

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

“Human power is its own end”—Karl Marx

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EDITORIAL *Chicago's racism on trial*

In Chicago, the Nov. 24 release of long-suppressed video of the Oct. 2014 police shooting of 17-year-old Laquan McDonald sparked new outrage and led to a series of largely youth-led downtown demonstrations that significantly affected holiday sales at the elite stores on the Magnificent Mile. It was clear from the video that Laquan presented no threat to the police, who had him outnumbered and cornered, nor to the public, as the location was an isolated Southwest Side truck yard.

ONE MORE RACIST POLICE MURDER

Nevertheless, Chicago Police Dept. (CPD) officer Jason Van Dyke decided to empty his 9mm semi-automatic pistol into Laquan's prone body. Van Dyke's first shot had knocked him to the ground. Yet here was one more “law enforcer” driven by the same racism that led to the murder of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman, the murder of Michael Brown by Darren Wilson and so many more. Van Dyke fired until Laquan's body was smoking; 16 shots in total.

The CPD “responded” to community outrage and protest on Dec. 26 by murdering 55-year-old activist Bettie Jones and 19-year-old Quintonio LeGrier, after LeGrier's family had called 911 to request help with his mental health issues. Protests continue.

While Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel shows no sign of bowing to protesters' demands he resign, he is clearly feeling pressure to deal with the scandal. Only as the video was to be released did Cook County States Attorney Anita Alvarez indict Van Dyke on charges of first-degree murder and official misconduct. (The first

continued on p. 8

EDITORIAL *Erdogan slaughters Kurds*

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blurted out a rarely acknowledged truth when he declared that a precedent for his authoritarian ambitions could be found in “Hitler's Germany.” Erdogan hasn't reached the level of brutality that Hitler and the Nazis did, but his ethnic politics have come to embody Martin Luther King's insight that “the logic of racism is genocide.”

Erdogan's recent attacks on the Kurdish population have not risen to the level of Turkey's 1915-18 Armenian genocide, but they are bad enough. According to human rights groups, over 150 people have died from government snipers and heavy weapons which have devastated numerous towns. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced. Curfews have been enforced in Kurdish provinces and towns. Arbitrary arrests, torture, and censorship are occurring; media and human rights organizations have been kept out.

CIVILIANS ARE ERDOGAN'S VICTIMS

Most of these actions are in violation of Turkey's Constitution and laws. Tahir Elci, the President of the Diyarbakir Bar Association, was shot dead on Nov. 28 while making that point and calling for renewed peace negotiations between the government and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The victims in these vicious state terrorist massacres are mainly civilians. The military declared that 12 young Kurds were killed in a recent shootout in Wan—it was found that the dead were people who had been arrested, and all had been shot execution-style in the head. ISIS or the bourgeois state: who imitates whom?

The government's excuse is that it is “fighting terrorism,” which it defines as the armed PKK and the civilian Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). In other words, any expression of Kurdish self-determination.

This is simply a “political” cover for the old

continued on p. 9

ON THE INSIDE

pp. 2, 5, 10 Remembering Olga Domanski
p. 4 Women as thinkers & revolutionaries
p. 8 Prisoner lawsuit beats backlash
p. 11 Witnessing revolution in Rojava
p. 12 Venezuela elections

ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Paris climate accord's suicidal complacency spurs protests

by Franklin Dmitryev

The Paris Agreement on climate change, reached by almost all the world's nation-states on Dec. 12 after a two-week conference, reveals the limits of what the global capitalist order is prepared to do even in the face of incipient catastrophe. It was universally agreed at the Paris summit that the plans associated with the agreement were nowhere near sufficient to avoid devastating effects, and that the terrible results of climate change have already begun, such as in the movement of millions of people displaced from their homes. And yet the nation-state leaders congratulated themselves for reaching an agreement in which even these insufficient national plans are not legally binding!

The French government attempted to ban climate justice demonstrations in Paris, and even put environmental activists under house arrest on the eve of the summit. This symbolizes the rulers' drive to keep the power to decide humanity's future out of the hands of the masses, the only ones who can halt the suicidal rush to climate chaos. The oft-heard excuse of “political realities” to explain the rulers' exclusion from the summit of anything that would amount to serious change shows bluntly how the ideological pollution of “there is no alternative to capitalism” has morphed into “there is no alternative to climate catastrophe.”

MASSES CANNOT BE STILLED

Protests still erupted both inside and outside the official conference space. They included Indigenous people from all over the world, people from poor African countries, women, farmers, and even a Black Lives Matter protest organized by people from the U.S. Many protesters reiterated the slogan from the 2009 Copenhagen summit protests: System change, not climate change!

The emptiness of the summit's achievements stands in stark contrast to the upsurge of voices questioning the UN process, the capitalist system and its whole notion of development. Consider the most touted purported achievements of the Paris Agreement.

First, it lays out the aim of keeping temperature rise to “well below 2 degrees” Celsius compared to before the industrial revolution, and even “efforts” to keep it below 1.5 degrees. That aim is not legally binding, at the insistence of the Obama administration, because that would give the Senate a chance to veto the agreement, and it would certainly do so. So the basic structure of the agreement is limited by the partial veto power that the fossil fuel industry has over the U.S. government, as it does in several other countries from Russia to Saudi Arabia.

That weightless aim is contradicted by the agreement's lack of emissions reduction targets, of any reference to a carbon budget, or of any commitment to keep fossil fuels in the ground. In many cases, the pledges submitted by nations before the summit actually project large increases in emissions, marketed as reductions by deceptive comparisons; while in other cases, such as the U.S., the projected reductions amount to about 1% a year. If all the pledges were actually carried out, which would be unprecedented, it would not be enough to keep warming below 3 degrees, and would risk far worse. And of course if a Republican is elected President in 2016, he would

probably repudiate the agreement altogether.

PRODUCTION FOR PRODUCTION'S SAKE

The earthy reality is that, at the very same time as the Paris meeting, key players are promoting fossil fuel extraction. The U.S. is pushing coal and oil exports, lifting the crude oil export ban, and trying to revive fracking and expand Arctic and other offshore drilling. China is building coal plants across the world. While scientists have warned that, starting immediately, most coal and much of the oil and gas must stay in the ground just to keep to the 2-degree target, coal plants designed to last decades are still being built in many countries. Meanwhile, climate change accords are

continued on p. 10

Olga Domanski, 1923-2015



Photob by Michael Pearn, 1981

The world lost a great fighter for liberation in December. Olga Domanski, who joined the socialist movement as a youth at the time of World War II, quickly found her way to the Johnson-Forest Tendency. She identified with what would become Marxist-Humanism from the moment she heard Raya Dunayevskaya speaking for the Tendency, and she established a political-philosophic-organizational relationship and friendship with Dunayevskaya that would last the rest of their lives. Domanski recognized a quality of leadership in her that Dunayevskaya would later develop under the name “philosophy as leadership.” Domanski took on as her life's work the task of helping the development and projection of what became Marxist-Humanism—well before Dunayevskaya created her philosophic moment in 1953—and ensuring the life and growth of its organizational expression as News and Letters Committees.

FOUNDING MEMBER, CREATIVE RE-CREATOR

Beginning with her activity as a founding member of News and Letters Committees in 1955 at the height of McCarthyism, she made contributions central to the development of Marxist-Humanism and its organization for the next 60 years. Together with Andy Phillips, Domanski maintained the vibrant West Virginia Local in the 1950s, which was an important part of the development of the first Marxist-Humanist book, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*.

Moving to Detroit at Dunayevskaya's request in order to be a vital part of the functioning of the organization's Center, she subsequently served as Dunayevskaya's secretary for over 25 years as Dunayevskaya worked out *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*; *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*; *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*; and all her other writings. Domanski was central to helping Dunayevskaya with so much of the writing of her books, articles, minutes of meetings, and letters, as well as organizing her notes and writings and communicating her ideas and views to others. Always at the forefront of Domanski's mind was the crucial role of an organization based on the Marxist-Humanist body of ideas. She was the organizational person par excellence, who, as well as engaging in those kinds of tasks, did not shy away from or look down on the nuts and bolts work of keeping the national office and the organization

continued on p. 5

Olga Domanski: embodiment of Woman as Reason

by Terry Moon

For a women's liberationist, meeting a revolutionary organization in 1969 that was founded by a woman was a wonderful stroke of luck. But it wasn't alone Raya Dunayevskaya who was so fascinating to a young feminist, it was that News and Letters Committees was full of riveting women, including Black and working-class women, and was a place to learn what women who were not white and middle-class, were thinking and doing.

Olga Domanski was someone to learn from—be that about her years as a worker at the GM plant in Flint, or about understanding organization and Marxist-Humanist philosophy. For several years I lived three blocks from her and looked forward to the times she invited me to dinner. Going to parks in Michigan with her is one of my favorite memories. She picked weeds and flowers and, seemingly without effort, made them grace her home.

But the reason that Olga will be in my head forever is because of what she taught about what it meant to be organizational, what Marxist-Humanism is.

It isn't only that Olga did the nuts and bolts work



Olga Domanski (middle) at News and Letters Committees literature table at the 2007 National Women's Studies Association Conference.

of organization, from all kinds of correspondence with authors, publishers, activists, to running the office; it was her attitude to such work. That kind of work—you know, office work, the work that women do that is undervalued and underpaid—was not belittled by her. She saw it as work that required thinking tasks through, doing them well, and being creative. Not because the work was fascinating, but because it kept your organization going.

Being organizational was in her bones and was evident in everything she did. Her first thought was, "How will this affect the organization?" That was true, be it a financial question, an argument with a comrade, where to live, whether to get married. Everything you did could affect the organization. Few people live their lives this way. Olga showed how it was done.

The new Women's Liberation Movement took the Left by surprise, but in a short time, Olga got it. In her 1970 article in *Notes on Women's Liberation: We Speak in Many Voices*, "Pages from a shop Diary," Olga wrote passionately,

"Most of the women were married and had children. They had two work days—first at the shop, and then at home. And they resented their relations to the men at both places.

"The department [where the women worked], to begin with, was situated like a harem. The women were not scattered among men, doing jobs side by side with the men. They were isolated in one corner of the shop, in one department. They were treated as 'creatures apart'—something very special—but special in a very negative way."

That passion that was so much a part of her is seen in most of her writings—some of which we will be printing in this and future issues—and it is especially noticeable in what she wrote about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. You can see it in this paragraph from "Clinton capitulates to 'ethnic cleansing'" from May 1993 and published in *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'*:

"But what can explain the disgraceful position of much of the Left, which has dared to present the events in Bosnia as if they were no more than some 'battles over

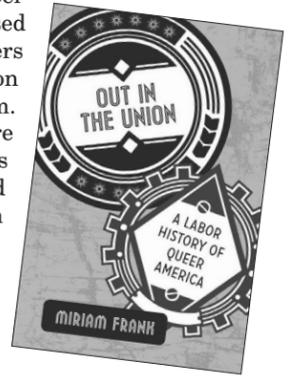
land among warring gangs of Serb, Croat, and Muslim forces' (as one Trotskyist journal would have it), all equally responsible for the suffering going on? Or worse, the Left which has dared to accuse women's liberationists who have cried out against the mass rapes of 'giving a feminist cover' (as another put it) for an imperialist intervention in Bosnia! Nothing more reveals the total bankruptcy of such a Left in the face to today's changed world. The truth is that if it were not for the Women's Liberation Movement, there would have been scarcely any response to the events in Yugoslavia anywhere in the world."

Olga will be terribly missed. When a comrade like Olga dies, it leaves a huge hole in the world. She was a unique, original thinker, activist and friend, and there will never be another like her. We can honor her by continuing this organization, and developing the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism that she lived her life for.

'Out In The Union'

Miriam Frank's *Out in the Union*, is an important history of a neglected subject: the relationship between LGBT people and labor unions. She interviews LGBT people involved and explains how labor unions operate as she describes their internal conflicts and fights with management. She shows how unions became vital to securing Queer rights and how LGBT workers and issues are important to the future of union organizing.

Interviewees describe how, in most workplaces before the Stonewall Rebellion, they could be harassed and threatened. Union leaders could be jeopardized if union political rivals outed them. But then unions began to hire people from the civil rights and feminist movements and to support non-discrimination provisions. Slowly, they became more open to promoting LGBT rights, including non-discrimination clauses and domestic partner benefits, which in turn caused more LGBT people to become interested in unions. There have been LGBT unions as well as LGBT caucuses within unions.



LGBT AND UNIONS UNITE!

As the LGBT communities became more political, activist groups began to work in coalitions with unions against common enemies. Here Frank shows how the religious Right targets all marginalized groups and can be defeated by these groups unifying. The Coors beer company has been notoriously racist and oppressive to workers and unions. As Coors financially supported religious Right anti-Queer causes and discriminated against LGBT workers, the LGBT community enthusiastically cooperated in labor's Coors boycott. In the 1970s and 1980s, the religious Right fought to replace anti-discrimination laws with anti-LGBT laws, especially attacking Queer teachers and students. Unions sometimes understood this as a threat to the democratic process, since it affected their ability to protect their workers, and they gave Queer activists their support.

Queer activism also benefitted heterosexual workers. Domestic partnership benefits were more often used by heterosexual couples who would lose benefits such as disability income if they legally married.

