

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

“Human power is its own end”—Karl Marx

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No to Trump's counter-revolution! No to fascism! Fight for a new human society!

by the National Editorial Board
of News and Letters Committees

Protests of thousands welled up in city after city in the wake of Donald Trump's election victory. High school students walked out of classes in several cities. Highways were blocked in Los Angeles and Iowa City, Miami and Atlanta. Denouncing racism, sexism and fascism, demonstrators—of all races, women and men, LGBTQ and straight, very many of them young—are clear about the significance of a Trump presidency.

EDITORIAL

TRUMP ELECTION OPENS DOORS OF HATE

At the same time, the naked reality of Trumpism—which captured the state while losing the popular vote—was revealed in a spate of physical attacks against people of color and calls for men to celebrate the election by sexually assaulting women. A group of students yelled “white power!” while walking in a Pennsylvania high school carrying Trump signs. White private school students on a New York City bus told Black students they should sit in the back. Blacks and Latinos have reported white men spitting at them and telling them to “go back to Africa” (or “where you came from”).

Graffiti saying “Black lives don't matter and neither does your votes” appeared in Durham, N.C., and “Make America white again” in Wellsville, N.Y. Cars, houses and offices in Philadelphia were vandalized with swastikas, “Trump Rules” and racist and sexist slurs. Social media were filled with threats against minorities and women. The green light has been given to open racism, rape culture and hate crimes, including by the police.

Internationally, Trump's victory strengthened forces of fascist reaction from France's National Front to Russia's Vladimir Putin, and the latter's

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Books destroyed

by Robert Taliaferro

The ultimate abuse of authority and the most egregious exenteration of the pursuit of knowledge is when someone in a position of power chooses to destroy books. After the Dominican Friar Girolamo Savonarola forced the Medici family from Florence, Italy, he ordered a mass destruction of books and artifacts in 1497 that he considered heretical. In the early 20th century, as the Nazis took power in Germany, books were burned if they did not conform to the Nazi concept of civilization.

A recent event in a Wisconsin prison paralleled those two actions and trampled prisoners' rights. It was not about religious or political fervor but rather a personal vendetta instigated by a uniformed correctional officer towards a civilian staff member, with the prisoners—and their books—caught in the middle.

PRISON LIBRARY TRASHED

The library was closed for several days as security decided to go through every book. If one was marked, torn or damaged in any way, it was ordered destroyed. All language books or tapes—destroyed. Even items to fix books were ordered out of the library. Donated books that have been in the facility for two decades—destroyed; classics, if damaged—destroyed; dictionaries, if they meet that obtuse

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clients such as the self-proclaimed “socialist republics” of eastern Ukraine and the genocidal Bashar al-Assad in Syria, who welcomed the president-elect as a “natural ally.”



Protest in Louisville, Kentucky, Nov. 10, 2016. Approximately 1,000 people participated in this anti-Trump rally.

Trump favors another reactionary active in Syria, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who suppresses all dissent within his own country. Where Trump has proposed reining in the press, Erdogan has destroyed any independent press in Turkey. He is hell bent on killing Kurds, especially Syrian Kurds, who in their fight for self-determination have been the most effective against ISIS and the butcher Assad.

At the same time Trump is opening the door to military confrontation with Iran, having threatened to scrap the 2015 international nuclear deal with that country. His National Security Adviser will be Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, a feverish Islamophobic ideologue who pushes over the U.S. He has worked for Russian state-owned media/propaganda company RT and advocates acquiescing to Russia's deliberate bombing of Syrian civilians and hospitals and its takeover of Ukrainian territory, in order to cooperate closely with Putin in the “world war” against “a component of Islam.”

UNDER WHIP OF COUNTER-REVOLUTION

This election deepened counter-revolution at home and globally. There can be no doubt that it is a very serious setback for all the oppressed and for all freedom movements. What Trump represents above all is counter-revolution, and, more specifically, fascism, which is the excrescence of capitalism under threat. His rise is the index of this system's crisis and bankruptcy of thought, which the Left has hardly met with a truly revolutionary perspective.

Where 20 years ago “anti-globalization”

Where to now for the Middle East?

by Gerry Emmett

It is hard to predict what effect Donald Trump's election will have for U.S. policy on the Middle East. He is being lobbied intensively, not least by President Obama. But from Trump's open expression of hatred toward Muslims and Syrian refugees, it's safe to say that contempt for the people of the Middle East will continue to play the central role it has had for all U.S. rulers.

MILITARISM VS. NEW RELATIONS

President Barack Obama placed his highest-stakes bet against the revolutionary “farmers and dentists” of Syria, and he lost miserably. He preferred to deal with counter-revolutionary state powers to bring “stability.” What he found was that at every stage of the Syrian revolution the masses in motion rose to the challenge—from attacks by Assad's fascist regime, to Iranian and Lebanese Hezbollah intervention, to ISIS and the counter-revolution from within the revolution.

It is only with the last year of Russian imperialism's genocidal bombing of schools, hospitals, civil

was a cry of the Left, the KKK-endorsed billionaire Trump poses as the champion of middle-class and working-class whites against free trade, which he merges with scapegoating immigrants. He did not, of course, offer any real solutions to the effects of trade agreements and globalization on jobs and wages, nor did he address the other structural factors, including automation and capitalism's crises connected to the fall in the rate of profit.

