate a concrete plan rather than a hypothetical scenario. We all have the power to agree to enact this, modify or to reject it entirely.

So, here's my concrete proposal for helping us create a fulfilling and democratic chapter: try to notice if you're about to argue what "DSA should" do. Use that as a starting place to help you determine what you want to achieve with your comrades. Then, determine how you could do it. Float your idea with comrades, ask for suggestions, and try to build support. See if you can convince skeptical members to agree. Finally, find the time for making these decisions and propose your idea. Rather than lamenting what DSA should but doesn't do, it is much more empowering and productive to use your power to propose what we could do together.



CLASS-STRUGGLE CINEMA OF NORTH JERSEY

by Whit S.

Sure, we can read *The Sopranos* as an epic tale of capitalism in North Jersey, and recent regionally-shot films like Halle Berry's *Bruised* or even Steven Spielberg's *West Side Story* as parables of class, among other things. But there's a deeper history of explicitly *class-struggle* cinema in North Jersey—this is just the tip of the iceberg, but here's a quick survey of some films that are all available free online:



The Passaic Textile Strike (1926): The 1926-27 textile workers' strike in Passaic, Garfield, and Clifton was, as historian Jacob Zumoff notes, "the first mass workers' struggle in which the Communist Party played a lead role." Part of that effort included this silent film, used for both propaganda and fundraising. Opening with a fictional prologue, it's mostly documentary, and invaluable as a record of North Jersey labor radicalism. Read Zumoff's recent book *The Red Thread* for a deep dive on why the strike, although ultimately unsuccessful, carries ongoing historical significance (<https://youtu.be/b0gr8H-VHyQ>).



Troublemakers (1966): In 1964, the leading organization of the New Left, Students for a Democratic Society, moved from college campuses into economically depressed urban areas

in an attempt to forge "an interracial movement of the poor." This portrait of the Newark branch details the challenges of building participatory democracy, when campaigns for basic housing rights or even stop signs become insurmountable struggles, and it's also unflinching about the challenges of solidarity when middle-class college-aged white people try to organize in the poor and Black community of Clinton Hill. I won't spoil where it all ends up, but suffice it to say, its release in 1966 coincided with a rising sense that the New Left needed to further radicalize (<https://vimeo.com/244908853>).



With No One to Help Us (1967): What people remember about Newark in 1967 are riots/rebellion. This short documentary offers an alternate take: Black women in Clinton Hill forming a buyers club to counter exploitative merchants with collective power. Showing heart-wrenching debates and the constant precarity of group cohesion, it offers an exemplary case study of what mutual aid can look like with a focused campaign that avoids prefigurative floundering. An important corrective to the broader marginalization of Black women in the cinematic history of the US left, too (<https://vimeo.com/241205041>).

The Case of the Legless Veteran (1981): James Kutcher isn't a household name, but as a disabled World War II vet who was fired in 1948 from his job at the Newark Veterans Administration office for belonging to the Socialist Workers Party, he endured a harrowing eight-year legal battle—which he eventually won, meaning that a socialist in

Newark played a key role in defeating the repressive red scare that swept the nation in the 1950s. Stylistically, this is a meat-and-potatoes documentary that approaches the case through a national lens, so you won't get rich New Jersey footage (you get a bit more from Kutcher's 1953 autobiography of the same title, though Robert Justin Goldstein's book about the case, *Discrediting the Red Scare*, has more to say about the SWP)—but as a bonus, you do get the pioneering leftist journalist I.F. Stone as a talking head (<https://youtu.be/9sbdlltd9HY>).

Street Echoes (1983): In 1975, documentarian Robert Newman made the short *Paterson*, whose captivating visuals are derailed by excessive centering of bootlicking, pro-police judges and politicians. It's on the Internet Archive and worth watching (<https://archive.org/details/Paterson>), but more interesting is Hector Alers' *Street Echoes*, shot on Super-8mm and sponsored by the city Department of Recreation. It's also a bit ideologically muddled, and you've got to be patient with low-fidelity audiovisual quality, but its unvarnished DIY depiction of proletarian youth delivers a striking portrait of North Jersey life in the early 1980s (https://archive.org/details/StreetEchoes_518).