LGBT CAN ALSO EXPLOIT

Frank also discusses the difficulties of unionizing LGBT-owned businesses. Queer restaurant and storeowners have exploited young staff members who view themselves as struggling creative types and didn't consider the struggle for fair treatment worth the trouble at jobs they expected to be temporary. When other owners attempted to run their businesses along Leftist utopian models, either they or their workers didn't realize they would experience the same problems as any other business.

Frank describes several difficulties that arose for the workers at the Gay Community Services Center in Los Angeles and the lesbian feminist owned and operated Labrys Auto Repair in San Francisco that might have been solved if the workers had made attempts to unionize sooner. In the 1980s and 1990s, when activists created medical clinics and caregiving services for people affected by HIV/AIDS, their zeal was often deliberately exploited. Bosses used "union-busting" strategies while also spreading the propaganda that unions were anti-Gay interlopers.

Frank shows how much of the progress for LGBT rights has come from unions, both by securing rights in the workplace and through use of unions' resources to change legislation. She explains how outreach to LGBT workers can help unions survive and expand. This book will also be important in helping activists understand the necessity of working with and within unions and will allow them to learn from its record of mistakes and successes.

—Adele

'Comfort' women dispute agreement

So-called "comfort women"—girls and women from countries Japan occupied in World War II—were forced by the Imperial Japanese Military to work as sex slaves for Japanese soldiers. Korean, Chinese, Filipina and other Southeast Asian women and girls were raped, forced into prostitution and sexual slavery. On Dec. 28, seven decades after the end of World War II, Japan and South Korea came to an agreement on compensating the surviving rape victims, but excluded them from contributing to the decision. The comfort women deserve so much more than this sham Agreement on the Military Sexual Slavery Issue.

The agreement reached by Prime Minister Abe and South Korea's President Park Geun-hye, designated final and irreversible by them, says that the Japanese government feels responsible for its military's committing sexual slavery and that Abe must apologize as Japan's representative. But the apology was made by a diplomatic representative, not Abe, who earlier had infuriated the comfort women by dismissing them as prostitutes.

South Korea will create a foundation to provide funding for the "comfort" women of \$8.3 million in reparations from Japan. Once that funding is paid out by Japan, South Korea alone will run the foundation. The funds are for the care of the surviving victims of Japan's sexual slavery but, incredibly, none of the money will go directly to the victims.

The Agreement falls short. There are no preventive initiatives, including truth-seeking and the teaching of history. South Korea is even considering Japan's demand for the removal of the statue of the "comfort" woman in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul—supposedly to maintain the dignity of the Japanese Embassy. For the same reason, South Korea has agreed to limit its criticism against the government of Japan internationally.

Following are the, very principled, demands of the comfort women:

1. Full acknowledgment of the military sexual slavery implemented by the Imperial Armed Forces of Japan between 1932 and 1945.
2. Thorough and complete investigation to fully chronicle the scope of the crime.
3. Formal apology from the National Assembly (Diet) of Japan.
4. Legal and full reparations to all victims.
5. Prosecution of the criminals responsible for the crime.
6. Full and ongoing education through proper recording and acknowledgment in textbooks and history books in Japan.
7. Building of memorials and museums to commemorate the victims and preserve the history of sexual slavery by the Japanese Military.

While the U.S. government supports this Agreement in hopes that Japan and South Korea can counter-balance China, the surviving women and their supporters are more committed than ever to see that Japan actually be held responsible for its military sexual slavery.

—Elise

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In December, the UN investigated the status of women in the U.S. for a report to be presented to the UN Human Rights Council in 2016. The women were appalled at how far the U.S. lags behind international human rights standards in many areas, including pay, maternity leave, childcare, healthcare, government policies, and social attitudes. Upon visiting a women's clinic, they were shocked at the anti-abortion harassment, since in much of Europe, abortions are a normal part of healthcare. In November, the World Bank released a four-decade study of 85% of the world's population, concluding that local grassroots feminist movements are the most important factor in creating positive change for women.

* * *

A five-year-old non-profit in Las Vegas, Nev., and Portland, Ore., "The Cupcake Girls," provides non-judgmental support to sex workers and survivors of sex trafficking. Unlike organizations with religious conversion or unrequested "rescue" agendas, they ask their clients what services they need and provide sympathetic listening and conversation. Bringing cupcakes to strip clubs, porn conventions and brothels, they connect clients to free health and dental care, legal advice, therapy, daycare, domestic violence shelters, financial planning, career counseling, housing, and tutoring. They worked with the Nevada state legislature to change the law to empower judges to drop trespassing and loitering charges that hinder sex workers and trafficking survivors from finding other employment.

* * *

In Britain, parents on the online discussion forum Mumsnet, frustrated with increasingly gendered marketing of children's toys, books and clothing, launched the "Let Toys Be Toys," "Let Clothes Be Clothes" and "Dinosaurs for Everyone" campaigns. Their petitions and letters have been successful in making manufacturers and retailers stop labeling and segregating toys and books for boys or girls. The clothing campaign critiques the stereotypes in clothes marketing such as the overuse of pink and the promotion of high heels for girls, even for baby girls.

Risking jobs for union and respect

Mexico City, Mexico—Workers in four *maquiladoras* (multinational assembly plants) in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, began organizing to form an independent union in the last months of 2015. Workers at Lexmark, Foxconn, Eaton Bussman and CommScope (U.S. and Taiwan companies) struggled for higher wages, better working conditions and against sexual harassment.

Transnational corporations are always looking for a cheap, a non-union work force that they can exploit and then discard when the economic situation is not as “favorable.” The Mexican government, the state government of Chihuahua and Ciudad Juarez all collaborate to supply a vast army of workers, mainly young women, to capital.

The basic wage is 77 pesos (\$4) per day; you can climb up to 120 pesos, but only after several years and if companies so decide. Working conditions are determined at the whim of the employer, and even the minimum labor laws are continually violated. But maybe things are about to change as these workers are saying *Ya Basta!* (Enough!)

FIRED FOR WORK SLOWDOWN

On Dec. 8, 700 workers of the U.S. company Lexmark, a manufacturer of printer cartridges, participated in a work slowdown, an extremely challenging event in a city where workers can be easily replaced. Lexmark’s reaction was immediate: It fired 75 of the workers who had also signed a petition to create an independent trade union, and even withheld their earned bonuses.

“I was fired. Human Resources told me my contract was terminated because I violated the code of conduct of the *maquila*, and to leave the plant because I no longer worked at Lexmark,” said Miriam Delgado, 37, who had worked more than five years at the transnational. “Why did the government allow this, if it is we workers who take Ciudad Juarez forward with our labor? They say we have to assemble 150 cartridges per hour, more than two per minute, and if not, we do not get a production bonus, of 80 pesos (under \$5) a week.” The dismissed workers have kept a vigil outside the plant and are receiving support from various groups.

VOICES FROM WORKER PROTESTS

Lexmark workers Rosa Maria, Susana Torres and Selene Carro said in a protest at the plant:

Detroit teachers ‘sick’



Detroit—Schoolteachers in Detroit began a sick-out on Monday, Jan. 11, closing 60 schools and idling 47,000 students, around 85% of the district population. Their actions give the lie to state-imposed Emergency Manager Darnell Earley’s claims that only a tiny fraction of “radical” teachers is hindering his efforts to improve the Detroit Public Schools.

Monday’s rally of several hundred teachers sent Michigan Governor Snyder a message, with chants like “Detroit won’t go to the back of the bus! Public education is a must!” and “Dirty buildings, dirty food, dirty politics!” Signs read: “My kindergarteners are better listeners than Governor Snyder” “Standing up 4 my students!” “I love my students” and “Enough is enough!”

The reasons Detroit teachers got so sick and tired include this description of their classrooms: “Mice, rats, leaking ceilings falling in large chunks, black mold on the walls.” Classrooms are designed for the contractual maximum of 25 to 34 students, but often hold 40 or more. There are supply shortages, antiquated and broken technology, and inexperienced young teachers assigned to teach classes out of their subject area.

Adding insult to injury were two 10% pay cuts in the past decade, and greatly increased healthcare costs. There is no local control: Public Act 436 disempowered the elected school board.

Students whose schools were closed were not deprived of education. They had the opportunity to learn that the fight is ongoing and that true power is collective power guided by the ideas of freedom and dignity.

—Susan Van Gelder

“We organize with colleagues on the night shift who started the movement. We take turns as guards. In the morning we are four or five people, and in the afternoon we are more. We are fighting for our rights because, thanks to us, Lexmark’s profits are high.

“We want an independent union so they cannot do to us what they are doing now. We want respect not humiliation, and to stop Lexmark from doing whatever they want. We want the community to know what is happening; they support us, bring us coffee, blankets, etc. We will not move until we have an answer.”

Foxconn workers Mónica Nolasco and José Luis Toscano spoke out: “We have been protesting for a week, demanding our return to work, better benefits, better wages, an independent union, respect for our rights. We are organized in six-hour shifts, four groups, with 17 *compañeros*. We have suffered repression and harassment by the company. So far, we have not had a response from the company or the government. We must be united in this movement. We will stay here until they give us answers. We are asking for community support.”

Eaton Bussman workers Ermitania López Pérez, Elizabeth Torres Cruz, Antonia Hinojo and Candelario Hernández described their conditions: “We have spent two days at the camp, demanding vacation pay. Eaton is stealing our money. We are harassed a great deal. We cannot even go to the bathroom without being followed. They watch us with cameras. We need a raise. The salary is terrible it’s a shame.

“We’re 22 teammates in protest. We fight for our rights as workers. So far, there has been no positive response. We plan to be in this fight to the end. We are a small group, but determined to win this fight. At best, those inside [the bosses] have much fear, and do not want us. But we are not afraid; we will no longer be humiliated.”

CommScope worker Flablio Salas González said: “We demand the right to form a union, which is why we were fired. We ask for understanding and solidarity. We demand also respect from the company, as many colleagues have suffered sexual harassment. So we decided to get up and tell what this company has done, including their supervisors, and even their human relations staff.”

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Two-tier ruins Muni

San Francisco—You’d think with all the talk about the environment and getting cars off the road, that governments would support public transportation. Here the San Francisco Municipal Railway (Muni) has been going downhill for three decades with infrastructure neglect and poor choices in equipment purchases. This has resulted in safety problems and a shortage of vehicles, so that in many parts of the city people can barely get around.

Hundreds of millions are being wasted on an unneeded and destructive subway line to Chinatown. The one good improvement, the T-Line streetcar route, was built to benefit developers.

Muni is going after its own workers, the soul of the system. The new contract that started last July 1 introduced a two-tier system, which lengthens the time period for new drivers to receive full pay from 18 months to five years! New hires now receive just over \$19 an hour, which does not allow them to pay even two-thirds of a monthly rent here. Full pay is around \$32 an hour, still inadequate for the Bay Area.

Furthermore, workers are often required to work split shifts, which makes the pay actually lower and imperils safety. Muni is having trouble keeping new hires. The shortage of drivers leads to increased overtime, which is costly and unsafe. Recently the union tried to reopen negotiations on the contract, but Muni refused.

The argument that drivers here are among the highest paid in the nation is misleading, because the cost of living is nearly twice what it is in most cities, due mainly to housing. When Transit Workers Union (TWU) Local 250-A president Eric Williams approved the two-tier proposal, Muni officials were amazed—they had only put it on the table as a bargaining chip. Williams claimed that it was a trade-off to preserve existing wages, and shoved it down our throats.

Now there are problems in the union that are becoming more serious. In this supposedly “progressive” city, where is the environmentalism and the concern for the non-wealthy? Many so-called “environmentalists” are plugging for bicycles at the expense of public transportation, when that is not a solution—bicycles are only practical for able-bodied younger people.

The one thing that we can do immediately, both for the environment and for quality of life in this city and other cities, is to make public transportation cheap and available to all.

—Don, San Francisco Muni bus driver

WORKSHOPTALKS

Urgency of solidarity

by Htun Lin

Under the banner of free trade, commodities and capital are given the right to cross the same borders which are meant as barriers to people. Politicians are out to maintain boundaries, dividing people, and then gin up wars to change boundaries. We rank-and-file workers often feel compelled to ignore borders to solidarize with our fellow humans struggling to survive. Like Doctors Without Borders, which tackles the urgent healthcare needs of those in crisis everywhere, we feel an immediate need to act when so many are facing death, starvation and terror.

President Obama quoted Martin Luther King Jr.’s formulation, “we have to feel the fierce urgency of now,” because people are dying. There is no longer any excuse for inaction.” Over 30,000 Americans die every year due to gun violence. In the eyes of healthcare providers, gun violence has become a public health crisis.

My son’s classmate was senselessly shot a month ago while working under the freeway on a mural, which was part of a campaign to end violence in Oakland. The Black Lives Matter movement has put American civilization on trial, revealing the toll institutional racism has taken on Black Americans.

ARMS MERCHANTS

The U.S. is one of the top nations, along with China, Russia, South Africa and Brazil, in the thriving global arms trade, which each year exports billions of dollars worth of weapons.

In Syria, where a persistent non-violent, multi-ethnic movement demanded a democratic opening and was repeatedly met by President Assad’s state terror, over 250,000 people have now died in five years of civil war that has displaced several million Syrians, many of whom have risked death to seek refuge in Europe.

