

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

“Human power is its own end”—Karl Marx

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Brexit emboldens the Far Right

Donald Trump must be stopped—but with no illusion that Hillary Clinton or Bernie Sanders is an alternative to the total economic and ecological crises in which capitalism has embroiled humanity. That truth was illustrated in the June 23 British referendum on membership in the European Union.

The anti-EU campaign, run by wealthy Conservatives like Trump-clone Boris Johnson, the racist UK Independence Party, and the Nazi-terrorist-incubating Britain First, was indeed the British version of Trumpism. Trump hailed the vote as foreshadowing his own success in the November U.S. elections.

REACTION GAINS GROUND

The specter of the falling apart of the EU, which was created in order to avoid more great wars in Europe, was raised. Europe's Far Right was emboldened as never before, with the French National Front's Marine Le Pen and the Netherlands' Party for Freedom's Geert Wilders proposing similar referendums in those countries.

What gave joy to Trump is the way a section of the working class was pulled into a campaign built on hatred of immigrants and minorities. He was unbothered that the violence he cultivated in his own campaign (“In the old days we took protestors out and beat them!”) was pushed even further on June 16 by the neo-Nazi murder of pro-immigrant Labour Party MP Jo Cox. Her killer, Tommy Mair, gave his name in court as “Death to traitors, freedom for Britain.” His hatred of “race traitors” stretched back to South African apartheid.

As described by Syria solidarity activist Sam
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WORKSHOPTALKS

Bleak future if no labor solidarity

by Htun Lin

Just four days after 49 people, mostly Latinos, were murdered at the Gay nightclub Pulse in Orlando, Jo Cox, a Member of Parliament, was shot and then stabbed to death in England by a man linked to U.S. neo-Nazi propaganda. Cox, an activist for refugee rights, was murdered in the run-up to the June 23 British referendum on the UK staying in the European Union (“Remain”, which was Jo Cox's position) or leaving in the guise of restoring sovereignty (“Brexit”) which won in an upset.

Cox's assassin was heard yelling “Britain first!” while he attacked her, the name of one of the anti-immigrant white chauvinist groups pushing a vote for Brexit. My immediate reaction was that he must want to build a Trump-like wall for Britain to keep out refugees from war-torn regions.

The nativism and narrow nationalism we've seen gain more prominence in the UK around the referendum echo movements like Trump's in the U.S., Le Pen's in France, and Orban's in Hungary. Outright neofascism masquerades as populist demagoguery. Racists who were pushing Brexit took the open borders within the EU, and its common trade rules, labor and human rights standards and environmental regulations, and
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Fires in Canada, drought in India inspire creative revolt

by Franklin Dmitryev

Throughout May, a wildfire raged in Alberta, Canada, spreading to Saskatchewan. On May 3 it swept through the city of Fort McMurray, forcing the evacuation of all 88,000 people, some of whom are still unable to return. At press time, it was still burning, having covered about 1.5 million acres. Most of that is forest, producing emissions of greenhouse gases equivalent to 100 million tons. That is just a rough estimate, but it compares to the yearly emissions of about 40 of the poorest countries, or six times what is emitted by 20 island nations at risk of losing much or all of their land to rising seas.

The Fort McMurray area had been the permanent or temporary home for many workers in the Athabasca Tar Sands, where the world's biggest industrial operation extracts bitumen to produce heavy crude oil. Some of it is piped into the U.S. to refineries such as the BP plant on the Indiana shore of Lake Michigan. Dozens of people were arrested in May protesting that plant's expansion to handle more tar sands oil. Some of that bitumen spilled near Battle Creek, Mich., in 2010 and may never be fully cleaned up, turning some of the neighbors into self-described “accidental activists.” The extraction and refining processes are so energy-intensive that, combined with the vast size of the tar sands deposit, leading climatologist James Hansen called it “game over for the climate” if the tar sands get fully exploited.

FIRST NATIONS, THE VANGUARD AGAINST OIL POLLUTION

Meanwhile, First Nations around Canada are fighting the poisoning of downstream communities to the north and the push to pipe the bitumen across their lands to the south, west and east. Indigenous groups from across the U.S. and Canada have pledged to use direct action to resist the Keystone XL pipeline into the U.S. if it is approved. In 2010, 61 First Nations from British Columbia, Alberta and the Northwest Territories issued the Save the Fraser Declaration:

This project which would link the Tar Sands to Asia through our territories and the headwaters of this great river, and the federal process to approve it, violate our laws, traditions, values and our inherent rights as Indigenous Peoples under international law....We will not allow the proposed Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, or similar Tar Sands projects, to cross our lands, territories and watersheds, or the ocean migra-

tion routes of Fraser River salmon.”¹

Since 2012 the Unist'ot'en resistance camp in Wet'suwet'en territory in British Columbia has blocked pipelines from crossing their territory, whether carrying tar sands oil or fracked natural gas to Pacific ports.

In the “Chemical Valley” area of Ontario, the Aamjiwnaang people have been at the forefront of resistance to Enbridge's project to reverse its Line 9 pipeline to carry tar sands bitumen, as well as Bakken oil from North Dakota, east to Quebec. That resistance builds on earlier marches and blockades in the area against the poisoning of residents and workers by local petrochemical industries, and Idle No More actions for Indigenous sovereignty. In short, wherever pipe-

lines are planned to ramp up transportation of bitumen from the tar sands, there is a movement in opposition.

TAR SANDS = EXPLOITATION OF LABOR

Alberta's tar sands operation offers a microcosm of capitalism at work. Huge international oil corporations have reaped a bonanza. Some of the Indigenous people from the area found no alternative but to take jobs with an industry they hate. After Dr. John O'Connor studied the very high cancer rate in downstream Fort Chipewyan—populated mainly by Indigenous and Métis people—Health Canada charged him with “raising undue alarm,” threatening his medical license.

Fort McMurray has grown into a typical boomtown. Many of the workers came from as far away as Newfoundland to get jobs they could not find at home. Social disruption due to climate change is one factor driving international migration, and many of the 84,000 temporary foreign workers in Alberta work in the tar sands, filing hundreds of complaints each year about the abusive conditions most prominently seen in a 2007 incident that killed two migrant workers.

For many workers the pay is relatively high, or was until layoffs due to falling oil prices in recent years, but prices for food and supplies are also high. Housing is outrageously expensive, and many lived in work camps. While investment in industrial infrastructure boomed, social services and infrastructure could not keep up with population growth. As in every capitalist boomtown, living in a pressure cooker gets stressful, leading to violence and many addictions to alcohol and drugs. Now most of the workers are wondering if they will be

1. See the whole declaration at http://savethefraser.ca/fraser_declaration.pdf

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Jasmine Richards – Black Lives Matter speaks

by Gerry Emmett

Jasmine “Abdullah” Richards, 29, is a Black Lives Matter activist in Pasadena, Calif. In an obscene travesty of justice, she was convicted on June 1 of attempted “lynching,” over her non-violent complaint to police in defense of another woman she believed was being unlawfully detained at a demonstration. There was no physical contact, no injuries, no violence, and yet prosecutors called the demonstration a “riot” in order to obtain a conviction. It wasn't a first for her—last year Pasadena police had tried to charge Jasmine with “terrorism” for taking part in a peaceful “die-in.”

There could be no greater perversion of language or historical facts. What are laws against lynching really against: A racist armed mob surrounding a jailhouse and demanding police turn over the person in custody. The victim would be tortured, perhaps raped or castrated, hanged from a tree or lamppost. Their suffering would be mocked by a crowd, some set to picnic or tak-

ing photographs for posterity or to sell.

Women were not spared this. There are 150 documented cases of women being lynched. There are picture postcards. This is the unfathomable, inhuman cruelty of lynching. The California law under which Richards was charged was directed against this then-common practice. Her verdict, the first time a Black person has been convicted of “lynching,” is political. Even more, it is a negation of the very idea of history or truth.

NEW REVOLUTIONARY GENERATION

Richards is representative of a new generation of revolutionaries. She grew up with personal tragedy, losing a brother and sister. She experienced police harassment and gave up on school. Like other young activists she was galvanized into action by the murders of Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, and so many others, Black youth who were murdered again by racist courts. These young activists have been informed by decades of thinking and organizing against a racist criminal

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Will Stanford rape be turning point?

by Terry Moon

A woman who was raped at Stanford spoke up and created a turning point in this nation's view of rape. She was not the "perfect victim." Her rapist was not an absolute stranger, he did not beat her to a bloody pulp, she was not kidnapped from her home or car. She went to a party, she got so drunk she passed out; her rapist was a "good boy," an athlete, a white boy. But, he raped her and two men saw him, stopped him, he ran, they chased him and caught him. It is not as if this hasn't happened before, and it is arguable that what made the difference is that he was caught in the act and ran, and that his victim was so

clearly unable to consent that the jury had to convict.

What was actually so different was the woman's statement, read before Judge Aaron Persky passed a paltry, insulting and shameful sentence of six months in jail (the rapist may get out in three) for three felony counts.

What this woman did so eloquently to bring about a turning point was simply to describe the entire process that she endured—and is still enduring and may forever endure. If you haven't already read her statement you can find it here: <https://www.buzzfeed.com/katiejmbaker/heres-the-powerful-letter-the-stanford-victim-read-to-her-ra>.

LIMITATIONS OF A TURNING POINT

While this woman did something unique in articulating what rape really means, we have to be cognizant that there have been other turning points and yet rape culture still exists worldwide. In fact it thrives.

In December 2012 was the vicious gang rape and murder of student, Jyoti Singh Pandey, on a Delhi bus in India. Thousands poured into the streets for months, demanding deep changes in the laws, in society and in actual human relationships. And laws did change. Yet in May 2014 in a village in Uttar Pradesh, India, two girls, 12 and 14, were gang-raped, strangled and hanged by their scarves from a tree. Shortly after, two other Indian women were found in the same condition. Countless Indian women have been raped since Pandey was murdered on a Delhi bus.

In February 2015, this time in Turkey, the rape, murder and mutilation of Özgecan Aslan again brought thousands into the streets. Aslan, like Pandey, was a student taking a bus home at the end of the day. Like Pandey, Aslan fought back. After the bus driver raped Aslan he stabbed her and beat her to death with an iron bar and disfigured her body in an effort to hide it. While the outcry was tremendous, rape continues in Turkey, as do attacks on women and feminism by Turkey's President, Tayyip Erdogan.

This list could include Egypt, where attacks on women in Tahrir Square after the ouster of Mubarak shook up society and created an unprecedented discussion as well as action against rape in a country where almost every woman has experienced sexual harassment of one kind or another. Yet rape continues in Egypt, including state-sponsored rape in the guise of police "virginity tests."

We do not lack turning points, or demonstrations and determination, or organizing in the streets or statements that are so crystal clear on what rape is and the human consequences that, finally, everyone can comprehend it.

NEEDED NEW CONCEPT OF REVOLUTION

But rape flourishes and will continue as long as we live in a world where human relationships are alienated, where we treat others as things; where women, Blacks, workers, LGBTQ people, youth, the differently abled—and the list goes on—are not comprehended as human beings. Simplistic leftist explanations such as "capitalism profits from rape," just won't do.

The persistence of the degraded, dehumanized reality of women's lives has to impact our concept of revolution and the banner raised to fight for a freedom-filled future. We have to sweep away the idea that if we ask for less, we'll get something, because whatever that paltry something is, it won't free women.

Women's lives show us that revolution has to be total from the start and our freedom has to be fought for at every step; revolution has to be permanent and cannot stop with a change in government, leaders, or an economic change. It must be so deep that all human relationships are transformed. According to popular leftist belief, that is an unrealistic, idealistic view that will lead to defeat. On the contrary, it is the realistic idea that can lead to a new society grounded in new human relationships where everyone can experience freedom.

The hell anti-abortionists have wrought

Any City, Alabama—I'm 23 weeks pregnant and we wanted a baby. At my 20-week appointment they found "concerns" resulting in a referral to a maternal fetal specialist, which resulted in an amniocentesis. The experience was fairly traumatic but a drop in the bucket compared to what followed.

I got a call a few days later that my fetus is positive for trisomy 13, a fatal condition. The specialist asked if I had considered whether I wanted to continue the pregnancy, then noted that I had no options in Alabama, as I was at 22 weeks 6 days. The best she could do was give me the phone number for a clinic in Georgia that she knew nothing about.

NO OPTIONS IN ALABAMA

My partner and I cried for the next 16 hours, then began looking at options. My insurance will only cover the "procedure I am looking for" if I can find an in-network hospital to do it. After about six hours on the phone to hospitals all over the Southeast, my insurance customer service representative, my ob/gyn, the fetal specialist, on call nurses, one of whom suggested I may have to "wait for nature to take its course"—meaning continue the pregnancy until I eventually miscarry, give birth to a stillborn, or have a baby that will live a few days, upping my own health risks as well—I finally found the National Abortion Federation (NAF). They got me in at a clinic two states and 12 hours away.

We drove through the night to get there Friday morning in order to meet legal criteria of the 24-week gestational cut off. I had to call the specialist multiple times to send my test results and medical records. The ultrasound indicated the fetus's head was too large, growing like some kind of mutant cancer, and it pushed my legal gestation stage to 26 weeks (which I don't understand). They couldn't legally terminate.

We turned around and drove 12 hours back home. Got back last night. The clinic, my ob/gyn, won't even call in a prescription for a nerve pill to help me sleep. The nurse on call suggested Benadryl.

\$500 PROCEDURE ENDS UP COSTING \$10,000

The NAF has provided me with a case manager to help me through this and got me into a clinic in Colorado that specializes in fetal anomalies that will do the four-day procedure this week. Family and friends are helping with cost of air travel and hotel. The procedure will be \$10,000-\$12,000, not covered by insurance. NAF is donating \$6,000. The people at the clinic who tried to help me yesterday but couldn't did all the medical legwork to get me in. I fly out tomorrow.