The U.S. economy is totally integrated in the world economy, which is in a crisis of stagnation. Any trade impediments such as Trump threatens could trigger a major economic downturn. There has been serious job loss but primarily due to automation. U.S. manufacturing output in dollars is near the all-time high it reached in 2007 on the eve of the recession. Seven million manufacturing jobs have been lost since manufacturing employment peaked in 1979, yet factory production has doubled. Though workers have been left behind, major disruptions due to trade have been concentrated in particular geographic areas and industries like textiles and auto.

Hillary Clinton adopted some of Bernie Sanders's specific proposals but remained a neoliberal “New Democrat,” like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama before her. Her message that the economic crisis is past and things are getting better rang hollow for too many people, some of whom fell for Trump's siren song on trade.

What neither Clinton, nor Trump, nor even the socialist Sanders acknowledged is that capitalism itself, by its very nature, is always decimating existing jobs, businesses, industries, and even regions. Boosters tout this as “creative destruction.” Today, parts of the middle class are falling into the working class, and previously better off workers are ending up in low-paid service jobs, the “gig economy,” or unemployment.

Being in that situation can spur someone to look to the future, to a new human society beyond capitalism, or to the past. If the power of the idea of freedom is muted, and an emancipatory vision of the future is not being articulated and heard, then a void is opened for a con man like Donald Trump to fill with a fabricated mythic past.

RACIST, SEXIST PAST FOR OUR FUTURE

Marketed at middle-class whites, especially men, that vision of the past includes putting the Others “in their place”—immigrants, African Americans, women, all of whom are scapegoated as responsible for white men losing ground. Too many were willing to overlook, or were positively attracted to, a

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High school students in Oakland, Calif., walk out of school on Nov. 14, 2016, to protest the hate projected by Donald Trump.

defenders, markets, bakeries, mosques, and refugee camps that Assad has been able to regain a minimum of scorched ground. His own army has essentially ceased to exist, and even with Iran's occupying troops he can't retake all of Syria.

This is at the cost of over 400,000 dead, including 15,000 children, over 6 million internally displaced people, and over 4.8 million refugees—almost half Syria's total population rendered homeless and in desperate need. The world's acceptance of this has once again revealed the infinite degradation in which humanity exists. President Obama's bet against the people of Syria contributed to the flourishing of reactionary politics.

It is a bitter irony to see so many of the destabilized region's contending militaries armed with U.S. weapons. Today, the U.S.-supplied Iraqi forces battle ISIS forces in Mosul who are armed to the teeth with U.S. weapons taken from those same Iraqi forces. ISIS battles the U.S.-supplied Kurds in Raqqa, and the Kurdish PYD faces off with the

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Polish women show path forward

by Terry Moon

Now that anti-abortion fanatics are soon to control the White House, Supreme Court and Congress, it is helpful to look at the recent victory for abortion rights that Polish women had against their own Catholic Church-mired rightwing government.

On Oct. 3 tens of thousands of women and their supporters, dressed in black, took to the streets, engaged in a general strike and skipped classes. They said “No!” to the Polish parliament’s plans to worsen an already draconian anti-abortion law by outlawing *all* abortions. It would eliminate exceptions—for danger to the life of the mother or fetus, grave fetal defects or a pregnancy resulting from rape or incest—which currently are only allowed in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The proposed new law would *only* allow abortion if the woman’s life is “directly threatened.”

WHEN ABORTION IS ILLEGAL WOMEN DIE

Such a law would send women to prison for five years for having an abortion; criminalize miscarriages; and lead to more back alley and butcher abortions and women dying.

Polish women would not let this stand! Their leaflet went beyond abortion rights: “We demand access to reliable sex education, contraception and effective in vitro procedures. We oppose further tightening of abortion laws.”

Over 30,000 black-clad women marched in freezing rain in Warsaw’s Castle Square as demonstrations also took place in 60 other Polish cities. They chanted: “We want doctors, not missionaries!” and signs read “My uterus, my opinion,” “Dead women can’t have any babies!” and the classic, and so very apt for Poland: “Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate!” One news commentator there said: “People were astonished....It was amazing to feel the energy, the emotional intensity was incredible.”

But it was not only the massive size of the demonstrations or their passion for a freer Poland; it was as well the revolutionary history of Polish women that caused the rabidly anti-abortion Prime Minister and the ruling Law and Justice party to back down in what has been reported as a “humiliating climbdown.”

REVOLUTIONARY HISTORIC MEMORY

That history includes the great Polish woman revolutionary and theoretician Rosa Luxemburg, a leader of the German revolution of 1919. More recently it includes the women in the great labor self-organization of 1980-81, Solidarnosc. Women not only started the strike, they not only made it possible for it to last as long as it did, they as well broadened what a labor strike and organization should mean so that it would take into account women’s demands.