Many more millions are internally displaced by the constant bombing from the Assad regime and from Iran, the Saudis, Turkey, Russia, France, and the U.S., each with their own global agenda.

The “urgency of now” is felt in the Syrian cities of Madaya, Zabadani, Douma and Idlib presently under siege, where war correspondents report emaciated residents “looking like walking corpses,” reminiscent of Srebrenica. They are resorting to crossing minefields in search of food, and eating leaves.

The “urgency of now” to show human solidarity has even shaken up a conservative evangelical Christian school, Wheaton College, in Illinois, where an African American, Larycia Hawkins, expressed her solidarity with Muslims under attack here and abroad. This is a labor issue, because the price for speaking out is the loss of her job, despite her tenure as an Associate Professor at Wheaton.

Hawkins was charged with “apostasy” when she publicly declared, as Pope Francis had, that “We [Christians and Muslims] worship the same God.” She delivered public statements challenging “the racist xenophobia of political candidates, senators, and real-estate moguls...towards Muslim refugees” and her declaration of “solidarity with Muslim brothers and sisters.”

For Hawkins this was “intended to be a way of walking a mile in my Muslim sisters’ shoes. I think that’s Sermon on the Mount Christianity.” Hawkins questioned whether tenure means anything if it doesn’t protect the intellectual and religious freedom of educators like herself.

FREE SPEECH ON THE JOB?

The lack of freedom to speak is a form of alienation in her job. We rank-and-file workers know there is no freedom of speech or democracy in the workplace. While our speech is muzzled, we speak among ourselves about the extreme tension we are under, feeling the “urgency of now” to provide care for our patients.

Dr. King, in his 1967 Riverside speech in solidarity with the Vietnamese people and the young U.S. soldiers who were made to participate in militarized violence in a foreign land, spoke of the “three evils in society: militarism, racism and poverty.” King never separated his opposition to militarism from his campaign to eradicate racism and poverty. He declared, “I’ve fought too long and too hard to make that separation now.” For that refusal and steadfast embrace of humanity and principle, King was criticized and made a pariah by some participants in the Civil Rights Movement.

Today we, too, do not want to separate expressions of solidarity with the suffering around the world from the struggle to be human beings in our everyday lives.

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: In honor of Olga Domanski, we present half of her summary of the series of six lectures on "Women as Thinkers and as Revolutionaries" given by Raya Dunayevskaya in Fall, 1975, for the Wayne State University-University of Michigan University Courses in Adult Education. The full summary is published in Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future by Raya Dunayevskaya, and is included in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #5363.

November 6, 1975

Dear Friends:

...The running theme throughout the entire series was the dual rhythm of revolution—as it is expressed in the movement from practice to theory AND the movement from theory to practice—seen in the movement of women throughout history. The lectures were thus the kind of extension of *Philosophy and Revolution* that deepened it so greatly that Raya Dunayevskaya is now considering these as the framework of a whole new book....

First, let's take the question of the fantastic amount of sheer "facts" Raya unearthed in her voluminous reading for the course. (The bibliography for the series is an education in itself—and she expanded it greatly at every lecture.) Never was it clearer to me what Hegel means when he describes facts as "emerging out of ground." Think of the way Raya took both the "facts" that have been buried in the countless different books she read, and the facts that all of us have heard so often we may think we know them by heart, and presented them in so new a relationship with all the other facts of history and philosophy that something totally new is seen in them.

Take the two lectures on Working Women and on the Black Dimension. Raya traveled in the lecture on *Working Women* all the way from 1647 (when the first maids' petition was handed to the British Parliament to demand "liberty every second Tuesday") to our own period of the 1950s, '60s and '70s (when she deals with the seamstress Rosa Parks who started the Black Revolution, the electrical worker Angela Terrano who talks about Automation in *Marxism and Freedom*, and the recent developments in the Coalition of Labor Union Women)—all to show how critical it is to grasp what comes from practice and from "gaining a mind of one's own."

As Raya puts it: though intellectuals may love the expression "in the beginning was the word," the truth is that in the beginning was *labor*, the *deed*—and not just as source for someone else's word, but as *Subject*.

Dunayevskaya takes us from the 17th century through the 18th, and we meet everyone from the indentured servants of the American Revolution to Mary Wollstonecraft—but she dwells on the 19th and 20th centuries because it is there that we have, finally, the *mass movements* as creative power.

THE FIRST GREAT WOMEN'S STRIKE in America of mill workers in 1824 and the climax in the First Female Reform Association in 1844, the 1848 revolutions in Europe and the Seneca Falls Convention in America, are all put in the historic framework not only of Karl Marx's discovery of a new continent of thought, but of Flora Tristan's call for a Workingman's International that predated Marx's call by two decades, to demonstrate that when the desire for freedom is this powerful, it is "in the air" everywhere at once, and the intellectual catches it in thought because so many workers have done it in deed for so many years before.

And the story does not stop there. We see what happens when the revolutions of 1848 are defeated. The counter-revolution takes its toll, but something new that has been born cannot be totally crushed, it still stirs underground—and it bursts forth in everything from the Taiping Rebellion in China to the Civil War in the U.S., only *after* which can the National Labor Union arise. This great bursting forth of the labor movement is not "impersonal"—we see it in the struggles of Augusta Lewis who helped to organize the first printers' union when the Knights of Labor had 50,000 women members, and Clara Lemlich who called for the first general strike the East Coast ever saw, and Rose Schneiderman who organized 120,000 as a funeral for the 146 workers, mainly women, who died in the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, not only to mourn but to express solidarity with the unorganized workers of 1911.

Or take the lecture on the *Black Dimension*, which Dunayevskaya presented as a good time to learn a new language—the language of thought, Black thought. She developed the concept of "time as the space for human development" by concentrating on specific historic turning points and what they meant.

Women as thinkers/revolutionaries

It was because of their integral connection with each of these historic points that six Black men were brought into this lecture: Nat Turner, 1831; Frederick Douglass, 1848 and 1867; W.E.B. Du Bois, Marcus Garvey, and Claude McKay, 1919; and Frantz Fanon, the 1960s.

The theme throughout was the activity of Black women not only as bravery but as thought, and their story not only as suffering but as creativity, the creativity of new ideas and of new forms of struggle.

Thus, it was after Nat Turner's hanging that the question to be answered was how to transcend the isolated slave revolts in order to end slavery, and the new form created was the Underground Railroad, of which the most famous conductor was Harriet Tubman. But when we hear of her in history, she is not presented as a thinker and a leader—of both men and women, both Blacks and whites.

IN THE SAME WAY when we hear of Sojourner Truth we hear of her courage, but not of her tremendous thought, or the philosophy she carried in her very name. Nor are we made aware that though it was a Black man, Frederick Douglass, who was the only one who would agree to chair the first meeting of the women to discuss their rights *as women*, by the time it came to 1867 even Douglass said that though he agreed "in principle" that the women should have the vote, it was not the time. It was then that Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth refused to accept his leadership, terming even



Picket line of Black women tobacco workers striking in Richmond, Va., in 1937.

the Black man "short-minded" and remaining with the white women in their struggles to the very end.

When we get to the 1880s and '90s and the Blacks are supposedly free but have not got their 40 acres and a mule—they get instead the KKK and lynchings as the turn of white civilization—a new stage begins. At the turn of the century W.E.B. Du Bois begins to fight against Booker T. Washington's philosophy, and the Niagara movement is organized. We do not hear of Ida B. Wells, a cofounder of the organization and editor of their publication—but it was she who separated from Du Bois because she thought the organization too mild.

Du Bois believed that every culture has its "talented tenth," and it is the Black intellectuals who will bring freedom to the masses. Wells didn't. And we will soon see how the talented tenth, in fact, worked *against* the masses.

We will see that just as the 19th century was a century of genius, the 20th century divides into two, not on the question of "genius" but on the question of nationalism and internationalism. The two Black men who enter history here are Marcus Garvey and Claude McKay. Garvey was a relatively uneducated West Indian and McKay was a poet, a Marxist, an internationalist. Like Du Bois he was an educated intellectual, but unlike Du Bois he recognized what Garvey represented—the Black pride expressed in nationalism and the creativity that saw six million Blacks flock to Garvey in 1919 when the KKK had blood flowing in the streets and everyone was saying the Blacks couldn't be organized. Contrast that to Du Bois, who was so ashamed of Garvey and the "uneducated" ones that he actually tried to help the government deport Garvey.

How clear it is that literacy has nothing to do with creativity is shown in everything from the 1929 Aba Riots in Nigeria, when the Nigerian women the British tried to tax defeated not only British imperialism and their own chiefs, but created a solidarity among all the tribes, to the strike in North Carolina in 1937 when the Black tobacco workers were told by everyone that they couldn't win—in the South, all women, and all Black—and thereupon organized themselves and won.

At every stage we have a history of the bravery and the thought and the philosophy of Black women—who have not hesitated, either, to break with their own Black men, whether it was Amy Jacques Garvey in 1919, who edited a woman's page in the *Negro World*

and, criticizing the Negro men as too halting, wrote "Mr. Black Man, watch your step!"—or whether it was the Black Panther women who challenged the Panther men when they were ready to give over the women's time on an agenda to Herbert Aptheker.

The women who fill the 1960s are so great and so many it is impossible to begin to name them, but they stretch from Gloria Richardson, Daisy Bates, and Rosa Parks all the way to Joan Little. When we see, despite all this history, a book produced called *Chronicles of Black Protest* that does not include a single woman's voice—not even Harriet Tubman or Sojourner Truth, who rate only a picture—it becomes clear why Doris Wright's question—"When the time comes to put down the gun, will you shove a broom in my hands?"—is not a matter of putting a precondition on her activity for revolution, but a matter of posing the question of What Comes After? as the question we have to answer now.

It is again the relationship of theory to practice that is the red thread running through the lectures on Women Theorists Today and on Literature and Revolution....At the lecture on the *Women Theorists Today* we were told from the start that we would be discovering what is meant by theory *rooted in philosophy* and "theory" which is not....

Which brings us, finally, to the very first lecture—and to the final one; the two are as intimately connected, I feel, as are the first and last chapters of *Philosophy and Revolution*. The very first lecture on *Russia, 1917; Germany, 1919; Portugal, 1975*, plunged us into revolution as act and as consciousness—but so tightly merged that each became something other than what it started out, as dialectics led the participants to great, new creativity. Raya took up 1917 as Revolution, 1919 as Counterrevolution, and 1975 as ongoing Revolution, which has yet to run its course....

It was this to which we returned again, directly, in the final lecture on *Philosophy and Revolution*, as we reviewed the double rhythm of the movement from practice to theory and from theory to practice, each of which is irreducible, and the unity of which is what, alone, creates something new.

We were shown 1789 as more important for us than 1776 because 1789 was against the enemy inside and created a new way of knowing. We were shown the French Revolution as not only giving birth to Hegel's great philosophy, but to everything from Mary Wollstonecraft's writing in Britain to Beethoven's music in Austria. We were introduced to Hegel's categories in the *Phenomenology of Mind* and to the new alienations that Spirit is constantly experiencing.

We saw tragedy as facing the fact that one age is passing and another coming, and great literature as arriving when you have great crises in the objective world. We saw time as both the continuity of history and as the place for human development.

WE WERE FACED WITH WHY none of the women theorists have seen what has come from the movement from practice, and how it is *philosophy* that creates the humus for everything else. We reviewed the three most important Hegelian categories of Universal, Particular, and Individual, and saw Universal as what we are striving for, but as abstract; Particular as the first concretization; and Individual as the highest point of the concrete when you are actually *living* the new relations.

We saw 1968 as supposedly the highpoint of the New Left Revolution of the 1960s, but were confronted with recognizing that 1970 was the highpoint of the counterrevolution—not because of Kent State only, but far worse because of Jackson, Miss., and the break that came within the movement between white and Black. And we were able to see that this is what has also happened in the Women's

Liberation Movement, which has suffered from its own "fixed Particular."

After Dunayevskaya went into Sartre's male chauvinism with some amazing quotations from his works, we could understand that the fixed Particular for Simone de Beauvoir was Existentialism, just as for other women theorists it has turned out to be "party-to-lead" because they all consider women as backward. Their maternalism is worse than paternalism—and their direction is all away from the actual movement from below.

After the impact of these six tremendous lectures, the final paragraph of *Philosophy and Revolution* surely had a deeper meaning for all:

"Ours is the age that can meet the challenge of the times when we work out so new a relationship of theory to practice that the proof of the unity is in the Subject's own self-development. *Philosophy and revolution will first then liberate the innate talents of men and women who will become whole. Whether or not we recognize that this is the task history has 'assigned' to our epoch, it is a task that remains to be done.*"...

Yours, Olga



Flora Tristan

Olga Domanski, secretary to Raya Dunayevskaya

continued from p. 1 running.

For a quarter of a century, Domanski as a national organizer was essential to continuing News and Letters Committees and Marxist-Humanism after the 1987 death of its founder, Dunayevskaya. Throughout that time, she was preoccupied with the philosophical and practical question of continuity and discontinuity—after such a profound rupture as the death of a founder, how to work out “continuity with the historic course of human development,” that is, with the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism.

