ISSUE NO. 01
APRIL 2021

BURNING ROSE

NEWSLETTER OF THE YOUNG DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA AT NORTHEASTERN

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BURNING ROSE

About YDSA Northeastern

Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is the largest socialist organization in America, and YDSA is its youth & campus wing. DSA has over 92,000 members, including Congresswomen Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez & Rashida Tlaib. As socialists, we believe that the economy should be run democratically by workers, the U.S. imperial empire must be dismantled globally, and that the liberation of all oppressed peoples requires the abolition of capitalism. We can only achieve these goals through unifying the working class through our common struggle. YDSA Northeastern is led by a democratically elected Central Committee, which establishes chapter priorities, organizes meetings, manages funds, and ensures that the chapter grows and develops in healthy ways. YDSA Northeastern began as Huskies for Bernie, where countless Northeastern students volunteered for Bernie Sanders' 2020 presidential campaign. After Sanders dropped out of the presidential race in April 2020, Huskies for Bernie's most active volunteers transitioned their socialist efforts to form YDSA Northeastern. Since its creation in May 2020, YDSA Northeastern has amassed over 200 members, and has become one of the most active political groups on campus. At YDSA Northeastern, we campaign for socialist politicians, canvas with local tenants unions, work to effect change at Northeastern, and publish socialist articles written for our magazine, Burning Rose. Our Northeastern efforts include our pass/fail campaign in Fall 2020, our Spring 2020 campaigns to reduce meal plan prices and T-fares, and our fight against the construction of private luxury housing at Northeastern. In the future, we hope to recruit more Northeastern students to organize towards our common goal of socialism.

Editor in Chief
Lina Petronino

Head Designer
Kimmy Curry

YDSA NEU Chair
Jordan Buchman

Communications Director, Comms. Working Group Chair
Joshua Sisman

Editors
Izze Kilgariff
Elana Lane
Lina Petronino
Deanna Schwartz

Designers/ Illustrators
Kimmy Curry
Taylie Kawakami
Elana Lane
Joshua Sisman

Writers
Jordan Buchman
Noah Colbert
Maya Harel
Lina Petronino
Joshua Sisman

Word Search

S L E V N B O R G A N I Z E B S C B
O S R G A R U I P O W E R Y G T A O
L O E H T G C R W K V B N A T R N U
I C J B I C B M N N N W U O E I V R
D I V X O B D T N I P B V M N K A G
A A T D N E X P U U N I O N G E S E
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Y M S N Z T E N A N T S Z R S J G I
W J A L E B A N K I N G Z M X E L E
C B E L E C T I O N Y B L G E Q J Z

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

BANKING
BOURGEOISIE
BURNING ROSE
CANVASSING
CLASS STRUGGLE
ELECTION
ENGELS
GBTU
LABOR
MARX
NATIONALIZE
ORGANIZE
POWER
SOCIALISM
SOLIDARITY
STRIKE
TENANTS
UNION
YDSA

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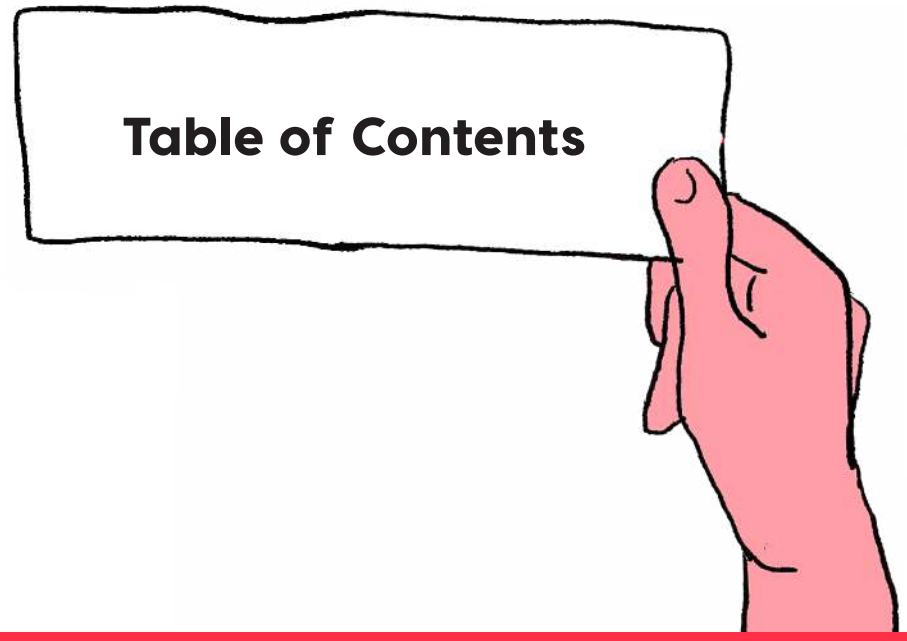