They created the concept of “horizontal solidarity,” where a workshop that was too small to win on its own—as many women’s workshops were—appealed to workers in larger or more vital industries to include their demands with theirs, thus giving more strength to both groups of workers. It meant that women’s demands for childcare, or even for better water pressure, were included alongside those for better wages and working conditions. (See *News & Letters*, “The revolutionary activity of Polish women, March 1982, and “Solidarity with Polish women!” Jan.-Feb. 1982.)

It is this historic memory of what women are capable of—revolutionary thought and action—as well as the thousands in the street in October that the right-wing Polish leaders feared so much that they backed down on what they had previously expected to be a done deal. Revolution and the thought behind it and the thought it creates, are what all tyrants fear the most.

As we face a future here in the U.S. that looks exceedingly dark at the moment, especially for women’s right to control our own bodies and lives, the message of revolutionary thought and activity as a powerful weapon against reaction will be in the forefront of our minds.

‘Pussy grabs back!’



Chicago—Inspired by women in New York and Philadelphia who protested in front of their respective Trump Towers before the election against candidate Donald Trump’s disgusting sexism, racism and everything elseism, women here demonstrated in front of Trump’s ostentatious, hideous building in the North Loop. A few hundred of us came out on Oct. 18 against the misogyny of Trump and the GOP. There was lots of energy. Five or six pro-Trump obnoxious counter-protesters were restricted to the other side of the street. Our protest was organized by SlutTalk under the hashtag #GOPhandsoffme and “pussy grabs back.” Several large cities held the same protests today. What was so great was seeing these angry, joyful, creative and powerful women. Despite the terrible situation we find ourselves in, we weren’t miserable. —Revolutionary feminist

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis



Photo: Imane Najjar

In November, in Quebec, 2,000 women and their allies took part in a March Against Rape Culture in Montreal, Quebec City, Saguenay, Sherbrooke and Gatineau. The events were in response to a worsening climate of sexual violence and rapes at universities. They also protested the police force’s legal proceedings against Radio Canada for a story on the rapes of several Indigenous women by officers. One of the speakers before the march said a prominent politician had raped her. Demonstrators chanted “We believe you” and held signs stating “The Struggle Will Be Intersectional or Nothing” and “Don’t Rape.”

Women Wage Peace (WWP), an organization of Israeli and Palestinian women, was formed after the 2014 war in Gaza. In October, they organized a march of hundreds of women across Israel to Jerusalem to rally with thousands of others at the President’s and Prime Minister’s residences and then at the Knesset (Israeli parliament), planning to reassemble with each plenary session. Solidarity marches were held across the country and in Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, the U.S. and France. WWP is determined to engage the public and political leaders to understand that peace in our time is not only feasible but necessary and must be achieved by political, not military means. Liberian activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Roberta Gbowee spoke at the march about how her organization helped end the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003.

In South Africa, the number of school-aged girls getting pregnant increased by 46% between 2011 and 2013. Teenage members of the nongovernmental organization Afrika Tikkun’s Young Urban Women program took a survey of girls in their Johannesburg community and found a lack of information about and access to contraceptives. They sent 13 girls to investigate local health clinics, where staff members rudely told most of them that they looked too young to be asking about contraceptives. Only four were given the information. YUW held a meeting with clinic managers and elicited commitments to working with YUW to make changes.

Review: *Nature’s God*

Nature’s God: The Heretical Origins of the American Republic by Matthew Stewart (W. W. Norton & Company, 2014).

In its attempts to remake the U.S. into a Christian fundamentalist theocracy, the religious Right has made historically revisionist claims that a fundamentalist theocracy is what the nation’s founders had intended to establish rather than a pluralistic, secular democratic republic.

Although many of the quotes they attribute to the founders have been made up, they have misrepresented some of their actual words as being supportive of a theocracy, especially the words at the beginning of the Declaration of Independence relating to “Nature’s God” and the “Creator.”

The average person opposed to theocracy knows that many of the founders were deists, but many have only a vague understanding that this meant something about a god creating us and then leaving us to run our own affairs. Matthew Stewart wrote this book to debunk the theocratic revision of history with the knowledge that the founders’ intent to create a democratic republic was based, not on religion at all but on an engagement with philosophy that was more intense, complex, and subversive than even he had realized.

GOD: INTERESTED OR DISINTERESTED

Stewart delves into the history of the complex philosophy of deism starting with the Greek philosopher Epicurus. Epicurus theorized that the universe was composed of “atoms,” particles of matter that obeyed observable laws of nature. Epicurus stated that the gods were simply beings with no interest in rewarding or punishing humanity.

Later philosophers considered this self-sufficient universe, which is full of life and functioning by predictable laws, to be the body of one God (pantheism); and others considered that the predictable laws meant that there was no God (atheism).

However, God was not a being made from a different substance from everything else and violating the laws of nature with miracles (transcendence). Our actions are rewarded and punished by cause and effect, and we feel happy by doing good and unhappy by harming ourselves or others. Faith is unnecessary because God is understandable (self-evident). Devotion to God really means studying nature through science. That includes studying human nature in order to determine right from wrong.