I feel abandoned by my doctors, specialists, insurance and the entire mainstream medical

Mother Jones Museum



Caption reads: "Blessing of grave prior to lowering Mother Jones to new grave at new memorial 1-24-36." Mother Jones died in December 1930 and was reburied when her monument at Mt. Olive was completed.

Mount Olive, Ill.—At the end of April I attended the opening of the Mother Jones Museum, which is temporarily housed at the Mount Olive, Ill., City Hall. At one end of City Hall is the Mother Jones Museum. At the other end is the local police department. I'm not sure Mother Jones would have liked that!

From her birthplace in Cork, Ireland, which holds an annual festival, eight beautiful panels of art and events are displayed on the walls. There is also a life-size board of about five feet with stories of strikes, speeches and statements of her views that helps grace the two rooms. Architects for the proposed stand-alone museum were on hand with a replica of their proposal.

I also went to the Union Cemetery—the only union owned cemetery in the U.S.—where Mother Jones is buried. We were given the tour of the Mother Jones and Coal Miners memorial statute.

—Sue, Chicago

community. The "baby killing abortion Nazis" (sarcasm) have been the support that has kept me from throwing myself down a flight of stairs, which would surely result in a charge of infanticide.

I want every "pro-life" asshole to know that their efforts have put my family through the seventh circle of hell.

I keep telling myself that it could be worse, I could have no support. My husband is afraid he won't have a job when we get back. We are grieving the loss of a wanted pregnancy and baby.

THE REAL RESULT OF ANTI-ABORTION LAWS

This is the reality of abortion legislation. The abortion doctor that couldn't do the procedure is the only medical person in this situation who embraced me while I cried and told me that she cares about me and that I would get through this.

Between family and friends, we will have the roughly \$4,000-\$5,000 we need for the procedure plus travel funds. I can't accept anyone else's money without thinking of all the other women going through this too.

Anyone who wants to help, please donate to NAF so they can help other women like me. The Tiller Foundation,

Freedom Fund, and Last Resort are other organizations that help with funding in these situations. The Center for Reproductive Rights fights bullshit legislation. I just want for no one else to go thru this or drink bleach or go to a butcher to try to manage this situation. This is just devastating.

Tomorrow will be hard, they will first euthanize the little guy. But I just keep thinking about how hard it would be to keep carrying him, 4, 8, 12, 16 weeks, waiting for him to die and hoping he doesn't kill me in the process. Wondering if we can put ourselves through this to try again one day.

Every time I feel him move I want to throat punch a Republican. This should already be over in a local hospital with my family at my side. The final stage of delivery is Thursday and they offer cremation. Everyone that asks, What can I do to help? I say, tell everyone you know exactly what bullshit the "pro-life" agenda is putting me and my spouse, and our families through. This is not theoretical. This is our actual life right now.

—Gertie

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In June, Stanford University students used their graduation ceremony to protest the sentence given to a male student who raped a woman who attended a campus party. (See article this page.) Students' signs read, "It Doesn't Matter What She Was Drinking," "Justice for Survivors, Not Leniency for Rapists," and "Stanford Protects Rapists." The feminist organization UltraViolet flew a plane overhead with the banner "Protect Survivors, Not Rapists #PerskyMustGo." Support for rape survivors was expressed by the commencement speaker who compared the victim's open letter to the judge to Martin Luther King's Letter from a Birmingham Jail.

* * *

A group of girls in Nepal developed a project with the charity WaterAid, which gave them cameras to photograph things they traditionally are not allowed to do while menstruating and during childbirth when they are considered impure. They are forbidden to eat with family, prepare food, and attend school; they are forced to stay and sleep in unsanitary structures such as cowsheds where they can be attacked by rapists or animals and have limited access to water. The photos' captions describe how they feel rejected and frightened during these times.

* * *

Amina Zioual, a banker in Morocco, is founder and president of The Voice of the Amazigh Woman. The Amazigh, or Berbers, are an indigenous and formerly matriarchal people in North Africa often pressured by Muslim fundamentalists including ISIS to adopt patriarchal customs and sharia law along with the Arabic language. Since Arab feminists ignore them, Amazigh women formed this organization to fight patriarchal customs including polygamy, underage marriage, domestic violence, and the practice of rapists marrying their victims. They educate women in rural areas on the importance of education, voting, and waiting until age 18 for marriage. Most Amazigh are Muslim; the organization fights for tolerance of all religions and governmental secularism.

Letter from Mexico

Police kill defiant teachers in Oaxaca

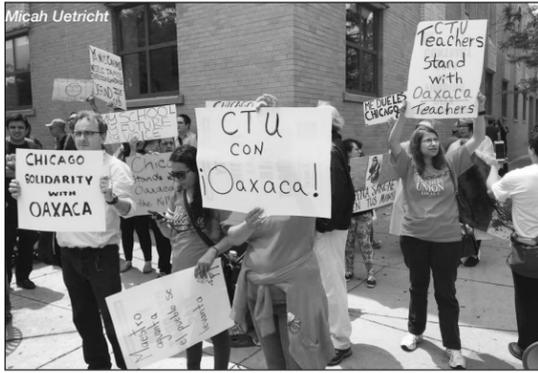
by J.G.F. Héctor

Since May 15 (Teachers' Day in Mexico), members of the National Coordination of Educational Workers (CNTE)—the independent branch of the official teachers' union—have been taking actions to protest the “educational reform,” a labor discipline enacted in 2013 that the government has tried to impose since then. Teachers have had daily demonstrations and sit-ins not just in Mexico City, but in several other states.

However, the government says it won't have any dialogue with the teachers unless they submit to its “reform.” Furthermore, the only “dialogue” it knows is repression, which has escalated from taking over the sit-ins, to attacking demonstrators with batons and tear gas, to murdering nine people and injuring more than 40 on June 19 in a blockade in Noxchitlán, Oaxaca.

Teachers, on the other hand, in spite of the strong repression, say that they won't give up their protests until the government cancels such “reform.” The teachers are not alone: An important part of Mexican society has shown its support for them, marching with them, bringing food and money to the sit-ins, and more.

This support includes, in particular, students and



Chicago Teachers Union members outside the Mexican Consulate on June 22 in solidarity with Oaxaca teachers.

parents from Michoacán, Guerrero, Oaxaca, Chiapas and elsewhere, who have declared that if the government fires the dissident teachers or tries to replace them, they will occupy the schools. This solidarity wouldn't have been possible without the close bond that the teachers have built through years and years with their communities, especially in these rural and Indigenous regions.

The Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) and the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) have recently published three communications on the importance of the teachers' struggle. They place the teachers' struggle alongside the other resistances that are taking place nationwide.

The repression from the state, which has been directed not just against teachers, but against the people who support them, has given birth to its opposite: unification of resistance. As a teacher from Chiapas stated: “The larger the repression, the more the people wake up and the movement grows. If state violence escalates, so does [mass] organization.”

The teachers' struggle is not for particular prerogatives—as the government wants us to think—but has a universal dimension. It is the struggle of all workers against neoliberal labor rules, and it carries the seeds of a new educational model: non-capitalist, at the service of the whole society. The struggle of the teachers is, therefore, not alone theirs, but everyone's.

This is not just a slogan. As we have seen, hundreds of thousands of people have realized that and given flesh and blood to such an idea. We are, therefore, at a new moment of protest in Mexico. How can we help to develop it, in order that we concretize the possibility of a new, truly human world that the teachers' struggle carries within itself?

First, we'd have to listen to the teachers' experiences and thoughts, to be with them, to understand them. That is, to realize that movements from below consist not alone of muscle and of demonstrations, but that through them come mind and reason, concepts of social change, of uprooting the old and construction of the new: teachers' experiences, conditions of work, ideas for an alternative educational system.

But this is not all. We also have to ask: What is the meaning, the significance, of this new moment carried out by the masses? To answer this, there has to be also a solidarity of ideas, a development of an emancipatory vision, a new Humanism for our day. Such a vision that is rooted in the voices and actions from below, that is organic to them, that is with them—is not something abstract or purely theoretical, but a revolutionary force that helps to make leaps in the human quest for freedom.

Can we then help to recreate such an emancipatory vision at this moment, when the struggle of the teachers has put us at a turning point of history in Mexico? This is the task that, for revolutionaries, for collectives of activist-thinkers, is most urgent. Are we up to it?

Wukan defies China's state-capitalist rulers

In 2011, residents of the fishing village of Wukan in Guangdong protested the steady appropriation of village land into the hands of developers by driving out the village officials and Communist Party cadres who had lined their pockets by allowing the thefts. Villagers blocked the initial attempts by troops to reassert control, and in effect were briefly sovereign until they negotiated the right to elect their own village leaders.

More than four years later, land grabs have continued, and are now authorized by higher officials. Shortly after elected village head Lin Zuluán called for a large meeting in protest, he was arrested and charged with taking bribes. Authorities threatened lawyers from representing him, and released a video of Lin confessing his guilt. Beginning on June 19, each day 3,000 or more villagers have marched in protest, carrying banners proclaiming that Lin Zuluán was innocent.

Lin's forced confession recalls both the show trials of the Mao Zedong era and the latest intimidation of anyone in Hong Kong at all connected with the Occupy Central protests of 2014 or, like booksellers kidnapped from Hong Kong, making available forbidden ideas. In case anyone in Wukan or across China failed to get the point of Lin Zuluán's arrest and his forced confession, the press is making it clear: Democracy and village elections lead the people into dark places and offer no hope for the people. But the people continue to protest.

—Bob McGuire

Union deal with Uber betrays drivers

New York—Uber car service drivers in New York City have begun to mobilize against exploitation by their management. (See March-April 2016 *N&L*.) There was even talk of organizing a union. However, since those first rallies, a local New York union has recently sold out the Uber drivers.

Union bureaucrats from a regional branch of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) agreed to a sweetheart deal with a multi-year ban on both strikes and union organizing. They sold out the workers' rights in return for a vague agreement to have an “association” for “consultations” on a regular basis between the drivers and management.

These consultations amount to nothing more than a listening session, with no enforcement mechanism for the complaints of drivers. Now, even if Uber drivers decide to organize a union to fight for their rights, they are forbidden from doing so. They are even banned from striking.

The five-year deal that IAM bureaucrats agreed to allows only for monthly meetings with drivers and Uber management. Guild members will not be able to bargain with Uber management about fare rates, benefits or protections. The union is prohibited from organizing workers, must encourage them not to strike, and must fight efforts to have drivers recognized as employees.

Fortunately this sellout is not without its critics. One group, the Uber Drivers Network (UDN), opposed the sellout, stating that the most important issues to drivers, price cuts and commissions, were not being addressed by the new accord. UDN has over 5,000 members and is encouraging drivers to sign union cards with the Amalgamated Transit Union. More than 5,000 have already signed.

The leaders of the UDN noted that a guild is no substitute for a union, declaring that the IAM deal sounded “bogus.”

—Natalia Spiegel

'Workless' capitalism?

Detroit—Karl Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* deals in some detail with a post-capitalist society, characterizing it as a society wherein labor is not a means to life but a necessity of life. Economists have been promoting a plan called “Universal Basic Income” (UBI) intended to address the onslaught of robots in society taking the jobs of factory workers, bank clerks, fast food restaurant workers and even drivers, by offering each person a basic income from the government.

UBI is aimed at providing a transition from the work economic arrangements that exist to what these economists call “workless society”—but still under capitalism. Europe has been grappling with the idea, and Switzerland even held a referendum on institutionalizing UBI, which was rejected by the voters. But are we talking of a “workless society,” where no one has to work? Or in reality a society where there is no work to be had and the rulers have to do something to stop the revolt?

Marx expected such a profound transformation of society under communism that what we think of as work would be something completely different from anything that we had experienced. One question is: What will be the psychological and economic implications for the “surplus population,” what Marx would call the reserve army of the unemployed? Furthermore, is UBI even economically feasible?

It is difficult to conceive of a solution to increased robotization, never mind a workless society, if we think in capitalistic categories and stop at the limits of capitalism. All of these categories wind up as dead ends.

A *New York Times* article called UBI the most optimistic of the alternatives that we face in a “workless society.” But it ignored Marx in its treatment because Marx's vision demanded a revolution and the transcendence of capitalism. Marx devoted much of his later writings to the idea of a society in which labor is completely transformed as the necessities of life impinge on the existence of everybody.

—Andy Phillips

WORKSHOPTALKS

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presented that to working-class British voters as, “Why should we allow foreigners to tell us what to do, and how to live?”

Pressure to exit the EU began with a large part of the ruling Tory Party, joined by the UK Independence Party and even more unsavory neo-fascist groups. A wide swath of the British Left ignored the racist foundation of the debate to campaign for Brexit.

In the U.S., grifter capitalist Donald Trump, who has long imported his branded merchandise from China and Mexico, has framed part of his campaign as concern for U.S. workers losing jobs to China and Mexico. He ties up his jobs pitch with anti-Muslim, anti-Mexican and anti-immigrant diatribes.

The Sanders campaign also made unfair trade a key issue in the primaries against Hillary Clinton, stating that “working people understand that NAFTA and CAFTA and PNTR with China have been disastrous for working families.” Bernie Sanders himself did not blame immigrants or other ethnicities for the current ravages of chronic unemployment and increasing health problems like opioid addiction and suicide. Yet some Bernie supporters tolerated or even celebrated a campaign surrogate like Rep. Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, whose virulent anti-Muslim rhetoric is based on the Hindu fundamentalism of India's President Modi.

SYRIAN REVOLUTION AND JO COX

In the tragic aftermath of the Orlando massacre, Trump led the way in trying to pit one demonized group, Muslims, against another, Gays. The murder of Jo Cox, a lonely voice in the Labour Party and in Parliament speaking out on behalf of the Syrian Revolution and demanding a no-fly zone even as Putin and Assad continued to rain bombs down on Syrian cities, reminded me that the smoke and ash from devastated cities of Syria and Iraq and Yemen mingle with the smoke and ash from Yemen to Orlando, from Gaza to Karachi.

