

Fall 2023 U.S. Immigration Alert!

A Newsletter from National Immigrant Solidarity Network

Fall 2023 Issue, Volume 84

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Biden Against Chinese-American and Immigrants—Except the Rich, are Unacceptable!

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8/3: McCarthyism Is Back: Together We Can Stop It

The People's Forum

We stand together against the rise of a new McCarthyism that is targeting peace activists, critics of US foreign policy, and Chinese Americans. Despite increased intimidation, we remain steadfast in our mission to foster peace and international solidarity, countering the narrative of militarism, hostility, and fear.

As the US government grapples with a major crisis of legitimacy, it has grown fearful of young people becoming conscious and organized to change the world. Influential media outlets like The New York Times have joined right-wing extremists in using intimidation tactics to silence these advocates for change, affecting not only the left but everyone who supports free speech and democratic rights.

The political and media establishments, both liberal and conservative, have initiated McCarthy-like attacks against individuals and organizations criticizing US foreign policy, labeling peace advocates as "Chinese or foreign agents." This campaign uses innuendo and witch hunts, posing a threat to free speech and the right to dissent. We must oppose this trend.

Scientists, researchers, and service members of Chinese descent have been falsely accused of espionage and unregistered foreign agency, often with cases later collapsing due to insufficient evidence. Similar to the old "Red Scare" and McCarthy periods, when scores of organizations and leaders like W.E.B Du Bois, Eugene Debs, Emma Goldman, Paul Robeson and Martin Luther King Jr and others were attacked with fact-less accusations, today, prominent organizations and individuals, including CODEPINK, The People's Forum, and Tricontinental Institute have been targeted, with smears and accusations propagated by outlets like The New York Times.

Their strategy paints a sinister image of a secret network funding the peace movement. However, there's nothing illegal or fringe about opposing a New Cold War or a "major power conflict" with China, views shared by hundreds of millions globally. Receiving donations from US citizens who share these views is not illicit.

Media outlets have tried to scandalize funding sources of several organizations that are on the frontlines working with anti-racist, feminist, anti-war, abolitionist, climate justice, and other movements throughout the United States and globally. Meanwhile, when white neoliberal philanthropists flood the non-profit complex with significant funds to support their political agendas this is rarely scrutinized or made accountable to the communities they impact.

From The New York Times to Fox News, there's a resurgence of the Red Scare that once shattered many lives and threatened movements for change and social justice. This attack isn't only on the left but against everyone who exercises their free speech and democratic rights. We must firmly resist this racist, anti-communist witch hunt and remain committed to building an international peace movement. In the face of adversity, we say NO to xenophobic witch hunts and YES to peace. Signed,

CODEPINK
The People's Forum
Tricontinental Institute for Social Research
ANSWER Coalition
Anticapitalism for Artists
Defend Democracy in Brazil
Families for Freedom
Mulheres de Resistencia do Exterior
Nodutdol
NYC Jericho Movement
NYC Young Communist League
Pivot to Peace
Radical Elders

8/2: National Survey Data Shows Nearly 3 Out Of Every 4 Chinese Americans Have Experienced Racial Discrimination In The Past 12 Months

Columbia University and Committee of 100

KEY FINDINGS

Racism against Chinese Americans continues. While the overwhelming majority of survey respondents see themselves as an accepted part of American society, culturally blended between American and Chinese traditions, they are also marginalized. They have experienced discrimination in their daily lives with:

- Nearly 3 out of 4 (74%) respondents having experienced racial discrimination or racism-related vigilance in the past 12 months;
- 55% worry about their safety relating to hate crimes or harassment;
- 9% having been physically intimidated/assaulted and 7% having had property vandalized/damaged.

The overwhelming majority of Chinese American citizens vote. They care deeply about issues facing the U.S. society, and they want better relations and more collaboration between the U.S. and China, including:

- The overwhelming majority (83%) of survey respondents are registered voters, and of those registered voters, 88% voted in the 2020 presidential election;
- Racism, gun control, the economy, and crime were identified as the top four most important issues facing the U.S. according to respondents;
- Most respondents (82%) agreed that the U.S. should build a collaborative economic relationship with China.