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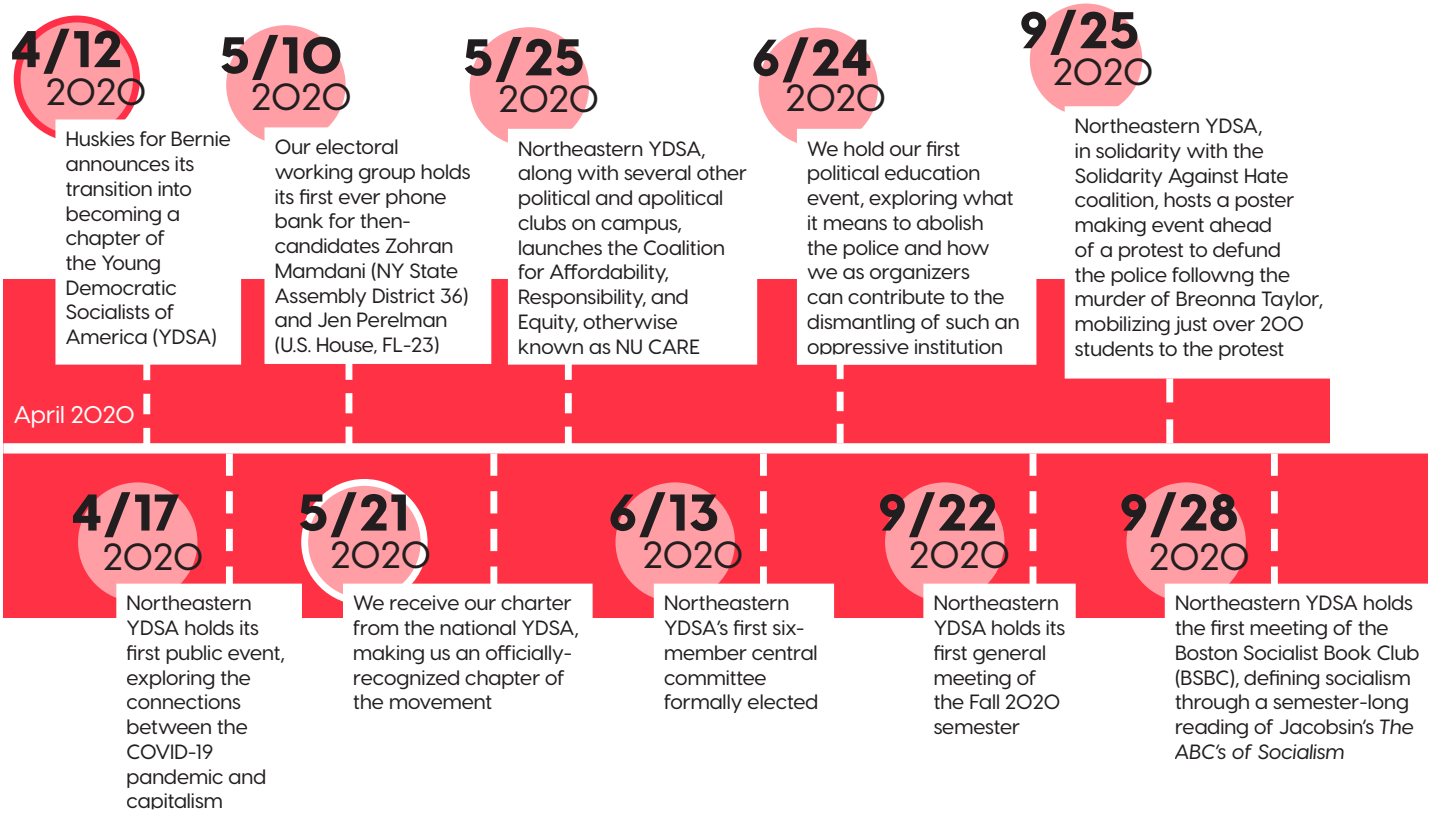
Why DSA Matters

Graphics by Elana Lane
Written by Jordan Buchman

By any reasonable definition, the American left did not exist before 2015. The Occupy movement had fizzled out, leaving a smattering of disconnected local groups across the country. The once vibrant Socialist and Communist parties of the early 20th century had been hollowed out by decades of repression and infighting, leaving behind empty shells and a trail of sects more focused on internecine strife than organizing. The storied CIO of old no longer existed and union density was at its lowest point in decades. The dual faces of left electoralism were the Green Party, regarded more as a joke than a serious effort, and a constellation of progressive NGOs more focused on extracting concessions from moderate Democrats than building any real power of their own. The bright star of the socialist left was Kshama Sawant, a single Seattle City Councillor elected by Socialist Alternative.

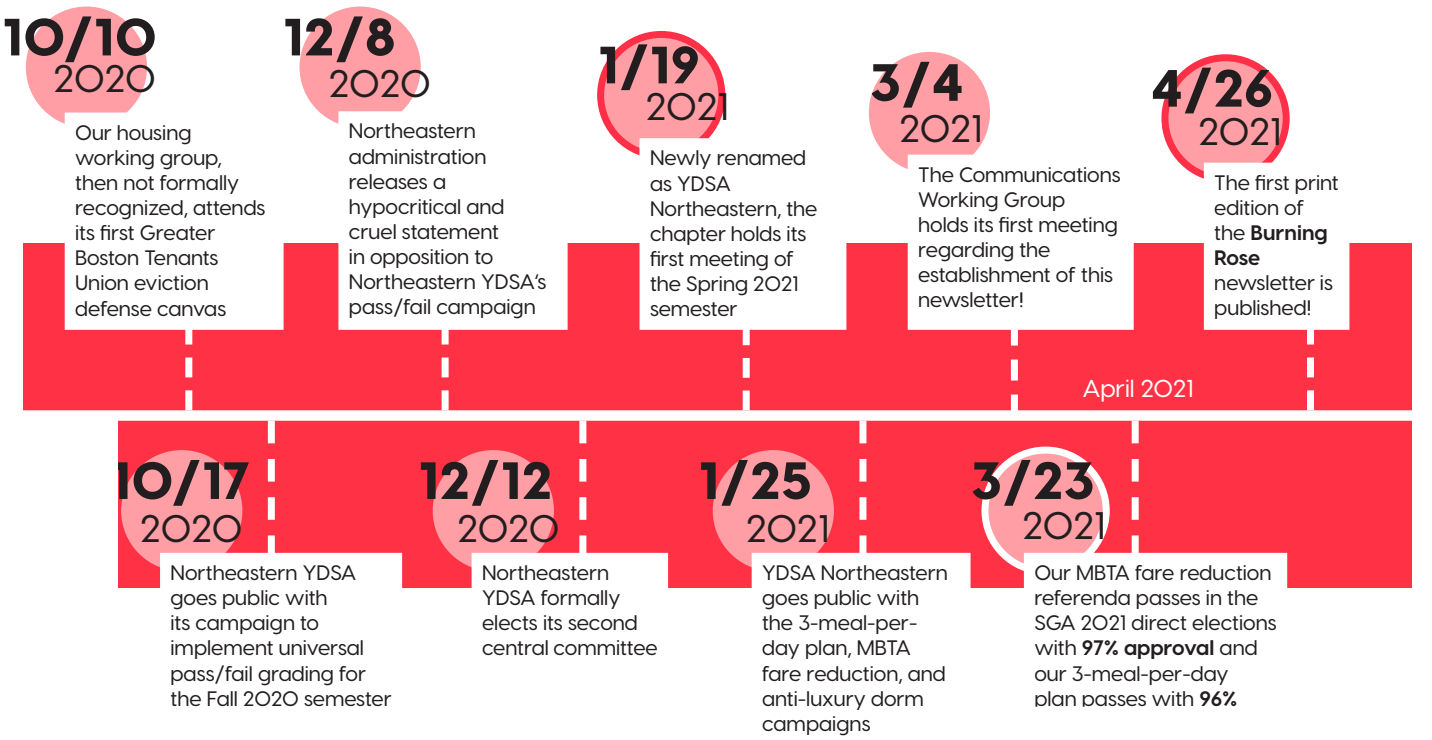
But that was then. Fast forward six years—through Bernie 2016 and Bernie 2020, the teachers strike wave, BLM, and AOC. Through President Trump, airport protests, and police crackdowns. Through tenants unions, mutual aid networks, and ballot initiatives. It doesn't take a visionary to realize that things have changed since the lean days. But is the left of 2021 really in better shape than it was in the 2010s? Well, yes and no. Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) has grown ten-fold, with dozens of thriving chapters across the country doing work that has concrete outcomes. The Chicago City Council and New York State Assembly have full-fledged socialist caucuses, and hundreds of DSA members are in elected office at all levels of government. Socialism is both more popular now than it's been in decades and doesn't appear to show any signs of losing momentum. But it's not all positive: union density remains perilously low, DSA (although