Thanks to Domanski, News and Letters Committees still functions, and has had opportunity to demonstrate Marxist-Humanism’s historic right to exist in turning points like the struggles in Bosnia in the 1990s and in Syria today, even as other revolutionaries outside and even within the organization were failing that test. Her fidelity and principled commitment to the vision and philosophy of freedom developed by Dunayevskaya never wavered.

DOMANSKI AFTER DUNAYEVSKAYA

In fact, immediately after Dunayevskaya’s death, one of her very last writings, her June 1, 1987, presentation on dialectics of philosophy and organization, was singled out by Domanski as crucial. She spoke of the need to “inwardize” it, and saw it as “both a profound testament and perspectives for us.” Shortly thereafter, she was one of two or three comrades who proposed publishing it together with the May 1953 letters establishing Dunayevskaya’s philosophical breakthrough, in the book titled *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, January 1989).

And when a minority within News and Letters Committees attempted to sabotage the newspaper after they failed to take over the organization and push Domanski out, and then they resigned—having evaded a principled debate on ideas—she is the one who wrote the June 2, 2008, “Open Letter to all Friends and Supporters of News and Letters.” It reaffirmed the organization’s commitment to “the principles established by the founder of Marxist-Humanism [which] were what we saw as guiding us to a new and higher point in our quest to become continuators of the movement founded as accepting responsibility for Marx’s philosophy of the unity of theory and practice.”

RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA MEMORIAL FUND

Domanski was instrumental in establishing the Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund in 1987 to preserve and present Dunayevskaya’s papers to her Archives, to assure that her published writings remain in print, and to encourage research into her works and ideas. She served as one of the Fund’s Trustees from its founding until 2015.

Domanski was a founding member of Women’s Liberation—News & Letters Committees in 1971, having contributed to *Notes on Women’s Liberation: We Speak in Many Voices* in 1970 with “Pages from a Shop Diary” of her experiences as an autoworker at GM in Flint, Mich. Dunayevskaya was determined that Domanski’s writings be recognized, and included two articles she wrote in *Women’s Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*. Self-promotion was anathema to Domanski, whose modesty was part of her self-discipline that always put responsibility for the philosophy of



Raya Dunayevskaya and Olga Domanski in 1979.

Marxist-Humanism and its organization ahead of ego.

Her powerful leads, editorials and activity articles and articles that she elicited from workers, including miners, and others speaking for themselves, helped shape *News & Letters* as a Marxist-Humanist newspaper that met the objective situation with a philosophy unseparated from the movement from practice. (See pages 2 and 4 for examples of how philosophical her writings could be. An essay by Domanski on women’s liberation and Hegel’s notion of life will appear in the March-April issue.) At times she served on the Philosophic-Technical Committee that produces the paper, and for decades she edited the Readers’ Views section.

Domanski’s friendships and correspondence with a wide array of activists, revolutionaries and critical thinkers—including members of News and Letters Committees—have encompassed over the years Adrienne Rich, Gloria Joseph, Phyllis Jordan, Narihiko Ito and Laszlo Gati. Domanski will be missed greatly not only by all of us in News and Letters Committees, but by so many others whose lives she transformed.

Let us honor Domanski by continuing the organization, projecting the body of ideas so dear to her, preparing for the revolutions to come, and holding out a banner for the new human society to which she dedicated her life.

—Franklin Dmitryev, for the Resident Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees

Comrades and friends remember Olga

It is impossible to detail the full and rich life of Olga Domanski, who passionately embraced the philosophy, politics and organization of Marxist-Humanism since its inception in 1955. Others have dealt with these aspects of her life, so I will make a few observations not widely known.

When Raya Dunayevskaya was writing *Marxism and Freedom* and finished a few chapters, she sent them to West Virginia, where Olga and I had established a News and Letters Committees local among students and coal miners. In keeping with our perspective and emphasis on workers, Raya’s idea was to have miners read them, then set up a meeting to have a full discussion. We had several dozen miners at that meeting.

When the book was published, the Local scheduled classes on it and reached the concept of “transformation into opposite.” The college students saw it as an abstraction that they didn’t understand whereas a miner said, “You mean like a guy who is a good union fighter, and is made a boss, then becomes a real slave driver.” What was an abstraction to the students was a common concrete experience to the miner. Olga never tired of telling that story.

Olga worked daily with Raya, yet was always there for our daughter, Erica, whether it was a major activity in kindergarten, grade school, junior high school, high school, college, getting her doctorate and throughout her life. Of course, it helped that Olga had an understanding “boss,” Raya. During the last years of Olga’s life, Erica reciprocated by providing Olga all that she needed.

‘I HELPED RAYA’

Olga also handled all of the family finances. All I did was give my paycheck to her. Many times that paycheck was very meager, especially when the mines were working only one or two days a week or I had a job making so little that she had to temporarily go to work. It always amazed me how much she could do with so little.

Before she died, Olga gave instructions on what was to be done with her remains: her body was to go for medical research, the unused parts were to be cremated and buried next to Raya, with a tombstone inscribed “I helped Raya.” In death as in life, Olga will be close to Raya—in perpetuity.

Andy Phillips
Detroit, Mich.

Editor’s note: Below are excerpts from a longer poem.
What hope is there for us?

Only the power of our ideas
The dedication of our members
The sacrifices we will all make
The banner that we will lift aloft
Of a liberating revolution

I don’t know if I will live to see it
But the death of a comrade
Spurs me on so that
Their life and death will not be
In vain.

Natalia Spiegel
New York City

We—Amy Garrison and Brown Douglas—met each other in Memphis in the early 2000s as young radicals intent on learning revolutionary ideas. One of us was involved in News and Letters Committees as a Youth columnist, while the other was an enthusiastic friend of the Memphis Local and briefly a member.

We knew Olga from national gatherings and from the many correspondences we had with her in the course of being active with the Committees. Olga was not only very fond of the youth in News and Letters Committees, but really any youth that came around who wanted to talk seriously about ideas.

OLGA WAS ON YOUR SIDE

It was no small thing to know that Olga was on your side: here’s this revolutionary who was there with the Johnson-Forest Tendency, and there as a founding member of Marxist-Humanism, and she intently wanted to know what you thought about something political or philosophical. It was fantastic. Any importance associated with our age differences dissipated as we became friends and comrades.

Olga made us feel like we mattered, and warmly so. At the end of every national gathering, she addressed the room and told us how precious Marxist-Humanists were, as we were comparatively few but passionate about our unique concept of freedom and revolution.

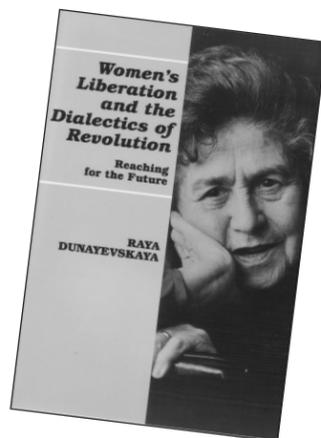
We want to make sure everyone knows how precious Olga was to us and how grateful we are to have known and worked with her.

—Brown Douglas and Amy Garrison

Remembrances are continued on page 10. Because of the desire of others to share their memories of Olga, our memorial to her will continue in the March-April issue, so there is still time to send your thoughts.

Special Offers: Read more of Olga Domanski’s Marxist-Humanist writings in these publications:

Women’s Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future by Raya Dunayevskaya contains two contributions by Domanski: “A Summary of Six Lectures for International Women’s Year (1975)” and “Women’s Liberation in Search of a Theory: The Summary of a Decade.” \$25 for the book includes a free one year subscription to *News & Letters*.



Bound Volumes of *News & Letters* contain numerous Leads, Editorials and articles by Olga Domanski. They are as well a history of labor, Black, youth, and women’s struggles throughout the decades, including subjects of revolution speaking for themselves unseparated from theory and the philosophy of Marxist Humanism.

1977-84, 1984-87, 1987-94, 1994-99,
2000-2010 \$70.00 each, includes a year’s

subscription to *News & Letters* and a copy of *Women’s Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*.

To order, see literature offers on page 7.

CALIFORNIA PRISONERS BATTLE BARBARIC 'JUSTICE' SYSTEM

Urszula Wislanka's lead article on "California Prisoners battle barbaric U.S. 'justice' system" (Nov.-Dec. 2015 *N&L*) is spot on and it warmed my heart as I read it!

**Todd A.
Pelican Bay, Calif.**

Wislanka's article was a powerful statement of what's happening in California per the Security Housing Units. All 50 states to some degree (and the Feds) have been using the same conditions. It's unfortunate they don't have the advocacy to address the situation, or the solidarity of the California prisoners. Segregation is used to break the will of men and women in prison, and families of prisoners are under attack financially. Nearly every state has shares in private prison enterprises, whether in support of corporations like the CCA, or overcharging for phones, canteen items or property. Companies like Access Keefe, Union Supply, J.L. Marcus know they can make a killing off of prisoners and prisoners' families through backdoor deals that—in a civilized world—would be a criminal enterprise.

**Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin**

One of the things I like about *N&L* is how articles often will bring in the "universal" aspect. It's important to note that anti-solitary struggles are also going on in other places besides California.

**Reader
New York**

Wislanka's article is one of the best leads I have read in *N&L*. It focuses on prisoners' voices and actions as a form of theory. We know the "evil people" are

"evil." What needs attention is what the masses are doing about this, and how these actions have the seed of a philosophy of liberation. This lead is clearly the product of a direct interchange with the prisoner movement in California, hearing them, thinking, rethinking. This goes with the excellent "coverage" that *N&L* has every issue of prisoners speaking for themselves as revolutionary subjects. It is not Wislanka's "genius" that has come to this conclusion, but the prisoners themselves, in their thoughts and actions against solitary confinement. She has "just" made explicit what was already there.

**Héctor
Mexico City**



AGAINST ISIS ATTACKS

Great web statement! ("Against ISIS attacks in Paris and Beirut: Counter-revolution must be defeated everywhere!") Especially the emphasis on the revolutionary humanist uprisings in Syria and Turkey; their vision of a human-based society instead of capitalistic alienation, war and poverty and how the reaction in the U.S. Congress against the Syrian refugees is a step on the road to fascism. Thanks.

**Reader
Detroit**

Pray, curse, send good karma, hope, love, whatever you can to our sisters and brothers in Paris and Beirut. It's not going to change a damn thing, but at the moment, these things are all we've got to give. We need a revolution; a revolution in permanence; one that is ongoing in thought and action; one that never

OLGA DOMANSKI'S REVOLUTIONARY LIFE, 1923-2015

Olga hitched her star to **Raya Dunayevskaya's** vision of human liberation and never EVER let go. She was the operational definition of **organizational** responsibility for Marxist-Humanism. The world will never know another like her.

**Erica Rae
Chicago**

When I arrived at News and Letters Committees decades ago, Olga's was the warmest welcome one could possibly imagine. She showed a keen interest in what I and others had to say. Such good listeners are few. She worked hard, but knew when to enjoy life. She stood by her word. In day-to-day matters, she took the high ground. I do not remember a single moment of pettiness on her part. She was not one to jump to conclusions, and would get the facts before making decisions.

Olga also had the rare quality of being comfortable among intellectuals and in the blue-collar world, of bridging that gap to the great benefit of colleagues. I could speak freely with her about my work, which I could not do with a lot of others. She had her own often earthy stories about her job experiences. She was not squeamish about anything, and had an amazing sense of humor. There was often a lot of laughter when you worked with her. She saw the humor and relevance of a lot of counter-cultural resistance to capitalism, whether satire and comedians, "beat" culture, punks, or other such iconoclastic things. I appreciated her opposition to racism, and that she did not put up with snobbery against poor whites, nor the derogatory word "hill-billy." For someone from my own background, this was important. Not least, anyone at her home knew her hospitality and her great cooking.

I feel sadness at her passing—I can't help it. She was so much fun, such a joy to be around. And as an activist and thinker, and as a personality, she will always be an example that I will try to live up to.

**D. Chêneville
Oakland, Calif.**

Comrade Olga Domanski was one of the most genuine and down-to-earth

persons I have known. She devoted her life to the proletarian movement for over 70 years, creating a legacy that will never die. Olga knew how to motivate people, to make them feel valued, the mark of a leader. She inspired me, people in News and Letters Committees and beyond. I still have several of the post-it notes that she attached to copies of *N&L* mailed to me when I had a Reader's View or article inside.

Olga inherited the legacy of News and Letters from Raya Dunayevskaya and Charles Denby. She preserved and enlarged that legacy. It must have given her a lot of satisfaction to see the 60th year of publication of *N&L*—an accomplishment that cannot be overstated. When humankind finally emerges into the full light of day out from under the shadow of capitalism, Olga will be remembered as one of the pioneers who laid the groundwork for that glorious day. The roll call of the revolution will honor her name. Please accept my deepest condolences to all the comrades and friends who knew and loved Olga, especially to the Chicago comrades who worked with her closely over the years, especially her devoted daughter, Erica, and her own Andy. Rest in peace, dear and faithful Comrade.

