

Social Justice Watch 0712

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My team and I sent 6,500 emails to randomly selected professors from 259 US universities. The sender of the email was a fictional, out-of-town, prospective PhD student who expressed interest in the professor's graduate program and sought his or her guidance. The emails were identical and impeccably written, varying only in the name of the senders, which included Meredith Roberts, Lamar Washington, Juanita Martinez, Raj Singh and Chang Huang. We used 20 different names in 10 different race-gender categories; some could be perceived as white and male, some could not. (Our study examined another issue related to the timing of the request, but for the findings reported here, the prospective student was requesting a meeting for the following week.)

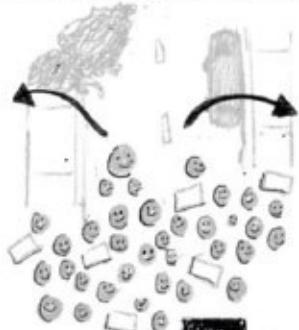
Overall, 67 percent of the faculty members responded; of those, more than half agreed

Overall, 67 percent of the faculty members responded; of those, more than half agreed to meet with the fictional student. (As soon as the professor wrote back, we immediately canceled the meeting.) However, professors were more responsive to white males compared to other students in almost every discipline and across all types of universities and bias was most severe at private universities and in disciplines paying higher faculty salaries (with business showing the most bias). Even when the student and the faculty member shared a race or gender, we saw the same levels of bias. The only exception was Chinese students writing to Chinese professors; they received more responses. Nonetheless, Chinese students were the most discriminated-against group in our study.

This pathway is informal, unmeasured and fluid. The prospective applicants weren't

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TAKE UP THE WHOLE STREET,
INCLUDING SIDEWALKS



HOW TO STOP A BIKE FLANK

POLICE WILL TRY TO
FLANK YOU WITH BIKES,
GETTING AROUND THE SIDES
AND NARROWING THE MARCH



WHEN THEY FLANK, WALK IN FRONT, **VERY** SLOW!



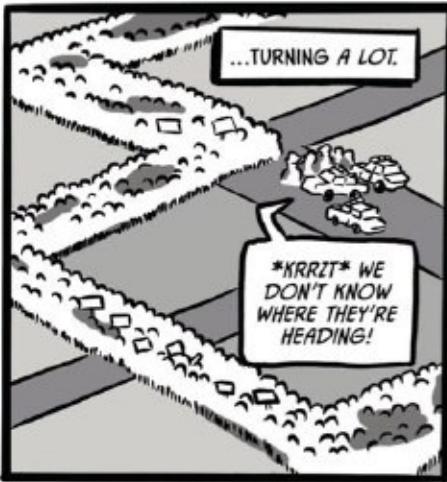
IT'S HARDER TO RIDE SLOW, AND YOU'LL
PUSH BACK THE FLANK

CALL TO OTHERS TO

FILL IN!

TO SECURE
THE SIDE





HOW TO PROTECT YOUR FINGERS

WHEN YOU'RE FACING A LINE OF COPS ACROSS A METAL BARRICADE,



BECAUSE THEY WILL **HIT** THEM WITH THEIR BATONS.