now the largest socialist organization in United States history) still pales in comparison to even the Communist Party at the height of its power, moderates maintain a strong grip on the Democratic Party, and any glimpse of a mass working-class party on the horizon is overshadowed by the looming threat of climate change. And given the relative success of groups like Sunrise Movement and Justice Democrats, one wouldn't be amiss to question the value of organizing as a socialist rather than focusing on electing and pressuring solid progressives to improve our government.

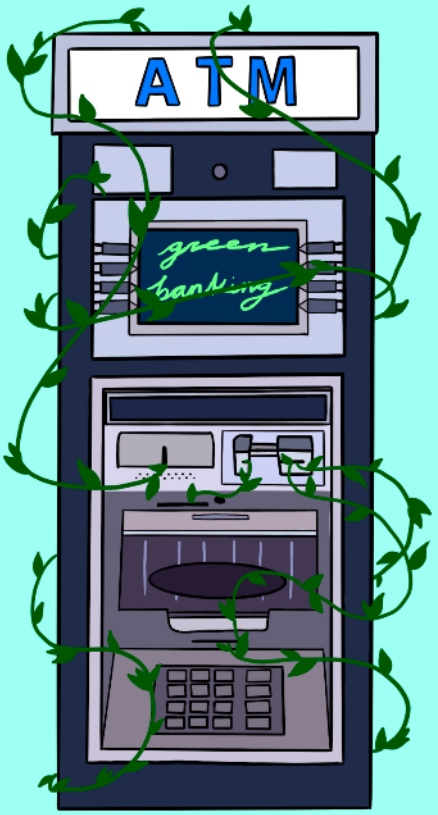
Of course, that isn't the goal for many of us. Instead, each victory, each tenant organized, each strike won, each socialist elected, each and every concession we claw from the capitalist class is not an end of itself, but a small step in our collective effort towards socialism. More than merely informing our strategy, this outlook does something to us. Call it hope or call it solidarity, there's something deeply transformative about organizing as a socialist: a thread that ties each and every one of us not just to each other, but to the striking miners of Harlan County, grape pickers in the Central Valley, and Amazon workers in Bessemer. Organizing as a socialist—whether you're standing with hospital workers striking for higher pay or out on the streets demanding we defund the police—sweeps you into a fight that has been ongoing for hundreds of years: the fight between the working class and the capitalist class.

That's why I'm proud to be a DSA member. Not just because of what we've accomplished, but because of what we can accomplish. Because in every door we knock with the Greater Boston Tenants Union, every call we make for Eve Seitchik, and every new organizer we involve lies the seeds of a struggle that inextricably links workers across the world. Because for better or worse, we're the only chance we have.



Through a People's Bank, We Can Pay for the Green New Deal

The great question that progressive policies face is always: "How will we pay for it?"



Illustrated by Taylie Kawakami
Written by Joshua Sisman

Across the nation, hundreds of thousands of climate activists participated in the September climate strike in a series of protests that drew over 7.6 million people across the planet. In the first wave of protests, an estimated 537,000 activists went to the streets in the United States demanding bold and transformative climate policy and a total divestment from fossil fuels. By no fault of their own, however, all of these activists were complicit in supporting the very industry that they sought to bring down. Whether you have funds directly held by banks—such as Wells Fargo, JP Morgan Chase, or Bank of America—or are simply a tax paying resident of the United States, your money has been used to support nearly $2 trillion worth of fossil fuel investments.

For context, a standard method of revenue generation for banks is the loaning of deposits (that can mean your wages, salary, gifts, savings, etc.), meaning that one's bank can support a number of projects through loans. Just like any individual, government entities may also hold

their assets and revenues in a private bank. Privy to this, a coalition of activists in Seattle successfully pressured the city to transfer $3 billion in assets to a bank more "socially conscious" than Wells Fargo, only for the city to find that there was no tangible alternative. Seattle promptly renewed its contract with Wells Fargo.

