

The Monthly Voice

January 2017 - ONE DC Newsletter

"Ultimately a genuine leader is not a searcher of consensus but a molder of consensus. On some positions cowardice asks the question, is it safe? Expediency asks the question, is it politic? Vanity asks the question, is it popular? But conscience asks the question, is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right." -*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"Movements do not come to us from heaven, fully formed and organized. They are built by actual people, with all their political questions, weaknesses and strengths." -*Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor*

What Is To Be Done?

"The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the "state of emergency" in which we live is not the exception but the rule." –Walter Benjamin *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Thesis VIII

Donald Trump is the leader of the free world. In his first week as president he has signed a disheartening number of executive orders: Reviving the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines, banning refugees and residents from seven Muslim nations, the authorization of a U.S.-Mexico border wall, and banning federal funds to international groups that perform abortions or lobby to legalize or promote abortions.^[1] The left, galvanized by an unmistakably white supremacist regime, have overwhelmingly refused the Trump administration's sovereignty. There have been marches, mass protests, and, in a few instances, the destruction of corporate property.

However, there are two broad tendencies on the left that, if unresolved, threaten to stifle the revolutionary potential of the moment. One desires a world free from the systems of oppression that constitute the American political system. The other merely wants to return to a less tumultuous time. It is this second tendency that refuses to acknowledge the violent core of American politics. They refuse to acknowledge the rising tide of fascism beyond the figure of Donald Trump.

Leon Trotsky, in opposition to the Stalinists and their theory of 'social fascism', insisted on fascism's specific political role: "The historical function of fascism is to smash the working class, destroy its organizations, and stifle political liberties."^[2] Trotsky's analysis, however, situates fascism *within* an economic crisis rather than a general function of State repression. It is precisely during a crisis that the democratic process breaks down and capitalism is at its most vulnerable. Here the material conditions of the masses are a breeding ground for malcontent but also a germinating class-consciousness. In response, capitalism organizes fascist cells to dismantle anti-capitalist resistance. Thus, fascism appears during periods of "deep social crisis" *by default*.^[3]

Today, economic crises are bound to the material conditions of the middle

class. The financial crisis of 2008 devastated the wealth of middle class Americans (albeit disproportionately amongst African Americans).[4] Now, income inequality has widened to such a degree that the middle class “may no longer be the economic majority in the U.S.”[5] Of those who voted, Trump won the majority of *both* white college graduates and white non-college graduates.[6] Other demographics reveal that Trump’s largest support came from those with salaries ranging from \$50,000 – \$99,000 as well as those living in the suburbs, small cities, and rural areas.[7] If fascism is capitalism in decay then it is also as much a crisis of *whiteness*. Yet everyone knows that Hilary Clinton won the popular vote (despite voter turnout plummeting to a 20-year low).[8] The issue is that the Electoral College, *by its very nature*, tends towards reifying white supremacy.

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of the Alt-right aligning their movement with Donald Trump’s presidential campaign or the significance of Trump naming Stephen K. Bannon, former executive chair of *Breitbart News*, as his chief strategist and senior counselor. However, it’s a mystification to claim that Trump’s election is normalizing white supremacy. The truth is it was here long before January 20th. The Clinton administration built the carceral state; Barack Obama expanded George W. Bush’s clandestine drone war while also authorizing over 2.4 million deportations as President.[9] Trump’s policies and appointees are intensifications, not aberrations, of American politics.

The ‘Great American Experiment’ has always been an experiment of white supremacy. Our nation grew by enslaving generations while thieving untold wealth from their labor. Modern medicine owes its status *as a science* to the ghastly tampering of black bodies.[10] We recoil in horror at the eugenics programs of the 19th and 20th centuries yet most forget that America forcibly sterilized Black and Indian women up through the 1970s.[11] Still, we risk erasing the struggles of marginalized people when we merely equate fascism with white supremacy. Trotsky’s analysis, as it was made from *his* historical position, fails only insofar as we maintain that fascism manifests *during* a period of crisis rather than as a *phase* in a larger coherent system of violence and oppression.

From within San Quentin State Prison, George Jackson argued that fascism’s most advanced form was here in America.[12] For George, fascism went through three phases: 1) Out of power 2) In power but not secure 3) In power and securely so.[13] With each phase come varying modes of political violence from Mussolini’s Black Shirts to America’s expansive policing and prison apparatuses. However, binding the fascist mode of violence is its intolerance of any “*valid* revolutionary activity.”[14] In the late 60s, the FBI used COINTELPRO to wage war against the Black Panther Party. Today, the State mobilized the National Guard and local police precincts to brutally repress water protectors in North Dakota. What we are beginning to experience is fascism’s shift from the exterior of the American political system to engaging the entire social body.

