

Missouri Football Players, Black Students Show the Way!

Abolish the Iowa Board of Regents! No to Cuts in Education! No Downsizing and No Privatization of Public Services!

Organize Mass Worker/Student/Faculty Struggle to Defend Public Education!

Free, Quality Public Education For All!

Republican Iowa Governor Branstad [hates public education](#) and public sector workers, and particularly unionized workers. His latest political stunt is the appointment of J. Bruce Harreld as the new University of Iowa president through Branstad's hand-picked Board of Regents. The search process was obviously a setup from day one, as the University search committee went through the motions and fast-tracked the appointment of Harreld, a career corporate executive who lacks credible academic experience. He fits the bill very well for Branstad, who is [privatizing Medicaid](#) in Iowa. What Harreld will do remains to be seen, but [Harreld says explicitly](#) that the University needs "to shift all of the practices, policies, procedures and culture." This is business-speak for workers, faculty and students getting the shaft. In the context of an education funding shortage and for a University that has been cutting staff and privatizing since the 1990's, Harreld's appointment signals future intransigence. Workers will get it in the neck; and as the quality of education declines, students will discover they have new debts, as tuition and fees will continue to increase to counter the [impending shortfall](#) that Branstad is committed to imposing. Harreld's installation comes in the wake of the [Deloitte fiasco](#), which was a scheme to make cuts, as is the [TIER](#) project.

Harreld's installation can be stopped. But this limited goal will not solve the generalized problem of state university systems operated as private profit machines. To achieve remedies that serve workers, faculties, students and communities, we must **employ the general strike weapon in support of a class struggle political program.** The nation-wide attacks on public education can only be stopped if we take up the method of the Missouri football players and shut it down in a general strike for open admissions and free tuition as part of a nation-wide campaign that unites Black Lives Matter, the struggle of the low-wage and precarious workers and the defense of immigrants and women. **The historic international program of the student movement has been for free, quality public education for all, with a student stipend, for academic freedom and guaranteed work upon graduation.**

This school year marks the eighth anniversary of the generalized crisis of the capitalist system. This is what the kept bourgeois press calls the "Great Recession of 2008-2009." But we notice that the cuts go on and the recovery does not include rehiring what are now long-term unemployed. The mushrooming growth of the precariat who exist at a subsistence or lower rate of pay is counted as a reduced unemployment statistic. College students graduate with overwhelming debt and few job prospects. The full-time working population has seen their wage package stagnate while their benefits and hours have

been under continuous attack. Thus adjunct faculty finds they have greater workloads for less pay and many suddenly find themselves unemployed. This is the future in store for many university workers in Harreld's promised program of changes.

Mass Outrage at Board of Regents over the Harreld Appointment

Harreld's appointment has set off a series of protests as workers, faculty, students and the community have expressed outrage at this blatant attack on the University and public education.

The Harreld appointment even made [national news](#). Both the Faculty Senate and Student Senate at the UI [condemned the appointment](#). The UI Staff Council, which "represents" the unorganized workers and is little better than an appendage of the University administration and a company "union", even chimed in their disappointment.

[Iowans for Defending Our Universities \(IDOU\)](#), has come into being as a coalition of "students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, unions and citizens." Which unions, they don't say. But the teaching assistants union UE-COGS has taken a prominent organizing role for these rallies, while the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, the Iowa City Federation of Labor (ICFL) has also shown support. The IDOU coalition has organized several protests, but if you "join" the coalition on their website, you are relegated to an email list. You are not invited to scheduled mass meetings of workers and students; instead, you are only called upon to carry signs that maintain the chains between the labor bureaucracy, the Democratic Party and leaderships you did not elect. ***This is exactly what democracy does NOT look like!*** Any successful workers movement demands workers democracy in order to flourish.

There should be mass, democratic worker/student/faculty assemblies organized on a regular basis that take exclusive decision-making power out of the hands of the Regents and Management and places it into the hands of the Assembly!

Abolish the Board of Regents! Examine the books and the contracts and publicize the identities of the beneficiaries of University and State largesse! A largesse based on increased public debt, fees and tuition hikes!

The Campus Community Assembly should establish Action Committees to meet and work daily to pursue the Assembly's agenda.

The November 17th Campus Community Assembly to “*learn more about the current crisis and share ideas for responding*” is a first start as far as mobilizing workers, students and faculty.

The IDOU coalition has two major action demands:

- to defend our universities against Board actions that undermine integrity.
- to demand that Board President Bruce Rastetter and all members of the Board of Regents be removed or resign

If the resignation of the Board of Regents is achieved, it would temporarily restrain business interests for a time and would turn the tide against wanton attacks on our public services. However, it should be pointed out that “shared governance” is a myth under capitalism. Even at a public university.