The world is devastated by the increasing dehumanization of militarism and terror, as in Burma where the Rohingya Muslim minority, another people that Jo Cox had spoken out for, are still at risk of genocide from political Buddhism. Global capitalism is propped up by racism, fundamentalism and narrow nationalism.

We workers have grievances against the powers that ravage our livelihoods. As we respond to these concerns, out of the sewer of a decaying society come old alternatives which claim to offer us relief—from Trump's version of America, to Le Pen of France, to Orban of Hungary, to Netanyahu of Israel, to Putin of Russia, to Erdogan of Turkey, to British nativism.

REVOLUTION WITH BORDERS? NEVER!

Ours is a time ripe for revolution. Revolution cannot remain local, or confined to one nation, but must be international. It cannot remain just political, but universal and humanist.

The time has come at this turning point in our collective global history for all of us workers to choose. We must choose between the path of fascism and narrow nationalism, or the path of universal freedom. There is no exit from global capitalism without international labor solidarity.

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Olga Domanski, National Organizer (1958-2015).
John Alan, National Editorial Board Member Emeritus (2008-2011).
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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This piece originally appeared as an editorial in the May 1967 issue of N&L with the title "The Unending Barbarous War in Vietnam and the Race Question." Taking up Muhammad Ali's refusal to be drafted and the Black dimension's opposition to the Vietnam War, it highlights the hypocrisy of those in the white power structure and their ideologues who viciously denounced Ali at the time but now heap praise on him. More deeply, it speaks to our time when a vibrant movement once again challenges the racism that still pervades U.S. society.

by Raya Dunayevskaya

On the same day (April 28 [1967]) that General Westmoreland came to wave the flag before Congress, Muhammad Ali refused to be inducted into the Army. While the white four-star general was applauded even by the doves, the Black man was, within hours, stripped of his title of World Heavyweight Boxing Champion.

General Westmoreland was paving the way for such escalation of the barbarous war that the country would soon reach the point of no return. Muhammad Ali was leaving fame and fortune behind in order to stand up for his convictions and show the world a **second America**. Yet the one who came to silence dissent ("an unpatriotic act") got all the glory heaped upon him; the one who stood up for principles was indicted and faces five years in prison and \$10,000 in fines.

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

The "American Dream" is being transformed into the Orwellian nightmare, 1984, not because one white man is praised and one Black man vilified, but because war has exposed the open nerve—"the Black Question"—which has always been the touchstone of American history. **It has placed American civilization on trial before the whole world much more seriously than the "war crimes tribunal" in Stockholm.**

Long before the confrontation between Muhammad Ali and the Houston, Texas induction center—but long after the white anti-war protestors had their anti-war teach-ins and marches and demonstrations—the World Heavyweight Champion was called for a hearing in Louisville, Kentucky, August 23, 1966. Judge Grauman tried opening a door to "non-combatant service." Ali refused: "If it wasn't against my conscience to do it, I would easily do it...wouldn't go through all of this and lose and give up the millions that I gave up and

Racism, war and Muhammad Ali

my image with the American public that I would say is completely dead and ruined..." Because, however, his conscience didn't fill any of the nice cubbyholes American justice "recognizes," Muhammad was refused this way out of war involvement.

BLACK DISSENTERS VILIFIED

Still, were this but an individual way of not participating in that most barbarous of wars, all sorts of other alternatives were open to the World Boxing Champion. As so many other athletes have done, he could have joined the Army Reserves, become a weekend warrior who escapes combat but becomes a darling of the "proper patriots." Or he could have allowed himself to be inducted and sent on a grand tour of Army camps that would have kept him out of the fighting. He chose, instead, to stand on principles. And when he was, with such unseemly haste, stripped of his title by a boxing commission that had never taken it away from criminals, Ali remarked that this was but a "continuation of the same artificially induced prejudice and discrimination" that he had encountered all his life.



Black women express their thoughts at the Spring Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam, New York City, April 15, 1967.

From a different vantage point, another Black who had recently become an open opponent of the Vietnam War and was quickly vilified, attributed the unbridled attacks on him not only to the fact that the Administration is getting nervous about the massive protest against its imperialist policy, but also "because I am a Negro." Dr. King said this, not because he thinks the war is merely a racist war, but because he knows what white America thinks "the place" of its Blacks should be.

Never before has Administration opposition to dissenters been so vicious as when Blacks began joining the anti-war movement.

Rep. F. Edward Hebert, Jr. of Louisiana, a member of the House Armed Services Committee, even had the gall to declare "Let's forget the First Amendment!"

A RACIST WAR?

The Vietnam War did not start as a "racist" war, but for "pure" imperialist purposes—domination of the world by the big powers, be they private or state-capitalist calling themselves Communist. The white-ness of all the contestants for power in shattered Europe following the conclusion of World War II did not eliminate the causes for the Cold War. War hawks, racist or otherwise, are not only against Black fighters against the war, but wish to stifle all dissent, especially the serious Marxist opposition to any capitalist wars.

Nevertheless, this being the U.S.A., born in the lie of color even as it declared "all men to be born free," consolidating its union a century later through the betrayal of the freed slave, and end-

ing the 19th century through its brilliantly white plunge into imperialism, it is not accidental that the attacks on opponents of the of the Vietnam War today reached a new virulence when Blacks joined the massive anti-war protest April 15.

LBJ'S NIGHTMARE

Consider this: President Johnson was satisfied at first with his own references to "nervous Nellies" and J. Edgar Hoover's diatribes about "Communist influenced" draft card burners, although opposition to the Vietnam War covered the spectrum from Senator Fulbright to Stokely Carmichael. There were times even when Johnson permitted himself to talk as if he had ever been a dove.

Today, on the other hand, he allows himself to inspire such bigoted outbursts about the need to violate the Constitution itself as come from Rep. Hebert who refers to Black dissenters as the reason for the need to "clean up this rat infested area." At the same time LBJ feels impelled to draw direct from the battlefield the square-jawed, patriotic, smartly saluting military commander.

Why? Because even the Republican Policy Committee issued a criticism of his conduct of the war? Not at all. He knows this is politics, and he would do as much if he were out and the Republicans were in. He knows very well that he can expect them "to rally around the flag, boys," napalm or no napalm, in or out of office. **But the youth, those who do the actual fighting and dying, of those he is not at all sure.**

His nightmare, and rightly, is seeing that, where Stokely Carmichael, as Black Power advocate, has no mass following, Stokely Carmichael as "Hell no! We won't go!" is **beginning** to have such a following. It isn't the fact that Stokely "won over" Dr. King that worries him, but that Rev. King is expressing a deep felt opposition to war in the whole Black community.

Worst of all, the masses who could not identify either with Carmichael or Rev. King, do find something in Muhammad Ali's quiet courage as anti-war opponent, something they **didn't see in him as Black Muslim.**

Suddenly the exposed nerve is not just racism, but class opposition to war and not only opposition to war, but dignity in what one stands for and is willing to sacrifice all for—freedom.

When Muhammad Ali says quietly, "I have won the world heavyweight title not because it was 'given' to me, not because of my race or religion, but because I won it in the ring through my boxing abilities," a new world of one's own suppressed talents opens up before them. And he hears better not only his own aspirations, but those of the Vietnamese peasants who want to determine their own lives, **freed of American occupation. In fact, and in affinity of ideas, this is the point of solidarity between the Black, and the Vietnamese! It cannot be sundered apart until the war itself ends.**

END THE WAR NOW! Use the 24-hour truce on May 23rd (Buddha's 2,511th birthday) as the beginning of a real cease-fire!

BRING THE TROOPS HOME! THE WAR TO BE FOUGHT IS THAT ON RACISM AND POVERTY, NOT ON STRATEGIC Footholds AND A WAR IN ASIA!

Marxist-Humanism and the Black liberation movement

Marxist-Humanism's unique relationship to the Black liberation movement was evident at the founding of News and Letters Committees in 1955. The organization's Constitution states: "We feel that the Black masses occupy a place of special significance in American life. Their struggle for equality and justice, which is taking place every day in every city of the country and increases in tempo and effectiveness, stands in the forefront of the struggle of all oppressed people for full freedom. Since the 1960s the Black Revolution is one more proof that the Black masses—men, women and children—are vanguard in the American Revolution."

Charles Denby, a Black production worker originally from Lowndes County, Alabama, became the Editor of *News & Letters* from 1955 until his death in 1983. His autobiography, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (1978), an expansion of his original 1952 *Indignant Heart*, is a history of the Black struggle for freedom in the U.S. and the place of the Left within that struggle.

During the Civil Rights Movement, members of the organization were active in the fight and, with the principle that people involved in struggle speak for themselves, produced several pamphlets, including *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves* (1961), *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution* (1965), and *Black Mass Revolt* (1967).

In 1963, Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism,

wrote *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*.

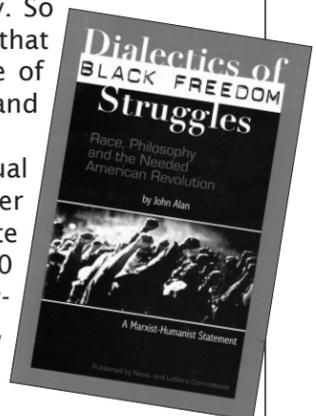
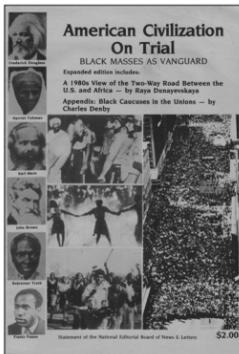
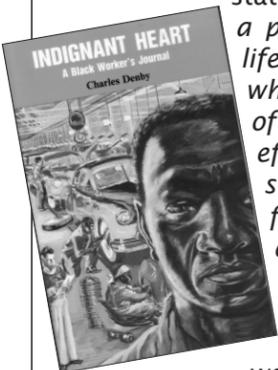
It traces the challenge to American Civilization given by Black Americans at every historical turning point from the struggle of the Abolitionists to our day. So important did we consider this history that we added it to our Constitution as one of the "theoretical foundations" of News and Letters Committees.

John Alan, a Black activist, intellectual and well-known documentary movie maker in the San Francisco Bay Area, who wrote the column "Black/Red View" for over 30 years in *News & Letters*, authored *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy and the Needed American Revolution* in 2003. This work builds on *American Civilization on Trial*.

News & Letters, throughout its 61-year history, has printed Black activists and theorists speaking for themselves. This issue carries the voice of Jasmine "Abdullah" Richards. Black, brown and white prisoners write their own articles in every issue. Raya Dunayevskaya's article from her archives printed above takes up Muhammad Ali, racism and the movement against the Vietnam War.

Dunayevskaya's Archives, available at www.rayadunayevskaya.org, are a rich source of the history of thought and activity of the Black movement for freedom in the U.S. and Africa.

See page 7 to order the books above, or many others.



PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

by Eugene Gogol

The radical heart of Hegelian dialectics is not alone negation—the No, the rejection of and refusal to accept what is our unfree reality—but the negation of the negation—the Yes, the positive within the negation, that constructs the new. Surely Marx recognized this heart of dialectical thought, appropriating and reconstructing it on revolutionary grounds, working out his *thoroughgoing naturalism or humanism* in his 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*. Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, would term 1844 Marx's "philosophic moment" that began his trajectory as revolutionary thinker-activist over four decades—Marx as philosopher of revolution in permanence.

Was there then no further need for Marxist revolutionaries to return to Hegel? Evidently Lenin, under the impact of the shocking betrayal by the established Marxism of the Second International at the outbreak of World War I, did not think so. He returned to Hegel's *Science of Logic*. Dunayevskaya would designate Lenin's Notebooks on Hegel as his "philosophic preparation" for 1917.

A further crisis within Marxism occurred with the transformation of the Russian Revolution into a state-capitalist monstrosity under Stalin, and the 1939 Hitler-Stalin non-aggression pact giving the green light to the Second World War.

This betrayal of Marxism *from within*, in the name of so-called Marxism, meant the need to find new beginnings for revolutionary Marxism (Marx's Marxism). By 1953 Dunayevskaya had already analyzed Russia as state-capitalist, had found and translated Lenin's Notebooks on Hegel, and had been reading and translating excerpts of Marx's 1844 writings. She was compelled to once again return to the Hegelian dialectic, to Hegel's Absolutes.

The State-Capitalist Tendency, of which Dunayevskaya was a leader along with C.L.R. James and Grace Lee, had finally left Trotskyism to form Correspondence Committees, and sought to find a basis for a Marxist organization within Hegelian dialectics. James had termed it the "Dialectic of the Party," and Dunayevskaya accepted this term as she began her exploration of Hegel's Absolutes.

FROM APPLYING TO RECREATING DIALECTIC

For many, Dunayevskaya's starting point of "the dialectic of the party" is surely a red flag. I can understand such a response after the deeply contradictory history of vanguardism, the outright acts of repression and dictatorship under the vanguard party of Stalin and Stalinism for much of the 20th century. However, I would ask you to enter with me into the Hegelian dialectic of negativity, of both negation and negation of the negation, to explore Dunayevskaya's letters and *her own second negativity* when she was within the Absolute Idea, Absolute Knowing and Absolute Spirit of Hegel's dialectic.

Yes, she began with Dialectic of the Party. You can find my commentaries on that on pages 300-301 of *Towards a Dialectic of Philosophy and Organization*. I call these "applications" of the dialectic—applying the dialectic to the party. Below I will contrast this to what I call "recreating the dialectic." Though Dunayevskaya used the term vanguard party, and perhaps had not fully yet broken with all aspects of the vanguard party, two aspects of her view were in opposition to the classical formation of the party. First, she was already practicing a concept of the masses as creative in their activities and as source for revolutionary theory. One can see this in her 1940s writings on the independent struggle of Black people in the U.S. Later, in 1963, Dunayevskaya would write a book on the history of Black struggle in the U.S.: *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*—a quite different concept of vanguard than the party.

We see her relation to workers, also non-vanguardist, in her activity with workers in the Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50. So important did she view the activities of the miners in their general strike, and the participation of the state-capitalist tendency in that activity, that later she would designate this experience as one of the threads that led to "the birth of Marxist-Humanism in the United States." Why? Because it was here that she came to see the practice of the workers as itself a form of theory. No, she did not enunciate this expression at that moment, but the seeds of this concept were born here.