So what is to be done? It is not enough to only engage in critique or to be anti-capitalist, anti-fascist, anti-racist, or anti-Trump. Negative concepts have

never been strong enough to hold together revolutionary movements. The general strike, mass protest, and other forms of direct action are all useful tactics for waging revolution. However, their use is secondary to the community and values that drive them. We must refuse the call for a return to American politics and the white subjectivity it privileges. We cannot content ourselves with only pushing fascism back underground, back to only policing low-income communities, back to only terrorizing our brothers and sisters in the Middle East and beyond. We must begin to practice a politics of solidarity, inclusion, and radical egalitarianism. We must center the struggles of marginalized people and listen to their voices. We must prioritize political education. We must build alternative institutions. We must remember, “The essence of politics is *dissensus*.”^[15] Our enemies will try to convince us that “we are insufficient, scarce, waiting in pockets of resistance, in stairwells, in alleys, in vain” but the demonstrations this past week have proven the contrary: “We’re already here, moving.”^[16]

[1] <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/01/24/list-trumps-executive-orders.html>

[2] <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm> See: *The Collapse of the Bourgeois Democracy*.

[3] <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1944/1944-fas.htm> See: *The Fascist Danger Looms in Germany*.

[4] <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/06/black-recession-housing-race/396725/>

[5] <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/05/11/americas-shrinking-middle-class-a-close-look-at-changes-within-metropolitan-areas/>

[6] <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/09/behind-trumps-victory-divisions-by-race-gender-education/>

[7] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/08/us/politics/election-exit-polls.html?_r=0

[8] <http://www.cnn.com/2016/11/11/politics/popular-vote-turnout-2016/>

[9] <http://www.politifact.com/truth-o-meter/statements/2016/oct/21/donald-trump/trump-right-deportation-numbers-wrong-talks-about-/>

[10] <http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/the-case-for-medical-reparations/>

[11] See *Reproductive Rights* from Angela Davis’s *Women, Race, & Class*.

[12] Jackson, George. *Blood in My Eye*. New York: Random House, 1972. Print.

[13] *Blood in My Eye*. Page 123.

[14] *Blood in My Eye*. Page 118.

[15] Ranciere, Jacques, and Steve Corcoran. *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*. London: Continuum, 2010. Page 38. Print.

[16] Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*. Wivenhoe: Minor Compositions, 2013. Page 19. Print.

Say NO to Displacement - Rally & Zoning Hearing for Brookland Manor!

Thursday, February 23 - Rally at 5:00 PM

Hearing starts at 6:00 PM & will last for several hours

Zoning Commission - 441 4th St NW #200



ONE DC members and residents at Brookland Manor request your support at the upcoming second stage zoning commission hearing on Thursday, February 23. At this hearing, the tenants and their legal team will be arguing for the inclusion of robust affordable housing, including the retention of large bedrooms, so that no resident is displaced from their existing community. We request that you both submit written testimony, and if possible, join us in person to provide testimony publicly in support of Brookland Manor tenants fighting to save their home. We encourage members who attend the monthly People's Platform meeting to join us at the rally & hearing under principle #1 of the People's Platform: "Housing for every person. Housing is a human right, not an opportunity to exploit & profit." Brookland Manor residents are saying NO! to displacement. Join us!

Member Support Needed!

- [RSVP](#) and share with your networks
- Sign up to testify
- Phone banking to members
- Canvassing in Ward 5
- Social media (live-tweeting during rally & hearing)
- Transportation of members & supplies
- Sign-making
- Outreach to other orgs, coalitions, partners & allies

To volunteer for any of these roles, email Claire at ccook@onedconline.org and Yasmina at ymrabet@onedconline.org

Brookland Manor Campaign Legal Update

The last hearing was held on November 21, 2016 when the federal district court for the District of Columbia denied Mid-City Financial Corporation's motion to dismiss the Brookland Manor case yet also denied the resident families' and ONE DC's preliminary injunction, which would have ceased any efforts to relocate or evict tenants on the basis of the redevelopment ([Click here](#) for a brief summary of that hearing, courtesy of the Washington Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights & Urban Affairs).