Chinese Americans are not homogenous. While often stereotyped as a “model minority,” many face disadvantages or hardships in health and economics and need better support from policies and services, including:

- Nearly one in four (24%) respondents state they are at moderate or severe risk when asked about their psychological distress, including feeling worthless, depressed, hopeless, restless, nervous, or that everything was an effort;
- Nearly a quarter (24%) reported either fair or poor physical or mental health, or having one or more types of disability;
- Nearly a quarter (23%) reported experiencing some form of medical disadvantage or economic hardship in the past 12 months.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Law enforcement, elected officials, educators, and government agencies should consider and act upon the following recommendations to help the Chinese American community:

To promote greater equity and inclusion of Chinese Americans:

- Incorporate or expand Asian American history lessons across all levels of education, from K-12 to higher education, to help Americans understand the diverse accomplishments, contributions, and challenges of Chinese and Asian American populations;
- Allocate or increase funding for language access to provide Chinese Americans with low English proficiency with equal access to the same level of services and opportunities as English-speaking individuals;
- Establish clear guidelines on addressing and responding proactively to reports of anti-Asian hate and discrimination. To increase levels of political engagement and reduce the negative impact of contentious political rhetoric and strained U.S.-China relations on the lives of Chinese Americans:
- Increase get-out-the-vote efforts and political mobilization of Chinese Americans, especially at the grassroots level to increase political participation of groups whose voices tend to be less heard and who tend to turn out at lower rates: younger, lower income, less educated, and less English-proficient groups;
- Actively discourage and speak up against inflammatory and derogatory language in discussion of U.S.-China relations, which has a direct and negative impact on the lives of Chinese Americans;
- Establish and increase opportunities to encourage more in-depth, meaningful conversations about political and civic engagement issues among Chinese Americans and across different racial or ethnic groups to enhance mutual understanding and respect.

To address the health and economic needs of Chinese Americans:

- Provide public assistance and health care services in various languages and dialects to support Chinese Americans with limited English proficiency to receive the economic support and medical services they need;
- Raise visibility and facilitate discussions of disadvantages and hardships among the Chinese American community to improve awareness and dismantle model minority stereotypes;
- Increase the number of bilingual, culturally-competent Chinese and Asian American mental health and social work professionals.

6/22: Chinese-American worker and activist arrested for advocating for peace between US and China

Li Tang “Henry” Liang, a hotel worker active in his Boston local union, was suspended from his job after being indicted on federal charges

Natalia Marques – People’s Dispatch

Labor leaders and organizers are banding together to demand justice for Chinese-American unionized worker and activist Li Tang “Henry” Liang. Liang was indicted and then arrested in early May in Boston in retaliation for exercising his free speech

rights. “The federal government has targeted Liang for advocating peaceful relations between the US and China,” say labor activists in the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance of the AFL-CIO, the largest trade union in the US.

As a hotel worker, Liang was an active member in his union, UNITE HERE Local 26. He is also an activist in the Chinese-American community, rallying against the US’s propaganda war against China. He previously served on the board of directors for Chinatown Main Street, an organization promoting Chinese-American small businesses in Boston’s Chinatown, and the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Association of New England, which “serves as the umbrella organization for the Chinese communities of New England” according to its website.

“Li Tang has been a participant in important fights for workers rights, including going on strike with his co-workers for 46 days in 2018,” Mike Kramer, Executive Vice President of Local 26, told Peoples Dispatch. “Despite working long hours as a hotel worker, he has dedicated his free time to being active in his community and to the service of others. The charges being brought against this man are a shameful, racist attack.”

“Following his indictment, his employer placed him on indefinite suspension, unfairly depriving his family of income and assuming his guilt without due process,” reads APALA’s petition. “Someone undergoing trial should not be presumed guilty and should have the right to due process and the right to livelihood.”