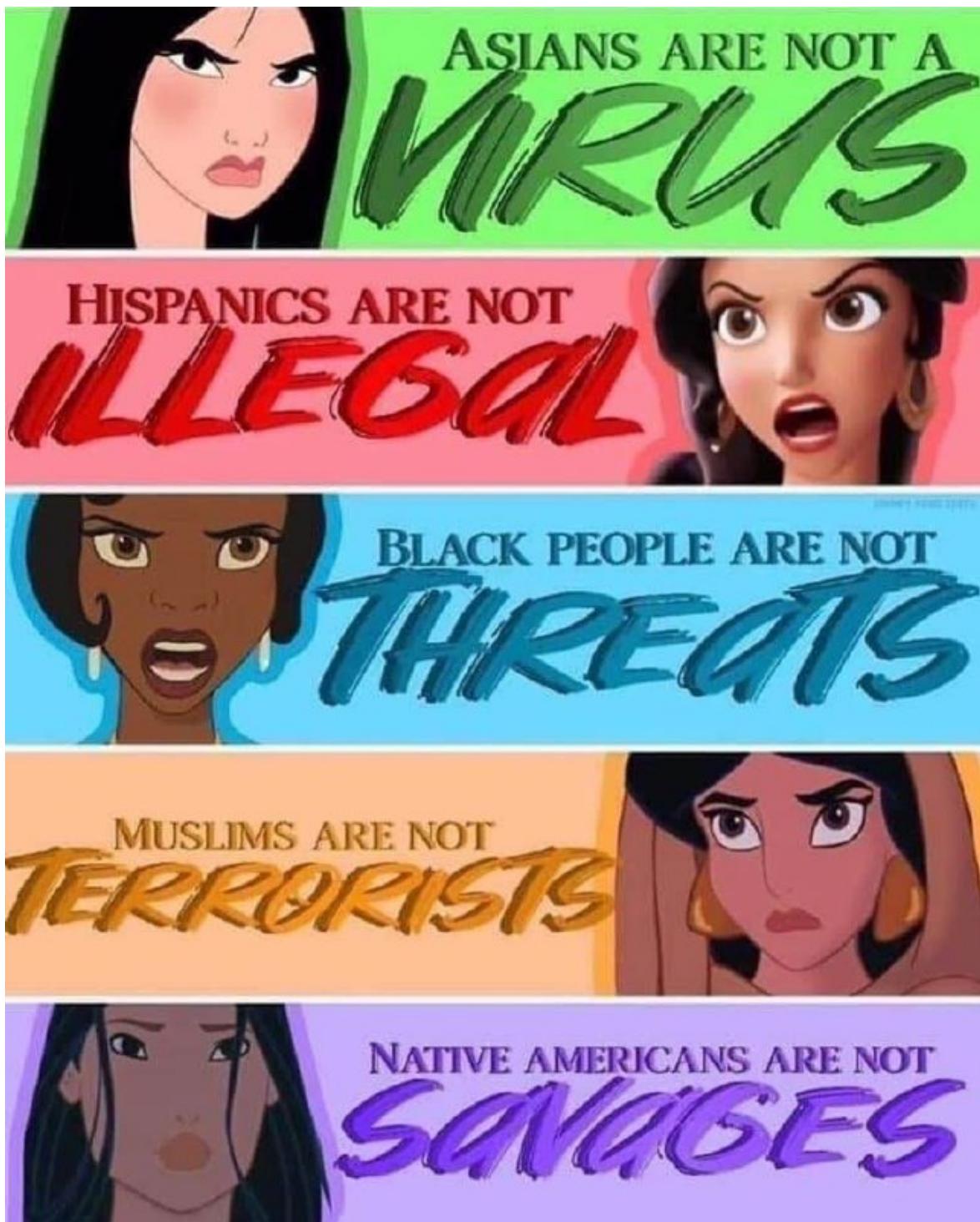
WHEN YOU LOCK ARMS WITH OTHER PROTESTERS,



**Scotland will become
the first country in
the world to add
LGBTQ+ history to
school curriculum**



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消息精选

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Breaking News: Amy Cooper, the white woman in Central Park who called the police on a Black bird watcher, will be charged with filing a false report

[nyti.ms/3gzP9bA source](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/black-bird-watcher-false-report.html)

Nytimes

Amy Cooper Faces Charges After Calling Police on Black Bird Watcher

Ms. Cooper was captured on video calling the police after Christian Cooper asked her to keep her dog on a leash in Central Park.

[Thailand] <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-thailand-lgbt/thai-cabinet-backs-bill-allowing-same-sex-unions-idUSKBN2491W4>

Reuters

Thai cabinet backs bill allowing same-sex unions

BANGKOK (Reuters) - Thailand's cabinet approved a civil partnership bill on Wednesday that would recognise same-sex unions with almost the same legal rights as married couples, in one of the most liberal moves yet for a largely conservative nation known for...

[telegra.ph/Jonathan-Sackler-Spent-His-Life-Spreading-Opioid-Addiction-Throughout-the-United-States-07-08 Sackler Family](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/07/08/jonathan-sackler-spent-life-spreading-opioid-addiction-throughout-united-states-07-08-sackler-family/)

Telegraph

Jonathan Sackler Spent His Life Spreading Opioid Addiction Throughout the United States

In 1999, two classmates asked me to the fifth grade dance. By 2009, both of them had developed opioid addictions. By 2019, one was sober, and the other was dead from a heroin overdose. The one who died left behind an infant son. "I never gave up on you,"...

<https://youtu.be/6Avcp-e4bOs>

YouTube

Responding to JK Rowlings Essay | Is It Anti-Trans?

Addressing what was said by JK Rowling in her 'TERF wars' essay. Is it anti-trans? Follow Shaaba: <https://www.youtube.com/Shaaba17> Reference list: <https://ww...>

<https://youtu.be/yaRF0Ohb1mg>

YouTube

Beyond Pink or Blue

The Transgender Movement, Yesterday, Today and the Future

The Center for Culture, Gender, and Sexuality is pleased to announce that world-renowned social activist and author Leslie Feinberg will be visiting Sonoma State University on April 26th at 7:30...