THE OBJECTIVITY OF SUBJECTIVITY

Second, when she wrote of "the type of grouping like ours," she had in mind not the orthodox Marxist parties with their programs, but what I would term a strictly theoretical-practical grouping that was searching for the philosophic basis of its existence, what she would later call "the objectivity of subjectivity." This is far, far away from classical vanguardism.

The key here is not alone to see her beginning point

Dialectic of the party or dialectic of organization and philosophy?

in Dialectic of the Party, but where Dunayevskaya's explorations of Hegel's Absolutes would take her. Her thought-dive went far deeper, transcending "the Dialectic of the Party." It is here that we will find her breakthrough on Hegel's Absolutes, "the Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism."

Dunayevskaya's breakthrough meant a completely different reading than both Hegel scholars and Marxist revolutionaries had given. Hegel's Absolutes had in general been seen as a complete idealism where humanity was shut out, perhaps a conversation with God, or simply a summary or recapitulation of what he had developed earlier, with nothing new in the sections on the Absolutes.

DUAL MOVEMENT OF PRACTICE AND THEORY

Dunayevskaya discovered something quite different. She saw *within* Hegel's absolutes, not an end point, but new beginnings, Absolute Negativity as New Beginning. What did she mean by this? She saw, particularly in the final syllogisms of Absolute Mind (Spirit) at the end of Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, a dual movement—a movement from practice to theory that she recognized was itself a form of theory, and a second movement, a movement from theory to meet this movement from practice. Furthermore, this second form of theory not alone joined with the movement from practice, but was

masses transform what is implicit in their practice and make it explicit as the basis for revolutionary transformation. It was in that manner that "we [would enter] the new society."

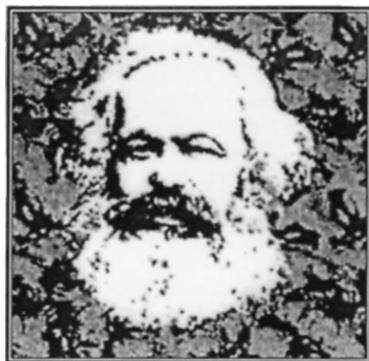
WHAT KIND OF THEORY IS NEEDED?

But how could these small groups of theoretician-activists be able to do this? If they were to meet the movement from practice that was itself a form of theory, with a concept of revolutionary theory that would truly be integral to the masses' practice, to their form(s) of theory, then what kind of theory needed to be worked out to undertake such a task? It could only be theory that had its roots emanating from, reached back to dialectical philosophy—only theory that was a concretization of the fullness of emancipatory philosophy. That is, it needed to be profoundly related with the totality, the fullness of a philosophy of revolution—the historically created Hegelian-Marxian dialectical philosophy.

This, precisely this, is the contribution of Dunayevskaya: The dual movement, from practice that is a form of theory, of theory that makes explicit the masses' own practice and thoughts and that can do so precisely because such theory is rooted in the fullness of philosophy. It is this, I would argue, that makes Dunayevskaya's contribution on a different level, a different philosophic plane, than that of other thinkers.

This is what I mean when I write of the need to "recreate the dialectic" rather than to "apply" that dialectic. It is not to dismiss or degrade other thinkers—Lukacs, Marcuse, Korsch and others. Yes, they have made contributions. And I am sure we would add many others. But, can we not grasp that Dunayevskaya's contribution philosophically, and I would add even practically in terms of concept and practice of revolutionary organization, is of a different type? This is not because she was smarter or wiser than any of the others. Rather, it was because she lived in a certain age, with a deeper maturity of the movement from below. She saw and identified with this maturity and ran with it to the Absolutes of Hegel, and within those absolutes, she found the philosophic expression of that maturity that had not been explored fully even by Marxists as great as Marx or Lenin. Again, not because she was "more advanced" than they, and certainly she had never claimed that. Rather, it is because of the maturity of the post-World War II world that opened to Dunayevskaya a new vantage point, and thus a new way

Special offer on: *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx by Raya Dunayevskaya*



The essays in this book, including those discussed in the "Philosophic Dialogue" on this page, show why serious Marxist thinkers and revolutionaries return to Hegel, the source of the radical dialectic, as Karl Marx did repeatedly.

Whether the reader wants insights into Marxist thinkers—from Lenin to Frantz Fanon to those in the Frankfurt School or contemporary thinkers of the 20th and 21st Century—or of philosophy's relevance to revolutions from the Black struggle for freedom in the U.S. to Africa, the Middle East, and the Balkans, there is an essay in *The Power of Negativity* that will shed an original radical light on the subject.



The special offer for *The Power of Negativity* includes \$10 off the original price of \$25 PLUS a year's subscription to *News & Letters*. To receive both book and subscription send \$15 to News and Letters or use PayPal from our website. Both addresses can be found on page 7.

itself rooted in, or reached back to be forged in the fullness of philosophy—that is, theory as a concretization, an expression of emancipatory, dialectic philosophy.

Let us think through what this means. First, if there is a movement of masses from below, workers, women, minorities etc. and that movement from practice is itself a form of theory, is itself not alone force or muscle, but reason, mind, of revolutionary transformation, then that realization means that the old form of the party to lead, vanguardism, was completely bankrupt. You did not need "to give consciousness to the masses," the masses would develop that on their own in the process of struggle, in the process of negation of the old. Didn't that mean that Dunayevskaya had, via this dialectical exploration, moved far beyond any Dialectic of the Party?

But wait, there is more. Yes, the movement from practice was a form of theory, but not the *only form of theory*. There was another form of theory—that which revolutionaries or radical activists could work out to join, to be in unity with, the movement from below, from practice that was implicitly theory. Note my use of the word *implicit*. The form of theory from the masses was not always full-blown theory, but theory was implicit. Now, there was a truly integral, dialectic role for revolutionary theoretician-activists. It was not to give consciousness to the masses, rather it was to help the

of reading Hegel, of reading *Hegel's absolutes as new beginnings*. That is what I see is involved in her Letters of May 12 and 20, 1953.

RELATION OF ORGANIZATION TO PHILOSOPHY

One other note on the dialectic in Dunayevskaya's exploration of Hegel's Absolutes. Over more than three decades, she returned numerous times to those Letters, to finding what she termed "the many universals" inherent in them. In 1986-87, she turned to the letters, not to explore "the Dialectic of the Party," but the dialectic of *organization*. She was asking what is the relation between organization(s) of revolutionaries and dialectical philosophy? She formulated this as: "Dialectic of Organization and Philosophy: 'The Party' and Forms of Organization Arising from Spontaneity."

Thus, it is the *dialectic in philosophy* that allows one not only to break with the vanguard party form (a first negation if you will) but to enter onto a path of working out revolutionary organization not alone as form, but as unseparated from emancipatory philosophy as the very being, essence and notion of such revolutionary organization(s) (an entering fully into second negativity).

First published in Spanish in Praxis en America Latina, after it published Raya Dunayevskaya's May 1953 Letters on Hegel's Absolutes.

Dear Readers: This page is yours. It is about what you're thinking and feeling about today's happenings; what makes you angry and must change. It is for you to express what has gone right and needs to continue, or what in your city, country, workplace or neighborhood you want to comment on. Send those comments to us at our national office or to our email address, both of which are on page 7. We look forward to hearing from you.

HATE: ORLANDO TO BREXIT

I have been in a state of sorrow and shock about the Orlando massacre. I broke down to both my therapist and my mother, overwhelmed by grief and by the hate that all Gay people experience here in the U.S. and around the world. My mother asked if I was Gay and I said yes, I consider myself a Lesbian. She said that she did not know what that meant and suggested we drop the subject. Her initial reaction to the massacre was, "Well, they were only Gay weren't they?" and that she didn't know any Gay people. Now she knows one: her Lesbian daughter, although she will never acknowledge me as such. For my part, the day after the deaths I wore the most flowery and colorful dress I had as my way of saying: You bastards may gun us down and beat us and rape us, but you will never stop us from being proud of what we are.

**Natalia
New York City**

Every time gun control has become a central topic in the U.S., some group has been thrown under the bus. The first time legislation was passed to restrict gun ownership was to disarm the Black Panthers. Republicans and their Democratic allies at the time could unite on what today they would call a threat to the Second Amendment. They didn't mind because it was disarming Black people. Lax gun laws are a serious problem. But now people are calling for "Terror watch lists," because of the alleged threat of foreigners shooting innocent Americans. Liberals call for an expansion of the FBI's ambit on Muslim communities, an organization that has historically shown itself to be nothing short of criminal. Once again, liberals are throwing the most disenfranchised under the bus.

**Black student
Pennsylvania**

DEADLY ASSAULT ON WOMEN FROM U.S. TO ISRAEL

The Supreme Court's decision on Whole Woman's Health v. Hellerstedt was unexpected but so important! It may at least put a damper on the mass closings of clinics offering abortion and the inhuman state laws that made the "right" to an abortion a sick joke. I doubt, however, that it will stop the deadly assault on women from the Republicans and theocratic Right.

**Terry Moon
Chicago**

A group of women in Beit Shemesh, Israel, had to fight to remove so-called "modesty signs" plastered around their city that ordered women to wear long sleeves and skirts and no tight-fitting clothing. Other signs ordered them to keep off the sidewalks near synagogues and yeshivas. The women had already won one lawsuit and the Mayor of the town refused to remove the signs so they had to sue again! Now the municipality has to pay the women damages for its negligence and remove the damn signs. All religious fundamentalism harms women and this was outrageous.

**Jewish feminist
Michigan**

I was angry to find that Bernie Sanders endorsed Rep. Marcy Kaptur, who is opposed to women's right to control our own bodies. She voted to ban federal health coverage that includes abortion; she voted to stop stem cell research. Evidently, it is enough for

READERS' VIEWS

Jo Cox's murder is just horrific, the outcome of inhuman political ideology. Her murder challenges those who think, "but I wouldn't pull the trigger (or plunge the knife)" to examine the logical outcome of their ideas, their prejudices. The mass shootings at Pulse in Orlando, at Planned Parenthood in Colorado, in Charleston, S.C., are the outcome of those in power legitimizing and fomenting racist, sexist, homophobic ideology. We had politicians say after the murders at Planned Parenthood that, while they mourn and condemn the loss of life, they mourn and condemn the loss of all the "dead babies killed" by abortion too. And they pretend to see no link between this and the nut jobs' "justifiable homicide" arguments? And they continue to hold witch-hunt hearings based on lies to close down Planned Parenthood, all the while introducing more laws to limit women's autonomy.

**Feminist
Chicago**

We workers have a lot of legitimate grievances against global capital and its ravages. The established powers worldwide conduct unending attacks against our lives and livelihoods. But, like Trumpism, the "Brexit" politicians used anti-immigrant racism and narrow nationalism to promote their campaigns. Only international labor solidarity can give us an exit from capitalism.

**Htun Lin
Oakland, Calif.**

The racism and xenophobia central to the British campaign to exit the European Union are one aspect of the rise of the Far Right in Europe. Disgracefully, part of the Left also tags along. Nothing could be more relevant than Raya Dunayevskaya's 1968 letter on then-MP Enoch Powell's racism, which inspired much of the "Brexit" drive. As she wrote then, "We must tell the proletariat of the technologically developed world that the working people themselves must face the fact that they lived off the fat of the land from the technologically undeveloped countries. Marx showed that at the root of the freedom of wage labor was

not only its own struggles for freedom, but also the fact that slavery still existed in Africa, in Asia, in the oppressed minorities *within* the developed country.... Instead of looking down upon the 'immigrants,' the British, as the American, as the East European, ought to hail the birth of the new Third World, especially the African Revolutions, for once again showing us the power of the ideas of freedom, that the will to freedom, even when unarmed and facing the mightiest empires, *can win*."

**Syria solidarity activist
Chicago**

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Racism did not stop in America. It was *born* in America, it lives today right here in America.



Believe it or not, somewhere in America 10 people have been wrongfully convicted

and in most cases they are either poor, come from violent communities, and are Brown or Black. Here in Chicago in June, the nation watched a Black commander found *innocent* despite DNA linking him to the crime. Today it's a verdict that attempts to question the Freddie Gray case in Baltimore and that the officers who killed him, did not really kill him. We must scream and holler the mistakes of the system into their ears. We cannot allow innocent blood to be shed without accountability. Today it is *Gray* and tomorrow it will be another case of injustice ruled in favor of the system to continue their systematic pattern of abuse and murder of innocent people.

**Tortured and framed by cops
Chicago**

How much Black Lives Matter has shaken up the life and thought of the U.S. is reflected in a dissent issued by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor. It is no surprise to see the most reactionary, utterly false ideas written into Supreme Court rulings. What is unusual is to see the language of the movement from below written into an opinion at the highest level of the judiciary. Demolishing Clarence Thomas's ruling legalizing evidence police find in some illegal stops, she included clear references to "Black Lives Matter" and Eric Garner's "I can't breathe":

"It is no secret that people of color are disproportionately victims of this type of scrutiny....[This ruling] says that your body is subject to invasion while courts excuse the violation of your rights. It implies that you are not a citizen of a democracy but the subject of a carceral state, just waiting to be cataloged. We must not pretend that the countless people who are routinely targeted by police are 'isolated.' They are the canaries in the coal mine whose deaths, civil and literal, warn us that no one can breathe in this atmosphere....They are the ones who recognize that unlawful police stops corrode all our civil liberties and threaten all our lives. Until their voices matter, too, our justice system will continue to be anything but."

**Franklin Dmitryev
Chicago**

In April, members of Los Angeles Community Action Network, Black Lives Matter and Stop LAPD Spying Coalition met in Chinatown to support the Chinatown Community Economic Development and Asian Pacific Islanders' press conference and speakout on the ongoing proliferation of police killings of mostly unarmed Black men and women.