Bonus film: *Lianna* (1983) isn't streaming for free, and it's a movie about a woman coming out as a lesbian written and directed by a straight man—but John Sayles has always been one of our most class-conscious filmmakers, from his novel *Union Dues* (1977) to the strike film *Matewan* (1987), and *Lianna* shows the literal costs of coming out in the early 1980s, in terms of downward mobility, while also showing Hoboken in all its glory. So, honorary mention for this list.



SOCIALISM CONFERENCE REFLECTION by dw

On a hot summer Labor Day weekend, thousands of leftists congregated at the Socialism Conference of 2022 in downtown Chicago. The conference was host to various panels and presentations including abolition, identity politics, abortion rights, and more. Socialists from different backgrounds and philosophies had come to socialize, share stories, and network. Organizations at the event ranged from big tent ones like DSA to more focused groups like Science for the People.

One of the speakers I most enjoyed was Liat Ben-Moshe. Ben-Moshe highlighted the concept of “disability/madness liberation” and how it is linked with the abolition of carceral systems. In addition to prisons, she argues institutions meant to “protect” patients in psychiatric hospitals and residential living spaces also contribute to the dehumanization of poor, marginalized individuals. It was empowering to hear someone advocate for the needs of those abandoned by capitalism. As someone who has faced abuse inside a mental health facility, I realized my challenges do not make me lesser than others even if capitalist institutions say that I am.

Other panels called into question what is meant by “the left.” This question culminated in the live recording of “The Dig,” where authors Robin DG Kelly, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, and Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò argued that there are multiple “lefts” that collaborate and/or clash. They also emphasized that movements that often aren’t seen as “left” by leftist circles actually are, including protests against apartheid in South Africa and against the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan by the US military. One highlight was Ms. Gilmore saying it’s okay if people don’t want to talk about ideas like racial capitalism, but they need to “shut the fuck up” about it if they don’t. It was a frank statement from one of the sharpest critics of racism and capitalism on the contemporary left.

I did not expect a panel to move me so much that I would cry but one of the best speakers at the conference did. In her talk *Becoming Kin*, Patty Krawec weaved her personal and ancestral history as an indigenous woman to show how differences between people are not divisions, a collective identity does not mean we need to erase our individual identities, and that the environment isn’t a resource, but a living being just like us. Despite all the harm that has been done through systemic abuse, human beings can choose differently.

In the final sendoff of the conference, Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson gave a powerful speech. Her main point was that performing leftist political work should be based on love and compassion. She indicated that doing the work, however small, has value. What I took away from her speech was that work is being done despite claims of demobilization on the broader left, especially in the south where voting, abortion, and LGBT rights are heavily under attack. These were points that were echoed earlier in the conference by Derenda Hancock who described the closing of the last abortion clinic in Mississippi after *Roe v. Wade* was overturned. Despite bleak circumstances, work continues in unlikely corners of the south and elsewhere.

Every aspect of life is connected. Being your authentic self and, as many speakers said, “trying to do shit” for others is a radical political act itself in a system that isolates and disempowers people. This process should be celebrated and emphasized as much as the outcome. The journey can be difficult, but dedication to what’s right and taking that first step is vital.

So yes, at the Socialism Conference, I danced. I hung out with science nerds, had a sick root beer float, finally met one of my best friends, touched a typewriter for the first time, and I made new memories with someone I cherish. In a reality full of hardships, participating in a large gathering of socialists was a joyful act of rebellion.

Poverty Is Capitalism's Great Crime

- Eugene Debs 1915

The great labor leader and socialist Eugene Debs wrote this article over 100 year ago. Replace Rockefeller with Jeff Bezos and the western miners with Amazon warehouse workers and the article could have been written today. Enjoy this reprinting of Debs' powerful words.