Stewart follows how later philosophers, especially the ones who had the most impact on the American Revolution, saw the implications of this deism in how people should govern themselves. If people would all apply themselves to self-knowledge, they would understand that harming others harms themselves as a result of natural law. Since not everyone is doing this, there is a need for human beings to form a society and protect each other through civil law. Through trial and error, people have developed democracy as the best form of government.

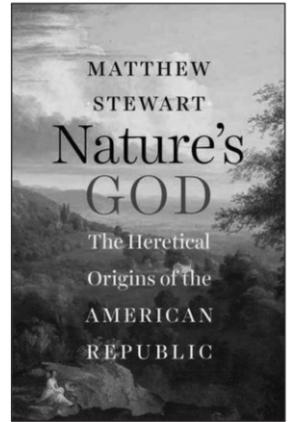
SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Stewart uses the writings of the founders to show that they criticized the supernaturalism of Christianity, which allowed its clergy to cruelly control the masses. However, they sometimes praised it to support what Stewart calls “popular deism.”

They felt that, since not everyone would attempt to understand ethical behavior through self-knowledge, they needed a code of morality common to all religions and based on the rule of “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” However, they thought religious belief was a matter of personal freedom. It should not interfere with the state, and the state should not interfere with it.

Stewart touches on some implications of the founders’ use of philosophy in creating the Revolution that could be discussed further in a sequel. He states at the end that the American Revolution is still unfinished and that “Christian nationalists” are part of the problem that needs solving.

This book is a useful resource in proving that the founders wanted democracy and not a theocracy. *Nature’s God* only briefly mentions the religious Right’s threat to democracy, but is important in combatting it. As Stewart states: “I wrote this book to encourage others to join the struggle.” —Adele



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Still the only Marxist-Humanist paper in the world and still only \$5/year for 6 issues (see p. 7).

LIU-Brooklyn teachers break lockout

Brooklyn, N.Y.—When the administration of Long Island University-Brooklyn (LIU-B) locked out teachers and staff in early September, they didn't count on the determination and united resistance of the professors, the rest of the teaching staff and the students. But that is exactly what they got: students and teachers together on the picket lines and at rallies.

STUDENTS REJECTED SCABS

Students were vocal in complaining about the low quality of the scabs that had been hired to take the place of their teachers. Although New York City currently has a glut of overeducated people who cannot find work in this job market, few if any crossed the picket lines.

The University was forced to use unqualified personnel to handle the classes, and students reacted in anger.

The whole affair came to a climax on Sept. 14 when administrators buckled under the pressure. They agreed to end the lockout and extend contract negotiations until next May.

IVORY TOWER ORGANIZING

The defeat of the lockout at LIU-B, combined with the recent National Labor Relations Board

Union betrayals

Detroit—Coming from a union family for all our generations in this country, and coming from the house of labor myself, it is ironic to witness what has happened in this election cycle in Detroit.

The labor movement put up candidates against the duly elected school board. Not just any candidates. We on the school board worked for seven years under emergency managers without compensation, always in defense of voting rights like the white districts have, and in defense of teachers and students.

UNION MIS-LEADERS VS. UNION ACTIVISTS

Labor put up Sonya Mays, who worked for Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr; Iris Taylor, who helped privatize the Detroit Medical Center for Mayor Mike Duggan, and other candidates in the same league. We worked for the people. They spent millions to defeat us, and thus to defeat public education.

The labor movement in Michigan also put up a proposal to defeat ballot measure Community Benefits so they could continue to discriminate and allow whites from outside Detroit to get jobs denied Detroit residents of color. That proposal passed, and they can keep driving in to Detroit to take jobs we pay for and do not benefit from.

AFL-CIO SIDES WITH BIG OIL

Nationally, the AFL-CIO issued a press release in support of the Dakota Access Pipeline to ensure 4,000 "good paying union jobs." DAPL will allow pollution of water and desecration of land in direct violation of treaties defending sacred land.

We need not wonder how many of these workers are Trump supporters. The lines are clearly drawn. Which side are you on?
—Elena Herrada

decision allowing graduate students at universities to unionize as the workers that they actually are, is evidence that the U.S. labor movement has opened a new front: the battle for workers' rights in the halls of academia. Faculty at the University of Pennsylvania walked out in late October, again with strong student support.

Harvard University used the same tactic of trying to turn students against strikers when workers in the university cafeterias and dining halls walked out. Students had said they were willing to put up with the strike's inconveniences if the result was justice for food-staff workers.

STUDENTS NO LONGER SCABS

Students were a constant presence on the picket line in the 22-day strike. Under pressure from both workers and students, Harvard agreed to pay workers at least \$35,000 a year and cover medical co-payments until 2021. Dining service employees voted 573-1 to accept the contract.
—Natalia Spiegel

No! to Urban Shield



Photo by Ron Ketch for News & Letters

Oakland, Calif.—On Sept. 9 several hundred of us trekked out to the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton to protest "Urban Shield," a police weapons expo of new gadgetry offered by vendors to further militarize local police departments. Though there were many ways into the huge fairgrounds, protesters chained themselves to fences to block entrances and 23 were arrested.

Demonstrations and community opposition in Oakland in 2014 had forced "Urban Shield" to relocate to Pleasanton. At issue is the growing use of SWAT raids in minority communities. The survivors' stories of these raids reveal the degree to which police have turned our communities into the enemy.