None

<https://telegra.ph/Nationalize-the-Ivy-League-So-We-Can-Rename-Yale-UConn-New-Haven-07-09>

Telegraph

Nationalize the Ivy League, So We Can Rename Yale “UConn New Haven” Republican Senator Tom Cotton normally spends his time doing things like bashing immigrants, trying to escalate tensions between the United States and China, and calling on Trump to deploy the military to use “overwhelming” force against racial justice protesters....

telegra.ph/How-Counterinsurgency-Tactics-in-the-Middle-East-Found-Their-

[Way-to-American-Cities-07-08](#)

Telegraph

How Counterinsurgency Tactics in the Middle East Found Their Way to American Cities

A knee to the neck. A rubber bullet to the eye. A tear gas canister to the head. America spends \$100 billion annually on policing, much of it supported by the exchange of material and counterinsurgency tactics used in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank...

[https://telegra.ph/Netherlands-Sees-No-Role-for-Gender-Marker-on-ID-Documents-07-10](#)

Telegraph

Netherlands Sees No Role for Gender Marker on ID Documents

The Dutch government will no longer include gender markers on national identification documents (IDs) in the next five years, a move that balances the potential harms – such as harassment, discrimination, and violence – that requiring people to declare gender...

[telegra.ph/Theres-No-Such-Thing-as-the-National-Interest-07-10](#)

Telegraph

There's No Such Thing as the “National Interest”

Whether you were sitting in an international relations class or listening to a mainstream politician expound on some foreign policy issue, you've probably heard that countries have “national interests.” They pursue them, they defend them, and sometimes they...

friendly reminder that if you only support abortion in instances of rape or incest, you're reinforcing the idea that in order for a woman to have a right to her body, someone else has to violate it first. [source](#)

<https://youtu.be/20x9xEzlODU>

YouTube

Pornhub Exposed as #Traffickinghub

Sign the Petition: <https://traffickinghubpetition.com/>

Fuel the Fight: <https://traffickinghub.com/donate> (Help us meet our \$200k goal!)

What proof do we have that Pornhub is enabling and profiting from videos of rape and child sex trafficking? This video...

Feminism gave me a second chance at life, to live a life of freedom, sisterhood, sexual freedom and exploration. It taught me to find validation in myself. It taught me to question and learn. It made me want to dedicate my life into helping other women experience this too. [source](#)

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The Israeli Defence Forces in the Gaza Strip. (IDF via Getty Images)

A knee to the neck. A rubber bullet to the eye. A tear gas canister to the head. America spends \$100 billion annually on policing, much of it supported by the exchange of material and counterinsurgency tactics used in the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the “war on terror.” Raining down on American protesters in the current wave of protests, rubber bullets have a history stretching back to the British policing of Republican protesters in Northern Ireland in the 1970s, and the Israeli containment of Palestinians during the First Intifada in 1987. How have the military tactics and technologies used to suppress dissent in the Middle East found their way to America’s cities in the latest round of Black Lives

Matter (BLM) protests?

In May, protests erupted after the asphyxiation of George Floyd by a Minneapolis police officer — an extrajudicial execution for the alleged use of a counterfeit twenty-dollar bill at a convenience store. Mahmoud Abumayyaleh, the store owner who contacted the police about Floyd, is himself a Palestinian-American, but may not see the connection between his being Palestinian and the choke hold that took Floyd's life.

In 2012, a hundred Minneapolis police officers received training from Israeli consultants in Chicago, while another counter-terrorism training session, cosponsored by the FBI, took place in Minneapolis. Israeli deputy consul Shahar Arieli commented on the training at the time, “Every year we are bringing top-notch professionals from the Israeli police to share some knowledge and know-how about how to deal with terrorism with our American friends.”

He conceded concerns that “law enforcement operations could violate civil rights,” speaking about a productive collaboration developing “terrorism prevention techniques.” That same year, the Minneapolis Police Department adopted those techniques — frequently used against Palestinians and protesters in the West Bank — and entered them into their use-of-force guidelines. In the last five years, Minneapolis officers have rendered forty-five people unconscious, including George Floyd.

The United States has long been Israel’s primary supplier of military weapons — a “special relationship” forged when the United States transported 2.2 million dollars of military assistance during the 1973 War. Over the decades, a complicated web of aid, military contracts, subsidies, and cash funds have been given to Israel.