The warnings which have recently issued from both the pulpit and the press in [Terre Haute] against the "unworthy poor" prompt me to ask these Christian gentlemen if the great Teacher they profess to follow ever made any discrimination between the "worthy" poor and the "unworthy" poor. The poor were the poor to him, because he was of their number. Born in direst poverty, he knew their suffering and heartache, and when he ministered to their wants it did not occur to him to smell their breath to see if they, or possibly their grandsires, had not in some evil hour taken a drink of liquor as an excuse for branding them as "unworthy poor," and turning them away to starve. Indeed, so completely and consistently did he love the poor, from whom he sprang and among whom he spent all the days of his sad and tragic life, that when he made any distinctions among them it was wholly in favor of the "unworthy" poor, by forgiving them much because they had suffered much. He did not condemn them to starvation and suicide upon the hypocritical pretext that they were "unworthy," but they did apply the lash of scorpions without mercy to those self-righteous and "eminently respectable" gentlemen who robbed the poor and then despised them for their poverty; who made long prayers, where they could be seen of men, while they devoured widows' houses and bound burdens upon the backs of their victims that crushed them to the earth.

Who and where are the "unworthy" poor and who dare in the name of Christ to judge them? I have seen the innumerable poor in all their agonizing poverty and hopeless despair, but I have yet to see an "unworthy" poor. They are all God's creatures and they are all human beings, and how any one professing to be a Christian can warn the community not to give them a mouthful of food, but to turn them away to starve and die can only be reconciled with that whited sepulcher, which so often passes for "Christian charity." A human being with a heart in him, unless it be of stone, would feed a hungry dog, to say nothing of a famishing fellow-being.

Do not tell me as an excuse that all these men could have work if they but wanted it. That is not true. On the contrary, it is palpably false. In the city of New York alone, according to the abstract recently issued by the national bureau of labor, there are nearly four hundred thousand of workingmen and women in enforced idleness and in the country at large there are literally millions for whom there is no employment. Here is where to place the blame instead of upon the helpless victims, the "unworthy" poor; and here, too, is where to apply the remedy.

But I do not blame even those who become hoboos and tramps, rather than spend their lives in slavish tasks for the benefit of others who look down upon them with scorn as beasts of burden. I would rather

be branded as belonging to the "unworthy" poor than to be insulted by being classed with the "worthy" poor.

The "worthy" poor! Think of that! It is society's inadvertent confession of its own crime. It is precisely as if we said "innocent convicts," and yet made no pretension to setting the innocent victims free.

Bernard Shaw is right. Poverty is civilization's greatest crime. And this crime cannot be atoned for by "charity." Rockefeller's Sunday school will count for no more than a brothel when the babies murdered at Ludlow confront him in the day of judgment.

Rockefeller's income is a hundred million dollars a year. It is pure robbery. Not a dollar of it does he produce. It is all taken from those in whose sweat and agony it is produced, and that is the reason they are poor and tired and discouraged and get drunk and recruit the ranks of the "unworthy" poor. If I had to exist as many of those poor wretches do — and we have them at our very doors — I, too, would probably get drunk as often as I had the chance.

There is a cause for poverty, and that cause can be removed, and when it is removed there will be few, if any poor, "worthy" or "unworthy." The very fact that a poor wretch is "unworthy" pleads most accusingly and irresistibly in his behalf. The cause of his "unworthiness" may be found in his heredity or environment, and in any event outside of and beyond himself, and he should no more be punished for it than if he were the victim of cancer or epilepsy.

A vast amount of fraud, hypocrisy, and false pretense parades as "charity" for the purpose of diverting attention from the cause of the poverty it affects to relieve.

It is not "charity" that the poor want, or that will change their unfortunate condition. It is justice, and to obtain that the whole modern world is in a state of increasingly intelligent and portentous agitation.

As long as the few own the sources of wealth, the machinery of production and the means of life, the many will be condemned to work for them as the miners of Colorado and Montana work for Rockefeller, with the result that the few pile up millions and billions and rot in luxury and self-indulgence, while the millions that are robbed riot and rot in poverty and filth. The exploitation of the many by the few is now on trial before the world, and when that trial is ended and the exploitation of man by man ceases and society is organized upon the basis of the enlightened mutual interests of all, democracy will dawn, men will be brothers, war will cease, poverty will be a hideous nightmare of the past, and the sun of a new civilization will light the world.