If climate activists truly desire to deliver transformative and just climate policy, a total divestment from private banks is necessary. Private banks make meaningful initiatives—such as green public housing and mass public transit—prohibitively expensive due to ludicrously high interest rates. To a private bank beholden to its shareholders, fossil fuel projects present a much more immediate return on investment than a public works project would. This explains why U.S. based banks provided over $3.7 billion in loans to the Dakota Access Pipeline project while continuing to charge ludicrously high interest rates to public infrastructure projects. If any government, state, city or other locality is to realistically fund infrastructure projects, it is important that the profit motive of private industry is stripped from the process through a system of public banking.

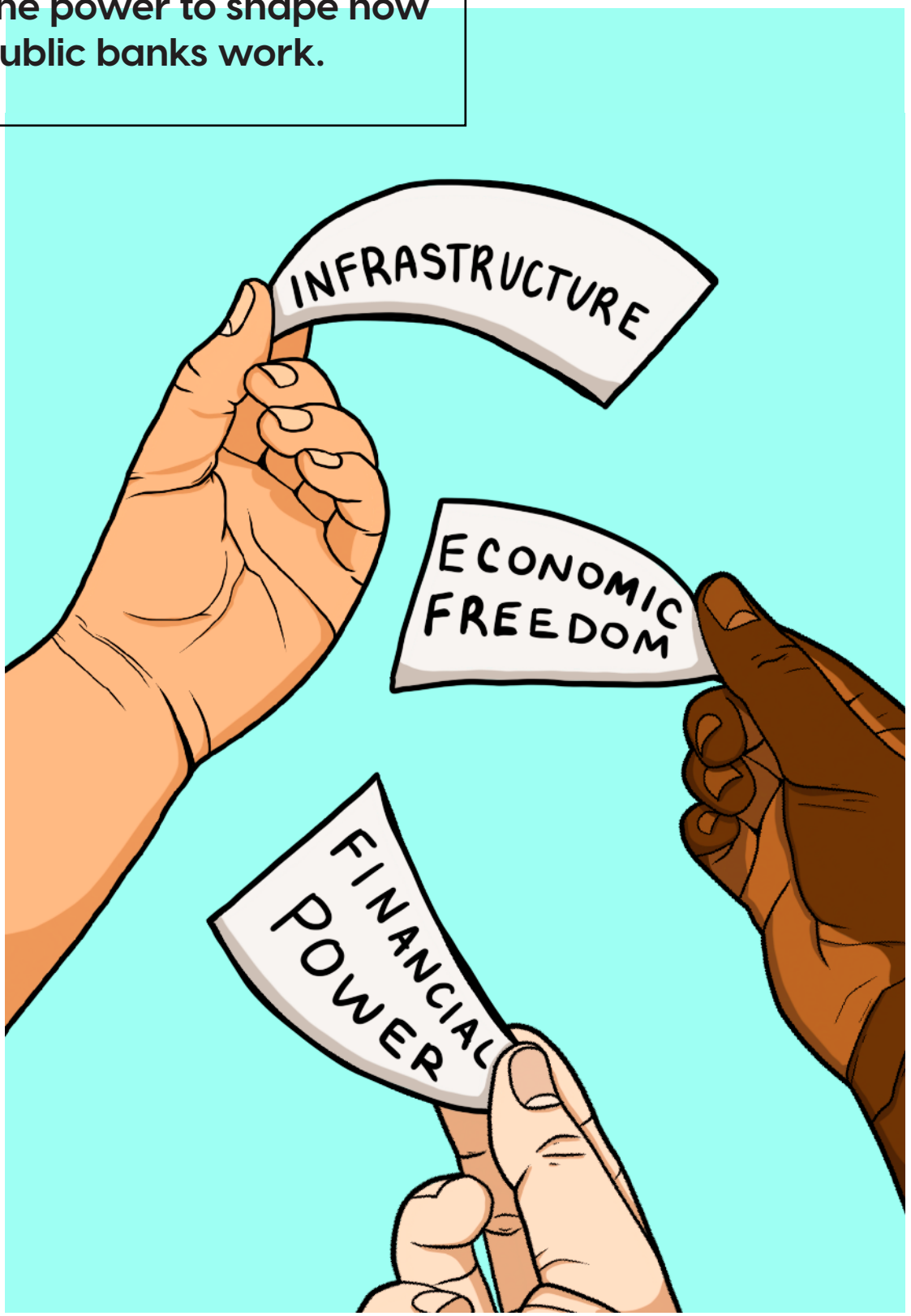
Such a system does not exist without significant precedence. The New Deal—a collection of some of the largest economic recovery projects in U.S. history, as well as the clear forerunner of the Green New Deal—was financed by the publicly owned Reconstruction Finance Corporation (R.F.C.). Founded in 1932, the R.F.C. would go on to support an inflation-adjusted amount of roughly $470 billion on economic recovery projects over two and half decades. In Germany, the nationally owned

Whether you have funds directly held by banks, or are simply a tax paying resident of the United States, your money has been used to support nearly $2 trillion worth of fossil fuel investments.

Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau bank (KfW) has funded the building and refurbishment of over 4 million energy-efficient homes while creating over 320,000 jobs per year in the process.

If crafted properly, the creation of a public bank would provide not only a viable means to financing massive infrastructure projects like the Green New Deal, but also hand financial and institutional power directly back to the people. In Costa Rica, the Banco Popular established the Assembly of Working Men and Women. The 290-member assembly—which requires 50% of its representatives to be women—is considered to be the highest and most democratic decision-making platform of a bank in existence, with workers across ten social and economic sectors participating. In a reversal of standard power structures, Banco Popular's board of directors is composed of three government officials and four assembly members with its power delineated from above by the assembly, not below.