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Black Workers Center Open House!

Friday, February 24 - 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM
United Black Fund - 2500 MLK Jr Ave SE

Come through and support the ONE DC Black Workers Center (BWC) by checking out our newly renovated office space in Anacostia and find out how we're building power in 2017! The BWC is a member-led space that builds racial and economic justice through popular education, direct action and worker-owned alternatives. We will also be unveiling the new Black Workers Center logo!

[Click here to RSVP](#)

***NEW* ONE DC Political Education Calendar**

The political education calendar is a new feature of our monthly newsletter that will highlight upcoming community learning events in the DC area. We recommend ONE DC members come together at these events as part of a commitment to ongoing political education, study, & reflection. In the words of Paulo Freire, "For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other."

The Power of Cooperative Ownership in the Black Community

Monday, February 13 - 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM

National Press Club, 529 14th Street NW, 13th Floor

Cooperatives continue to play a significant role in social and economic development in the Black community. From economic independence and desegregated housing, to small farmer empowerment and food security, cooperatives are an integral part of the Black experience that has often been silenced. Accordingly, the panel will explore the potential of cooperatives to drive economic growth and social progress in the United States and abroad. The panel will be moderated by Ellis Carr and feature Jessica Gordon Nembhard, Cornelius Blanding, LaKeisha Wolf, and Alex Serrano as speakers.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Race, Class, and Struggle Then and Now: Lessons from the League of

Revolutionary Black Workers

Tuesday, February 14 - 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Social Work Auditorium - Howard University, 601 Howard PI NW (at the corner of Howard PI & Sixth St, NW - enter from Sixth St)

Howard University is excited to announce that Jerome Scott from the League of Revolutionary Black Workers will be visiting the campus to screen video from the oral history project on the LRBW in the Detroit auto plants from 1968 to 1970. The forum will focus on Black workers and their struggles in the factories, the community, and schools as part of the movement upsurge in the 1960s. It will lift up lessons learned for today's generation of scholar activists and movement actors rooted in the experiences of League members, many of who who are engaged in movement struggle today. A critical lesson to be discussed is that "it's easy to be a revolutionary in revolutionary times, but it takes theory to be a revolutionary in ebb times."

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Upcoming Events & Actions

Black Lives Matter General Assembly Meeting

Thursday, February 2 - 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ - 3845 S Capitol St SW

The Movement for Black Lives Steering Committee is going to be hosting our first General Assembly of the year. It will focus around the organizing and advocacy around the NEAR Act and building a sustained joint campaign for transformative criminal justice reform. This general assembly will feature a popular education piece on the NEAR Act and updates from core groups on how to get involved.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

DC Fair Elections Grassroots Meeting

Saturday, February 4 - 1:30 PM - 3:00 PM

Anacostia Library - 1800 Good Hope Rd SE

More than half a million of us were out in the streets last weekend, making a stand for women's rights, our climate, black lives, immigrants' rights, LGBTQ equality, our democracy, and the myriad of intersecting issues for which we will all need to fight for the next four years. One of the key lessons from the Women's March this weekend was that we can't just all go home and pat ourselves on the back for a job well done. It's up to us to become leaders in our own communities on the issues we care about: to take action and to keep pushing our elected officials to do what is right.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Stop the Cuts, Save WMATA - Americans for Transit

Monday, February 6 - 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Resources for the Future - 1616 P St Conference Room B

Next Monday, Americans for Transit will hold a meeting discussing how to save our metro system. Our system is tipping towards the "Public Transit Death Spiral" and WMATA's only response has been to propose service cuts and fare hikes. Maintaining an efficient and reliable public transportation is foundational for a just and equitable city.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Solidarity Squad Kickoff and Training - DC Jobs with Justice

Thursday, February 9 - 6:00 - 8:00 PM

Florida Avenue Baptist Church basement - 623 Florida Ave NW

The new federal government has begun its assault on our communities. We need tight-knit, organized groups of people to resist the right-wing's agenda, to protect workers' rights, and to defend our neighbors. That's exactly what we seek to build with the Solidarity Squad. Training will include: community building, training on racial bias, local DC organizing, and opportunities for more training.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

Rooting DC 2017

Saturday, February 18 - 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Wilson High School - 3950 Chesapeake St NW

Rooting DC is an all-day gardening forum that aims to provide education about urban food production and consumption, to cultivate health and preserve the environment.