**Curtis
Battle Creek, Mich.**

I am indeed sorry to hear Olga has passed and sorry for her friends and colleagues. My sincere condolences. I believe I'm a better person for knowing Olga. We were not close but we did get along very well, and for a number of years, we always met for lunch during the North American Labor History Conference in Detroit. It was the best part of the conference for me. She was a remarkable woman and I will think of her and keep her in my memory.

**Mike Smith, former director of Walter Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs
Michigan**

Enclosed is a small gift to honor Olga's life.

**Sue
Chicago**

READERS' VIEWS

stops. Otherwise, it will be us someday who need the prayers, cursing, good karma, hope and love. And it will be too late. We need a new society based on new human relationships and a new relationship with labor. Am I preaching? Too bad. Fascism is creeping in—just look at the Republican Party and what they are saying. We cannot be silent!

**Suzanne Rose
Springfield, Ill.**

There have been different responses to the attacks. The anti-Islamic view conflates the refugees who have escaped the wrath of ISIS, with the very people that forced their migration. The fascists and the far Islamic right share a lot in common—most importantly, the targets of their violence. The second camp insists that Islamophobia causes these attacks, which refuses to accept the complexities of the Muslim community. We, just like you, have our anti-fascists, leftists, liberals, moderate Islamists, libertarian Muslims, free market fundamentalists, feminists, etc. We are not either passive victims of Islamophobia or active militants. For those of us who have had friends and family killed by the far Islamic right, this coddling attitude keeps us alienated. We don't want sympathy; we want your solidarity in the fight against the closest thing to ever look like fascism. Where *Jacobin* Magazine says, "Beware of Islamophobia," a joint coalition of the Free Syrian Army and the Kurdish YPJ/YPG made up of Muslims, Christians, atheists are putting their lives on the line to fight ISIS and their ilk. The third camp is saying "but no one cares about non-white deaths." Can we not mourn for all? It is true, people of color are expendable, no one mourns for us. This kind of statement is spitting on the dignity of lives, it is reducing the dead to a polemic point about Imperialism.

**Mohammed
Pennsylvania**

WOMEN UNDER ATTACK

Obama's "State of the Union" had so many opportunities to address home-grown domestic terrorism broadly and realistically—specifically the Planned Parenthood attack that preceded San Bernardino by a few days. I was glad he was able to say the San Bernardino attack did not represent Islam in general nor Muslims. Would it have killed him to say the same thing about radicalized Christian fundamentalist ideology, which influenced Robert Dear and countless others? Couldn't Obama also have noted that like mainstream Muslims and Muslim leaders, Christians like those running our government and running for office have a responsibility to stop fueling terrorism by demonizing abortion, women, doctors, staff and Planned Parenthood in particular?



**Sonia
Chicago**

One day at the clinic where I escort women past anti-abortion fanatics, they argued with the cops for 40 minutes on their right to "freedom of speech" so as to keep standing in front of the clinic door with their big awful signs and their horrible pamphlets. They kept disobeying direct orders from the police to move. Our escort team agreed that had they been African American or Latino, there would have been no arguing, no disobeying, just arrest and probably worse. We also figured that if we used that same line about freedom of speech and protested in front of their churches about child molesters and yelled as people went in while holding signs about

child abusers there would probably be no arguing, no disobeying, just our arrests. I tried to pass out condoms by Holy Name Cathedral a few years back. I was threatened with arrest and I was across the street!

**Clinic escort
Chicago**

SUPPORT MAATI MONJIB

The historian Maati Monjib, Chair of Freedom Now, the Association for the Defence of Freedoms, lodged a complaint before Morocco's Public Prosecutor against the Moroccan website "Le360" for defamation following several articles denigrating him and members of his family. Prof. Monjib is being prosecuted for "undermining State Security" because of statements critical of the Moroccan government. Last October, he carried out a 24-day hunger strike to protest the illegal restriction forbidding him from leaving the country and other harassment by the Moroccan political police. The International Committee to Support Maati Monjib will resume a worldwide campaign asking the Moroccan government to drop the charges against him and his six comrades and to respect its obligations regarding human rights and public freedoms protected by the Moroccan Constitution and international conventions ratified by Morocco.

**The International Committee
to Support Maati Monjib**

THE BURMESE WAY

Along with tens of millions, I welcome Aung San Suu Kyi's and the NLD's electoral landslide in Burma. Yet the visage of Burmese fundamentalism is raging. The victorious NLD methodically purged Muslim candidates from their party. Back in the 1960s, the slogan of the Burmese regime was "Socialism the Burmese Way." In 1969, we minorities there experienced that by getting ethnically cleansed. After the 1960s, the junta didn't even try to maintain the pretense of socialism within their entrenched military dictatorship, they just screwed everybody. Today's echo from Suu Kyi's "peaceful coexistence" with the military regime's "disciplined democracy" has the eerie ring of "Socialism the Burmese Way." Will Suu Kyi's compromise with the military junta strangle Burma's nascent democratic movement victory as well?

**Htun Lin
S.F. Bay Area**

RACE, CLASS & POLITICS

I am alarmed by the Presidential debates, both Democratic and Republican. I was even taken aback by Bernie Sanders. He talks like FDR on domestic policies, but sounds like Warren Harding on foreign policy. He is talking about using Sweden as a model rather than reaching into the American roots of socialism, about which he seems to know little. He seems to have little awareness of racism; he runs on about the "middle class" and rarely refers to workers.

**Malcolm
California**

The Chicago police are hardly different from any other racist department of local government—from underfunded schools to inadequate health care facilities. Or, for that matter, from racist segregation in housing or last hired/first fired, or all the mean little techniques of cultural denigration, marginalization and limitation that operate throughout U.S. culture even now—and without which the more obvious vulgarities of a racist demagogue like Donald Trump would be impossible.

**Gerry Emmett
Chicago**

PHILOSOPHY, THEORY AND NEWS & LETTERS

The relation between particular and universal couldn't be more clearly stated than in the letter from a Chicano prisoner saying The Raza needs theory: "We all have the same oppressor, but there are issues that are unique to our existence, which we need to learn in order to overcome." We can get lost in the abstraction of "We are all humans." Yes, but we have to go deeper than that. Chican@s have "issues that are unique to our existence." Just rising from that particular struggle, can a concrete universal be achieved?



**Héctor
Mexico City**

Terry Moon scared me by starting with a quote from Karl Marx's *Grundrisse*, but her letter to the readers ("Philosophic basis of *News & Letters*") was one of the best, most coherent and well laid-out articles to appear in the newspaper recently.

**Natalia
Queens**

Ron Kelch's philosophical dialogue ("Behind Markovic's turn to fascism was rift with Marx's humanism," Nov.-Dec. 2015 *N&L*) has a particular import to the dilemma of unfreedom that has humanity ensnared. Why do these catastrophes continue to haunt humanity? The writer believes an answer exists in the context of this philosophical dialogue. The principle which explicitly sets a Marxist organization apart from all other tendencies is the universal, self-determining, free, conscious activity as the first necessity of life. This universal shaped Marx's life of revolutionary theory and practice, including a key to realize freedom in a post-capitalist society. Many Leftist tendencies are bereft of a revolutionary philosophy, which speaks to why humanity has had to continuously witness the revolutionary process turned into its opposite: a barbaric counter-revolution. Marx's revolutionary philosophy gives humanity a way forward.

**Faruq
Represa, Calif.**

Mihailo Markovic became an accomplice, an architect, of the 1990s genocide in Bosnia and the rest of what had been Yugoslavia. That is his real crime. The idea that there is a link between this degeneration of his thought and some inadequacy in his philosophy from the 1960s is interesting, but the philosophic dialogue makes no argument to show such a connection. Degeneration of thought is not a unilinear phenomenon flowing inexorably from a philosophical error. Nor does the article make clear what "halfway dialectic" can be found in Markovic. Too much depends on reading the word "immediately" from one sentence as if it implies excluding mediation from Marx's dialectic and limiting it to action. The criticized sentence intends to contrast Marx's dialectic as "activist and revolutionary" as against a reified, closed methodology.

**Franklin Dmitryev
Chicago**

Kelch's essay does not purport to show a causal link between Markovic's interpretation of Marx and his turn to a genocidal criminal. He showed how neither Markovic nor *News and Letters* Committees measured up to the uniqueness of Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism, which would help us to not fall into the many traps that lay in wait, the pitfalls of a "dialectic" that does not go all the way to Absolute Negativity in the form of self-referred negation which is also a self-determination of Marx's own humanism. Rearticulating the importance of "free conscious activity as the first necessity of life" has stood out for me since we re-read the 1844 Essays.

**Urszula Wislanka
Oakland, Calif.**

FLINT PART II

Michigan's Department of Environmental Quality, which made such a catastrophe in Flint, approved the petition of the Marathon Oil Refinery in Southwest Detroit to increase the release of

sulfur dioxide into the ZIP code with the most polluted air in the U.S.: 48217. One Black woman interviewed said, "This is Flint Part II." One of the Emergency Managers in Flint who didn't heed citizen complaints about the water is Darnell Earley, now manager of Detroit Public Schools, who is excoriating the teachers for holding "sickouts" since the first of the year.

**Susan Van Gelder
Detroit**

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's attorneys filed a lawsuit against the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for grossly inadequate medical care for Abu-Jamal's Hepatitis C. In March, three years after he was diagnosed, an unconscious Mumia was rushed to the hospital. Despite the fact that his kidneys were failing and his blood sugar level was extremely high, he was neither treated nor informed about his condition. More than one-fifth of U.S. prisoners have Hepatitis C. Prison officials are reluctant to treat it with the expensive FDA-approved antiviral treatment. Since 1982, Abu-Jamal has been in prison without chance for parole, convicted at a trial that Amnesty International said didn't meet international standards. All prisoners deserve quality healthcare and fair trials! To get involved go to <http://www.freemumia.com>.

Mumia supporter from Japan

VOICES FROM BEHIND THE BARS

This paper helps me not only to be aware of what's happening in other prisons, but also that I'm not alone in what we go through "inside." "California prisons' punitive 'wellness checks'" (Sept.-Oct. 2015 *N&L*) shows we're not alone as women. We have the "wellness checks" too. So, thank you for your newspaper, your writers, your donors, your compassion, and help.

**Woman prisoner
Chowchilla, Calif.**

Ideas are made real by how we act, especially toward each other. In order to act as a self-determining agent of one's destiny we have to learn through our

mistakes. I was incarcerated at a young age. I didn't realize how destructive to my family and myself I was. In prison I had to look within myself. After that I was able to look outward and see the true face of the power of the state, how the prison system tries to manipulate our minds by controlling our behavior and who our enemies are. We must come together to formulate a stand like the hunger strikes.



How can we get young prisoners to want to change? They leave prison with no education and go out into society without a care for anyone, including themselves.

**Prisoner
Blythe, Calif.**

From the perspective of the rulers of this world we are all criminals (at least potentially), because we are all potentially capable of seeing through the veil of the law, choosing to ignore it, and taking back moments of our lives whenever we can on our own terms. This law, and the social order of property and power which require it, makes us equal precisely by criminalizing us. There is only one way to respond. We must attack this society and destroy it.

**Rand Gould
Upper Peninsula, Mich.**

I came across an issue of your newspaper, the contents of which proved stimulating. The perspective termed "humanist" piqued my interest. My understanding of Marxist analysis has admittedly been heavily influenced by Louis Althusser's readings. Though I abstain from subscribing to much of his thought, it is his notion of "interpellation" which to this day I find illuminating. This notion has contributed, not without foundation, to the characterization of his thought as "anti-humanist." I am interested in the news as well as the "humanist" lens through which it is viewed. Thus I would like to request a subscription to your paper.

**Prisoner
Calipatria, Calif.**

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Prisoner beats legal odds to win guard retaliation suit

San Francisco—A most remarkable trial started on Nov. 16, 2015. A federal judge found that a prisoner's story was believable enough that a jury should hear it.

Jesse Perez, 35, has been imprisoned since age 15. In 2003 he was "validated" as a gang member and sent to solitary confinement at the notorious Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit (SHU). He challenged the baseless validation in court in 2005. He participated in all three of the historic hunger strikes in 2011 and 2013.

Seeing the mood in the country change because of the hunger strikes, in 2013 the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCr) settled his case by agreeing to re-examine his status.

Guards at the prison, not happy with the outcome of the legal case, raided his cell, sought to humiliate him and his roommate, destroyed all his property, and promised he would stay in solitary forever. To make good on that promise, they filed a made-up rules violation report (RVR).

LYING, THIEVING GUARDS

That a judge found a prisoner's claim of retaliation by guards compelling enough to be heard is rare.

All a prison's lawyers have to say is that a convicted criminal is complaining about his treatment by law-abiding guards. In this case, the lawyer argued that the guards did nothing wrong and followed standard pro-



Jesse Perez after proving prison guards had retaliated against him, destroyed all his property, and lied to keep him in solitary.

cedures. In the vast majority of cases, the judge agrees with the prison and the complaint is dismissed.

The lawyers for Mr. Perez presented his case: convicted as a youth, he used his time in prison to improve himself, becoming a jailhouse lawyer and helping others file their appeals. Helping other prisoners was undoubtedly what earned him the validation as "dangerous."