We were demanding justice for Akai Gurley, an unarmed Black man killed by NYPD officer Peter Liang over a year ago. A jury found Peter Liang guilty of manslaughter, but he was sentenced to probation and community service. Their press release said in part: "just as the Black community has stood with Chinese victims of police violence—we must stand with the Gurleys and hold individual police accountable for abuses of authority."

**Basho
Los Angeles**

MUHAMMAD ALI AND DR. KING

Did you know that when Martin Luther King said, "We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them 8,000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem," that he was directly drawing from Muhammad Ali? Ali said: "Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over." This is the kind of man that Muhammad Ali was, an organic intellectual who had wisdom way beyond the books.

**Mohammed
Pennsylvania**

One cannot help but be struck with how alike sounding were Muhammad Ali and Martin Luther King, Jr. That likeness brought to mind the quote from 19th Century freedom fighter Nat Turner about the universality of the idea of freedom. In 1831, in response to his prosecutor who did not believe him when he denied conspiring with others in a slave insurrection in another county, he said: "I see, sir, you doubt my word. But cannot



you think that this same idea [freedom] prompted others as well as myself to this undertaking?"

**Women's Liberationist
Chicago**

DUTERTE IN THE PHILIPPINES

No "Left" excuses should be made for the President-Elect of The Philippines, Rodrigo Duterte. When he advocates the murder of "criminals," of "drug dealers," it echoes the worst rhetoric of the U.S. Right from George Wallace on, and mirrors the practice of death squads like those that murder street kids in Brazil. Extra-judicial killings have significantly increased even before his swearing-in. Human rights groups are protesting. At the same time, Duterte wants to make the country more attractive to foreign investment, and much of the ruling class supports him in this. So whom will his death squads turn their attention to next? Let's have no illusions.

**Observer
Illinois**

N&L READERS UNITE!

Do you have other subscribers in Santa Fe? I go to a lot of places where I ought to see *News & Letters* and they do not have it. Send me a small bundle of the paper and I will get them around. You cover things that do not appear anywhere else. I like your group and I like your editorials. I hope that you could put out a leaflet to explain yourself briefly and spread the word a lot wider. I would also like to get together with other *N&L* subscribers in Santa Fe and Albuquerque to see what we can do.

**Subscriber
Santa Fe, N.M.**

NEEDED NEW BEGINNINGS IN PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

What's so compelling about the Draft Perspectives is that we at News and Letters Committees are the only news dissemination block that talks, in depth, about "human" problems worldwide. *N&L* does not advertise to appease, so we can use words like revolution and (Black, Women, LGBTQ) Lives Matter. We can attack the status quo and the defined hypocrisy, which exists on all levels worldwide. Most importantly, we offer solutions to the problems and we do it in a responsible manner.

The violence we see at political rallies is often instigated by irresponsible political figures who feel that they can bully their way into having people accept their ideas. Those who are enemies of freedom are often the biggest hypocrites of all, for they shout from their pulpits of despair, loudly, in order to drown out the cries of desperation of those whom they seek to oppress. Whether in the U.S. or abroad, the war on freedom is being waged with a vehemence that is appalling by any standard. Yet, unless a tragedy like that on the lives of the slaughtered club-goers in Orlando is perpetrated, this war goes largely unreported.

The Draft Perspectives is properly titled, "The need for new beginnings in thought and in action." If we are to give true meaning to revolution, then it is necessary to establish a new foundation for our society and culture to stand upon. *N&L*, the paper, and News and Letters Committees, the body general, are those tools of change.

Robert Taliaferro
Black River Falls, Wisc.

"Alive in struggle" by Htun Lin (May-June *N&L*) is a powerful "first-person" article that at the same time stresses the importance of self-activity from below and speaks about the urge of a "revolution in philosophy." Self-activity from below and revolution in philosophy don't appear as separate realms. Htun Lin calls self-activity from below "the essential philosophic concrete," implying that philosophy is internal to workers' struggles. This poses the next

questions: "Is a 'political revolution' to 'save' capitalism what we need? Is a focus on economic distribution and forms of remuneration under current bounds adequate or appropriate for our times?" He is writing about the need to explicitly develop a "new continent in thought," a "revolution in philosophy," already implicit in workers' self-activity. This is in tune with *N&L*'s call to unite theory and practice, revolution and philosophy. Htun Lin's call is strong because a worker, realizing the importance of both self-activity and philosophy, makes it.

Hector
Mexico City

MAKING ONE YEAR COUNT

Reading "One year for 29 lives" in the May-June issue spurred me to do research. I found out that West Virginia activist Ann Bybee-Finley, a Cornell University Ph.D. student, created the letter-writing project "Making One Year Count." She hopes that Massey Energy CEO Don Blankenship receives at least one letter each day to make him reflect on the great damage he and his company caused with the 2010 Upper Big Branch Mine explosion which killed 29 miners. To take part in this campaign, folks should go to the "Making One Year Count" Facebook page. Blankenship got only a year in prison, a \$250,000 fine and one year supervised probation for his willfully neglectful deadly mining practices and murdering miners.

Kaitlin
Chicago

SUBJUGATED KNOWLEDGE

We are pleased to announce that *Subjugated Knowledge: The Literary Journal* is accepting submissions and applications for editorial positions. There is a certain kind of denigration foisted onto knowledge produced by people in the margins—people of color, queer, agender, gender fluid or gender nonconforming people, immigrants, ref-

ugees, people who are disabled, people who have experienced homelessness, people who have been or are imprisoned, and so on. Our goal is to provide a platform for people who are situated within the margins to produce and disseminate knowledge and creative work.

Please submit your notes, poetry, fiction, non-fiction, scholarly essays, rants, experimental writing, musings, interviews, playlists, reading lists, photography to iwilli8@emory.edu. (Multiple submissions are permitted and we accept work that is unpolished.)

The authors of selected pieces will be contacted within one week. Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in an editorial position or if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you, and we look forward to receiving your submissions!

The Subjugated Knowledge Editorial Board
<http://subjugatedknowledge.org/>

FREE SYRIA / MAY DAY

The Free Syria rally in Chicago on May Day was very inspiring, as any of their events I've been to always are. These freedom fighters are strong and enduring. Part of what made their May Day rally special was that many of the May Day marchers showed solidarity with the Free Syria people. I do wish the mainstream media would cover the Free Syria movement and its fighters... maybe that way the U.S. would firmly support the fight to free Syria.

Elise
Chicago

VOICES FROM BEHIND THE BARS

I enjoy this publication and share it with other prisoners. It's a good educational tool and helps with the expansion of prisoner thought and mental capacity. I wish it had a much larger section to deal with prison issues and struggles.

Prisoner
Represa, Calif.

The Bureau of Prisons is now trying to murder me by withholding essential medications, imposing a substandard

medical non-treatment plan and denying me colostomy supplies, which can result in fatal infections of the intestines and stomach. My medical and physical condition is such that I should have been transferred to a medical facility as opposed to a penitentiary, which routinely



ignores my medical condition. I enjoyed the Draft of the Marxist-Humanist Perspectives 2016-17 and will address

particular issues as soon as I become settled in my "new" oppressive existence.

Fernando Bustillo
Florence, Colo.

I'm a prisoner in a California state prison. I read about *N&L* in the Prison Activist Resource Center directory and I have the same dream of the abolition of capitalism in any form. I'm requesting a subscription to *N&L*.

Prisoner
Wasco, Calif.

Thank you for providing a voice for the few who have no other voices speaking out for them. Please place me on your subscription list and send me a copy of the pamphlet on the Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers.

Prisoner
Wasco, Calif.

I'm in the SHU at Florence awaiting a transfer to an LGBT-friendly yard so I can go home when I'm supposed to. I'm new to fighting for LGBT/prisoners' rights to be free and ending caging people. That's clearly not the answer or prisons and jails alike wouldn't be revolving doors. I'd love to receive your newspaper as well as participate in it. Without the courage to speak out, no one would know the struggle, pain and torment this place causes.

Prisoner
Florence, Colo.

TO OUR READERS: Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to N&L?

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Prisoner's worth

by Robert Taliaferro

Though the U.S. has only 5% of the world's population, it holds over 25% of the world's prison population. Despite the fact that crime has been going down, the prison industrial complex has padded its bottom line by enlisting investors with names like IBM, Revlon, Boeing, Target and Pierre Cardin—to name a few—creating billions of dollars in profits for those companies who not only get tax breaks, but a captive workforce not subject to wage laws or strikes. This captive workforce has few protections on either the federal or state level. No workers' compensation if injured, no benefits, no standard wages, no consistently enforced standards for hours worked, training or safety.

To the U.S. Prison Industrial Complex, the average prisoner brings about \$30,000 a year. If a prisoner—especially a lifer or long-timer—survives long enough to get old, they bring as much as \$100,000, depending on the state and facility. With about 2.5 million people currently confined, it comes to an estimated \$75 billion a year. Though it is taxpayers' money, it's an untraceable expense that no one—especially not the Prison Industrial Complex—can adequately account for.

The expense doesn't stop there. Other forms of correctional authority add another \$10-30 billion to the tab. Expenses include over 50,000 people incarcerated in solitary confinement or supermax prisons; and then there are those who get punished beyond what was prescribed by the courts for crimes they were alleged to have committed.

One of the greatest lies told by the Prison Industrial Complex is that it has created processes where prisoners can be "rehabilitated." This is in the form of in-house programs often subsidized by the federal government. They cover every aspect of criminality—Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Domestic Violence, Anger Management, Sex Offenders, Stress Management, Cognitive Group Intervention, even programs like Divorce—for people who feel that they do not need these programs.

The success of these programs is debatable. Federal funding is received—not for demonstrating successful completions of the programs—but rather based on how many bodies are registered for the programs at any given time. There are no consistent, accurate, or required reports that define how successful such programs are in terms of completions or in lowering recidivism rates. Most facilitators of such programs are prison employees whose only requirement is a certification based on training that is conducted by whatever agency benefits from the program's enactment.

In many state prisons, prisoners are often assessed a need for a program—an assessment that is rarely substantiated. If the prisoner successfully completes the program, it has little impact on the status of their incarceration, especially if they are a lifer or long-timer. But the only real impact is if the prisoner refuses the program or is terminated from the program for any reason. Then it may negatively impact whether they are placed in reduced custody status or released on parole.

It is a win/win for the prison. The prison has already received the funding even if the prisoner does not complete the program. Because it is now a requirement, the prison industrial complex will continue to get paid every single time the prisoner has to retake the program. The prison industrial complex and the military industrial complex are the only two corporate enterprises which profit from negative outcomes and instigated human tragedies.

If we, as a nation, are going to hold ourselves to moral standards and ideas, then there needs to be morality and accountability when it comes to the treatment of this nation's prisoners.

With this nation's focus on mass incarceration as a social tool, and so called rehabilitative programs being used punitively to keep people confined, the only thing that separates this country's prison policy from that of China, North Korea, Iran or some other unfree country is that U.S. prisoners are better fed.

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Upon leaving Pelican Bay: my firsts (of many 😊)

Leaving out of Pelican Bay Solitary Confinement Torture Prison-Facilities/Units-Cages for the first time on Jan. 23, 2015 (after arriving there Nov. 29, 1990), I remember witnessing my first sunrise as the CDCr [CA Dept. of Corrections and rehabilitation] "gray goose" transportation bus travelled up the mountainside along Highway 101.

Staring out the window at the skyline as it transformed

into a mixture of blended orange-red-violet-blue colors, I sat there in deep silence just appreciat-

Walking against indefinite detention

Chicago—In early June, I helped bring together a 150-mile walk across the state of Illinois from east to west. I have been doing walks for the past four summers with Voices for Creative Nonviolence. This year, I convinced them to do the walk on the issues of indefinite detention, solitary confinement and the racist U.S. prison system. In past years we tried to highlight the Midwest drone bases where missiles are fired by remote control over the skies of other countries. This year we highlighted the Administrative U.S. Penitentiary expected to open next summer in rural Thomson, Ill., which sits on the Mississippi River.

NO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN ILLINOIS!

The word "administrative" is a euphemism for a facility which consists entirely of isolation cells, in this case 1,900 of them. The U.S. Bureau of Prisons would try to fill these cells by bringing prisoners to Illinois, a state where activists have spent decades furthering a general awareness of solitary confinement. The general disgust with solitary confinement in Illinois recently forced the state assembly to consider House Bill 5417, legislation that requires a documented reason for putting any prisoner in isolation and which limits the duration of such confinement to not more than five days.

I wanted to do this walk because I think the discourse in this country is becoming dangerous; racism and fear of the other are ramping up. The national mood for building walls to keep out refugees, further militarizing the police and increasing gun ownership to keep the "criminals" in check (they are imagined as Black, Latino and Muslim people) reflects what has already festered for decades in the prisons.

The U.S. is building ever more restrictive prisons for a prison population that is falling. People put in these prisons are often not the "worst of the worst" prisoners but are the "uncooperative" ones. The choice becomes: cooperate with legal slavery or resist and be harshly disciplined. The mentally ill have suffered from the closure of mental health facilities, such as the six clinics recently shuttered in Chicago. Many of the patients are funneled into the prisons, where guards often see them as uncooperative.

Laws are elastic. The poor have the book thrown at them while the rich get off easy. Governments do not have to follow the law at all. Many people in atrociously-run county jails spend years with no trial.

ERODING THE SYSTEM'S FOUNDATION

A long walk is a good way to erode the ugly foundations of this system because it gives us the chance to interact with hundreds of passers-by and to give a momentary reminder to thousands of motorists (via placards). We have a chance to hold public face-to-face discussions at churches and libraries. I pulled together all the different people and organizations who volunteer to provide meals, snacks, water, transportation, and lodging for the 15 days and 14 nights we spent walking, and they also feel a sense of involvement in arguing with their own neighbors and friends about prisons.

We walked the final mile up to the prison on June 11. I think it made some difference but only a little bit, like a recently woven row in the vast tapestry of work being done to challenge the prison system. The more work that can be done to engage people on the issue of mass imprisonment, the better, and it is always worth it. Facilitating dialogue and sparking people's imaginations can eventually lead to a diversion of public resources away from building prisons and into alternatives that help to build a healthier society.