More recently, the United States has promised 38 billion dollars over the next decade in military aid to Israel, with President Trump openly acknowledging that arms deals create jobs in the United States. Though it is not called economic stimulus, 100 percent of US aid is flushed back into Israel’s economy, and Israeli arms, in turn, are coveted in the global market because they have been field tested within the laboratory of human suffering called the West Bank and Gaza.

As Jeff Halper argues after September 11, the United States adopted Israel’s

“security state” model where constitutional, civil, and human rights are subordinated to security imperatives. With security as the nation’s highest value, Israeli knowledge in policing terrorism, surveillance, behavioral science, profiling, torture, and maiming was transferred to various offices in the United States, among them the Department of Homeland Security, US marshals, police chiefs, Customs and Border Protection agents, the FBI, and the CIA.

At the time of this exchange, Israel was fighting a second Palestinian uprising, the Al-Aqsa Intifada. With the prevalence of civilian suicide bombers, Israel’s counterinsurgency focused on unarmed Palestinian and foreign protesters, as well as journalists resisting the army’s occupation tactics.

During this Second Intifada, a new practice known as “human shields” became military policy, whereby soldiers held the bodies of Palestinians as human armor in an act that left no doubt whose life was disposable in the logic of the occupation. Although Israeli courts made the practice illegal in 2005, it continues to be used in the Occupied Territories.

Because of the live rounds fired during the Second Intifada, Israel offered safety to “embedded journalists,” who would become mouthpieces for the Israeli military. The United States would borrow this policy for journalists a few years later in Iraq, using military law and disorder to undermine the democratic pillar of the free press.

As foreign peace activists and Palestinian protesters were shot with live sniper rounds during the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Israel developed a sophisticated public-relations campaign to counter its global image, part of which included partnerships with US law enforcement.

An extensive 2018 report titled “Deadly Exchange: The Dangerous Consequences of American Law Enforcement Trainings in Israel,” compiled by Researching the American-Israeli Alliance, documents how Israel’s policing tactics were transferred to US personnel. Over 250 police departments have received training inside Israel.

Moreover, Israeli Weapons Industries established two police training centers inside the United States: a police academy in Paulden, Arizona, and the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE) Center, in partnership with Georgia State University in Atlanta. The same university offers degrees to Israeli

personnel as a part of these exchanges grounded in the integrated knowledge of counterinsurgency.

Atlanta, one of the great black American cities, created a video integration center modeled after one frequently showcased during a training session in the Old City of Jerusalem. Near Atlanta is GILEE's predecessor, the School of the Americas, where ten former heads of state in Latin America honed their skills in torture and repression.

That Rayshard Brooks and George Floyd could be killed by police in the street means the rules of the occupation are at play on US soil. Procedurally, the knee to the neck and other choking restraints should only be used when an officer believes their life is in imminent danger.

A week ago, an officer in Bellevue, Washington, restrained an unidentified black woman who asked to speak with the sheriff. As he pushed her to the ground he said, "On the ground or I'll put you out," a threat to render her unconscious or possibly dead with his choke hold. What does it say when black people appealing for their legal and human rights are interpreted by the police as life threatening?

The "no knock" warrant that broke down Breonna Taylor's door and enabled police to shoot her eight times is not only the police equivalent of a drive by shooting, it's a paramilitary tactic. In 2016, when the Houston shooter was "neutralized" using a robot field-tested in Afghanistan, it marked the first "targeted assassination" of an American citizen. The United States condemned extrajudicial killings in the Occupied Territories before adopting it for use on suspected terrorists.

The hallmark of the "war on terror" was the presumption that any youthful, able-bodied male is a terrorist body. Fighting-age brown male bodies were "neutralized" by the person controlling the drone in Yemen and Afghanistan who, like the police knocking down Taylor's door, serves as judge, jury, and executioner. In the "war on terror," all military-aged men were not counted as civilian casualties.

The very presence of the living black body of the African American and the brown body of the Arab are a threat regardless of whether they are carrying a weapon or not, whether they are a criminal or not.

The killing, maiming, and imprisonment of Palestinian bodies is today considered “worst practice” of the Israeli occupation. When these brutal tactics caused an international backlash during the First Intifada, Israel responded by “softening” its approach with the adoption of rubber bullets — much as the British Army was moved to adopt rubber bullets as an alternative after the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre caused so much bad publicity.

Today, there are more than seventy-five different types of “non-lethal” projectiles labeled rubber bullets. A beanbag round recently entered the skull of a sixteen-year-old protester in Austin causing the kind of injury that has maimed and killed Palestinian protesters for over three decades. While Austin has since banned beanbag rounds, the overall militarization of the American police has effectively Palestinianized dissent in the United States, bringing counterinsurgency tactics that both the United States and Israel have been using against Arabs onto home turf.