[Click here to RSVP](#)

The Black Public Health Student Network: Communities of Color Health Conference

Friday, February 24 - 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Milken Institute School of Public Health - 950 New Hampshire Avenue NW

The Black Public Health Student Network will be holding their annual conference on issues related to minority health and community wellness in relation to a view to educate future public health professionals and community members on critical issues and barriers pertaining to health in minority communities. We are proud to announce that Dominic Moulden will be speaking on the Housing and Community Development panel. This year's theme is, "Health Care is a Human Right: Intersections of Racial Inequity and Health Attainment."

[Click here to RSVP](#)

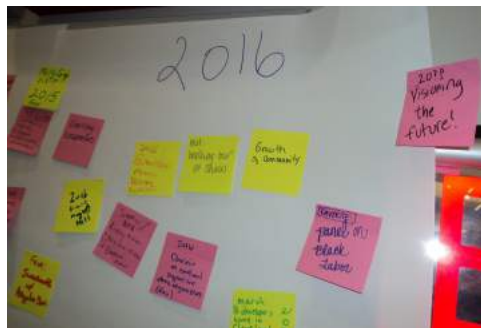
ONE Bit of Good News - A Word from a Member

By Julia Thome

Energized! That's how I feel going into 2017 as a [member of ONE DC](#).

I am a new member of the organization, first participating in a march for housing rights in Congress Heights earlier in the year, then going on a ONE DC tour of the Shaw neighborhood. On December 3, I attended the ONE

DC Member Appreciation celebration at the RISE Demonstration Center in SE DC. I was welcomed by staff and long-time members, and also met several new members, like myself.



Each person I met, and those that spoke during the event, had an inspiring story to tell that connected them to the work of ONE DC. For example, I was moved by the passion and energy of Kristi Matthews, a leader with the Brookland Manor campaign. She had attended a training by ONE DC 6 or 7 years ago, and became involved again through her work as a Kressley Fellow at the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless. She has a deep commitment to the issues, as she is involved in other community organizations dealing with homelessness and poverty, and is completing studies to become a mental health counselor. After speaking with Kristi in the line for food (food catered by Organic Soul Live was amazing, by the way), I was thrilled to see Elijah win a member award.

Among the many other stories told at the celebration, I was also excited to learn about the Norwood Childcare Cooperative, the food sovereignty cooperative under development, and the recent victories of the Congress Heights residents.

The inspired lyrics and beats of Son of Nun were the perfect accompaniment to the energy of the event, as members got up on their feet to sing along. While speakers at the event conveyed an underlying recognition of the difficult road ahead for housing and economic justice, I couldn't help but feeling energized by the momentum of ONE DC and hopeful about what can be accomplished in 2017.

[Click here to pay your 2017 membership dues](#)

Community Announcements

DC Greens - Become a Community Advocate

In the name of building community power that addresses change at the city level and creates a more just food system, DC Greens is hiring 6 Community Advocates. The positions are part-time, 18 hours/month for 5 months at \$20/hour. We plan to hire in February. [Job Description and application information here!](#)

[Protect DC's Budget - Sign the Fair Budget Coalition's petition](#)

[4th Annual DC Black History Calendar](#)



WHAT:
Meet and Greet fundraiser to help support MFY&B free community yoga sessions.

DATE: Sat, Feb 11th 2017

TIME: 2pm – 6pm

DONATIONS:
Suggested (not limited to) \$10
GOAL \$20,000

LOCATION:
TMTC
1816 12th St N.W.
Washington DC 20009
Suite 419 (4th FL)

Join Us! Making DC Stress Free...

Agenda
2:00 – 6:00 Meet the community
Yoga Products, Art, Jewelry, Face
Painting, Massage & More.....
3:30 – 4:00 Yoga session
4:30 – 5:00 Plant care demo
5:30 – 6:00 Yoga session



For more information contact 240.343.2584 or andrea@mefirstyoga.com

Do you want to be a writer, editor, or designer for the ONE DC *Monthly Voice*? Email organizer@onedconline.org

Donate to the Movement Today

Become a Sustaining Donor

Become a Member

Volunteer

ONE DC · 614 S Street Northwest, Carriage House in Rear, Washington, DC 20001, United States
This email was sent to organizer@onedconline.org. To stop receiving emails, [click here](#).
You can also keep up with ONE DC on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

Created with [NationBuilder](#), the essential toolkit for leaders.