Uncle Bobby, Oscar Grant's uncle and a spokesman for the Black community of "Love not Blood," has been a tireless activist since the murder of his unarmed nephew by a Bay Area Rapid Transit policeman in 2009. He summed up the issue as not just one of things, the technology of killing, but the mentality behind it. He said every one of the officers involved in killing Oscar Grant testified that before they even arrived they felt they were "going into a combat zone."
—R. K.

Uber scams drivers

Oakland, Calif.—To drive for Uber you have to have a fairly new car, which you can lease from a third party. But if you've got marginal credit, the lease rates and insurance costs are very high. Uber took almost \$200 every week out of my checking account to pay for the car I leased from a dealer.

Any money you make driving goes into that account after Uber takes its share. When I hadn't made enough, I had to deposit money from my other employment to cover the \$200. If you get behind, they charge a \$25 late fee. This happened to me for several months.

If you are two weeks behind, they will turn the car off. You cannot get into it or start it until you pay. I was out of town when they turned my car off. Thankfully the car was parked. I called them and told them I didn't have the money that day and would leave the car where it was and take the train home. They didn't want the car abandoned, so they gave me a grace period.

Uber dropped the rates for riders because of competition, meaning the rates for drivers dropped too. I just wasn't making enough money to make it worthwhile.

Since they say we are independent contractors, we have to register our "business" with the county. My daughter as a mother on welfare thought driving for Uber with its flexible hours would be a good fit for her. I suggested she not do that. I thought it might drive her into depression to experience what I did.

Uber is taking over the old Sears building in Oakland, but I know there won't be any jobs there for my people. Uber wants to eliminate all drivers. Why would you do that? Why would you eliminate the entire work force? It is a capitalist imperative. I feel really badly that this whole planet will go the way of the dinosaurs.

—Driver abused by Uber

Demand Indigenous Peoples Day

Tucson, Ariz.—Although it is obvious that Christopher Columbus was not the first person to set foot on a Caribbean island, popular lore credited him for "discovering" two entire continents.

STREET HONORING FASCIST

As a descendent of Italian and Irish immigrants to Chicago, I understand the desire for an ethnic hero who would demonstrate the worthiness of Italian Americans to gain acceptance from the white power structure of the early 20th century. This same structure may have exploited the situation to win support for fascist political ideologies: one literal case is that of Italo Balbo, Italy's Air Force Marshal during World War II, who still has a Chicago street named after him.

In the past decade, Indigenous communities throughout the U.S. and beyond have been organizing against this false dogma of discovery, which effectively erases them from history. This year in Tucson, Ariz., on the day commonly known as Columbus Day, the Indigenous Alliance Without Borders sponsored a block party to commemorate Indigenous Peoples Day.

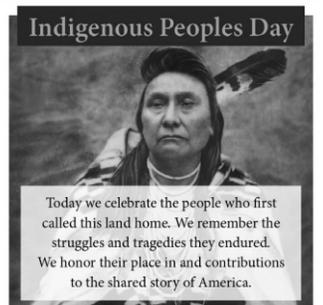
This block party included spoken word and musical performances, a bounce house for the kids and a push to get everyone there to sign a petition to establish Indigenous Peoples Day statewide. Already several municipalities have officially established the day to commemorate Indigenous people.

BURYING COLUMBUS DAY

Cities and towns that used to officially sanction Columbus Day have dropped the designation. In Arizona, the cities of Phoenix, Tucson, South Tucson and Guadalupe and the county of Pima have designated the second Monday in October exclusively as Indigenous Peoples Day. The holiday is recognized statewide in Vermont and as Native American Day in South Dakota.

It isn't as though there aren't Italians or Italian Americans who exemplify livelihoods of expanding human freedom, not genocide. There's Danilo Dolci, the Sicilian social activist who organized people to perform governmental functions themselves, in opposition to the official government plagued by Mafia corruption. To me, the philosophy that Dolci's life invokes is highly preferable to the colonial one that is implied if we venerate Columbus.

Hopefully, the deification of Columbus will continue to wane because of determined efforts by Indigenous activists and allies.
—Buddy Bell



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HANDICAPTHIS!

by Suzanne Rose

Melissa Yalch Valencia, a temporary staffing agency employee at the New Mexico Orthopedics Associates in Albuquerque, said after she was fired, "It should never have happened. A mother should never have to worry about losing her job because her child has a disability." Now NMOA is paying her \$165,000 for associational disability discrimination in a lawsuit filed by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. NMOA violated the Americans with Disabilities Act by failing to hire her for a full time position and then firing her, because her three-year-old daughter was regarded as having disabilities.
* * *

A new virtual-reality Halloween attraction planned for Knott's Berry Farm in California was shut down after mental health advocates protested. The "attraction" gave an unrealistic and frightening view of mental illness. Visitors were strapped into a chair and given virtual reality goggles. Then they were subjected to hell: shown bloody bodies, deranged guards, escaped mental patients and every negative image of mental illness you can imagine. None of these should be used as "entertainment" as it exploits the pain and experiences of real patients.
* * *