Either the Regents rule for the interests of Big Capital rule and continue to fleece the public treasury and the tuition-payers, or, the workers, students, faculty and communities, i.e., the working class, establishes free education as a right!

We don’t need the Board of Regents to dictate! Those who work and study at the University should run the University! For worker/student/faculty control of the University through democratically elected committees!

The Labor Bureaucracy and the Democratic Party Graveyard of Struggle

The University of Iowa is the core of the organized public sector workers in Iowa, with three unions, AFSCME Local 12 that covers the “merit” blue collar and clerical, UE-COGS who represent the graduate student teaching assistants and SEIU 199 who represent the nurses. These three unions represent thousands of workers in a “right to work” wage-slave state. It is labor that has taken a prominent lead in the protests against Harreld, notably UE-COGS, and the AFL-CIO Central Labor Council, the Iowa City Federation of Labor (ICFL). The leadership of AFSCME Local 12 (and AFSCME Council 61) and SEIU 199 have issued no formal statements on the Harreld appointment or in protest of the Board of Regents. Governor Branstad has always hated unions, particularly AFSCME, and he has a [long history of anti-union and anti-worker attacks](#). That AFSCME and SEIU are not trying to mass organize opposition to the board of Regents, trying to build a fighting labor movement, is to surrender the fight before it has even begun.

And make no mistake about it. The University has been cutting staff for decades. Back in the 1990’s, there were [demonstrations against cuts](#) and the use of temp workers at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) and Vending Services was privatized out to Coca-Cola, eliminating those union jobs. Branstad, “inspired” by Scott Walker, could very well be able to gut Chapter 20, the Iowa Collective Bargaining law. ***The time to organize to fight is now, not tomorrow!*** As was shown in Wisconsin, the strategy of class collaboration with the Democratic Party of the bosses, electoral politics and “fighting” right-wing Republicans with Democrats is not going to cut it.

The Iowa City Federation of Labor has taken a more active role in organizing demonstrations in recent years, but historically rather than an organization of workers struggle and solidarity, it has been and still is primarily a sandbox for the local Democratic Party political hacks within the labor movement to play in. This is the method of the pro-capitalist, Democratic Party labor bureaucracy. One of the first things they do in any and every struggle is prop up the Democratic Party and divert workers into the dead-end of lobbying, legislative and electoral politics, limiting struggles to what is acceptable to the Democrats. In Johnson County, the Fight for \$15 was watered down from one [poverty, sub-living wage](#) to another \$10.10 poverty sub-living wage promoted by the Iowa Democratic Party. **NOT NOW, but in 2017!** It was an [SEIU 199 labor-faking bureaucrat](#) who stated at a 2013 Fight for \$15 minimum wage rally that “...\$15 would be great. We’ll take \$10.”. He sure wasn’t kidding.

As the CWG wrote in [Class War](#) in 2013 about the Chicago Teachers’ strike:

“This is the bankrupt political methodology of the parasitic, pro-capitalist union bureaucracy that has dragged the labor movement to defeat after defeat. In virtually every labor struggle, the first thing these labor-fakers postulate are “talk shop” rallies with some kind of electoral strategy, which translates into “we don’t need working class struggle, let’s elect ‘labor-friendly’ politicians (mostly Democrats).” This was clearly the case in the Wisconsin Recall diversion, as well as in Michigan battle over “right to scab (work)”, where the AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federation tops caved in.”

Early American socialist Daniel De Leon’s characterized the labor bureaucracy as the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class”. This parasitic, privileged, pro-capitalist layer within the workers movement identifies its interests more with the class enemy than with the vast mass of unorganized, highly exploited workers as they push “labor-management” class collaboration and tie the labor movement to the Democratic Party (and sometimes the Republican) of the bosses.

The labor lieutenants’ dutifully endorsed attacks on public services is exemplified by the 2013 [Johnson County disabled paratransit SEATS](#) cuts at the hands of the Democratic Party County Supervisors, where the ICFL did not mobilize against the cuts to a vital unionized public service, but instead fed a free Chili supper to County Supervisor Rod Sullivan, the initiator of the cuts and point man at the county level. 24 hours after the news of the cuts hit the press, Sullivan was eating the workers’ beans at the annual ICFL Chili Supper mobilization of the Democratic Party politicians.

We need a class struggle leadership of the labor movement, a leadership who will push the struggle forward and not limit it, or divert it into impotent channels or outright surrender.