How to Stay Safe at a Protest

Since May, multitudes who never demonstrated before have flooded the streets to protest racism and police violence. Protests can be unpredictable. Here's how you and your comrades can stay safe.

Before

SUPPLIES Bring water in a squirt bottle, a snack, phone charger, permanent marker for writing phone numbers on your arm. If you are tear gassed or pepper sprayed, use only water on your eyes.

PHONE SECURITY Turn your phone security setting to lock every time you close it. Turn off the thumb and facial recognition unlock. Turn banner notifications off so that nobody can see who is writing to you. If you are comfortable and know your surroundings, turn off location tracking.

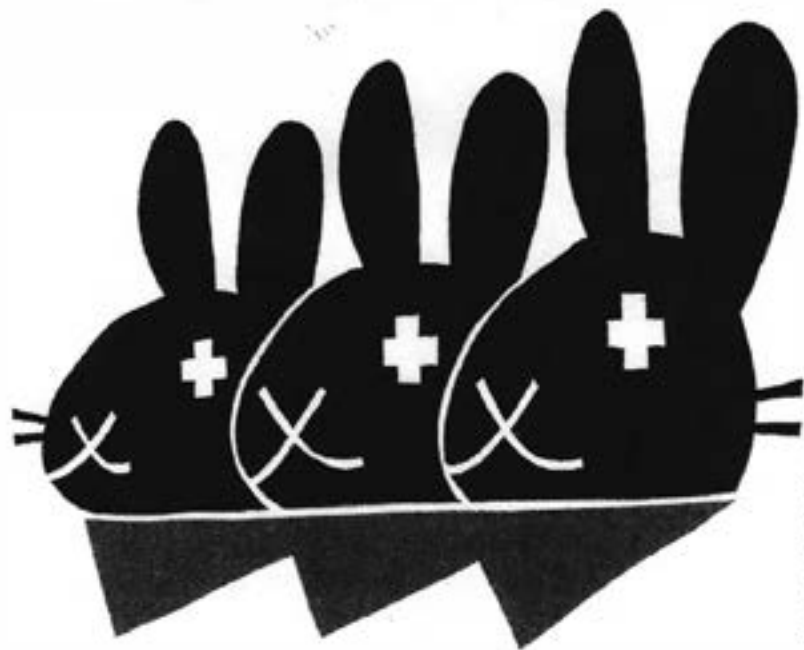
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS Know what is legal to carry. Don't take anything illegal with you or anything that you don't want to lose. Write the number of legal support on your arm.

PLAN AHEAD Who will call in to work if you're arrested? Who will care for your children, walk your dog or feed your pets? Who will call a lawyer, show up in court, wait for you? If you require medication, carry it in the prescription bottle in which it came. It may still be taken from you if you are arrested.

During

BUDDY SYSTEM Have a "buddy" that you arrive with and leave with. Have a plan for if you get separated. Make sure your buddy knows key information in case anything happens to you (your address, birth date, contact numbers).

DON'T RUN Walk, don't run unless absolutely necessary. Running leaves behind those who can't run,



BE RESPONSIBLE Be Responsible for Yourself and Others. An unplanned arrest is not good for you or the movement. Unless you have a plan, try to avoid it. If you see someone being arrested, get their key information (date of birth, name, person to notify). Decide beforehand whether you can risk arrest, i.e., will your job be in jeopardy, your immigration status? If you are at risk, notify the marshals. Even if you are not at risk, do not put others at risk by your actions unless they consent to it.

If the situation looks dangerous, leave!

LISTEN TO MARSHALS Marshals have been trained in de-escalation. Take marshal training yourself.

After (if there are arrests)

ASK FOR A LAWYER, AND DON'T TALK TO THE POLICE You do not have to give them any information except to identify yourself. This is not the time for you to tell them what you think of them or the system. You do not want to escalate the situation and endanger yourself and others.

YOU WILL BE SEARCHED Your cell

to you at the end of the process. Never consent to a search of your personal belongings. They will check for outstanding warrants. You may either be given a ticket for an appearance in court or kept for up to 24 hours for an arraignment.