It is the local community that has the power to shape how the public banks work.



A common criticism of public banks is that global private capital is too large to compete with and that there is not enough capital to seed an effective public alternative. However, the reality of global capital is that $38 trillion (roughly 48% of global GDP) is publicly held across almost 700 already established public banks. The aforementioned Banco Popular derives its seed funds from a 1.5% wage tax, 1.25% of which is transferred into a pension fund, much like social security. This format, which includes localized democratic leadership branches for local projects and concerns, has convincingly shown that any government body has the power to be led by the people, not for-profit global finance interests.

A key and unique advantage enjoyed by communities in the United States is that the public banks do not yet exist. As activists and local electeds push towards public banking, it is the local community—not global capital interests or deep-pocketed politicians—that has the power to shape how their public banks work. For the more than 40 million Americans whose basic checking, savings, and low interest loan services are not available to, localized and democratized public banking would invigorate economic activity and security. Unbanked and underbanked Americans, who are disproportionately people of color and/or LGBTQ+, could be freed from the shackles of the predatory loan industry. These direct tax dollars would then be put towards building climate friendly infrastructure and reconciling decades of environmental racism.

Fortunately, the concept of public banking is not just a low-key idea bouncing around left-wing think tanks. Across the nation, legislation and local initiatives are popping up and pushing to divest from the private system of capital. After years of hard fought activism, California's 2019 Assembly Bill 857 finally legalized public banking and empowered localities to implement community written and approved bank charters. At the federal level, DSA members Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rep. Rashida Tlaib have introduced legislation in the spirit of the Green New Deal that not only emulates the California law, but goes a step further in explicitly prohibiting public banks from investing in and collaborating with the fossil fuel industry. Though an under-discussed issue, the topic of public banking is certainly gaining steam. Mass actions such as the climate strike are certainly beneficial to public awareness, though such actions should not and cannot be the end. The framework and precedent has been set. As members of the community who are tied directly to the fossil fuel industry, it is our responsibility to ensure the return of financial power to our communities.

Evicted, Suffering, and Starving:

The Cycle of Discrimination Against Undocumented Tenants in Boston

Illustrated by Taylie Kawakami
Written by Lina Petronino

(For the purpose of security, the undocumented tenant is referred to under the pseudonym of "Lucy". Without the veil of anonymity, Lucy fears she could be deported.)

The October chill freezes Lucy to her core. She never liked the cold—in her native country of Honduras, the weather never dipped below 70 degrees—but this winter is the coldest she's ever known. It's not the frigid climate that gives her goosebumps, it's the fear of homelessness. With the end of Boston's eviction moratorium nearing on Oct. 17, Lucy can't help but shiver.

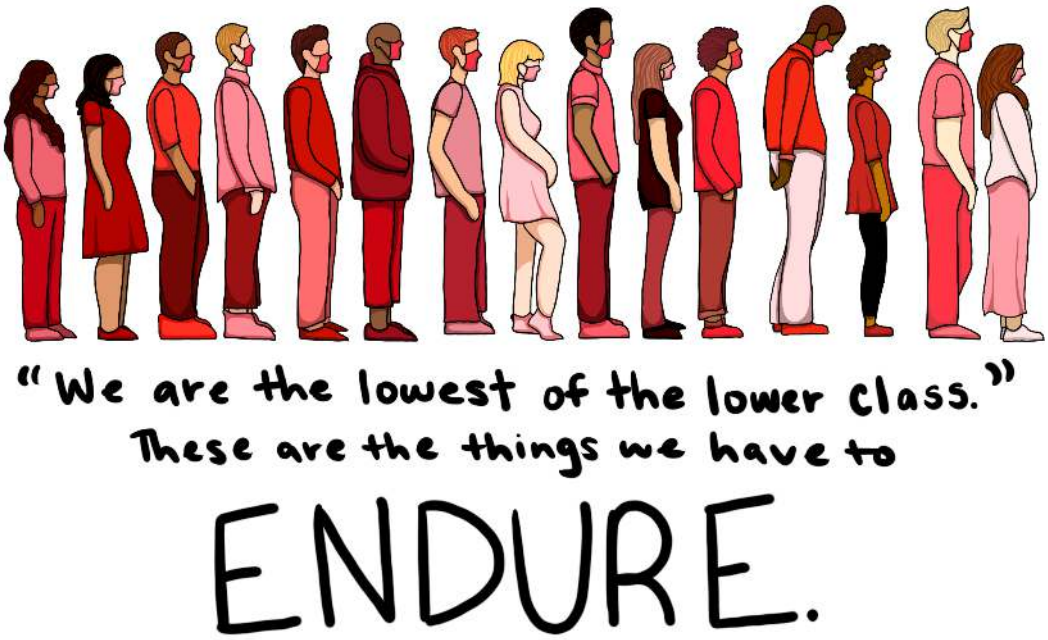
Lucy, an undocumented immigrant, worked as a factory worker until COVID-19 swept her job out from under her feet. Her husband lost his job of 15 years, and their working children lost their jobs too. They couldn't apply for unemployment insurance either: their undocumented status bars them from any aid. With no money or safety net to fall back on, Lucy scrambled for solutions. Though Boston's eviction moratorium protected unemployed tenants from eviction for six months, by the beginning of November Lucy was left to fend for herself.

Wrought with anxiety, she couldn't bring herself to sleep. A prisoner to her insomnia, she would watch the night sky bleed into dawn. "The emotional impact has hurt us too, even if we don't have the disease," she said. "It's really attacked us: stress, anxiety. It's a desperate situation."

She began paying rent with what little savings she and her husband had saved. Within two months, the well had run dry. Lucy had never felt more helpless. "I've lived in this country for 20 years and I've never asked for help," she said. She always paid her rent and taxes, but now she couldn't even afford food to eat.