From Protest to Power

Scott Walker, the anti-union Governor of Wisconsin, in 2011 said he didn’t care how many protestors marched around the capitol and he really didn’t. Protests and demonstrations should

be an opportunity to discuss, debate and build the struggle, not “moral suasion” rallies. What was needed in Wisconsin was [mass strike action](#). Collective bargaining in Iowa was won for public sector workers, passed by a GOP Senate and signed by a GOP Governor, through what were illegal teachers’ strikes at the time. **What is needed is to go from protest to actual power!** In particular, working class power. Organized workers have the ability to shut down the University, and especially the UIHC. Students by themselves wield little social power. The University can always end the semester early. It was the black Mizzou football players who by acting effectively as workers, went on strike to force the University President to resign over racist incidents.

The CWG points to the example of the [1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike](#) that was a signature event in not only building the Teamsters union, but the mass industrial unions. We bring this up as a model of organization, independent of the capitalist parties, and effective employment of self-organized working class power across a city, a state and a region leading to the organization of Teamsters in nine states. This struggle was run with military efficiency with a class struggle leadership decided upon by workers democratic strike committees. Every struggle should be organized to win!

As American Trotskyist James Cannon wrote of the [1934 Teamsters strike](#):

“Our people didn’t believe in anybody or anything but the policy of the class struggle and the ability of the workers to prevail by their mass strength and solidarity. Consequently, they expected from the start that the union would have to fight for its right to exist; that the bosses would not yield any recognition to the union, would not yield any increase of wages or reduction of the scandalous hours without some pressure being brought to bear. Therefore they prepared everything from the point of view of class war. They knew that power, not diplomacy, would decide the issue. Bluffs don’t work in fundamental things, only in incidental ones. In such things as the conflict of class interests one must be prepared to fight.

Proceeding from these general concepts, the Minneapolis Trotskyists, in the course of organizing the workers, planned a battle strategy. Something unique was seen in Minneapolis for the first time. That is, a strike that was thoroughly organized beforehand, a strike prepared with the meticulous detail which they used to attribute to the German army—down to the last button sewn on the uniform of the last individual soldier. When the hour of the deadline came, and the bosses thought they could still maneuver and bluff, our people were setting up a fortress for action....”

Lest you think that free education is only possible in another era in the distant past, consider that the city University system in New York was tuition-free until 1976 and consider the South African student union recent victory over the imposition of tuition and fees.

The way forward is through political program, leadership and action:

For free, quality public education for all with open admissions and a student stipend! Abolish all student debt!

Make the capitalists pay! Nationalize the private schools and charter schools without compensation! Seize their endowments! For worker, student, faculty and community control of public education!

Cops and campus security out of schools! No to racist Stop and Frisk! Organize labor, black and brown workers self-defense guards via the Campus Community Assembly against racist cop, fascist and vigilante terror!

Abolish the ROTC! NSA, CIA, FBI plants and military off campus! For academic and internet freedom! Expose all COINTELPRO-type programs! Hands off all whistleblowers! Free Chelsea Manning and drop the charges against Edward Snowden and Julian Assange!

Unite the struggle with the broader working class! None of these demands can be won without a united multi-racial working class struggle to defend all social gains, such as education, and extend them via jobs for all! For a 30 hour workweek at 40 hours pay to spread the work around! For a living wage at the prevailing union rate, including guaranteed pensions that can’t be taken away!

Free quality healthcare for all! For socialized medicine to include free abortion on demand and full reproductive services! Equal pay for equal work! Free quality 24-hour childcare! For fully paid maternity leave!

Defend immigrant rights! For mass labor, black and brown mobilizations to stop La Migra raids and deportations! For immediate full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No to English-only bigotry! Same work, same contract across borders! For joint Canadian, American, Mexican and Central American labor struggle!

Organize workers’ struggle to defeat Branstad and all attacks on public services! We need democratic rank and file action and union strike committees to coordinate daily struggle activity in pursuit of the program! Organize the University of Iowa Student, Temp, Faculty and Professional & Scientific workers!

Build for the indefinite general strike to implement these demands! The only illegal strike is the one that loses! Smash all anti-labor laws through struggle! Spread the struggle to Iowa State, UNI and nation-wide!

Build a class struggle leadership of our unions! No collaborating with the Democrats! Break with all the capitalist parties! Build a fighting workers/labor party to fight for a workers government and a rational, centrally-planned socialist economy based on human needs!

For species survival, build a new revolutionary workers international that unites all workers against the imperialist powers! For world socialism!