Liang has advocated for China’s reunification with regions such as Taiwan and peace between the US and China. He was indicted by a federal grand jury for “conspiracy to act as an agent of a foreign government without prior notification” and “acting as an agent of a foreign government without notice to the attorney general.”

“Having a political view doesn’t make you an agent of a foreign government,” said Amrita Dani, unionized teacher in Boston and APALA member.

Liang’s charges come in the context of the United States’ New Cold War against China. “Liang is facing charges under the Foreign Agents Relations Act (FARA),” states APALA. “In recent years, the US Department of Justice (DoJ) has used FARA to intimidate peace activists, journalists, and others for voicing opposition towards hawkish US foreign policy.”

With the rise of challenges to US hegemony by China and Russia, the United States has grown increasingly paranoid and has lashed out in various ways against these two countries. One way is the billions of dollars in funding funneled to the Russia–Ukraine war, or with the military drills in Chinese waters along with US bases strategically surrounding China. Part of the ongoing effort to rally mass support for the New Cold War is the persecution and repression of free speech in the Chinese-American community.

Waves of Chinese-Americans and Chinese nationals including students, academics, researchers, and activists have been targeted for repression by the FBI due to the US’s orientation against China. In 2020, Trump signed an executive order to expel thousands of Chinese university students purportedly for having ties to the People’s Liberation Army, although many of these students had ties to civilian universities who merely provided scholarships through the PLA. The US is still to this day denying visas based on this proclamation.

“[The US is] fighting tooth-and-nail to prevent, not countries that want to make war with them, but countries who want to develop their economies, to protect their people and sovereignty, and to have a multilateral world, not a unipolar world,” said Marxist militant Ronnie Kasrils, former Minister of Intelligence of South Africa, during a recent webinar. “The Yankees are panic-stricken... for the way their control [over these nations] are breaking down.”

APALA is calling for Liang to be reinstated at his job, for the Department of Justice to stop racially profiling and restricting freedom of speech, and for the DOJ to drop all charges against Liang.

8/3: FBI frame-up overturned Three of Newburgh 4 freed

Otis Grotewohl – Workers World

In a partial victory, three members of the “Newburgh 4,” Black Muslims from Newburgh, New York, who were wrongfully framed by the FBI in a 2009 “bombing plot,” were finally released from prison. This came after a recent ruling by a federal judge. Three of the Newburgh 4 are African American, and one is a Haitian immigrant.

Onta Williams, David Williams and Laguerre Payen were happy to be released after being unjustly incarcerated for 12 years, based on an obvious FBI frame-up and entrapment scheme.

The situation stems from a 2009 arrest and a 2011 conviction that claimed four individuals—all of whom are of the Islamic faith—were plotting to use stinger missiles to shoot down military airplanes flying out of an Air National Guard base in Newburgh, New York, and blow up two synagogues in Riverdale. (New York Times, July 27)

Evidence now suggests that the FBI, along with an informant named Shahed Hussain, was responsible for the whole fiasco. Hussain is a Pakistani businessperson who had been working with the FBI prior to the sting operation. Records show that he was paid a generous salary of \$100,000 by the FBI to “seek out Muslim radicals” at local mosques. (The Guardian, Dec. 12, 2011)

Hussain’s provocative rhetoric and flashy appearance raised suspicion among the Islamic clergy at Masjid al-Ikhlās, the Islamic Learning Center in Newburgh infiltrated by Hussain, where he met the four individuals who became FBI scapegoats.

Masjid Imam Salahuddin Muhammad was leery of Hussain’s reactionary and forceful demeanor from the time he first stepped foot into the Newburgh community mosque. “This guy said ‘women should not be heard, not be seen.’ I thought that was strange,” Muhammad told The Guardian. Hussain presented himself in a cartoonish manner, reinforcing negative stereotypes, and that raised suspicion among several members of the Mosque.

