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USA

Defend DACA and Demand Justice for All Migrants

- News from around the world -

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The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was established by an executive order from President Obama in June 2012. Far from a gift from a sympathetic administration, DACA was a victory won only through the brave and militant actions of undocumented activists who were willing to criticize the devastating immigration policies of a supposedly progressive President, including by occupying Obama campaign offices.

On the morning of Tuesday September 5, a new administration that nobody could mistake as progressive announced the phasing out of the program. The impact of this cruel decision will be widely felt and will bring a renewed threat of deportation to hundreds of thousands of young people, including many key organizers in the movement for migrant justice.

We must fight this racist attack tooth and nail, and fight for the right of all immigrants to live and work freely, regardless of their status or DACA eligibility. But to do this we need to learn the lessons of how DACA and other victories were won to begin with: through the willingness of radical and militant segments of undocumented people, many of them indigenous and/or queer, to challenge politicians of all parties and make the radical demand of #Not1More deportation.

DACA itself, while significant, was never nearly enough. While it granted temporary reprieve to nearly a million undocumented youth, it excluded more than ten million other immigrants, and rewarded only those who fit the “good immigrant” narrative. For every person protected by DACA, five others were deported in the eight years Obama was in office. And, as we're now seeing all too clearly, it was only ever a reprieve even for those included, and not a permanent or stable victory.

Just as militant struggle from below won the victories we've so far seen, so will it be the only way to beat back the attacks from the Trump administration and every future administration, and the only way to win the greater victories we desperately need. As we prepare for a new round of wholly inadequate and half-hearted attempts at Congressional immigration reform proposals, we need to understand clearly that these “solutions” proposed by the ruling class will never be enough, because capitalism itself requires mass labor migration, and mass deportation and enforcement regimes to manage it. Directly (through economic imperialism and imperialist war) or indirectly (through the climate crisis), capitalism is also responsible for the conditions that force migration to begin with. To end the unthinkable violence of this system, we must fight for an end to capitalism itself, while recognizing the important of limited and temporary reforms along the way.

Now is the time to unite and demand an end to all deportations, amnesty and universal rights for all, and a world without borders. An unwavering commitment to these principles and the process of struggling toward them is our best path—perhaps our only path—toward winning and protecting even the limited and short term victories like DACA which grant some relief along the way from the cruelties of capitalism.

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