Every day, Lucy and her family bent over on their stomachs to dull their hunger pains. They rose in the early morning to wait in foodlines, their teeth chittering. "People who have money don't know what it's like to endure hunger," Lucy said. "We are the lowest of the lower class. These are things that we have to endure."

Citing her family's unemployment, Lucy pleaded with her landlord for mercy. He demanded her rent anyway.



Thankfully, Boston's eviction moratorium began before Lucy's landlord could try to evict her. In these six months of safety, Lucy and her family applied for Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), a statewide rental assistance program that doesn't discriminate against undocumented immigrants.

With this money—approximately $4,000—Lucy paid her rent after the moratorium ended. Even so, it wasn't enough to sustain her and her family for long. To assuage the economic pressure, Lucy and her husband picked up small jobs. Whenever it snowed, Lucy's husband shoveled the city sidewalks. Lucy cleaned houses, even though it didn't pay very well. They seldom earned anything over the minimum wage ($13.50 an hour).

Among Boston's immigrant community, stories like Lucy's are not uncommon. The unemployment crisis disproportionately affects immigrants of color: the odds are systemically stacked against them. In a survey conducted by the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy coalition (MIRA), 76% of immigrant households reported experiencing some form of job loss since the pandemic. For undocumented households, the statistic surges to 83%.

The case is the same for food insecurity: 59% of the respondents revealed that they didn't have enough food to eat. Within the undocumented community, the number jumps to 78%.

76% of immigrant households reported experiencing some form of job loss since the pandemic.

After her unemployment, Lucy found solace in City Life/Vida Urbana (CLVU), an organization that fights for racial and economic justice in Boston. Though she originally attended the group's weekly Zoom meetings for legal consultation, she stayed for the sense of community it provided.

CLVU's educational meetings taught Lucy her tenant rights: that only a judge can evict you and that undocumented tenants are offered the same rights as documented tenants. Above all else, CLVU proved to Lucy that she was not alone in her struggle. She saw tenants, both undocumented and documented, struggling with unemployment and food insecurity. Their shared experiences, though awful, reaffirmed to Lucy that her situation was no fault of her own, but of systemic discrimination.

Systemic discrimination against undocumented immigrants manifests in tenant discrimination, explains Joey Michalakes, a Greater Boston Legal Services lawyer. Michalakes works in tandem with City Life/Vida Urbana for their legal education meetings, which undocumented tenants like Lucy sit in on. Michalakes, who has represented tenants in court for five years, told of his undocumented clients' experiences with discrimination.

His undocumented clients frequently reportthat they have been "threatened on the basis [of undocumentation], including and especially if they do things like resist a rent increase, call to complain about bad conditions, or fall behind on rent." This phenomenon does not surprise him anymore, he said.

An undocumented tenant's biggest fear is the threat of deportation. Landlords prey upon this fear through intimidation tactics, both explicit and veiled: "If you call inspectional services, I will call ICE" or "I can make things happen to you." In a more passive approach, landlords will evict undocumented tenants by playing into power dynamics: "It's better to work it out. You don't have status. You don't want to go to court. Why would you make the report?" In many instances, undocumented tenants will move out instead of going to court.

Oftentimes, undocumented tenants allow these threats and abuses to go under the radar. Michalakes refers to this phenomenon as the 'no quiero problemas' (I don't want problems) dilemma. The lawyer explained, "they don't report bad conditions for many years because they assume that if they do, bad things will happen to them." Even if the landlord leaves undocumented tenants with rodent infestations, or without electricity or running water, the tenants will grit and bear it. And thus, the cycle of discrimination against undocumented tenants continues.

Lucy and her husband have remained jobless for over a year. Though she still fears the threat of eviction, her involvement with City Life/Vida Urbana has given her hope for the future.

"The emotional impact has hurt us too, even if we don't have the disease,"

SGA Must Repeal the IHRA

Illustrated by Taylie Kawakami
Written by Noah Colbert

Last November, the Northeastern Student Government Association (SGA) passed a resolution condemning anti-Semitism in a form similar to previous resolutions condemning racism and white supremacy. But unlike other SGA resolutions that are largely performative and accomplish nothing, the passage of this one was misguided and actively destructive, for it adopted the controversial IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) definition of antisemitism.

Of course, one would not know just how controversial it is based on the word of Senator Josh Glickman, who claimed the resolution, which was accompanied by a petition signed by less than 300 Jewish students, represented "the unanimous backing of the Jewish community." Even so, the resolution acknowledges that the Northeastern Jewish community numbers nearly 1,200 students. The backing Glickman speaks of is a far cry from "unanimous."

The IHRA definition has been rejected by Jewish organizations IfNotNow and Jewish Voices for Peace, which recognize it as a political tool for stifling criticism of Israel. Greater Boston Area Judaism On Our Own Terms recently published an op-ed in the Huntington News that criticizes Northeastern Hillel's Standards of Partnership, which heavily promote IHRA. The very man who drafted it, Kenneth Stern, stated "it was never intended to be a campus hate speech code." But SGA senators were not made aware of any of this when voting; they were simply led to believe that any opposition, any questioning of the motives of the bill sponsors, was secret bigotry.

But with this context in mind, our scorn should primarily be directed towards the definition in question. The IHRA working definition reads as follows:
"Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

Confused? Don't be. The vagueness is intentional: one cannot walk away with a better understanding of anti-Semitism after having read this definition. Considering the fact that the SGA resolution criticizes a past condemnation of white supremacy for not delineating its component of anti-Semitism, it's strange to see this ambiguity replicated. The IHRA definition does nothing to recognize how antisemitism is intrinsically linked with racism and white supremacy.

The only form of speech the IHRA definition is concerned with is that surrounding Israel. When it comes to that, the utmost care is taken to protect the country from even the slightest of critique. Out of the eleven examples of anti-Semitism the definition provides, seven of them mention Israel. Because the working definition is so nebulous, it allows its the examples to do the heavy lifting of determining what is or isn't anti-Semitic. Even if one does not wish to be critical of Israel, one should reject a definition that diminishes a plague that faces 7.1 million Americans to criticism of a foreign state.