In a series of peaceful, unarmed border protests called “The Great March” in Gaza from 2018 to 2019, over 10,000 Palestinians were maimed by Israeli snipers with state-of-the-art scopes on their guns aimed for the knees. Weapons designed to inflict maximum damage without killing by using ammunition that mushrooms and expands within the body.

When we look only at death, we overlook lifelong disability caused by “less-lethal weapons.” This new frontier is called “humane war.” Its goal is to kill less people while maiming for life. Jasbir Puar has documented how less lethal weapons produce disabled bodies that will be fed back into the capitalist medical industry to be rehabilitated for a profit.

In his prescient work, *Rubber Bullets* (1998), the late Israeli political theorist Yaron Ezrahi argued that Israel’s choice to use the apparently nonlethal projectiles against Palestinians was a moral turning point that threatened liberal democracy by compromising its principles for the sake of extreme nationalism. Rubber bullets and knees on necks have similarly brought America to the precipice. How do we fight back against the normalization of militarized police violence in our cities and the threat it poses to democracy?

Ending America’s “forever wars” is a start. Activists must demand a ban on surplus materials and tactics training acquired by the police from Israel and US counterinsurgency abroad. The Palestinian Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

national committee issued a powerful statement of solidarity calling for support for BLM.

Such solidarity is built on an understanding that what is happening inside the United States, though not identical, is intimately connected to technologies of colonization and brutal policing overseas, in places like Palestine. Addressing the crisis at home, means looking toward the United States's influence — and inspiration — abroad.

Elyse Semerdjian is a professor of history at Whitman College and a community organizer for the Walla Walla chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America.

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Jonathan Sackler Spent His Life Spreading Opioid Addiction Throughout the United States

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Derrick Slaughter, age five, attends a march against the epidemic of heroin in Ohio. Spencer Platt / Getty

In 1999, two classmates asked me to the fifth grade dance. By 2009, both of them had developed opioid addictions. By 2019, one was sober, and the other was dead from a heroin overdose. The one who died left behind an infant son. “I never gave up on you,” my classmate’s mother posted on Facebook, “but you would not let me help you.” She chose a photo of him from around the time we slow-danced to the Aerosmith song from the *Armageddon* soundtrack.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention statistics on opioid overdose

deaths start that same year, in 1999. Since then, nearly half a million Americans have died from overdoses on prescription and illicit opioids. Drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental death in the United States, and opioids are involved in two-thirds of them. Four out of five new heroin users are transitioning from misusing prescription opioids. More than one hundred people are now dying from opioid overdoses in the United States every day.

It's well established now that the proliferation of prescription opioids, particularly the game-changing painkiller OxyContin, fueled the broader addiction epidemic. You can see the progression of the crisis in the data. The opioid deaths have come in three waves: first a rise in deaths from prescription opioids starting in 1999, followed by a rise in deaths from heroin overdoses beginning in 2010; then an explosion in deaths from dangerous synthetic opioids like fentanyl starting in 2013. For every person who dies, hundreds more are entangled in the criminal justice system, and thousands more are living with addiction as their lives fall apart.

The crisis has swallowed entire communities. The primary location of the industry in the town of Oceana, West Virginia used to be coal mining. Now it's the black-market opioid trade, and the town is nicknamed Oxyana. In a documentary about the town, an opioid addict explains, "If you don't work in the mines, the only other way you've got to make money anywhere close to working in the mines is to sell drugs. If you don't see somebody getting up in the morning and going to work, they're selling pills." Overdoses are common in Oceana, and so too is violence related to the drug trade. A local dentist describes the opioid crisis as a darkness that has descended so heavily on the town that it's even cast a pall over its natural beauty, a gray shroud over the green mountains.

The life I shared with my classmates was worlds away from Oceana, but the pills are everywhere, from double-wides in rural West Virginia to McMansions in the Texas suburbs. The story of how they became so ubiquitous begins when Purdue Pharma decided to manufacture OxyContin. Emails from a Purdue executive in 1999 demonstrate awareness that there was no evidence that controlled-release opioids were less addictive, and yet the company consistently made this claim in order to get OxyContin on the market and into the hands of as many consumers as possible. Purdue then spent decades downplaying the drug's abuse potential, despite knowledge to the contrary.

For several years now, Purdue has been dragged through both the formal legal

system and the court of public opinion. The public backlash has been ferocious: Americans are now more inclined to place heavy blame on the pharmaceutical industry for encouraging doctors to overprescribe the drugs than on individual drug users for becoming addicted.