—Buddy Bell

ing the beauty of Nature . . . It would be the first of many first time experiences of using my natural senses again after being buried alive in that concrete box deprived of the natural use of those senses for the last 25 years.

My next First was at the San Quentin Receiving and Release Center. And while we were standing in small holding cages waiting to get back on the bus, another of the men (in another cage) asked to use the restroom across the hall.

I was surprised when the guard walked over to the cage, unlocked the door, and let the guy walk out and across the hall (around other staff) unhandcuffed! I knew that I had to experience this after years/decades of being chained and

cuffed (like a 19th Century slave). I asked to use the restroom and the guard let me out to walk freely across the hall uncuffed. It was not far, but just the absence of cuffs made a world of difference between being treated like a (chained) animal and feeling Humyn!

My next First may seem small to many outside hearing this, but for me it was special for my humanity. On Jan. 28 I arrived at Salinas Valley State Prison general population and was housed with a fellow human being named Malik. He gave me a brand new toothbrush (that he was allowed to purchase from an outside quarterly package vendor).

This was not the 2" miniature size toothbrush (normally for brushing pet animals' teeth) I had been using since the 1990s. This was the normal regular-size toothbrush used for brushing human teeth. And each time I use it, the feel of being human is always at the front of my mind. With each stroke of the brush I humbly give in to the use of this part of my deprived senses.

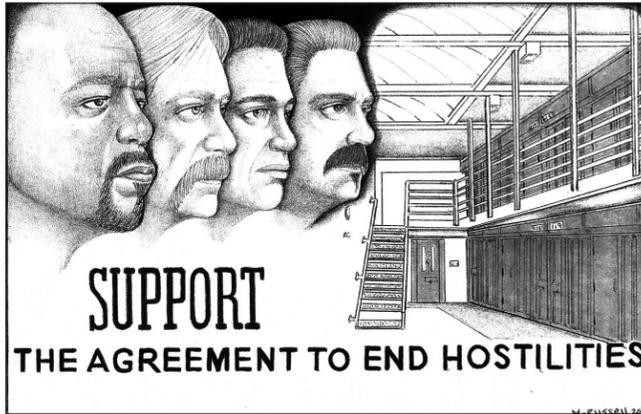
There have been many more Firsts since then over the course of this first year, but the one that is so close and dear to heart was my first visit (contact) with my family in my thirty-plus years of confinement.

When I was able to visit my sister Donnita Benson, when she flew out from Oklahoma City and we hugged/kissed for the first time since 1980. It was a memorable experience to go from tears of hurtful pain and suffering that date back to our childhood struggles—domestic violence, being separated at ages 10 (me) and 14 (her); as "survivors"; she survived breast cancer and I survived being lost to the street jungles at age 15, then these concrete prison jungles, including decades in solitary confinement—then went to tears of joy, laughter, and happiness as we enjoyed those two days together.

She said I squeezed her hand so tight and would not let it go that it went numb... Oops, my bad. I guess I subconsciously was that little child back home walking everywhere holding securely to my older sister's hand.

I will close this off with a solidarity salute of appreciation, and honor to all of the Prisoners' Hunger Strike Support-Prisoners' Human Rights Movement outside supporters who believe in our cause enough to keep the spotlight on this state's massive dysfunctional system of mass incarceration, its evil solitary confinement torture use, non-rehabilitative and social re-entry parole opportunities. Thanks for their contributions for helping those released from long-term solitary confinement identify, cope with and heal from its own unique post-traumatic stress disorder syndrome. Thank you/Asante to each and all.

In solidarity with all oppressed peoples' struggles,
—Brutha Baridi



Prisoners at Pelican Bay SHU worked out The Agreement to End Hostilities in response to prison authorities setting prisoners against each other. The Agreement expresses the bases for what is now the Prisoners' Human Rights Movement.

Art by Michael Russell

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Homophobic mass murder in Orlando

Near 2:00 AM, June 12, after a night of celebrating Latin Gay identity, patrons at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, were assaulted by heavily armed domestic terrorist Omar Mateen. For three hours, he shot people, took hostages, and finally died in the apocalypse he had orchestrated.

EDITORIAL

We stand in solidarity and mourning with the 49 people who were murdered, the 53 wounded, their families and communities. The massacre is a reminder of why the struggle for LGBTQI freedom must continue. The point was underscored later that day when another heavily armed man was taken into custody at the Los Angeles Pride Parade.

From the beginning, the struggles of LGBTQI people have added immeasurably to our understanding of the most basic questions, “What does it mean to be human?” and “What does freedom mean?” As Black Lives Matter reminded us, often through the voices of Black Queers, our revolutionary ground must never be less than human freedom and dignity.

OMAR MATEEN A ‘CASE STUDY’

The Orlando killer, Omar Mateen, seems to have been a case study: he was a narcissist, a wife-beater, and a make-believe cop—reminiscent of George Zimmerman, killer of Trayvon Martin.

Mateen was surrounded by toxic social relations. His father, a would-be Afghan politician based in the U.S., embodies the worst aspects of U.S.-Afghan relations. He advocates geopolitical alliance with the Taliban in support of his desire for Afghanistan to annex Pakistan’s Northwest Frontier Province. Small wonder Mateen wanted to gesture towards ISIS and the Boston Marathon bombers before he died.

Despite earlier claiming membership in Al-Qaeda and Hezbollah, ultimately Mateen wasn’t taken seriously as a threat by the FBI. It wasn’t geopolitics that drove him, but internal conflicts, and nothing kept him from being licensed to carry a gun or from being able to buy military assault weapons.

Mateen worked as a G4S guard in Florida’s privatized juvenile prison system. Facilities run by G4S, a multinational security company formerly notorious as Wackenhut, have seen numerous examples of violence and sexual abuse directed at young prisoners by company personnel. There are few schools of dehumanization more efficient than the U.S. prison system.

Even before all facts were known, Donald Trump was treating the massacre as his racist, anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, anti-women campaign’s Reichstag Fire—the event Hitler used to consolidate his power. Omar Mateen is Trump’s best campaign asset. And it’s certain Mateen was influenced by the atmosphere

spread by Trump’s, and the Right’s, hateful rhetoric.

This hatred has only become more virulent in the face of recent victories for LGBTQI people like the Supreme Court striking down bans on same-sex marriage.

The reactionary rise of anti-LGBTQI hatred can become a “license to kill” for the most inveterate haters. Witness “bathroom bills” directed against Transgender people, as in North Carolina; the bombing of a Target store’s bathroom in Evanston, Ill., over that issue; a Gay couple in Atlanta assaulted with boiling water; a young Gay man in Los Angeles murdered by his homophobic father.



Demonstration in London in solidarity with those murdered and attacked at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida.

REACTION FEEDS ON REACTION

The Orlando massacre will resonate in domestic politics and across the world. The ghoulish spectacle of Trump crowing that he “appreciated the congrats for being right on radical Islamic terrorism” disgusted many, but also galvanized his base. Even part of the ruling class now realize that this sociopath and neofascist can’t be given political power.

This crime will also be used to bolster Europe’s rising anti-immigrant Right. It will be a primary task of revolutionaries to defeat these reactionary moves.

This will require developing, practically and philosophically, the uncompromising assertion of human freedom and dignity common to Black Lives Matter, the Arab Spring, and the Syrian Revolution, which has long struggled against ISIS and its related ideologies. It will mean a fierce defense of, and solidarity with, the LGBTQI community, which is the common target of reactionary attacks across the world.

The creation of a new human society remains the human endeavor. The totality of the crisis demands a total solution. It can be nothing short of a New Humanism.

EDITORIAL Reactionary Brexit vote

continued from p. 1

Charles Hamad, “In the northeast of England, the politics of racist hysteria, hatred and fear have won in white working class areas. This line that it’s a ‘protest against the establishment’ is pernicious. It’s the result of decades of racism being fostered among these communities. You have, simultaneously, the Tory government cutting public services, while the people are being told that immigrants are putting a strain on these services. It’s the cuts, not the immigrants. The English National Health Service has been weakened by Labour/Conservative stealth privatization, not by immigrants.”

Such neo-fascism is what capitalism turns to when experiencing a global collapse of its rate of accumulation—as Germany bowed to Hitler in the 1930s. A tiny minority of capitalists have for decades relied on coded racist rhetoric to divide the great majority and now would like to undo even the minimal post-2008 crash regulatory curbs on their speculative activity. They will line up behind Trump, to keep their lock on the political process.

THE U.S.’S LESSER EVILS

In the U.S. election campaign, on the Democratic side, Bernie Sanders exposed Hillary Clinton for refusing to make public her speeches to Wall Street, which is hedging its bets between Clinton and Trump. Yet few can ignore the history that Clinton would make if elected the first woman president of the U.S. An avalanche of acidic misogyny is already in motion from both Trump and even some Sanders supporters.

The Sanders call for a political revolution, as an avowed socialist, brought out hundreds of thousands, demanding free education, universal single-payer healthcare and a redistribution of wealth that has been concentrated in the top 1%.

At some points it looked like he might overtake Clinton, who began as the party favorite, but what put her over the top was millions of Black people’s votes as well as women concerned about reproductive justice.

Sanders required a wake-up call by Black Lives Matter activists who early in his campaign seized the

microphone at his rallies to make their point. Black Lives Matter’s Darnell Moore criticized him in an open letter for having “foregrounded” income inequality at the cost of beginning from the “life experiences and work experiences of, let’s say, a Black woman or an undocumented individual.”

NOT A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Presidential candidates rarely, if ever, represent the “American people,” a phrase they love to kick around. Like the British Labour and Conservative Parties, they represent capital and the status quo. Even Obama, who gave hope to Black America, acknowledged that what he became an expert at was “killing people.” It was under his reign that Black Lives Matter had to birth itself in response to unending executions by cops of Black men, women, and children.

What can make a difference is people’s own self-organization. If life is better for workers, it became so through strikes and factory takeovers; that women have the right to abortion, that there is awareness of rape culture and domestic violence is because women marched by the thousands and raised the issues. Black Lives Matter is how Black people in the U.S. have again shown themselves as vanguard at this turning point in history, and brought to the forefront what it means to be a human being in 2016.

Defeating a creature like Trump is only a part of humanity’s struggle to create a society where every individual can experience freedom.

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Anger & tears in NYC

New York—There was an immediate reaction in the city’s LGBTQ community in the aftermath of the Orlando massacre. On the Sunday evening following, there was a spontaneous outburst of outrage and solidarity in the Theater District. There, hundreds of protesters carrying homemade signs were confronted by New York police on horseback trying to herd the crowds into subway stations.

On the same night at the historic Stonewall Inn, the birthplace of the modern LGBTQ revolutionary movement, hundreds gathered to protest the killings and to denounce violence directed against Gays and Lesbians in the U.S. and across the world. Also on that night, a protest was held in the Queens neighborhood of Jackson Heights where many working-class and Third World Gays live.

The following Monday evening, nearly 1,000 people turned out for another protest at Stonewall. Many in the community, including many Lesbians, straight people, religious leaders, congregations, and Queer Nation organizers, attended this rally.

Under heavily militarized police presence, this protest was used by the New York political establishment to advocate tighter gun control laws, rather than focus on the massacre itself.

At one point, after many politicians had spoken, the police commissioner got up to speak and was booed by the crowd, who chanted “Read the names!” demanding that the names of the 49 victims be read aloud.

At the same time, Transgender women at SAGE, the senior center for LGBTQ people, held their own vigil in honor of the massacre victims.

The next day, a solemn rally was held outside the Callan-Lorde Community Health Center, which services the LGBTQ community and also that night at the women’s group at SAGE, many of us spoke movingly of the impact of the massacre on our lives and some called for political action against the NRA and the gun lobby.

More protests are expected in the days leading up to Pride Week in New York City. —Natalia Spiegel

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

TRANSSA (Trans Siempre Amigas/Trans Always Friends), Guyana Trans United, JFLAG (Jamaica Forum of Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays), Caribbean Vulnerable Communities Coalition and Bahamas Transgender Intersex United are some of the Queer rights groups in the Caribbean fighting for Transgender people to have human rights. They document: the unlawful detentions and police brutality towards Transgender people, Transgender people who have been murdered, and the abuse of Transgender children by their own families. These and other Caribbean Queer rights groups demand that their governments encourage families to support their Transgender children and have enough shelters for abandoned Transgender children. They are also running life-saving programs for HIV-positive Trans women and helping them navigate healthcare systems. Guyana Trans United is challenging the constitutionality of colonial laws criminalizing cross-dressing.

* * *

Transgender teen girl Corey Maison’s story of overcoming vicious bullying has gone viral. Through The Bully Project, a media campaign to end bullying of children, Corey reveals that her supportive parents home schooled her after the bullying at school became so severe that she was crying every day. After Corey watched the show *I Am Jazz: A Family in Transition*, about Transgender girl Jazz and her family’s journey to supportiveness, Corey returned to school and is allowed to use the girls’ restroom and locker room. To get involved in The Bully Project, see their Facebook page or their website www.thebullyproject.com.

* * *

The University of North Carolina is finally protesting North Carolina’s anti-Queer rights and anti-Transgender bathroom law, HB2. After UNC President Margaret Spellings—no friend of the Queer Community—said the university would enforce HB2, she later stated UNC will not enforce provisions of the law that people must use the bathroom and changing room of their gender at birth, instead of the gender each person identifies with.

* * *

Allies of Transgender and gender nonconforming students at Oregon State are wearing buttons, T-shirts and backpacks that say, “I’ll Go With You” (IGWY). The IGWY movement began over a year ago when T-shirts, buttons and backpacks with the words I’ll Go With You started to be distributed all over the country. OSU students wearing IGWY gear will escort Transgender and Gender Nonconforming students to bathrooms and changing rooms, to ensure their safety.

Fires in Canada, drought in India inspire creative revolt

continued from p. 1

able to return to work, while others have already given up. At the same time, the social and environmental devastation generates resistance.