Rather, the definition is intended to be used as a weapon against criticism of Israel and to silence pro-Palestinian activism and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. But don't take our word for it (or that of the numerous Jewish organizations that have spoken out against it). Again, we can appeal to the words of the definition's author, decrying its adoption by the Trump administration: "This order is an attack on academic freedom and free speech, and will harm not only pro-Palestinian advocates, but also Jewish students and faculty."

It is worth considering how unique and odious such a definition is. There is not one other definition of racism against a particular group that is codified in Title VI law, as Donald Trump's 2019 executive order created. Anti-Black racism, anti-Asian racism, and Islamophobia have no working definitions recognized by the government.

One example IHRA gives is "denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." The inclusion of this example makes it clear that under the IHRA, all anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism—an absurd proposition. Though the United Nations recognizes that all people have the right to self-determination, it has never stated that this equates to statehood and manufactured political hegemony. If it had, we'd see claims that those who do not recognize the legitimacy of Catalonia, Kurdistan or any of the over 60 active secessionist movements are racist.

Zionism holds that there is a unique right to a Jewish state, with a Jewish majority. To maintain this goal, it is acceptable, even necessary, for 20% of its citizens,

Palestinian and Arab-Israelis, to be kept as second class citizens, and for an even larger population to be kept entirely dispossessed, unable to vote or exercise its own self-determination. To be kept under conditions the United Nations has deemed "unlivable," by an occupying power that would like nothing more than to see them "sink into the sea." Interestingly enough, America is familiar with this principle in its own history, through Jim Crow. White supremacists in the South maintained political control where they could not prevail by disenfranchising Black voters through legal and extralegal means. We have no trouble recognizing this practice as racist and wrong. Yet under the IHRA definition, it is anti-Semitic to apply this same logic to the Israeli occupation and apartheid.

The calculus that holds that self-determination for Jews can only mean the right to a state that privileges them is flawed. All people have the right to determine their own identity, but Zionism is not an identity; it is an ideology that affects more than just Israelis. Palestinians have an equal right to self-determination, but IHRA holds that Israeli supremacy supersedes it.

By making speech surrounding Israel the primary focus of the IHRA definition, the IHRA reveals that it is not interested at all in combating the very real and rising threat of anti-Semitism. It refuses to acknowledge the fact that the greatest threats to the Jewish people come not from the anti-Zionists, but the growing far-right in America and Europe. The adoption of the IHRA definition has done nothing to curb the resurgent far-right in Germany, which is responsible for 90% of anti-Semitic hate crimes.

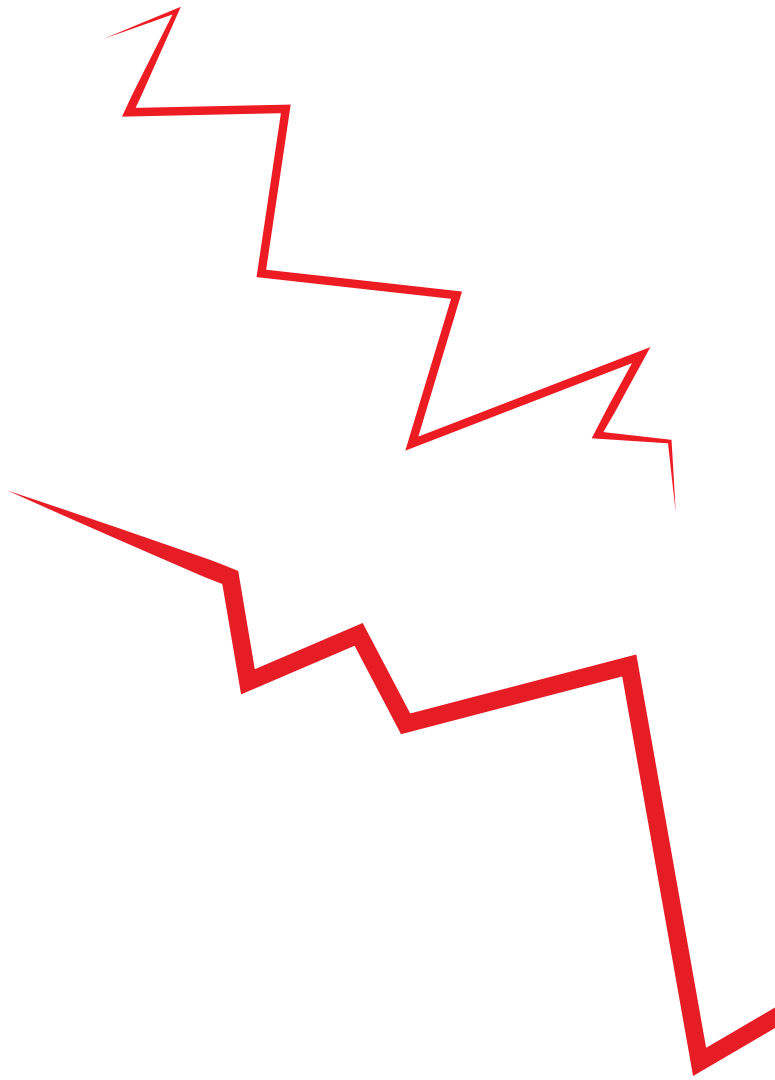
The ridiculousness of equating anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism can be seen in the fact that many anti-

Semites themselves are Zionists! Donald Trump, Viktor Orban and Richard Spencer, all men who have openly telegraphed their anti-Semitism, count themselves as Zionists. This has been so since the beginning of the Zionist movement, as anti-Semites have supported a Jewish state for the explicit reason that they did not like having Jews in their own state.