Findings of facts

U.S. District Judge Colleen McMahon’s 28-page decision concludes that “all four men were caught up in a scheme in 2009 to attack the synagogues, community center and launch stinger missiles at military aircraft, driven by overzealous FBI agents and an ‘unsavory’ confidential informant.” (Reuters, July 28)

Judge McMahon is the same judge who originally ruled to place the Newburgh 4 behind bars in 2011. Allegedly, she did so reluctantly, and her arbitrary “catch and release” style rulings in the case are an example of why the working class and oppressed cannot rely on bourgeois courts to seek any type of sincere justice.

Despite evidence of his innocence, James Cromitie, the individual considered by FBI informant Hussain to be the “ringleader,” remains unfairly incarcerated. Testimony and court exhibits visibly demonstrate that none of the Newburgh 4 would have been associated with the situation had it not been for the FBI’s instigation and provocation.

Conclusion of the case, from a Marxist view

The FBI has a history of infiltrating and attempting to disrupt political and religious organizations, notably those led by oppressed peoples. In this situation, the FBI took advantage of four working, poor and nationally oppressed individuals who were falsely promised an escape from poverty. None of the Newburgh 4 had any interest in carrying out violent actions, but the idea of breaking free of constant hardship sounded appealing, understandably so.

The FBI plot was also an effort on their part to divide the Muslim and Jewish communities. The arrest came at a time when U.S. politicians, military leaders and the corporate media were constantly pushing Islamophobia and anti-Muslim bigotry. The release of Onta Williams, David Williams and Laguerre Payen is only a partial victory, however, because James Cromitie remains behind bars and his future is uncertain. Communists and anti-racist activists need to demand freedom for all the Newburgh 4 and for a complete abolition of the FBI!

7/26: Judge blocks US asylum restrictions

LIA ZHU-China Daily Global

The US government’s new rules aimed at deterring illegal crossings on the southern border were rejected on Tuesday by a federal judge in California who said the restrictions on asylum seekers violated federal law.

Judge Jon Tigar of the California Northern District Court in Oakland blocked the Biden administration’s rules, which make it harder for migrants to get asylum if they crossed the border illegally or if they didn’t first ask for humanitarian refuge in Mexico or another country on their journey to the US.

Those found ineligible for asylum under the rule could face swift deportation to their home country or Mexico and a five-year ban from re-entering the US. Those who attempt to re-enter the country illegally could face criminal charges.

Civil rights and immigrant advocacy groups immediately challenged the policy in court after it was implemented in May, saying it “places vulnerable asylum seekers in grave danger and violates US asylum laws”.

Tigar wrote in his ruling that "noncitizens who enter between ports of entry, using a manner of entry that Congress expressly intended should not affect access to asylum". He said the rules were "both substantively and procedurally invalid".

The judge put the ruling on hold for 14 days for a possible appeal. The Justice Department has said it would appeal the ruling.

"The Justice Department disagrees with the district court's ruling today," a spokesperson said in a statement, calling the policy a "lawful exercise of the broad authority granted by the immigration laws".

The ruling was applauded by immigrant advocates as "an important victory" for asylum seekers.

"The ruling is a victory, but each day the Biden administration prolongs the fight over its illegal ban, many people fleeing persecution and seeking safe harbor for their families are instead left in grave danger," said Katrina Eiland, deputy director of the American Civil Liberties Union's (ACLU) Immigrants' Rights Project. The organization represents the plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

The advocates accused the Biden administration's rules of mirroring two Trump-era policies, which they called "entry" and "transit" bans. One of those rules disqualified migrants from asylum if they entered the US in between ports of entry, while the other barred migrants from asylum if they failed to seek protection in a third transit country.

The ACLU successfully challenged both rules and persuaded judges to halt them. An appeal court upheld the lower court's rulings in both cases.

While the new restriction is based on penalizing migrants for entering the US without permission and for not seeking asylum elsewhere, the Justice Department argued that it was less restrictive than the earlier version by former president Donald Trump.