Correspondingly, it's hard to think of an American capitalist dynasty more roundly condemned in recent years than the Sackler family, which owns Purdue Pharma. The family has followed the philanthropic playbook, lavishing art museums and university departments with funds to burnish the Sackler image, but this hasn't shielded them from popular wrath. Their transgressions are too intolerable, and the contrast between their astronomical wealth and the devastation they've left in their wake is too stark to ignore. The Sacklers are intensely private, but with \$13 billion at their collective disposal it's impossible not to picture them lounging on superyacht sun decks while ordinary Americans fill the halfway houses and the morgues.

It's no surprise then that when news of co-owner Jonathan Sackler's death broke earlier this week, the reaction on social media was unsympathetic, to put it gently. On the one hand, the role of a single person in orchestrating this crisis shouldn't be overstated. The deceased was only one member of the family that built and profited from the OxyContin empire, and despite its outsize role, not even Purdue Pharma bears sole responsibility for the calamity. Consider the deindustrialization and austerity that have left places like Oceana vulnerable to an explosion in the pill trade, its people desperate for money and release.

On the other hand, it's easy to comprehend why the news of Jonathan Sackler's passing received such a cold reception. With the constant churn of the news cycle, the new distractions, and the fresh terrors, it's easy for some to forget that the opioid epidemic is still raging. Others are still electrified with grief. Did Jonathan Sackler mourn the loss of their spouse, child, or friend?

The opioid crisis has claimed nearly five hundred thousand lives since 1999. That's five hundred thousand irreparable tears in the fabric of millions of people's personal worlds. Not only that, but nearly one-third of Americans know someone who is currently addicted to opioids. That's more than one hundred million people actively witnessing, at various distances, the slow fade from life to death. Most feel helpless to reverse it, not least because capitalists like the Sacklers prefer to redistribute their money on a thoroughly volunteer basis, starving public services and rendering help hard to find for those without means.

In 2009, the midpoint in this saga so far, another boy I knew died of an opioid overdose. He was sixteen. He'd already established himself as an athlete when he was serendipitously cast in a school musical, where he discovered — as we all discovered, with pride and delight — that he could really sing.

There's a video of him still up on Facebook from shortly before he died singing a Red Hot Chili Peppers song at an open mic. "I better not leave before I get my chance to ride," go the lyrics. "All my life to sacrifice." And sacrifice for what? For \$35 billion, \$10 billion of it straight to the bank. Hundreds of thousands of lives sacrificed at the altar of profit. That, more than all the museum wings and endowed professorships put together, will be the Sackler legacy.

Meagan Day is a staff writer at Jacobin. She is the coauthor of *Bigger than Bernie: How We Go* from the Sanders Campaign to Democratic Socialism

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Nationalize the Ivy League, So We Can Rename Yale “UConn New Haven”

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This sweatshirt will soon be outdated.

Republican Senator Tom Cotton normally spends his time doing things like bashing immigrants, trying to escalate tensions between the United States and China, and calling on Trump to deploy the military to use “overwhelming” force against racial justice protesters. In the last few weeks, though, he’s also found time to denounce what he sometimes calls the “Jacobin mob” toppling statues.

Last week, Cotton discovered what he clearly thinks is a glaring hypocrisy in the position of that “mob.”

Yale was named after a notorious slave trader.
If the liberal mob wants to destroy Mount Rushmore, when will they rise up
to change the name of Yale?
— Tom Cotton (@TomCottonAR) July 2, 2020

It's extremely unlikely that Yale will change its name, but the idea became a bit less unthinkable when Princeton University president Christopher Eisgruber announced that the college would remove Woodrow Wilson's name from its School of Public and International Affairs.

Activists at Princeton had been pushing the idea for years, but the rapidly shifting political environment finally caused the administration to concede. As President Eisgruber acknowledged, Wilson segregated the civil service after it had been integrated for decades. His "racism was significant and consequential even by the standards of his own time."

So, should Yale change its name, as Tom Cotton so helpfully suggests? And if so, what should be its new name?

The median family income of an incoming Yale student is almost \$200,000 a year. Sixty-nine percent of those students hail from the wealthiest 20 percent of US society. Only 2.1 percent come from the poorest 20 percent. Lists of the university's notable alumni include a rogues' gallery of corporate CEOs, war criminals like Dick Cheney and the Bushes, judges who serve the interests of the 1 percent, and pro-business politicians.

The main reason that Yale won't change its name is that the prestige associated with the moniker provides too much valuable social capital for its graduates. In other words, Yale functions to enhance the preexisting advantages of its well-off students and train the next generation of men and women who will preside over a deeply unequal society.