The fires sweeping Alberta, like those that have plagued much of Russia—70 million acres in 2012—are made stronger and more frequent by the climate change accelerated by the tar sands operations that were temporarily interrupted. Hotter summers have also led to interruptions of coal-fired and other power plants because the cooling water they use is too hot. But the bankruptcy of this system is expressed as much in how it responds to climate-related disasters, as in the murderous racist and militarized response to Hurricane Katrina's devastation in New Orleans. And the Pentagon is the U.S. institution most seriously planning responses to future climate events.

CLIMATE CHAOS IS UNLIMITED

Those disasters are not limited to wildfires, though they are serious enough and have sharply increased in places like the Western U.S.

Extreme storms, floods and drought are increasing. Floods in France this spring were in some areas the worst in a century, and scientists quickly pronounced them linked to climate change. Paraguay had its worst flooding in 50 years last December, as 150,000 South Americans had to flee their homes. Record-breaking rain in Houston in April brought floods that killed eight people in Texas and flushed oil and chemicals from fracking sites and oil wells into rivers. Worldwide, over one billion people are projected to be at risk of coastal flooding by 2060.

Drought has cut farm yields, causing food and water shortfalls from California to Southern Africa to the Philippines to India, where monsoon rains have been minimal for two years in a row. Already 400 farmers have killed themselves this year in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. Tens of thousands of people have had to move to slums in bigger cities just to live. As this pattern intensifies globally, more and more climate refugees will be created, though they will likely be officially classified as “economic migrants,” without the rights refugees are legally supposed to have.

PRODUCTION FOR PRODUCTION'S SAKE

While future food production is in jeopardy, enough food is still produced to feed everyone, but little is available to people with the least money.² In general, production is not, as the ruling ideology would have it, production for the needs of people but for the needs of capital, for its accumulation and the reproduction of capitalist social relations, regardless of the consequences for human well-being and for the environment on which production depends.

In the same way, the most advanced science is applied to the productive process and to military and corporate planning, but science is at the same time attacked in the political sphere in the service of the most retrogressive, even fascist, ideology. Congress and state legislatures have even used laws, budgets and investigations to muzzle climate science and the communication of its results.

Instead of an energy or climate plan, presidential candidate Donald Trump spews lies and delusions, such as the claim that global warming is a “hoax” that was “created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive.” His administration “will focus on real environmental challenges, not the phony ones we've been looking at.” First he promises to open more land for oil and natural gas drilling and deregulate fossil fuel companies in the name of “energy independence” (a term also used by Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton to justify continued oil, gas and coal production). So deluded is Trump that he told Californians, “There is no drought!” Yet he speaks for millions whose paranoia has been cultivated by both right-wing extremists and oil companies like Exxon Mobil.

THE PEOPLE FIGHT BACK

While that ideology holds in thrall most Trump supporters, the public at large does realize that climate change is happening and is harming people now, threatening even greater catastrophe if left unchecked. The movement to take action is growing. This May saw dramatic coordinated “Break Free from Fossil Fuels” actions around the world:

- 10,000 people marched in the Philippines opposing a new coal-fired power plant in Batangas City and demanding an end to coal use. “Batangas and the rest of

the Philippines will not bow to those who think of nothing but profit instead of people and plunder instead of protecting the environment,” said Naderev “Yeb” Saño, the government's former climate negotiator.

- 150 people camped on railroad tracks used by oil refineries near Anacortes, Wash., blocking trains for two days.

- Hundreds of kayaks and boats blockaded the entrance to Newcastle harbor in Australia, the world's biggest coal port, while others blocked nearby train tracks used for transporting coal. “The risk we face by not taking action on climate change is far greater than the risk of sitting on train tracks,” said Jesse Kalic, a student studying climate change.

- Protests in different areas of Nigeria highlighted the legacy of pollution left to peoples like the Ogoni in oil-rich zones, and of “fossil colonialism.”

Brazil, South Africa, Germany, Indonesia, Canada, and a number of other countries were all part of the “Break Free” actions. This was the peak intensity so far of a movement that has been going on for years.³

FIGHTING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

An important element of the movement relates it to struggles against environmental racism, a term coined by Black Americans fighting against the poisoning of their communities. They gave rise to the environmental justice movement, along with Latinos and other oppressed groups. This movement's breadth is reflected in statements like this one by Sâkîhitowin Awâsis, a Didikai Métis activist in Ontario:

“There are links between the presence of the tar sands industry and heightened rates of missing and

murdered Indigenous two-spirits, women, and girls....A pipeline campaign rooted in an anti-colonial framework brings together converging anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-colonial, and environmental struggles. This means that the strategies of our grassroots anti-tar sands movements entail leadership from Native peoples defending the sacred land. This work is already being led by women, girls, and two-spirits....”⁴

Indigenous activists have raised the question of what kind of development humanity should pursue. The answers, when one is given, are varied and usually partial. But it is a question the movement needs to tackle if the often-stated opposition to capitalism is to be fully realized.

Today the question of an alternative path of development has become overwhelmingly urgent because being trapped in the confines of capitalist development and its thought leaves only two choices: condemning billions in the so-called developing countries to increasing poverty and precarious existence, or bowing to capital accumulation in countries like China, India, and Brazil that pump more and more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, making catastrophic climate chaos a certainty. The need to break out of these false alternatives is felt by activists and theoreticians, and—along with the experience of the past five years' revolutionary upsurge—is one reason why capitalism is increasingly labeled the enemy by those who are not tied to the bureaucracies of states, corporations, foundations, and NGOs.

THE NEED FOR CLARITY OF THOUGHT

This calls for greater clarity on what capitalism is, what is to replace it, and how to get there. The ever-growing extraction of resources is obvious. That is not a policy choice or a result of unenlightened attitudes. Extractivism flows from capitalism's basic nature, in which the human being exists to serve the process of production, and machinery, as capital, is designed to extract the most labor from the worker. This is what Karl Marx called the dialectical inversion where capital or dead labor acts as the subject and the human being is made into an object. Its inner motion and fuel is the extraction of labor, which is objectified in an alienated manner into value. The transcendence of this alienated inversion is needed in order to fundamentally alter the law of motion of modern society and, with it, mentalities hostile to both nature and humanity.⁵

Whereas posing the question as a “growth para-

3. See, for example, “Canada's First Nations against fracking,” Nov.-Dec. 2013 *N&L*, and “Tar sands pipeline vs. human future,” Nov.-Dec. 2011 *N&L*.

4. “Pipelines and Resistance across Turtle Island,” in *A Line in the Tar Sands: Struggles for Environmental Justice*, ed. Toban Black, Stephen D'Arcy, Tony Weis and Joshua Kahn Russell (PM Press, 2014), pp. 255-56, 261.

5. See “Ecosocialism and Marx's Humanism,” Aug.-Sept. 2009 *N&L*.

digm” or “extractivism” paints a picture of wrong-headed ideas leading society astray, the concept of the dialectical inversion shows not only the objectivity of the distorted relationship between human beings and the objective world, but the way the subjectivity of individuals is at the heart of the contradiction—not only as victims of extracted labor but as Subjects capable of inverting the inversion. That is, workers taking control of production is the necessary basis of establishing a rational, sustainable relationship of society to nature.

Toward the end of his life, Marx extended his concepts, showing that not all nations need follow that path of capitalist accumulation as a law of development. The communal forms that remain, particularly in Indigenous societies today, can provide an element of regeneration. They would still need to develop through revolution, and in relationship to proletarian revolutions in the West.

This is what Marxist-Humanism singled out as the “new moments” of Marx's last decade, which open a far deeper view of what kind of development is the needed alternative to today's suicidal path of so-called development.

‘We defend the earth’

San Cristobal, Chiapas, Mexico—“Together We Defend Our Mother Earth” is the title of a documentary that shows the collective struggle for the defense of the land of the *ejidatarios* (collective land owners) of Tila. The documentary is in the *Ch'ol* language and Spanish. It was shown in the presence of the *ejidatarios* of Tila.

On Dec. 15, 2015, in the context of dispossession, continued harassment and after years of struggle and demands before the state and federal government, the organized *Ch'ol* people decided to remove the municipality (government) from the Tila *ejido*. Here is how the *ejidatarios* expressed it:

The video was made collectively. Both men and women. We are one, a collective whole, as was shown on the screen. In this video the interest we have in the community (adherents and non-adherents [to the Zapatista Sixth Declaration of the Selva Lacandona]) is demonstrated. We show that we defend Mother Earth together...In a General Assembly we decided to have self-determination, and our own government. People should govern their own lands.

On Dec. 16 the people decided to remove the municipality of Tila. We have long endured the abuse of misrule. We decided that the government should no longer be on our land. Once the municipality left Tila, we feel calmer, the harassment was over.

*Together we are working for garbage collection. All partners are collectively serving without pay. On the issue of security: In an assembly we decided to create the *ejidal* (community) police. Now the village is quieter, and you can see that there is not misrule.*

*Women are also collaborating and participating. At a meeting women said: “Enough! Alcoholism must end!” We have already seen a fall in alcoholism within the *ejido*.*

*We practice of autonomy in our *ejido*. An *ejido* has to have autonomy. In the constitution it says that a people, as in our *ejido*, have the right to exercise their own autonomy and self-determination.*

*In terms of justice, when the official government was exercising its rule, police tortured the *ejidatarios*, and there were even disappearances. Some of us were captured as we returned from the cornfields, tied and tortured. Now when a partner is caught drunk or does harm to society, a talk of reflection is given, advice, exercising justice in a respectful manner, respecting human rights. It depends on the crime.*

*Some time ago, a mining company arrived. We'd already written to them asking the company to leave. It was the municipality which gave it permission to be here, not the *ejido*. It is illegal. We will decide what to do with this company.*

*Once we decided to become autonomous, there's no dialogue with any of the three levels of the government. We will figure out how to respect the rights of our neighbors, who are not *ejidatarios*. We don't bother them.*

We are not against other peoples. We are against the government, against the exploitation of the peoples. Our rights should be respected for we are original peoples.

We will not go. We were born in this land and we will be buried here. The government does not own the land. The government wanted to give us 40 million pesos, but we don't want money, we work the land, so all together we defend the earth.

— Xmal Ton

Excerpted from an article in *Praxis en America Latina (Mexico)*.

Subscribe to News & Letters
Still the only Marxist-Humanist
paper in the world and still only
\$5/yr. for 6 issues (see p. 7).

2. See “World food crisis stirs revolt,” June-July 2008 *N&L*.

Upheaval and crisis in Latin America

Making of a disabilities rights activist

Venezuela: A death spiral for President Maduro's government?

The collapse of the economy catalyzed by the huge drop in oil prices—Venezuela's sole revenue producer—as well as severe state mismanagement of economic resources combined with economic-political sabotage carried out by the neoliberal political class, has led the country into an ever-deepening crisis. Electricity shortages—government offices cut to part-time, schools closed one day a week to save on electricity—severe lack of water (some communities receiving water shipments only one day a week), runaway inflation, and now devastating food shortages leading to outright hunger, are the everyday reality.

Food riots and the ransacking of stores are taking place, perhaps orchestrated in part by the right-wing opposition who have collected millions of signatures for a referendum to remove President Maduro. Of course the Right and the U.S. are intent on bringing down the Chavez legacy and Maduro reality. But what is, at the same time, the responsibility of a deeply contradictory vision and practice of “21st Century Socialism” for this present moment in Venezuela?

* * *

Colombia: Peace agreement signed, but problems in land tenancy remain

After more than three years, the peace talks between the government and FARC (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia) have reached an agreement for a cease-fire, and for FARC to lay down their arms. Negotiations for a final peace deal will be continuing. However huge problems remain.

Among the difficulties is the perverse agricultural question. It is not possible to understand the Colombian conflict if the problem of land—the source of life, work, food and livelihood for large segments of the population—is not grasped. A huge agricultural work stoppage took place in May involving tens of thousands of agricultural workers. Among those participating was the Movimiento Dignidad Agropecuaria (Agricultural Dignity Movement), which brings together small and middle-sized producers from different regions of the

country. What they and others face is a huge inequality in land distribution. Taking advantage of the particular circumstances of the war, ranchers, farmers and certain agricultural businessmen have concentrated



Thousands march during a protest on June 1, 2016, in Bogotá, Colombia, joining the farmers nationwide strike.

land ownership in their hands. This has come about by forced, often violent, expulsion of thousands from the land. There is as well the continuing increase of food imports causing hardship to domestic small producers. The development of the capitalist agricultural system has been running full speed ahead. Meanwhile, for vast numbers of rural residents there has been increasing poverty. Peace without agricultural justice, indeed without an agricultural transformation from below, has severe limitations.

* * *

Peru: Election defeat of Fujimori daughter

In a razor-thin presidential victory, the right-wing neoliberal Pedro Pablo Kuczynski defeated Keiko Fujimori, the daughter of jailed ex-president Alberto Fujimori who ruled Peru with an iron fist, human rights abuses and much corruption in the 1990s. While the defeat of Keiko is welcomed, the choice for Peruvians was the lesser of two evils, as both candidates espouse neoliberal big business economic policies. Furthermore, the election does not mean the defeat of Fujimorismo since in Congress her party, Fuerza Popular (Popular Force), will have 73 of 130 seats.

Still, it was large popular mobilizations, including the backing of the left-wing presidential candidate Verónica Mendoza of the Frente Amplio (Broad Front), who came in third in the first round of the election, that finally turned the tide. “To stop the advance of Fujimorismo, the only option is to vote for Kuczynski,” Mendoza had announced just days before the election.

The Syrian Revolution continues

The world is still discussing Syria as if the Syrian people and their Revolution don't exist. The people in the town of Maarat al-Numaan, in Idlib, have given the lie to that idea. For over three months now they have been demonstrating, daily, for freedom and dignity against the Nusra Front (Al-Qaeda), which attacked the Free Syrian Army; against ISIS; and against the Assad regime and Russian bombing.