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded grants totaling \$14.9 million to six states as part of its Disability Employment Initiative. This program works to improve education, training and employment opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed or receiving Social Security disability benefits.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This November marks the 60th anniversary of one of the most important revolutions in history. In 1956 Hungarian revolutionaries organized themselves in decentralized workers' councils, taking control of factories throughout the country. Opposing state-capitalism that called itself "Communism" as well as Western capitalism, the revolutionaries indicated a pathway to transcend value production. This letter's concept of the relationship of spontaneity and party, and its inseparability from organization of thought, speaks to the dialectics of organization and philosophy. Therefore we reprint Dunayevskaya's Weekly Political Letter of Sept. 17, 1961. Footnotes by Dunayevskaya are indicated by "RD"; all other footnotes are the editors'.

Don't talk to me about space ships, a trip to the moon or Marx, about life in the atomic age....

We live like this. In darkness, in mud, far away....

Don't tell me it is worse in Africa. I live in Europe, my skin is white. Who will embrace me to make me feel that I am human?

—Karoly Jobbagy, Budapest, April 1956

On Oct. 23, 1956 the Russian puppet regime in Hungary fired on a student youth demonstration in Budapest. Far from dispersing the young students, these were soon joined by the workers from the factories in the outlying suburbs. The Revolution had begun in earnest.

During the following 13 days, ever broader layers of the population revolted. From the very young to the very old, workers and intellectuals, women and children, even the police and the armed forces—truly the population to a man, woman and child—turned against the top Communist bureaucracy and the hated, sadistic AVO (secret police).

The Communist Party, with more than 800,000 members and the trade unions allegedly representing the working population, just evaporated. In its place arose Workers' Councils, Revolutionary Committees of every sort—intellectuals, youth, the army—all moving away from the Single-Party State.

Overnight there sprang up 45 newspapers and 40 different parties, but the decisive force of the revolution remained the Workers' Councils.

When 13 days of armed resistance was bloodily crushed by the might of Russian totalitarianism, the new form of workers' organization—factory councils—called a general strike. It was the first time in history a general strike followed the collapse of the revolution. It held the foreign imperialist as well as the "new" government at bay for five long weeks.

Cry 'Free Syria!'

Chicago—On Oct. 1, on the International Day of Solidarity with Aleppo, Chicago held a vigil in solidarity with Syrians suffering and dying under air attacks on civilian targets. Our picket line, arrayed opposite Trump Tower, raised demands to end the bombing by Russian and Assad's forces that were targeting hospitals and schools, and to stop blocking and bombing relief convoys of food and medicine.

We displayed banners proclaiming: "Save Aleppo" and "Obama, Putin drop food not bombs" and passed out leaflets detailing—in the face of genocidal atrocities—the depth of resistance to the Assad regime and its scorched earth use of barrel bombs and chemical weapons. Speeches from Syrian participants and others underlined the parallel to Bosnia's fight for self-determination in the 1990s.

Our demonstration was not as large as those in other cities across the U.S., Europe and around the world which brought as many as thousands; but it was larger than the so-called anti-war demonstration supporting Putin and Assad on Oct. 7.

There, a dozen Free Syria activists carrying "Listen to Syrians" signs confronted the 40 or so marking 15 years of the war in Afghanistan who shouted that a no fly zone meant nuclear war with Russia. Some tried seizing our signs and leaflets and then ran away from confrontation.

The same counter-revolutionary position that supported Russian tanks crushing the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and Chinese tanks bloodily clearing Tiananmen Square in 1989 wants to bury the ongoing Syrian Revolution.

Loyola University on Oct. 3 gave a forum for Joe Jamison, returning from lunch with Assad. He too had to face activists who came to puncture his lies.

—Bob McGuire

Spontaneity of action and organization of thought

In memoriam: Hungarian Revolution

Even a Janos Kadar¹ had to pretend he was listening to the demands of the Workers' Councils for control over production and even the possible abrogation of the single-party rule.

As late as Nov. 21, 1956, the Appeal of the Central Workers Council of Great Budapest stated:

"We protest against the attitude of the newly formed 'Free Trade Unions' which are ready to accept the workers' councils merely as economic organs. We declare that in Hungary today the Workers' Councils represent the real interests of the working class, that there is no stronger political power in the country today than the powers of the Workers' Councils."²

And on Nov. 30 the Bulletin of the Central Workers Council reported a meeting with Kadar at which they demanded a daily press organ:

"Our position is that the Workers' Councils are in absolute need of a press organ so that the workers may receive uniform and true information...We also raised the question of the multiparty system."³

It was the attempt to publish the *Workers' Journal* without state permission that made Kadar realize that "the government was simply ignored. Everyone who had a problem to settle came to us (Central Workers' Council)."⁴ That made the Kadar Government, with the help of the Russian Army, move in and dissolve the Councils, on Dec. 9, long after armed resistance had been crushed and the exodus of refugees had reached 200,000, or a full 2% of the total population.

Although the Revolution had been sparked by the intellectuals, not only had the workers borne the main brunt of the fighting, but it was they who had shown the greatest creativity and given the Revolution its historic direction.