In a sense, it's only appropriate that the university bears the name of a monster who profited off of a previous form of injustice. Similarly, the Wilson School at Princeton is an elite institution that saw Samuel Alito, Judith Miller, and David Petraeus pass through its doors. The school bearing the name of the president who segregated the civil service and jailed Eugene V. Debs for his opposition to World War I is just truth in advertising.

Even so, it's a positive sign that Wilson's name is going to be dropped. And

Yale should change its name too. Specifically, it should change its name to UConn New Haven.

While running for president, Bernie Sanders popularized the demand that tuition should be abolished at public universities. That's a very good idea. But what about private universities like Yale and Princeton?

If tuition were scrapped at public universities but private universities were kept private, it could actually exacerbate the gap between the two tiers of American higher education. Universities that relied entirely on state funding would be less able to compete for prestigious faculty members.

Private universities would feel less pressure to give generous scholarships to poor students if those students could go elsewhere for free. And with a much larger percentage of Americans from working-class backgrounds continuing their educations past high school, merely having a college degree would offer even less value on the labor market than it does now. This would give middle-class strivers an extra incentive to send their children to more prestigious private schools.

Why do Ivy League colleges exist at all? What social function do they serve? If the answer is that they help give their graduates the aura of membership in an elite club that connects them to many of the richest and most powerful people in the country, why would a society that claims to care about equality of opportunity or justice tolerate their continued existence? On the other hand, to the extent that the Ivies provide their students with a uniquely valuable educational experience, why would we want to treat such an experience as a commodity to be sold at exorbitant prices?

Of course, if Yale became UConn New Haven and Princeton was absorbed into New Jersey's state university system as Rutgers Princeton, and if their massive endowments were redistributed to more important social purposes, and if tuition were abolished at each, these institutions could no longer claim to offer a particularly "unique" educational experience.

Under the Sanders plan, tuition at all public universities would be paid for with a modest federal tax on Wall Street transactions. Presumably, universities with exalted histories couldn't ask for a greater share of these funds simply because of their formerly rarefied status. State governments might choose to supplement

the federal money, but it's unlikely that any proposal to give the New Haven branch of UConn more funding than other campuses would be a political winner.

Deprived of the ability to soak the parents of wealthy students with \$50,000 tuition bills, UConn New Haven wouldn't be able to offer famous professors higher salaries than UConn Hartford or UConn Storrs. And teaching at UConn New Haven would be no more prestigious than working at the other sites. Over time, the educational experience at the various branches of the University of Connecticut would start to become more equal. And that would be progress.

We already live in a savagely unequal society. Educational institutions that perpetuate and deepen that inequality don't need to exist.

Ben Burgis is a philosophy professor and the author of *Give Them An Argument: Logic for the Left*. He does a segment called "The Debunk" every week on *The Michael Brooks Show*.

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Netherlands Sees No Role for Gender Marker on ID Documents

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The Dutch flag flies at the parliament in The Hague, Netherlands, March 16, 2017. © 2017 Daniel Reinhardt/picture-alliance/dpa/AP Images

The Dutch government will no longer include gender markers on national identification documents (IDs) in the next five years, a move that balances the potential harms – such as harassment, discrimination, and violence – that requiring people to declare gender on documents poses against whether there is any justification for publishing a person's legal gender.

Activists around the world have long pushed for simpler and more transparent procedures to allow transgender people to change the “female” or “male” gender marker on their documents. Some – now including in the Netherlands – have called for removing gender markers from IDs altogether. The move to remove gender markers is in part based on recognition that they do not accommodate non-binary people and that even rights-respecting legal gender recognition procedures impose burdens on trans people to proactively change their gender markers.

International legal thinking is evolving.

In 2006, global experts drafted the Yogyakarta Principles, a codification of international human rights standards related to sexual orientation and gender

identity. A decade later, they updated their call for barrier-free legal recognition of gender to recommend that states “end the registration of the sex and gender of the person in identity documents such as birth certificates, identification cards, passports, and driver licenses, and as part of their legal personality.”

The United Nations Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity said in 2018 that “Legal systems must, on an ongoing basis, carefully review the reasoning behind the gathering and exhibition of certain data” expressing “significant doubts as to the real need for the pervasive exhibition of gender markers in official and non-official documentation.”

There is precedent for removing information from IDs, as not relevant to the purpose of the document. Many countries have removed personal characteristics such as race, religion, or marital status. The primary purpose of an identity document is to ensure that the person presenting the ID is who they say they are. Race or gender markers do not create additional clarity.

The Netherlands’ decision puts into sharp focus the question whether gender markers on ID documents are redundant and potentially harmful. For those in the Netherlands at least, when implemented, the move means citizens will no longer be required to carry documents displaying unnecessary information that for some could invite harm.