By filing this lawsuit, Mr. Perez writes he was seeking "to shine a public light at trial and rein in what prisoner activists often endure in exercising their constitutional rights: the retaliatory abuse of the department's disciplinary process by prison guards.... As prisoner activists seeking to make positive contributions to the interest and human dignity of prisoners, we understand that the trappings of power enjoyed by guards represent the biggest obstacle to significant and lasting progress."

Mr. Perez testified to his reasons for filing the lawsuit. To his attorney's question, "So are we here today because one day your cell wasn't as neat as it was the day before?" he replied:

"Not at all.... Our system of law requires prisoners like me and many others to surrender

our freedom, but our laws do not require us, and we refuse to surrender our human dignity or the minimal constitutional rights that we retain even after crossing the prison gates.

INVADING LAST BIT OF LIFE IN SOLITARY

"So for me, we're here because prison officials decided to punish me for exercising my constitutional right to file a lawsuit against their colleague. They threatened Rudy [his cellmate] and me. They unnecessarily con-

China in crisis moves to crush dissent

In the face of an upsurge of strikes by China's industrial workers, as export production has dropped and the entire economy has shrunk, China struck back with new weapons against the spread of job actions and demonstrations. The insistence on stamping out dissent has made opponents in Hong Kong, with its legally separate system, added targets of this campaign.

The explosion in job actions in the last year was partly fueled by factory shutdowns as bankruptcies spread. About 13 major electronics manufacturers failed in 2015 in Shenzhen alone, according to the Shanghai-based *National Business Daily*. Workers battled the owners of shuttering factories for their legally entitled severance pay, and even weeks of back wages. Strikes doubled to 2,774 in 2015 compared to the year before, according to China Labor Bulletin.

WORKERS WIN RAISES AGAINST ALL ODDS

Chinese workers, denied union protection until 2008, then facing official union hacks as well as bosses in order to strike, still have forced real wages to quadruple since 2001. Devaluations of the yuan in response to production drops and stock market crashes are one cudgel against workers by chipping away at those wage gains, even as police have again fired at strikers and arrested those they single out as ringleaders.

In addition to arrests of labor and human rights lawyers last year, Chinese authorities detained almost 20 labor activists in December, eventually arresting four, mostly for inciting strikes. That means they were blaming outside agitators for what workers have been doing year after year, and trying to stifle workers' voices by silencing those who could help their voices be heard.

China's regime has begun to restrict free speech in Hong Kong. When Hong Kong returned to Chinese authority in 1997, it was under a "one country, two systems" policy that guaranteed financial and political autonomy for 50 years—until 2047. What was critical to China was not to protect people, though that allowed residents to commemorate the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre, but to protect capital in Hong Kong, which had been the key source of foreign capital in the first decade of making China the world's workshop.

But Hong Kong's leading English-language newspaper, *South China Morning Post*, is now owned by Weibo, the mainland search-engine giant. The hand of Beijing, which was occasionally seen in the handling of the 79-day Occupy Central protests in 2014, is now far from subtle as five associates of a bookseller intent on publishing a tell-all about Chairman Xi Jinping, have been kidnapped and spirited across the border. We will find out what the regime fears.

—Bob McGuire

fiscated important legal documents that I had. They trashed my cell. And then they wrote a false disciplinary report in order to keep me in solitary confinement.

"This is not just about a messy cell or some sort of inconvenience in having to defend against a trumped up RVR. This cell was my whole world for the multiple years that I was in there. It's the only space where I was able to experience the little bit of life that exists in solitary. They didn't just take my stuff. They took the only possessions that I had. It's all I had. So to me it was a huge deal.

"I think the officers' actions also represent the sort of backlash that prisoners often have to hazard when speaking out or exercising their constitutional rights. So to me, we're also here so that we can both inform and empower the public to deal with this continued corrupt course of conduct. Because, in our reality, the CDCr seems incapable or unwilling to do so. So that's why we're here."

Just getting the case heard in open court was a major victory. The prison enjoys an almost complete immunity from prosecution, no matter what illegal and inhuman conduct they inflict on prisoners. That any of it could be presented in public proceedings is remarkable and a hope for change. That the jury unanimously found that Perez' constitutional rights were violated and awarded him \$25,000 in damages is the icing on this story. It suggests that the public may be ready to address the inhumanity perpetrated in U.S. prisons.

—Urszula Wislanka

EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

time an on-duty CPD officer has been so charged since 1980, when three cops beat a man to death for smoking on a train.) Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy, who refused to resign, was fired. Democratic Party officials have distanced themselves from Alvarez and will challenge her upcoming re-election bid. The Department of Justice (DOJ) has also announced an investigation of the Chicago Police Department. None of this would have happened without mass protest.

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE

The Chicago Police have a long history of brutality. There is former detective Jon Burge, who, with other cops, tortured hundreds of Black men and boys; the police murders of Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark; the "police riot" at the 1968 Democratic Convention; and the Chicago practice of dropping Black youth off in known racist areas to be beaten and possibly killed. This inhuman history hardly distinguishes the Chicago Police from those of Milwaukee, Los Angeles, New Orleans, New York, Ferguson, Baltimore, Philadelphia or all the other scandal-ruling departments that have served the aims of the ruling class.

Police brutality is the "Abandon All Hope!" gateway into the genocidal prison system, too. The youth who challenge all by raising the banner of Black Lives Matter begin with the clear-eyed understanding that the current state of this society is the result of hundreds of years of development of a racist capitalism.

The young women and LGBTQI youth who provide leadership and energy to this movement represent something new, as well, and mark Black Lives Matter as a development from previous movements. This has led to tensions in some demonstrations, as in Chicago when older activists have tried to downplay the presence of these new voices.

A HISTORIC FREEDOM STRUGGLE

Significantly, new points of departure are being posited, as in this call for open community dialogue:

"The Mayor and the State's Attorney can fire all the top cops they want. The problem with the CPD remains systemic. The DOJ will not force the Mayor to stop allocating 40% of the city budget to CPD, and to re-open our neighborhood schools. The DOJ will not force the Mayor to raise the minimum wage to a livable wage. The DOJ won't force Anita Alvarez to pass legislation to stop the criminalization of youth, or to prosecute police that destroy our families and communities...

"Everyday people fed up with the systematic racism, disinvestment and brutality targeting our communities from the Police and City officials have gotten us this far. How do we continue to move further? Join us to discuss ending police terror and murder in our communities and demanding the creation of a society dedicated to our well-being and humanity." (Issued by Black Lives Matter, We Charge Genocide, Assata's Daughters, and Black Youth Project 100.)

The ruling class would like nothing better than to see the Black Lives Matter movement die. They are being judged for their present inhuman actions, and for the entire history of cruelty, genocide, and slavery that has brought them to the eminence they have enjoyed up to now. This movement and the generation of Black youth it springs from are putting American civilization on trial.

'Wellness check' is Orwellian for torture

Chowchilla, Calif.—On May 18, 2014, Central California Prison for Women (CCWF) instituted a "wellness check" procedure. The procedure stems from class action cases, which seek to improve the conditions of confinement in California prisons. The "wellness" checks are meant to decrease suicides while in custody. A guard is supposed to check each prisoner in a vulnerable population every half hour.

The prison installed metal buttons on the metal doors of prisoners' cells, which a guard is to touch with a metal pipe to prove a prisoner's status has been checked. In addition the guard carries a flashlight to see into the cell. The noise from main doors opening and closing every half hour, from stomping, from banging the pipe on the doors as guards hit (or miss) the buttons, beeping, indicating that check has registered, all are further exacerbated by guards shining the flashlight into prisoners' faces as they are trying to sleep.

The prisoners have been deprived of sleep since the procedure began. Sleep deprivation can lead to suicidal thoughts and/or tendencies. The way the "wellness" checks have been implemented is a further torture.

The women stated in a 602 (prisoners' complaint form) filed on June 24, 2014, after the system was instituted on CCWF's death row: "...We've been in [this housing unit] for decades (since 1991) and have had no suicides... It's not to point fingers at who's doing the pipe wrong or loudly...because people always make errors. Some use it as a torture tactic, because we are the 'row' and should be woken, and/or treated badly.

"The U.S. Federal Courts have said, 'Sleep is critical to human existence, and conditions that prevent sleep have been held to violate the Eighth Amendment...' It causes high blood pressure, seizures, uncontrolled blood sugar levels, stress, depression, etc. ... Many of us have histories of seizures. Flashing lights, banging on doors and lack of sleep have caused some of us to go into seizures, which can be hazardous.

"Some are having to raise/change meds just to cope, because of the monitoring/banging/beeping/flashlights. We're surprised nobody's had a heart attack yet....

"This is torture. We are being emotionally, mentally and physically battered by the security checks throughout the nights." Signed by the 19 death row prisoners.

The complaint was accompanied by detailed records of the exact times excessively loud banging was performed, and by whom. The first-level review of the complaint found that because the policy states that the checks at night are to be performed silently, therefore they are silent, and the complaint was dismissed. Subsequently the 602 complaint form was "lost" repeatedly in the system.

As of January the "wellness" checks are still depriving women of sleep. To support them, call the warden, Deborah K. Johnson at (559)665-5531, or the public information officer Lt. Brian Davi at (559)665-6002, Brian.Davi@cdcr.ca.gov.

—Urszula Wislanka

Detroit, Flint—water is a human right

Detroit—In November I attended 36th District Court here in support of the Homrich 9. Homrich contracts with the city of Detroit to shut off water to people with overdue bills. The protestors were arrested last June for stopping the Homrich trucks. The attorneys for Detroit Mayor Duggan and Michigan Governor Rick Snyder (aka “the looters”) objected to nearly everything the defendants raised. The looters’ attorneys objected to the language in the ordinance the defendants are accused of violating: the definition of neighborhood. Since the Homrich trucks were in an industrial zone where there are no residents, the attorneys for the shutoffs argued that the defendants disturbed the peace in a neighborhood, by the definition that did not require that people live there.

Further, the attorneys for fancy Washington D.C. law firm Jones Day/Duggan/Snyder (not to be confused with our city), also argued against the defendants using the following words in their testimony: Emergency Manager, Water is a Human Right, Water Affordability Plan, Water is a Right. The judge continuously addressed the looters’ mouthpieces’ objections by reminding them that this was only opening arguments.

They also argued against allowing jurors to see the Fox 2 news coverage of the demonstrations of the day of the arrest when thousands of people marched against the shutoffs, including The Hulk. You know things have gone sideways when the prosecutors don’t want to allow Fox 2 footage.

Bill Wylie-Kellermann represented himself brilliantly. John Royal represented Marian Kramer brilliantly.

ON THE SIDE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Lines are more clear than ever. The city’s attorney Butch Hollowell appeared briefly in court with the looters’ lawyers. There was a whole row of them. Our side is poor but on the side of righteousness. Who can shut off peoples’ water and show their faces in public? Remember that Duggan is the Democrats’ candidate for governor. Remember that Butch Hollowell is general counsel to the NAACP and also for the city of Detroit, now.

Governor Snyder’s actions towards Black majority cities: Flint, Benton Harbor, Muskegon Heights, Highland Park, Pontiac and Detroit should let us know that not only does he believe we don’t deserve water, we don’t deserve schools or the right to have an elected school board to make important decisions like the white districts get. Remember the atrocities committed against Detroit by Republicans and Democrats and who is complicit in these acts.

—Elena Herrada

Flint water poisons children

Flint, Mich.—The City of Flint reattached its water supply system to the Detroit system in October. However, lead levels remain high, because of the effect of huge amounts of chlorine on pipes connected with lead solder. When the City of Flint drew water from the Flint River, it used eight times as much chlorine as was present in water from the Detroit system. The new mayor, Karen Weaver, declared a state of emergency because of lead levels in the blood of Flint children, and she is trying to get the federal government to also declare a state of emergency. The Federal Emergency Management

Trans victims honored

New York City—On Nov. 18, the Audre Lorde Project organized the first event in New York honoring Transgender women murdered in the last year. Affirmations of solidarity with Trans and Gender Non-conforming people around the world included immigrants and people in prison. Everyone recited a collective affirmation. A slideshow with the faces of Trans women and men from around the world emphasized that the oppression and murder of Trans people is a global phenomenon.

TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

On Nov. 20, over 50 people attended a ceremony at Services & Advocacy for GLBT Elders (SAGE). A moment of silence honored the dead before a history of the Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR). The names and personal details of murdered women were read aloud. People sang “Amazing Grace” and shared memories of Trans people who died in the past. All were touched by the somberness of the event.

The same day, over 380 people at the 13th Street LGBT Center heard the names of murdered women from around the country read aloud. Speeches advocated a more vigorous campaign against violence directed at the Transgender community. There was a solemn prayer for those who had died in the last year.

That night, about 75 people gathered with candles on the steps of City Hall to commemorate TDOR in an event sponsored by the LGBT Caucus of the City Council. Islan Nettles, the mother of a Trans woman murdered more than two years ago in Harlem, was given a proclamation in her daughter’s memory by City Council members Carlos Menchaca and Corey Johnson, two out Gay men who identify as Trans allies.

—Natalia Spiegel

Administration has already delivered 28,000 liters of water to Flint.

According to a study released in September, the proportion of infants and children with above-average levels of lead in their blood nearly doubled after Flint began drawing water from the Flint River. Excessive lead in the blood can lead to brain damage, hypertension, anemia, kidney impairment and other health problems later in life. Flint residents are furious!