Even their support of Premier Imre Nagy⁵ was dependent on his acceptance of the workers' control over production, a multi-party system of government, and a new type of socialism. Central to it was, an independent Hungary, but this demand for self-determination had nothing in common with narrow bourgeois nationalism. As Imre Nagy himself recognized—it was this fact that brought him to the leadership of a revolution he did not desire—"They want a People's Democracy where the working people are masters of the country and of their own fate, where human beings are respected, and where social and political life is conducted in the spirit of humanism...An atmosphere of suspicion and revenge is

1. János Kádár (1912-1989) was selected by the Russians to lead the Communist regime in Hungary from 1956 to 1988.
2. *The Review* (published by the Imre Nagy Institute, Brussels), No. 4, 1960.—RD
3. *The Review*. East Europe (New York) of April 1959 also carries an "Eyewitness Report of How the Workers Councils Fought Kadar."—RD
4. "My Experiences in the Central Workers' Council of Greater Budapest" by Miklos Sebestyen, *The Review*, Vol. III, #2, 1961.—RD
5. Imre Nagy (1896-1958) was a reformist leader of Hungary who served as Prime Minister again during the revolution in 1956. He was executed by the Russians following the crushing of the revolution.

banishing the fundamental feature of socialist morality, humanism."⁶

This Marxist humanism was in the air since 1955. Because the Communist intellectual caught this in the air, he was assured of leadership of a revolution against Communism.

When the fight against the Stalinist, Rakosi,⁷ had first begun and he called these intellectuals "outsiders," Tardos had replied that the ruling circle "is not the party. The party is ourselves, those who belong to the other current, who fight for the ideas and principles of humanism and whose aims reflect

in ever-increasing measure those of the people and of the country."⁸

But though the intellectuals had caught the humanism in the air and set off the revolution, they did not reveal themselves as leaders and organizers at the moment of crisis. The best, the young, however, did recognize that the spontaneity which produced the revolution will see

that it does not die.

"As a true Marxist I believe in the inevitability of the historic processes. We know perfectly well that a wave of terror and Stalinist repression will be let loose on us....You know how the revolution broke out—spontaneously, without any kind of preparation. When the police fired on our students, leadership and organization sprung up overnight. Well, we'll scatter now just as spontaneously as we came together....The revolution can't die; it will play dead and await its moment to rise again."⁹

Today, when the world stands on the brink of nuclear holocaust, sparked by Russian state-capitalism calling itself "Communism" and U.S. private capitalism calling itself "Democracy," the page of freedom opened by the Hungarian Revolution shows the only way out of the crisis-racked capitalist order.

When the 1917 Russian Revolution put an end to the first betrayal of established Marxism, Lenin never wearied of reminding us that without "the dress rehearsal" of 1905, there could have been no successful 1917. Because of the maturity of our age, marked, on the one hand, by the African Revolutions which broke from Western capitalism, and, on the other hand, by the East European Revolutions against Russian totalitarianism, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 is more than a dress rehearsal for a new European Revolution. It is the dress rehearsal for a world revolution that is out to reconstruct society on new, truly human beginnings and in that way finally bring to an end that which Marx called the pre-history of mankind.

6. *Imre Nagy on Communism: In Defense of 'the New Course'*, pp. 49, 56.—RD
7. Mastyas Rakosi (1892-1971) was a Stalinist leader of Hungary in the late 1940s and 1950s. He was in the USSR at the time of the revolution.
8. *Behind the Rape of Hungary*, by F. Fejto. See also my *Marxism and Freedom*, pp. 62, 255-56 on the Russian debates on Marx's Humanist Essays, and my *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* on the Polish debates.—RD
9. From a report by Peter Schmid quoted in *The Hungarian Revolution*, edited by Melvin J. Lasky.—RD



By Nagy Gyula
Hungarian freedom fighters and protestors march on Kossuth Square near Parliament in Budapest, Oct. 25, 1956.

Learn our revolutionary history

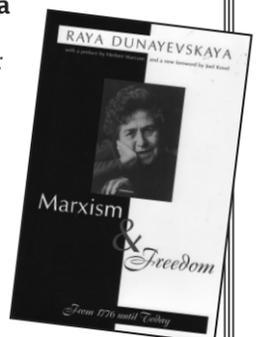
**The Hungarian Revolution, 1956,
as it happened and as comprehended philosophically.**

**Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today (1958)
by Raya Dunayevskaya**

The Hungarian Revolution—the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarianism:

"When all said that everything was over, the Hungarian Workers' Councils sprang up. Production remained the key, and the whole brunt of the struggle against Russian tyranny was borne by the workers. They began to fight in the factories, which they were using as their places of refuge. The leaders of the Workers' Councils were arrested only after they left the factory and walked to the Parliament building to negotiate. The workers evolved new ways of fighting, both on the job and when they walked out on strike. For example, the miners refused to mine coal while the Russian Army remained in Hungary. Nor did they let anyone else mine the coal 'for the workers.' When Russian might finally asserted itself through overwhelming force the workers blew up the mines."