Contradictingly, under the IHRA definition, these individuals are not classified as anti-Semites. Instead, anyone who opposes violent occupation and settler colonialism that violates our most basic beliefs about democracy is labeled as the real bigot. We should reject any such supposition.

For these reasons, and countless more, the SGA must repeal its resolution adopting the IHRA definition. It was wrong to push it through with minimal student input— in a year where awareness of campus affairs is at an all-time low due to COVID-19— while silencing the voices of the advocates for Palestine the definition is intended to target.

The SGA need not turn its back on the very real problem of anti-Semitism; it can adopt the recently released Jerusalem Declaration, signed by over 200 esteemed scholars on anti-Semitism, which removes the elements of the IHRA definition that are intended to stifle Palestinian voices. But there can be no excuse for maintaining a definition of antisemitism that serves the wishes of the Israel lobby. By repealing this disgraceful resolution, the SGA would take the necessary steps towards creating a campus atmosphere where activism is not only permitted, but encouraged. At the nation's second most "liberal" university, we cannot render advocacy for Palestine as the only exception.



How I Became a Socialist

Illustrated by Taylie Kawakami
Written by Maya Harel

When I was nine years old, I was a cookie-cutter kid. I went to school every day, I jumped rope at the playground during recess, and I annoyed my brother at every possible chance. My mundane life was a product of the area I grew up in: a predominantly white, upper-middle-class town in a quiet New Jersey suburb. Just like every other kid in my town, I would go to school, participate in sports teams, and go to sleepaway camp every summer. Although it was only a two-hour drive from home, my sleepaway camp, Camp Shomria, felt like a separate world. I know it's cheesy, but when I first arrived I immediately knew something was different: Camp Shomria was far from the cookie-cutter mold I had grown to know. Every morning, each age group would be given a task to maintain the culture and atmosphere of the camp. The younger children would water the plants or collect chicken eggs, while older children would clean the bathrooms or pick up trash. Age groups would take turns to help serve food or wash the dishes at every meal, and within each age group all the individual kids' snacks and money would be compiled and shared as a collective. What made this camp different was that it represented something greater than itself: it fueled the camp's daily practices and educational goals. Camp Shomria is part of a worldwide Jewish youth movement called Hashomer Hatzair, which prioritizes education and youth leadership, and holds these pillars at its core. While I became highly critical of a few of the movement's beliefs, such as zionism, I grew to cherish socialism's values and practices. It taught me to willingly share and to contribute to society for the common collective, rather than for my own gain.

A camp where we watched "Bring It Com", a communist spoof of "Bring It On", was probably not what my parents were expecting when they sent me to upstate New York every summer. While they may have expected my counselors to teach us archery or bring us banana boating, we instead sat in circles discussing modern labor unions and the manipulation of second amendment rights. The movement taught me to expand my worldview: I began crafting my own opinion on issues rather than agreeing with the mainstream opinions around me. The gift of perspective made me see the world from an entirely new, socialist lens. Camp Shomria taught me that nothing is as powerful as lived experience, and I still carry the lessons of the camp to this day. I am incredibly lucky to have been introduced to socialist life and education at such a young age. I have been an anti-capitalist since I was thirteen years old. When I revisited camp, I would complain about the invasive nature of advertisements and the unnecessary, but constant, strive for profit. As I grew older, I began to further align with socialist principles: I was drawn to Bernie Sanders' 2016 presidential campaign and its promises to tax the rich and make higher education tuition-free. By sixteen, I had become a dedicated socialist.

Despite my newfound view of politics, I never felt like I could be a socialist publicly. I never wanted to cause any trouble or make waves outside of my camp, so I hid my leftist views to fit in. I would politely agree with my friends and family during political discussions. I pretended to love big Democratic politicians, like Nancy Pelosi and Barack Obama, because I felt I had to keep my true beliefs a secret. But at camp, I could freely express myself.

Through the years, I watched socialism integrate itself into American politics. I felt the echoes of Camp Shomria and its socialist principles when Bernie first ran for president in 2016. When multiple DSA members were elected into American government in 2018, I had hope that socialism could one day take hold in American politics. Slowly but surely, socialism became a credible talking point in political conversations. For once, I saw my political beliefs reflected in mainstream politics. And then, when COVID-19 took hold of the world, I witnessed the largest surge of DSA members in my life: membership swelled from 60,000 to over 90,000 seemingly overnight. It seemed that, in isolation, we could finally take a step away from the world to think critically about our daily lives. As the pandemic exposed government incompetence and systemic oppression on

a grand stage, political beliefs radicalized immensely, giving way to a surge of socialist and communist views. Friends that had once discredited my socialist rhetoric now prompted leftist discussion with me. My friends at home, who were Hillary supporters during the 2016 election, started preaching the necessity of revolution to enact real change.

The popularization of leftism solidified my socialist beliefs and gave me the courage to speak out. Now, at 19, I have found socialist communities that echo the comfort of my camp. In my first year at Northeastern, I joined Huskies for Bernie to volunteer for his 2020 presidential campaign. Through the campaign, I met countless like-minded leftists, who I learned so much from. When Bernie dropped out of the presidential race in April 2020, the most active members of Huskies for Bernie transitioned our socialist efforts to found a new YDSA chapter at Northeastern. Now, in 2021, we are one of the largest and most active political groups on campus. Being able to connect with other leftists outside of Camp Shomria exponentially increased my confidence in my beliefs and allowed me to actualize them. Seeing our chapter and other DSA chapters across the country freely organize has shown that socialist action is possible in everyday life. Through every leftist we campaign for, or every tenants union we canvas for, my DSA comrades and I solidify our socialist vision. I used to think that socialism could only exist in a youth movement-made bubble, but participating in socialist organizations has proven to me that socialism isn't just an ideal, but a tangible goal to work towards.

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SOCIALISM