Estimates range from a few million dollars to \$1.5 billion for the cost of replacing the lead leaching pipes which probably have been damaged beyond repair by the corrosive Flint River water that went through them for a year and a half.

An internal e-mail by Michigan Gov. Snyder’s former chief of staff suggests that the governor was aware of the lead problem at least six months ago while the Department of Environmental Quality was telling Flint residents that the water was safe.

—Dan B.

EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

anti-Kurdish prejudice that exists in Turkey. This prejudice, along with many others, has been profoundly challenged by the Gezi Park movement in 2013 and more recent electoral advances of the HDP with its generally progressive pro-women, pro-gay, pro-working class agenda. Unfortunately, Erdogan’s racist tactics did gain his Justice and Development Party (AKP) votes in the last election.

‘TERRORISM’ AND HYPOCRISY

What Erdogan hasn’t done to any significant degree is curb the genuine terrorism of the “Islamic State.” ISIS bombings

have taken a tremendous toll in Ankara (99 dead), in Suruc (33 dead, 104 injured), and in Diyarbakir (4 killed, over 100 injured). All targeted peaceful rallies in solidarity with Kurdish self-determination and Turkish democracy. The HDP has been the most common target.

That Erdogan’s racist politics poisons the very idea of democracy is seen by the failure to defend revolutionary Syrian refugees from ISIS attacks, as well. Firas Hammadi and Ibrahim Abdulkader, editor and reporter for the pro-Syrian Revolution *Ayn Watan* newspaper, were beheaded in Sanliurfa province in October. Journalist Naji al-Jerf, who had exposed both ISIS and Assad regime atrocities, was assassinated in Gaziantep on Dec. 27 as he prepared to travel to France. A reactionary, anti-democratic government gives license to all other reactionary forces in bourgeois society.

‘RELIGION,’ CAPITALISM & REVOLUTION

Erdogan has no real defense for what he’s doing. All the powers that have congregated their bombers over Syria agree that while they may oppose particular enemies, they accept reaction in general if it helps to reimpose “order” and “stability.” If they must, they will accept ruined cities and exiled populations over freedom, dignity and revolution.

Behind the “religious” trappings of Erdogan’s AKP has always been unrestrained capitalism, the exploitation of workers and the destruction of nature. If one disregards similar rhetoric from Assad, and from the Iranian and Saudi governments, it is plain that they are also driven by this capitalist impulse. The same is true of Obama’s U.S. and Putin’s Russia. By no coincidence, all these states are also witness to increasing attacks on, and struggle over, the very concept of democracy.

ERDOGAN ATTACKS KURDISH DEMOCRACY

It is to the great credit of the Kurdish people that their struggle has found a specifically non-capitalist expression—not just in the mutable ideology of the PKK, but in the aspirations of grassroots activists. This can be the basis for new revolutionary developments if serious international dialogue can be opened among the freedom movements of the region and the world.

It isn’t just something that “should” happen, either. Erdogan’s attacks on the concept and reality of Kurdish self-determination—as an attack on Turkish democracy, workers, women, culture, the environment—reveal this need for dialogue as the deepest necessity of the Kurdish freedom struggle itself. As Frantz Fanon put it, “National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension.” Theoretical and practical lessons post-2011 have only served to deepen this insight.

HANDICAPTHIS!

by Suzanne Rose

Personal assistants for the disabled in Illinois were told they can’t work more than 40 hours a week. A new ruling by the U.S. Department of Labor says that Personal Assistants must be paid time and a half after 40 hours. The Illinois Department of Human Services does not want to pay overtime so they are capping hours at 40. This is a disaster for many personal assistants who work over 40 hours a week and can’t survive on less.

* * *

State lawmakers in Madison, Wisc., are seeking support for a bill that would require the state to adopt certain rules for investigating abuse and neglect when victims are children with disabilities. An investigation found that Wisconsin children with disabilities are dying despite repeated calls to child protective service agencies. In the last five years, 15 disabled children have died and nine others have been badly injured.

* * *

Thirteen activists of the December 3 Movement, an organization working for disability rights, were arrested on Jan. 5 while protesting and staging a fast at the State Commission for Differently Abled at K.K. Nagar in Chennai, India. On Sunday, an event was organized by the State Commission for the distribution of aid to the differently abled. Dozens of people with disabilities arrived at the venue, only to find that there were no ramps, no wheelchairs, or sign language interpreters.

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

There were some encouraging signs for Tunisia’s LGBTQ community, and then its Court of First Instance banned Queer rights group Shams for 30 days for not reporting support of homosexual rights in its founding documents. Shams was planning a protest against Article 230, which makes it illegal to commit homosexual acts in public, and the arrests late last year of men charged with doing exactly that. Fortunately, Tunisian LGBTQ rights group Damj continues to work on the presentation to the Constitutional Court to have Article 230 declared unconstitutional. Political party Jabha al-Shabiyah is supportive of Shams and Damj, and former Minister of Justice Mohamed Salah Ben Aissa said that homosexuality should be decriminalized. Letters in support of Shams can be sent to Tunisia’s President Beji Caid Essebsi, boc@pm.gov.tn or to Place du Gouvernement, La Kasbah, 1030 Tunis.

* * *

In Acapulco, Mexico, three participants at Tres Palos, Mexico’s Reina Gay festival, were murdered and five injured by gunmen who invaded the celebration. Rural schools near Acapulco either suspended classes or installed security due to increasing violence near the port of this Mexican city. Acapulco has the highest homicide rate in the country.

* * *

Employment discrimination against GLBT people has been made illegal by the Ukraine’s parliament. This is a hopeful move in a country with many anti-Queer laws and where Queer people are often harassed. The law may be the result of Ukraine trying to cooperate with the European Union’s human rights principles in order to gain visa-free travel within the EU. If Ukraine can pass an ENDA, why can’t the U.S.?

* * *

The National Organization for Marriage, a group opposed to same-sex marriage, raked in less than half of its fundraising goal after sending 12 donation solicitations in two weeks at the end of 2015.

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Witnessing revolution in Rojava

Editor's note: Paul Z. Simons, co-editor of Modern Slavery, went to Rojava in Syria in mid-2015 to report on the social revolution taking place there. Here we excerpt a talk he gave in Oakland on Dec. 5.

In Rojava, who is the enemy is real simple: the Turkish government. Everyone knows that the Turkish government has supported Daesh [also called ISIS]. If the outside world wants to support Rojava, it's not money they primarily need, it's opening the border.

Rojava is composed of three different autonomous cantons, Cizera, Kobane, and Afrin. They have their own command and control structures, their own YPG (People's Defense Units), YPJ (Women's Defense Units) and Asayish militias. I wanted to know if Rojava is a new nation-state, or is it something different? The first city I visited was Kobane.

THE SIEGE OF KOBANE

The siege of Kobane encouraged the formation of commune councils. While the siege was on, everyone saw the need for them. They took responsibility for everything from resolving people's marital issues to fuel, food, medicines, etc. To make the system responsive enough, they found that the maximum size should be no more than about 100 families, small enough to create social accountability. Family and friends, not the government, hold one to account.

Anyone can show up to sit on the council, it's not an elected position. But it must be at least 40% women or they can't make any formal decisions. The women's council in Kobane met just before I got there to discuss crimes against women: rape, domestic abuse, etc. The same women's group wants to form a special women's militia to investigate crimes against women.

Tev-Dem (The Movement for a Democratic Society) turns the ideas of democratic confederalism into something that works on the ground in Kobane and Cizera.

Commune councils send representatives to an executive council of Tev-Dem, with representatives from all the parties—including ones that would horrify us, like the Muslim Brotherhood, a permutation of al-Nusra, and various Arabic Islamist organizations. Some of the Kurds are not so happy about this.

PRESSURE IS FROM THE STREET UP

The executive has a single function, to legalize what the commune councils are already doing. If a commune wants to add another fighter with a Kalashnikov, they may need the law re-written, so they can have three such fighters instead of two.

The commune councils push the executive councils of the Tev-Dem to do what they want them to do. It's pressure from the street up. For example, by mid-2014 each commune had a military group. They went to Tev-Dem asking for training for the militias, for uniforms to tell who not to shoot at. I met with the defense minister of Kobane canton. YPG/YPJ will consult with the executive council, but ultimately the order for any military action will not come from the "governmental" ministers.

Rojavans see their revolution not just as political change, nor just an adjustment of their economic system. Tev-Chan is the cultural offshoot of Tev-Dem. They completed two films and will do a revolutionary soap opera.

They brought in Western films for kids. A favorite is Charlie Chaplin's *The Kid*. Since Daesh trashed most of the schools, there is not much for the kids to do. They are doing painting projects in the community, setting up kilns for pottery projects. The movement, the revolution, is on all levels.

They say there is no way we can win militarily unless the revolution moves forward. The knowledge and power we gain in the revolution is the knowledge and power needed to win the military engagement.

GENDER ROLES CHALLENGED

There is a huge cultural/social change in defining gender roles. In the commune councils, men and women sit in the same room together. To us it does not seem like anything huge, but to the Kurds it was unheard of. The militias function as schools of revolution. Men's and women's barracks for YPG/YPJ are built side-by-side, joined by a common area. The work in the barracks is done together.

There is no draft in Rojava. I've heard it said that for every martyr there are 30 new recruits in the YPG/YPJ. YPG/YPJ is a real school for revolution. There are no leadership positions unless you're in battle, when they choose leaders. You can only serve as a commander in YPG once, for a six-month term.

One particular story struck me. The Kurds helped save 50,000 Yazidis from the Sinjar mountaintop from being slaughtered by Daesh. The Yazidis have thousands-years-old traditions, much more conservative than classic Judaism or Islam.

After the Sinjar rescue, many of the Yazidi young men wanted to join the militia. One young fighter had just gotten basic training of 45 days plus a month in the field, then went home on a four-day leave. Yazidi men are not allowed to handle kitchen knives, because that is what women use. But you learn to cook pretty

quick in the YPG, because you have to. I asked the young man what was it like to go home? He said, "I spent the entire four days apologizing to my mom and making dinner."

The majority of Rojavans live in villages that have been cultivating the same fields, in general communally-owned, for hundreds of years. Those fields never needed irrigation, and are still produc-

ing. Assad's regime allowed them to grow only cotton, cucumbers, tomatoes, and bananas. Now they throw many seeds into the ground to find out what will grow.

PROPERTY BASED ON USE

The food is taken to market and sold for money, which goes back to the villages. In larger cities goods brought in from outside gave rise to a market-capitalist class, mostly with Syrians, not Kurds. Kurds have been working outside the capitalist structure for decades, so [the loss of markets due to war] did not bother them.

Their concept of private property is based on use, not ownership. If you're using something, it belongs to you. If you're not using it, it doesn't. In Kobane all private property is crushed rubble. They are selling properties based on what people can pay.

To me it looks like a post-Left revolution in a pre-Left world. There is no industry, no proletariat, no bourgeoisie. People are used to talking face-to-face. That's why the commune councils work so well.

What we are witnessing in Rojava is no sovereignty. There is no state in Rojava, the revolution is happening at every level in society, it's producing institutions and innovations that work in all those areas. You feel it is a different world, if only for the moment.

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Natalia Spiegel

Last year students, parents and teachers in Jefferson County, Colo., revolted against an effort to force a right-wing curriculum down the students' throats. There were massive walkouts, highway blockages, etc. A campaign to recall the three school board members responsible for this assault on education was an overwhelming success. The three were decisively defeated. More progressive candidates swept into office with 65% or more of the vote in the November election.

* * *

Following the lead of the South African students who last year fought for and won the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes, the architect of apartheid in South Africa, students at Oxford University in England, Rhodes' alma mater to which he gave large donations to benefit that bastion of ruling class education, are campaigning to have all images and names honoring him on the campus permanently removed. Oxford is the home of the (Cecil) Rhodes Scholarships. As of this writing, the struggle is continuing.

* * *

An unprecedented movement of student activism has been sweeping South African university campuses and cities, culminating in a massive and historic march in late October 2015 at the seat of the South African government. Not since the Soweto Uprising of 1976 have this many youth demanded the right to a quality and accessible education. They won their demand of no tuition increase, but only for this year. They note that the historic Freedom Charter of the African National Congress (ANC) calls for free universal education for all students and are demanding that the ANC government live up to that promise. Further, the students have called for the "decolonization" and "transformation" of higher education institutions, the insourcing of outsourced workers (mostly cleaning, security and support staff), and the release of their classmates arrested earlier. As several students pointed out: "White dominance is not just about numbers, it is about patterns of thinking and the style and content of teaching."

Stop campus racism!

The last quarter of 2015 has been marked by a national campaign against racism at campuses across the U.S. It began at the University of Missouri, where students—including the football team's Black and white players—denounced the school administration's handling of several racist incidents that occurred this fall and demanded radical changes in campus life.

In September Payton Head, president of Missouri's Students Association, was walking near campus when people in a truck screamed racial slurs at him. Frustrated with bigotry, anti-homosexual and anti-Transgender attitudes at the school he wrote in a widely shared post: "For those of you who wonder why I'm always talking about the importance of...respect, it's because I've experienced moments like this multiple times at *this* university, making me not feel included here."