This has not been easy. Nusra has fired on the demonstrators, and the regime has committed massacres by bombing the market place. But the revolutionary men and women, young and old, are determined to be heard. As one man said this week, “The Revolution took off in Daraa and Syrians carried it out in their heart, and now its renewal happens here.” And as one woman said, “Even if we have to stand here for a hundred months, we want our rights. We are here to say the word of truth.”

Significantly, the town was the birthplace of one of the greatest Arab poets, Al-Ma'arri (lived 973-1057). His poetry is comparable to the Roman poet Lucretius in its anti-supernaturalism, which prefigures the European Enlightenment in some ways. (That's why Nusra beheaded his statue!)

The active side of the Reason and free thought Al-Ma'arri wrote of can be seen in this incredibly brave and principled freedom struggle of today's Maaratis, a vital part of the Syrian Revolution. To be in solidarity with the people of Maarat al-Numaan can begin a philosophical dialogue that crosses between cultures. What could be more important? In Al-Ma'arri's words:

You've had your way a long, long time,
You kings and tyrants,
And still you work injustice hour by hour.
What ails you that do not tread a path of glory?
A man may take the field, though he love the bower.

But some hope a divine leader with prophetic voice
Will rise amid the gazing silent ranks.
An idle thought! There's none to lead but reason,
To point the morning and the evening ways.

(Translated by Reynold Nicholson.)

—Gerry Emmett

Berkeley, Calif.—On March 7, I attended a talk by a daughter/mother team, Becky and Dena Taylor, who introduced their book, *Tell Me the Number Before Infinity* (Many Names Press, 2016). Becky was born very premature in 1972, with a doctor telling Dena that if Becky lived she would probably be “blind, deaf and retarded.” Becky had cerebral palsy and developed very differently than other children.

From the perspective of both mother and daughter, we get a view of the travails of raising a child and growing up as that child while being pioneers in standing up to a conscious and unconscious cruelty inflicted on those who are different. Becky grew up in a loving, protective family, including her younger sister Anna, but the experience in the outer world made her wonder if “being teased and feeling lonely were normal.”

Becky was one of the first to be mainstreamed in public school under a California law that required publicly funded schools to integrate disabled children. There were serious challenges and difficulties at every step, all the way to getting a degree in computer science at the University of California at Santa Cruz.

This, however, is not a tale of woe, but rather of a person whose open optimism was nurtured by her family. Early on Becky was appreciated for her innate talents, which are considerable, especially with respect to mathematics. This intelligent, sensitive person turned outward, learning how best to deal with a body and slowness to communicate that often made others uncomfortable. It took a while for her precociousness in math, an ability to do very complicated problems in her head, to show through to her teachers because for Becky the “hardest part is saying the answer out loud.”

While Becky's life is not defined by her disability, she is now a disability rights activist, sitting on a local disability access committee, and joining the group Women Independently Living with Disabilities (WILD), which fights for the rights of those with disabilities. The book is part of Becky's openness to the world and an attempt to break down barriers that often keep people isolated instead of appreciating our mutual humanity. Rather than wishing she had a different life, Becky feels comfortable being who she is and wouldn't change anything. As she put it: “I think the outsider perspective is very important in a homogenizing society.”

Investigating what is specifically human, Karl Marx—contrary to the prevailing view, in which physical differences often play such a dominating role—found that what is human is specifically what we make of those differences. Do we relate to the other as a self-determining free agent? To me, Becky's message is that we know how human we are by how much the importance of that “outsider perspective” becomes internalized, so that being different does not mean you are an outsider.

—Ron Kelch

Polarization in Brazil

The coup to protect corrupt Congressmen and to oust the progressive Workers Party of Lula da Silva and Rousseff from power continues with Interim President Michel Temer, Dilma Rousseff's Vice President before she was impeached, and his all-male, all-white cabinet. Rousseff will be put on trial in the coming weeks. But sharp divisions within Brazil have a longer history.

TRY ANYTHING BUT SOCIALISM

Industrialists and businessmen were happy to work with state management instituted by the Workers Party under Lula on the capitalist Brazilian economy as a substitute for a movement toward authentic socialism with workers' control and peasant self-determination. When the price of oil and other export commodities fell, these representatives of capital began to favor savage neoliberalism.

State management of the economy (a form of state-capitalism) went hand in hand with the Party's efforts to demobilize the very social forces that carried them to power. Mobilization in the street was ceded to the Right, particularly to the emergence of a conservative student movement at a number of universities. A neoliberal militant Right, for whom the state is anathema, arose.

Brazil has a long history as a colonial society, particularly persistent racism, despite claims of being a multicultural society. Lula did greatly reduce poverty among the Afro-Brazilian population. However, as the Latin American political chronicler Raul Zibechi notes: “Now there is a clear ethnic divide between afro-descended people in the North and urban peripheries, and the white middle classes of the South and Southeast, an odious update of racism and discrimination—to the point that opponents of the government argue that there was no racism in Brazil before [!], and that it began when the Lula government implemented quotas for black people in universities.”

The question is: Is the parliamentary state-centered Left of the Workers Party the only alternative? Can social movements from below begin a reconstruction, a deep emancipatory project? —Eugene Walker

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Natalia Spiegel

Sweltering Massey High School students in West Auckland, New Zealand, recently launched a revolt over the school's new uniform, which requires students to wear ties and blazers and long pants year round. An online petition on change.org calling for the board of trustees to bring back a summer uniform had almost 600 signatures in only six hours signed by students and parents alike. The student behind the petition wrote that the uniform was not suitable for Auckland's humid, hot summer weather: “Sweating profusely, or just plain distracted by the heat—these things stop us achieving our educational potential.”

* * *

At the end of August, 82 male and female students at Grissom High School in Huntsville, Alabama, defied the Huntsville City Schools' dress code by wearing leggings, jeans with holes along the thigh, and tank tops in a “Stand Against the Dress Code” action. Josephina Thompson was pulled out of class and sent to an in-school suspension room for wearing leggings and a baggy sweatshirt. She wrote on Facebook: “This isn't JUST about dress code anymore, this is about my rights as a female,” including her Title IX rights to an equal education. One woman student pointed out, “The distraction excuse is overused.... This is promoting rape culture and is setting us back 40 years in feminism where saying what a girl wears validates rape or whatever happens to her, as if clothing means anything about character.” Students are demanding that the dress code not be enforced in a way that singles out and punishes girls. As Thompson noted: “Gotta love feminism. I'm looking to start a revolution here, everyone is welcome to join.”

* * *

A seventh grader in Vandalia, Ohio, threatened to shoot a Muslim boy on the bus ride home, calling him a “towel head,” a “terrorist,” and “the son of ISIS.”

A sixth-grade girl wearing a hijab in the Bronx was reportedly punched by three boys who called her “ISIS.”

A 2014 survey by the Council on American Islamic Relations found that 52% of Muslim students in California reported being the target of verbal abuse, double the number of students who report being bullied based on gender and race nationwide.

One in five Muslim students in California experienced discrimination by a teacher or an administrator.

Of all the kids who were harassed, only 42% said reporting the problem to an adult made a difference.

Even in the progressive Bay Area, a 2012 survey of high school students by the Arab Resource and Organizing Center found that 45% of them heard racist remarks about Arabs in their classrooms.

WORLD VIEW

France rebels again

by Gerry Emmett

The attempt by Socialist President Francois Hollande to ram through labor law changes has been met by nationwide strikes and social mobilizations. This includes Nuit Debout (“Up All Night”), the occupation of Paris’s Place de la Republique which began following the huge demonstrations in May when thousands simply decided not to return home but to stay up all night discussing alternative ways of living.

SOCIALIST IN NAME ONLY

Hollande says he wants to create jobs in an economy with 10% unemployment. The proposed laws would allow employers to negotiate away the 35-hour work week, with either more or less hours up to 46; give them greater leeway to reduce wages; make layoffs easier; and give firms an opening to negotiate holidays and maternity leave.

Resistance is heated. On June 23, hundreds of



Nuit Debout in a Paris banlieue, April 10, 2016.

thousands were prepared to defy Hollande’s ban on marching, before a settlement was negotiated between government and union officials. This follows weeks of strikes in rail and public transit, aviation, and energy.

Pundits have pointed to a widespread sense of betrayal among workers, furious that a nominally Socialist government would be introducing such “reforms.” But the movement is, at least, attempting to get beyond that. There is a strong anti-capitalist sentiment among the Nuit Debout discussions.

That sentiment has not yet been able to seriously connect with the rebellious African and Arab youth of the working-class suburbs or *banlieues*, who suffer from both capitalism and racism, but it has, significantly, understood the importance of doing so.

REACHING BEYOND REFORMISM?

Likewise, the militance of the rank and file has been sold out in the past, as in 1968, by labor bureaucrats oriented toward state power. All these state powers want to manage human beings. But to be human is to want to determine one’s own life, and that can only happen when the free development of each is the free development of all.

Zimbabwe succession

Zimbabwe’s de facto President for Life, Robert Mugabe, 92, is approaching the end of that life. Mugabe has ruled Zimbabwe since the overthrow of white minority rule in 1980. The succession is now being contested by factions of the ruling ZANU-PF party. One faction is associated with First Lady Grace Mugabe, 50. A rival faction is associated with Vice-President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

Mugabe has been moving against this second faction. He prefers keeping power in the family. It is characteristic of him. Mugabe lost to labor activist Morgan Tsvangirai in the 2008 presidential election, but kept himself in power through violence and threat.

Mugabe has long looked to China as his biggest arms supplier. Today, the Chinese yuan is Zimbabwe’s official foreign currency.

A classic neocolonial relationship has developed that profits China, via control of mining and agriculture, more than it does Zimbabweans. Mining runoff, for example, contributes to a major water pollution problem, which in turn helps promote or exacerbate diseases like cholera, tuberculosis, AIDS and malaria.

Zimbabwe has an 80% poverty rate and 95% unemployment rate. Neocolonialism bolsters the kind of undemocratic “strongman” rule favored by U.S. imperialism. Despite laws favoring Black control of business and agriculture, little is done to contest capitalist relations. Mugabe wants to spirit away economic reality into an ideological fantasy meant to bolster his rule in this life and after.

Jasmine Richards

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Jasmine “Abdullah” Richards, center.

injustice system. Their critique of current reality is so deep as to have become a critique of all U.S. history.

Hear Richards: *“I went to Ferguson and it was life-changing. I experienced Black love for the first time. I was able to cry for the first time. Before I was part of Black Lives Matter, I was just sitting in the park, hanging out. I had no self-respect. Now I’m trying to give back what Black Lives Matter has given me. I’m determined to not lose any more friends, not lose any more young men or women of my community. My goal is to save lives by any means necessary, even if that means putting mine on the line.”*

“I just want to say that Black Lives Matter has changed my life. And for all those who think that this is just a moment, they have another think coming, because this is a movement and it’s motivating the masses.”

Richards is openly Lesbian. Many young revolutionaries are open as LGBTQI people. In this respect, Black Lives Matter goes beyond most previous freedom movements.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

The incalculable loss of Sandra Bland and MarShawn McCarrel tell us something about this generation of young warriors. They pay a price in rising above a society so steeped in corruption, brutality, and nihilism that simply to keep one’s own humanity is a struggle. Everything is designed to reward things, objects of power, informers, instead. As Richards said,

“When I was out here causing trouble, I never got in trouble by the law. Once I picked up a bullhorn I became a target. That just showed me how powerful a Black woman’s voice is. I’ve gotten fired from my job and kicked out of my home, and I’m still here organizing.”

As we must defend Richards against the outrageous “lynching” charge, so we must defend all of these young revolutionaries. They are the opposite to the mystification of the Tea Party, fundamentalist fanatics, or racist Trump legions.

Demands for Black and other ethnic and gender studies in schools were never demands for what the Right likes to call “special rights.” They were of benefit to all, and especially workers and the poor, illustrating the continuing nature of a capitalist system that returns to its origins in “primitive accumulation”—dispossession, slavery and genocide—each time it falls into inevitable crisis.

No movement has challenged the fundamental racism of U.S. society more sharply than Black Lives Matter. To see the rulers’ reaction is to learn the hypocrisy, cynicism, and brutality that underlie every aspect of the capitalist system.

Jo Cox (1974-2016)

On June 16, Labour Party Member of Parliament Jo Cox was murdered by a neo-Nazi. Tommy Mair shouted “Britain First!” (a Far Right, racist, anti-immigrant party) as he shot and stabbed her following a public meeting. Mair was a supporter of the National Alliance, the U.S. Nazi group that inspired Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh. Like that crime, Mair’s was patterned after NA leader William Pierce’s racist fantasy *The Turner Diaries*.

Jo Cox was a sensitive voice on workers’, women’s, LGBTQI, and disability rights issues. She was one of the few Western political figures who cared about Syria. Syria’s White Helmets civil defense group gave her their highest award. Cox was murdered for opposing the rising reactionary tendency in European politics, including the drive to leave the European Union led by wealthy Conservatives like former London Mayor Boris Johnson, and supported by Putin, Trump, and the European Far Right.

STANDING FIRM AGAINST RACISM

In her first speech in Parliament Cox said, “Our communities have been deeply enhanced by immigration, be it of Irish Catholics or of Muslims...we are far more united and have far more in common with each other than things that divide us.”

From “respectable” Boris Johnson, to the UK Independence Party’s Nigel Farage, to the violent fringe, there has been a revival of the racist ideas of the late Conservative MP Enoch Powell. In an inflammatory speech in 1968, Powell said “In this country in 15 or 20 years’ time the black man will have the whip hand over the white man...[Immigration] is like watching a nation busily engaged in heaping up its own funeral pyre.”

Some elements of the Left fell in behind the victorious anti-EU campaign, disregarding the racist ideas underpinning it. There is no ground there for revolutionaries; our role is telling the workers the truth, that they have profited from the exploitation of those immigrants in the past, and now must pave a new road of solidarity with all the “immigrants,” all the dispossessed, of the world.

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 calling itself Communist, which 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 unseparated 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.