What we Fight For

We fight to overthrow Capitalism

Historically, capitalism expanded world-wide to free much of humanity from the bonds of feudal or tribal society, and developed the economy, society and culture to a new higher level. But it could only do this by exploiting the labour of the productive classes to make its profits. To survive, capitalism became increasingly destructive of “nature” and humanity. In the early 20th century it entered the epoch of imperialism in which successive crises unleashed wars, revolutions and counter-revolutions. Today we fight to end capitalism’s wars, famine, oppression and injustice, by mobilizing workers to overthrow their own ruling classes and bring to an end the rotten, exploitative and oppressive society that has exceeded its use-by date.

We fight for Socialism

By the 20th century, capitalism had created the pre-conditions for socialism – a world-wide working class and modern industry capable of meeting all our basic needs. The potential to eliminate poverty, starvation, disease and war has long existed. The October Revolution proved this to be true, bringing peace, bread and land to millions. But it became the victim of the combined assault of imperialism and Stalinism. After 1924 the USSR, along with its deformed offspring in Europe, degenerated back towards capitalism. In the absence of a workers political revolution, capitalism was restored between 1990 and 1992. Vietnam and China then followed. In the 21st century only North Korea survives as a degenerated workers state. We unconditionally defend the DPRK against capitalism and fight for political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy as part of a world socialist revolution.

We fight to defend Marxism

While the economic conditions for socialism exist today, standing between the working class and socialism are political, social and cultural barriers. They are the capitalist state and bourgeois ideology and its agents. These agents claim that Marxism is dead and capitalism need not be exploitative. We say that Marxism is a living science that explains both capitalism’s continued exploitation and its attempts to hide class exploitation behind the appearance of individual “freedom” and “equality”. It reveals how and why the reformist, Stalinist and centrist misleaders of the working class tie workers to bourgeois ideas of nationalism, racism, sexism and equality. Such false beliefs will be exploded when the struggle against the inequality, injustice, anarchy and barbarism of capitalism in crisis, led by a revolutionary Marxist party, produces a revolutionary class-consciousness.

We fight for a Revolutionary Party

The bourgeoisie and its agents condemn the Marxist party as totalitarian. We say that without a democratic and a centrally organized party there can be no revolution. We base our beliefs on the revolutionary tradition of Bolshevism and Trotskyism. Such a party, armed with a transitional program, forms a bridge that joins the daily fight to defend all the past and present gains won from capitalism to the victorious socialist revolution. Defensive struggles for bourgeois rights and freedoms, for decent wages and conditions, will link up the struggles of workers of all nationalities, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations, bringing about movements for workers control, political strikes and the arming of the working class, as necessary steps to workers’ power and the smashing of the bourgeois state. Along the way, workers will learn that each new step is one of many in a long march to revolutionize every barrier put in the path to their victorious revolution.

We fight for Communism

Communism stands for the creation of a classless, stateless society beyond socialism that is capable of meeting all human needs. Against the ruling class lies that capitalism can be made “fair” for all, that nature can be “conserved”, that socialism and communism are “dead”, we raise the red flag of communism to keep alive the revolutionary tradition of the Communist Manifesto of 1848, the Bolshevik-led October Revolution, the Third Communist International until 1924, and the revolutionary Fourth International up to its collapse into centrism, with the closing of the International Center. We fight to build a new Communist International, as a world party of socialism capable of leading workers to a victorious struggle for socialism.

Join us: Where overthrowing capitalism is all in a days work !!!

Early American Socialist Eugene V. Debs attacked the “[Monstrous System](#)” of capitalism and the capitalist Democrat, Republican and Progressive parties in his 1912 acceptance speech as the Socialist Party Presidential candidate. Below is an abridged version of this speech:

“The infallible test of a political party is the private ownership of the sources of wealth and the means of life. Apply that test to the Republican, Democratic, and Progressive parties and upon that basic, fundamental issue you will find them essentially one and the same. They differ according to the conflicting interests of the privileged classes, but at bottom they are alike and stand for capitalist class rule and working-class slavery...”

One question is sufficient to determine the true status of all these parties. Do they want the workers to own the tools they work with, control their own jobs, and secure to themselves the wealth they produce? Certainly not. That is utterly ridiculous and impossible from their point of view. The Republican, Democratic, and Progressive parties all stand for the private ownership by the capitalists of the productive machinery used by the workers, so that the capitalists can continue to filch the wealth produced by the workers...

It is vain to hope for material relief upon the prevailing system of capitalism. All the reforms that are proposed by the three capitalist parties, even if carried out in good faith, would still leave the working class in industrial slavery. The working class will never be emancipated by the grace of the capitalists class, but only by overthrowing that class...”

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Class War (Paper of the CWG-US)

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