SUSTAIN OTHERS Each person reacts differently to being arrested. Stay calm and supportive. Be proactive to get help for anyone with a medical emergency.

DO NOT POST ON SOCIAL MEDIA ABOUT YOUR ARREST And definitely do not post about anyone else's arrest without their consent.

HELP WITH JAIL SUPPORT Find out where arrestees have been taken. Notify the legal team. Stay in the precinct house or courthouse. Be in the courtroom or waiting whenever your comrades come out. ■

Adapted from "Protesting: Rights, Risks, Responsibilities," a pamphlet developed by the DSA National Red Rabbits team.

DSA Condemns Killing of Forest Defender

January 20, 2023



The Democratic Socialists of America condemns the murder of an Atlanta Forest Defender, Tortuguita, by Georgia State Troopers. Over several months, the police have escalated their attack on Forest Defenders using violent tactics in an attempt to suppress public opinion and organized political dissent to build a costly, corporate-funded cop training facility. Wednesday morning's raid represents a clear escalation by law enforcement, who orchestrated a violent eviction of protestors from public land. DSA maintains our full support for the democratic rights of all people to peacefully protest this development and defend Atlanta's public forests from destruction. We condemn attempts by police and the far-right to mischaracterize left-wing activists as "outside agitators" or "domestic terrorists" as those are merely excuses to further criminalize organized efforts to protect our communities.

Atlanta has the highest income inequality in America, yet all the corporate Democratic and Republican officials have to offer is environmental destruction and more state violence. Cop City is both an ecological and racial justice issue, with both Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens and Georgia Governor Brian Kemp calling for the destruction of much of Atlanta's South River Forest as well as the expansion of the carceral system through a \$90 million dollar cop facility. We stand firmly with the working-class communities who overwhelmingly oppose the destruction of public forests and reject the construction of an 85-acre police base in their backyards. We call on Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens and the Atlanta City Council to shut down construction and cancel the city's plans for a new cop academy. We reiterate calls for an independent investigation of this recent murder by police, which should be shielded from the corrupt political agenda of local officials and the Atlanta Police Foundation.

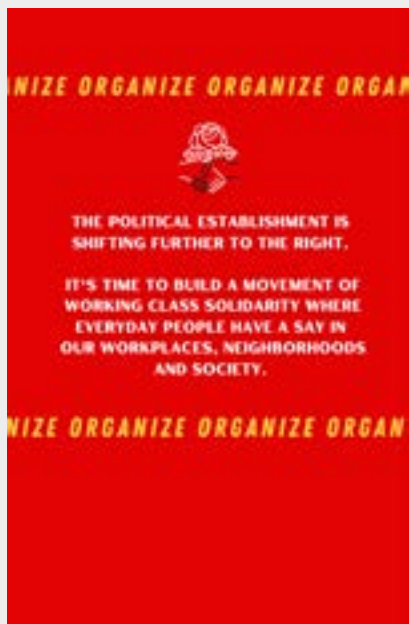
As socialists committed to environmental justice and the abolition of the carceral state, we ask our comrades and the community [to donate to the Atlanta Solidarity Fund](#) to provide bail support to protestors arrested in Atlanta. You can follow and find more ways to support these efforts at [defendtheatlforest.org](#) and [@defendtheATLforest](#).

Statement co-written by the National Abolition WG and Atlanta DSA. The original version of this statement gave the dead name of the forest defender and has been changed to reflect the name of their choice.



North New Jersey Democratic Socialists of America

To learn more about our chapter and the work we do, to see our calendar of events, and to join, email: northnj@dsanj.org
 web: <https://north.dsanj.org>
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The Red Star Ledger

The Red Star Ledger is a publication of the North NJ Democratic Socialists. We believe that working people should run both the economy and society democratically to meet human needs, not to make profits for a few.

The Red Star Ledger is a collection of individual member op-eds, education blogs and other thoughts from the Left. Opinions expressed here are those of the author(s) only. All our writing is done on a volunteer basis, and we're always looking for more help.

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