The Biden administration's asylum restriction includes exemptions for unaccompanied children and those who can obtain an appointment to present themselves at a border port through a mobile application called CBP One, which migrants can use to schedule interviews.

More than 38,000 migrants were allowed into the US along border ports of entry in June after securing an appointment through the app, according to government data.

But migrant advocates called the app "flawed" because migrants face limited resources to acquire a smartphone or access internet, and other barriers such as language and illiteracy.

Under US asylum law, migrants on the US soil are allowed to request protection, regardless of how they entered the country. However, the legal threshold to win asylum and a chance to become a permanent resident is high.

The number of migrants crossing the border illegally dropped sharply in May and June, which the Biden administration attributed to the new restrictions.

The administration has rolled out a series of measures to try to reduce migrant crossings on the US-Mexico border but is facing multiple lawsuits from Republican states as well as advocates.

7/26: Harvard study finds rich students overrepresented in US elite private colleges

Xinhua

LOS ANGELES - Students from wealthy families are overrepresented in the US highly selective private colleges, a new study has found.

The study, published Monday by Opportunity Insights, a group of researchers and policy analysts at Harvard University, shows that students with parents in the top 1 percent income level are more than twice as likely to attend an elite private university than those from middle-class families with comparable SAT and ACT scores.

The study looked at 12 colleges from the "Ivy League Plus" group, including the eight Ivy League schools, and Stanford University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Duke University, and the University of Chicago.

The researchers analyzed anonymous admissions data linked to income tax records from 1999 to 2015 and SAT and ACT test scores from 2001 to 2015. They defined the top 1 percent as having an annual income of over 611,000 US dollars.

In contrast, children from high-income families have no admissions advantage at flagship public colleges, the study found.

According to the study, high-income admissions advantage at private colleges is mainly driven by three factors.

Firstly, there are explicit preferences for children of alumni, known as "legacy admissions". Secondly, non-academic credentials are higher among rich children who come from private high schools with affluent student bodies. Finally, rich children are more likely to practice expensive sports and benefit from athlete recruitment.

According to the study, attending elite private schools could increase students' chances of reaching the top 1 percent of income by 60 percent, compared to their counterparts in highly selective public institutions. That almost doubles their likelihood of attending an elite graduate school and triples their chances of getting employed at a prestigious firm.

The paper proves the heavy toll of admission biases in elite private colleges on the socioeconomic diversity among US leaders. Although only less than 0.5 percent of US students attended Ivy-Plus colleges, these 12 colleges accounted for more than 10 percent of Fortune 500 chief executives, a quarter of US Senators, half of all Rhodes scholars, and three-fourths of Supreme Court justices appointed in the last half-century, said the researchers.

"This paper has shown that highly selective private colleges serve as gateways to the upper echelons of society in the United States. Because these colleges currently admit students from high-income families at substantially higher rates than students from lower-income families with comparable academic credentials, they perpetuate privilege across generations," said the study.

The US Supreme Court recently overturned affirmative action, judging race-conscious programs in universities as unconstitutional. It has raised concerns among civil rights groups that the number of African-American and other minority group students would plummet. In addition, legacy admissions and other preferential policies for privileged students are still common practices.

Critics argue that such policies compromise the principle of transparency, contradict the objective of advancing social mobility, and even have no impact on increasing alumni donations.

The study recommended eliminating legacy preferences, evaluating non-academic characteristics in a better context, and recruiting athletes more uniformly across the parental income distribution. Such policy changes will compensate for the opportunities lost among minority students due to the ban on affirmative action.

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NISN is a coalition of community, immigrant, labor, human rights and student activist groups, founded in 2002 in response to the urgent needs for the national coalition to fight immigrant bashing, support immigrant rights, no to the sweatshops exploitation and end to the racism on the community. Please visit our website:
<http://www.ImmigrantSolidarity.org>

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