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There's No Such Thing as the “National Interest”

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US president Donald Trump takes part in a welcoming ceremony with China's president, Xi Jinping, in 2017. Thomas Peter-Pool / Getty

Whether you were sitting in an international relations class or listening to a mainstream politician expound on some foreign policy issue, you've probably heard that countries have "national interests." They pursue them, they defend them, and sometimes they apparently do things that undermine them. The United States, it seems, has vital interests in the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific, and pretty much everywhere else on earth.

In discussions about US foreign policy — especially debates about how to make it less terrible — references to these mysterious interests are rarely far behind. Just this week, *Defense News* reporter David B. Larter claimed in a Twitter

thread that the United States is still in Iraq simply because “we have core interests there.” He continued with a dire zero-sum calculation: “It’s that or we leave it to Iran and Russia to run it.”

Not to pick on Larter, but his use of “we” is emblematic of the way “national interests” are typically invoked in these discussions. Interests are presented as shared *faits accomplis* — objectives that are self-evident, inevitable, even natural. And as the descriptor “national” implies, they’re also supposedly beneficial to the country as a whole.

It’s an easy way to short-circuit debate: “Oh, you think we should leave the Middle East? Well what about *our interests* there?” The pressure is then on the critic to rebut the establishment pundit or politician on their own terms, by developing detailed policy proposals that address every possible objection to a clearly sensible idea. Meanwhile, the question of whether such interests are legitimate in the first place is conveniently sidestepped.

This type of framing is a powerful ideological move, but it’s also a revealing one. Because clearly these interests came from somewhere. They didn’t appear fully grown from the head of Zeus. One only has to ask very basic questions — Who is this “we”? When did we agree to these? Who benefits? — to start cracking the whole edifice.

The United States’ national interests aren’t the result of mass consensus. We haven’t held a referendum on foreign policy. No one asked if I wanted to spend a portion of my yearly taxes supporting eight hundred military bases abroad and a \$1.25 trillion annual national security budget. Sure, I can write my congressperson and tell them I oppose such things, but it’s safe to say that contractor dollars are likely to have more of an impact on my rep.

No, “our” interests are largely the product of entrenched power structures, many of them highly insulated from democratic oversight. The lumbering momentum of the Pentagon, the rapacious profiteering of the war industry, the quiet tyranny of Washington lobbyists, the cynical votes of captured politicians — all of these crystallize into something called a “national interest.” Are there internal debates between these forces? Do they shift or come into conflict occasionally? Of course. But ultimately, ordinary people have very little say in the matter. The “national interest” is in fact a ruling-class interest.

This state of affairs isn't exclusive to the United States. Other countries have their own "national interests" that are the product of powerful political-economic forces. In China, the techno-authoritarian Communist Party bureaucracy (with the dictatorial Xi Jinping at its head) plays an outsize role.

Russia, Iran, North Korea — pick any bogeyman you like — have their own variants, too. Sometimes these states even seem to acknowledge internal struggles about their national interests. After the Hanoi summit, DPRK vice foreign minister Choe Son-hui claimed Kim Jong Un took a big risk negotiating because "our military and munitions industry" opposed giving the Americans any concessions.

Seeing through the mystification of "national interests" is particularly important right now because we are told again and again that the world is entering a new age of great power conflict. Even liberals who abhor the anti-Asian xenophobia of the Trump administration appear to endorse increased confrontation with China. The consensus in Washington holds that the United States and China are headed for a new cold war, in part because their national interests are necessarily opposed.

But when we see those interests as products of each country's ruling class, rather than the people themselves, the situation looks less like a conflict between great powers and more like petty but dangerous squabbling between two national ruling elites. The "interests" of the United States and China aren't collective pursuits. They're prescriptions imposed on us from above — and highly risky ones, at that.

During the fraught debates about offshoring in the 1990s and 2000s, leftists and pro-labor liberals often pointed out that the American and Chinese working classes had more in common with each other than with their respective ruling classes. This remains an economic truism — but today we should remember that it also applies to the geopolitical sphere. Chinese and American workers should be working together to check their ruling classes' drive toward virulent nationalism and military conflict. They want a new cold war — not us.

This internationalist perspective also serves as a subtle rebuke to the anti-imperialism of fools, which carries water for repressive governments simply because they buck the United States on the international stage. We can and should critique US imperialism without falling prey to the ideology of a

competitor state's ruling class.

A wise man once noted, “The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas.” I’d say the notion of a national interest qualifies, wherever it’s asserted.

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