On Oct. 1, a second "Racism Lives Here" rally was held on campus. "White silence is violence, no justice no peace," protesters chanted. On Oct. 5, members of the Legion of Black Collegians were called the n-word. On Oct. 24, a swastika was drawn with human feces at a university residence hall.

On Oct. 10 members of Concerned Student 1950—named for the year the first Black graduate student was admitted to the university—blocked the University president's car.

The President did not respond and his driver bumped into Jonathan Butler, a member of Concerned Student 1950. On Nov. 3, Butler began a hunger strike saying "Mr. Wolfe (the University President) had ample opportunity to create policies and reform that could shift the culture of Mizzou in a positive direction but in each scenario he failed to do so." A day later, a student boycott in support of Butler began. Then the President finally issued an apology to Concerned Student 1950.

It was too late and Wolfe finally resigned, but Concerned Student 1950 persisted and set up a tent city on campus, now demanding the elimination of the culture of on-campus racism and addressing the inclusion of students of color more fully in the life of the University.

By then the movement had expanded. Protests were held at Yale, Ithaca, Smith, the University of Michigan, Stanford, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Wisconsin at Madison, Sacramento State in California, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Penn/Drexel University and Claremont-McKenna College, where the junior class president resigned after students discovered a Facebook photograph showing her with two women wearing sombreros, ponchos and mustaches for Halloween. A campus demonstration followed.

At Ithaca, one issue was an on-campus panel on Oct. 8, in which Tatiana Sy, a 2009 graduate, said she had a "savage hunger" to do everything in college. Panelist J. Christopher Burch, chief executive of Burch Creative Capital, also an alumnus, responded, "I love what the savage here said." The moderator, pointing to Burch, said, "You are driven," and pointing to Sy said, "You're the savage." The men are both white, and Ms. Sy is Afro-Cuban. On Nov. 11 hundreds of students and faculty members walked out of class to a rally calling for the removal of the president, Tom Rochon.

There are no signs the protests are abating. At Occidental College, students took over parts of an administration building to demand the creation of a Black Studies major and the hiring of more minority faculty. At Iowa State University, students and faculty held a rally to support Black students at the University of Missouri, and to draw attention to racism on their campus. At Niagara University, students walked out of classes to a rally on racism and inequality.

At the University of South Carolina, about 150 students walked out of class to demand that the university do more to promote diversity. In Boston, students from 17 colleges held a march against racial injustice, sometimes blocking traffic. A major movement began at Princeton, where students, denouncing Woodrow Wilson as a notorious racist, have demanded that his name be removed from every part of campus. That inspired students to demand that any buildings or schools or whatever named after slaveholders or racists have those names removed, including Thomas Jefferson's.

Black, Latino and even some white students feel that the time has come to end the culture of racism on so many campuses. Students of color, decades after the introduction of affirmative action and cultural sensitivity programs, are still excluded from the life of the schools they attend. The U.S. educational system stinks of racism. These institutions exist in the midst of a profoundly racist culture, which is clear not only in the wave of police murders of Blacks and other people of color, but in the whole history of racism and slavery that the U.S. was founded on.

Students know their protests are making a difference. Through their actions they are laying a new standard as to how they expect their schools to respond when confronted with racism. Whether this movement can deepen through the months of winter is an open issue. But the movement has put the U.S. on notice that racism will be fought, wherever and whenever it rears its head.

—N.S.

WORLD IN VIEW

by Eugene Walker

The defeat of the ruling Bolivarian United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) in the December National Assembly elections was stunning. Not merely losing its large parliamentary majority, President Nicolás Maduro's party was replaced by the Democratic Unity Party (MUD), a coalition of the right wing that captured two-thirds of the legislative seats.

The opposition now has power to block spending for social programs, approve or revoke enabling laws, and remove Supreme Court judges. A two-thirds majority can remove ministers and the Vice-President, revoke or modify organic laws, and convoke a Constituent Assembly to write a new Constitution. A symbolic moment was the action taken to remove portraits of former President Hugo Chávez from the legislative building.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Where to now for those on the Left, especially the Venezuelan masses, who supported Chavez in power, even in difficult times, but many of whom felt disappointed in the two-and-a-half-year post-Chavez period?

It was an overwhelming defeat. Some 75% of those eligible voted. Much of the so-called Left focused on imperialist maneuvers, such as poisoning public opinion through capitalist propaganda and funding opposition groups to disrupt the economy.

Chavez had a significant relationship to the masses which Maduro never achieved. That support fueled the Bolivarian process in spite of the efforts to isolate Venezuela and disrupt its progressive aspects.

Focusing only on the external enemy and internal effort of the bourgeoisie and its supporters is an incomplete analysis. To downplay the bad economic management, shortages, corruption, and paternalistic decision-making from above, is to fail to confront the real contradictions within what was termed 21st Century Socialism.

The steep fall in oil prices has contributed to the difficult economic situation. Yet the seeds were planted during Chavez's presidency. His concept of 21st Century Socialism was based on the most crucial capitalist commodity—oil. Thus the focus was on a redistribution of oil wealth, a welcome and necessary act. But there was not a focus on a break with capitalist production.

Chávez's concept of socialism wasn't building it from below but with a charismatic leader making the decisions, building the party, and fighting the old bureaucracy, even as a new bureaucracy emerged. Yes, the masses supported him, but were their ideas and talents elicited and acted on while he lived? Where have the proletariat and peasantry been authentically involved in decision-making?

NEEDED 'RUTHLESS CRITICISM'

Of course there needs to be a concrete, specific anti-imperialism, and a vigorous defense of important social programs in health, education, housing, food, and workers' and peasants' rights. But there needs to be as well a ruthless criticism of the idea of constructing socialism from above, of statist solutions that can lead to a form of state-capitalism.

A process of constructing socialism from below, eliciting the talents of women, men, youth, workers, peasants, Indigenous peoples, and urban dwellers is needed. They are the social subjects of revolutionary transformation.

Such socialism needs to be rooted in the philoso-

Venezuela elections

phy of revolution that Marx created: the unity of theory with practice, and practice with theory. These are challenges not alone for Venezuela, but for the process of social change under the "progressive governments" of Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, and formerly Argentina as well. At stake are the needed Latin American revolutions of the 21st century.

Ruqia Hassan's dignity

The Syrian Revolution has given birth to a generation of citizen journalists who risk everything to bring the facts and ideas of the struggle to world attention. The courage it takes, and the potential cost, were measured in Raqqa in September when the Islamic State announced the execution of young woman journalist Ruqia Hassan.



Ruqia participated in the Revolution of Freedom and Dignity from its start, and stayed in Raqqa when it was occupied by ISIS. She fearlessly documented life under fascist rule and Western air strikes. Her last

words to the outside were, "I'm in Raqqa and I received death threats. When ISIS will arrest me and kill me it's okay. They will cut my head but I have dignity. It's better than living in humiliation."

ISIS has executed at least three other women in Raqqa recently. Activists consider it a sign of weakness owing to combat defeats in Syria and Iraq. —G.E.

David Bowie's legacy

David Bowie's early 1970s music and performances, including his announcement of his "Gay" sexuality, were unprecedented in its injection of social enlightenment into the lives of working-class youth. It was an indication that our culture could reflect our deepest selves—the selves previous culture, schools, work, church, even the Left served to deny and vilify.

This salutary influence continues to this day. It made Bowie a hero, but it made him a celebrity, too, with the coke and cocooning that come with that. In the mid-1970s, losing faith in social change, he began to fantasize about a coming fascism. Those who continued to take the liberatory ideas in Bowie's work seriously were first to mercilessly criticize this turn.

Fascism was only too real. A threat growing in our neighborhoods, among our peers, it represented an intensification of the social prejudices we had fought to throw off. Rock Against Racism, for one, grew directly from this close-quarters confrontation.

To his great credit, Bowie got the message and reorganized his thinking. What remained most profound in his art was its democratic impulse, a recognition of common humanity, and the desire for freedom. That "we can be heroes" in the shadow of all Berlin walls.

Bowie went on to produce worthy art, to attack racism in the music industry, and to release an excellent new album, *Blackstar*, two days before he died. —G.E.

Paris massacre heralds more reaction

The fascist terrorist attacks in Paris Nov. 13 (130 killed, 350 injured) signaled a change in strategy for the nihilistic ISIS death cult. In the face of military losses in Syria and Iraq, ISIS is widening its field of operations to include territory from Indonesia to Pakistan to Kenya and Nigeria. Perhaps no act of theirs will be more terrifying than the successful recruiting of so many young people.

ISIS, like nihilist cults before it, has fastened itself to the pervasive nihilism of bourgeois society. Consider the response of all state powers to the Arab Spring freedom movements which represented the best in our humanity. The revolts were met with hypocrisy, pettiness, and a mythic "stability" imposed through state violence that has risen to genocide in Syria.

It's little wonder that Syria and its tortured twin, Iraq, have become the umbilical cord connecting ISIS to the bourgeois imperialism that is its model.

REACTION FEEDS ON REACTION

The Paris attacks were the mirror image of Anders Behring Breivik's anti-immigrant massacre of 77 mostly young people in Norway in 2011. They feed the currents of hatred and reaction that flow from Milosevic's Bosnian genocide and poison world politics.

The anti-immigrant Right used the Paris attacks to make serious political gains; the French National Front was boosted in local elections, doubling their previous vote, and gaining hundreds of regional council seats. Denmark and Switzerland have now begun confiscating refugees' possessions, behaving like pirates and human traffickers. Far Right parties have grown in Poland, Sweden, Austria, Hungary, Greece and Denmark.

U.S. politics has never been immune to this. But hatred of Muslims and immigrants has come to vie with classic racism and antisemitism as Republican candidates Trump and Cruz work to associate each other with the "alien," or with "New York values," i.e. the alien within. It's a level of open hatred not seen in mainstream politics in decades.

THE END PRODUCT IS ALWAYS WAR

This growth of reaction confuses attitudes to ongoing freedom struggles. As piratical ISIS carries on its pretense of statehood, reactionary regional powers carry on a pretense of legitimacy, and the big imperialists (Russia, the U.S.) commit or condone every manner of crime. It should be noted that the Assad regime in Syria is responsible for 85% of civilian deaths there, ISIS for 5%.

Meanwhile, near open war has broken out between regional powers Iran and Saudi Arabia with dire consequences in Yemen, Bahrain, Syria, and at home.

These two oppressive theocracies are mirror images of each other. Iran denounces Saudi crimes, such as the execution of Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, while it executes hundreds of its own citizens and its client Hezbollah starves Syrian cities like Madaya. Iran sentences poets Fateme Ekhtesari and Mehdi Moosavi to flogging. The Saudis sentence Palestinian poet Ashraf Fayadh to death and blogger Raif Badawi to prison and flogging. All this for the exercise of free thought and free speech.

One worker in Saudi Arabia summed up the state's motives: "I think this whole thing may be a way to defuse the growing youth population from turning their attention and focus on serious domestic problems." The root of Arab Spring will clearly need more than bourgeois thought and reality to flourish. —Gerry Emmett

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists. It has always stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and in its state property form that appeared as the Russian Revolution was transformed into its opposite. That retrogression anticipated the next stage of development—the age of state-capitalism. We stand for a society of new human relations, what Marx called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. News & Letters was created so that the voices of revolt could be heard un-separated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, was Chairwoman of News and Letters Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–1983), a Black rank-and-file autoworker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, was editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983.

The articulation of the relationship be-

tween the movement from practice which is itself a form of theory and the movement from theory to philosophy is reflected in Dunayevskaya's three major works.

Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today (1958), established the American roots of Marxism while presenting a comprehensive attack on present-day Communism, which is a form of state-capitalism. It re-established Marxism in its original form as "a thoroughgoing Naturalism or humanism," while pointing to the new Humanist philosophy expressed by the working class. It presented history and theory as emanating from the movement from practice.

Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao (1973), written after the failed revolts of the 1960s, articulated the integrality of philosophy and revolution as the characteristic of the age and, tracing it historically, caught the link of continuity with the Humanism of Marx. As against the vanguard party, the integration of dialectics and organization reflects the revolutionary maturity of the age and the passion for a philosophy of liberation.

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution (1982) explores

Marx's body of ideas from his discovery of a continent of thought and of revolution in his youth to the "new moments" of his last decade. Written for our time of revolutions in developing countries, the rise of the international women's liberation movement, and global economic crisis, it reveals the absolute challenge to make real Marx's "revolution in permanence" as the determinant for the relationship of theory and practice and as ground for organization.

These works spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism. *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard* (1963, 1983) concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way freedom road between the U.S. and Africa.

In 1989 News and Letters Committees published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough—her two letters on Hegel's Absolutes—and her 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism. In light of the crises of our nuclear-armed world, climate change, and failed

revolutions, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but to further work out the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The recreation of Marx's philosophy as Marxist-Humanism is recorded in Dunayevskaya's archives, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*, deposited at Wayne State University in Detroit and available to all.

We aim to continue to develop Marxist-Humanism and make it available to all who struggle for freedom. In opposing this capitalist, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have adopted a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead."

We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our Constitution states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a free copy of the *Constitution of News and Letters Committees* or see it on our website: www.newsandletters.org.