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ESSAY

The masses in Latin America face a duality

by Eugene Walker

Can social movements resist neoliberal capitalism's advances and at the same time move beyond progressive governments' narrow statism?

The last year has witnessed significant reversals in what has been termed Latin America's "pink tide"—a decade of progressive governments in a number of South American countries:

- **Brazil**—a stunning legislative coup removing President Dilma Rousseff from power. She was replaced by Michel Temer, a corrupt neoliberal who promptly appointed a cabinet without a single minority or woman in a multiracial country.

- **Argentina**—the election to president of rightist Mauricio Macri after the Left Peronist administrations of Cristina and Nestor Kirchner brought sharp austerity measures and increasing poverty.

- **Venezuela**—the government of Nicolás Maduro, who became president following the death of Hugo Chávez, has faced massive protests demanding a referendum for his removal after the economy collapsed and legislative elections sharply repudiated his ruling party.

- **Bolivia**—A referendum, which would have allowed President Evo Morales to run again for president in 2020, was defeated in a close vote.

- **Ecuador**—President Rafael Correa, after three terms in office, often in tension with Indigenous groups and environmental activists, has decided not to try and change the Constitution to allow him another term.

MASSES OFFER HOPE OF NEW BEGINNING

It is Latin America's masses who, with their actions and hopes, created the possibility for a new beginning in South America at the onset of the 21st century. In 2016 is this opening slipping away? The South American masses are feeling the brunt of this closing as deep poverty returns, unemployment rises, hard-won rights are lost and austerity is imposed. There is as well the possibility of renewed outright repression and the imposition of new obstacles impeding the drive toward an emancipatory future they have been striving to obtain.

We can continue reaching toward those new human beginnings only if we comprehend our present reality of neoliberal and state-centered capitalism—including the limitations and contradictions within the progressive governments of this past decade and a half—and work out more concrete and total pathways toward a freedom-filled future.

I. How have we arrived at this impasse?

The problem lies in Latin America's place in capitalism's world market. Latin America has a strong dependency on the prices for its raw commodity exports. In the "boom" time of the 1990s and most of the first decade of the 21st century, commodity prices fueled the export economies of Venezuela (oil) and Brazil (iron ore, soybeans, oil), among others.

However, with the Great Recession, there has been a downward trend and even collapse in the price of raw materials that many Latin American countries grow or extract to place on the world market. The prices of oil, soybeans, and iron ore dropped, sending a number of economies, particularly Venezuela and Brazil, into deep recession.

At the same time, we cannot minimize the massive presence of U.S. capital in the form of military as well as economic "aid." Plan Puebla Panama set the stage for Mexico and its neighbors, while Plan Colombia extended it with a huge emphasis on military aid to Colombia and South America. Turning a blind eye to the 2009 Honduran military coup, if not actually aiding it, seeking to isolate Venezuela under Chavez and now under Maduro are not fantasies or conspiracy theories but the reality of U.S. imperialism's many faces.

THE WORLD MARKET RULES

Given these hard truths, what has the last decade and a half of progressive governments shown us? In spite of their rhetoric of anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism as well as their calls to build socialism for the 21st century, the reality of their economic policies is tethered to the world market. It could hardly have been different given the limits both in their concept of "power" and in what kind of view they have of the social-economic-political transformation needed in Latin America.

In contrast to the possibilities of fundamental social transformation—revolutionary changes from below—the focus in each country was on obtaining control of existing governmental institutions through elections.

Once these institutions were under new progressive leadership, it was argued, substantial changes would be made.

Suffice it to say those changes failed to involve possibilities for transforming the capitalist labor process or disentangling from the web of the world market. For the former, at most what was posed was state ownership or state-private hybrids, not worker control from below. For the latter, what was begun was a Latin American capitalist market as opposed



Over 100,000 demonstrate in São Paulo demanding general elections and the resignation of President Michel Temer, installed in Brasil after the legislative coup.

to the world capitalist market. The immediate future would be managing capitalism through the presence of a strong state that would redistribute the wealth, particularly to the poor.

II. The limits and contradictions of South America's "Pink Tide"

Earlier this year, Garcia Linera, Vice President of Bolivia under Evo Morales, warned, "We are facing a historical turning point in Latin America" in which conservative forces are seeking "to take control of the management of the state.... They are targeting what can be considered the golden, virtuous Latin American decade." [https://www.opendemocracy.net/democraciaabierto/lvaro-garc-linera/ebb-ing-latin-american-tide]

What, for Garcia Linera, is the essence of this "golden, virtuous Latin American decade"? It is "taking over state power." It is true that he claims "popular forces... have assumed the tasks of controlling the state," but in his speeches and in the actions of the Bolivian government, the focus has been on the State as an indispensable tool. In this sense he is an ideological and actual representative of this "Pink Tide"—the pull of statism as the guiding force. The state becomes a substitute for authentic socialism constructed by the masses from below.

None of these progressive governments could have taken power had there not been genuine movements from below. In fact many of those leading the progressive administrations and congresses have emerged from various social movements. But it is one thing to be a militant and involved in social movements, and quite another to be that same person after an electoral change. To suddenly have one's hands on "the instruments of power," and to believe that, precisely that, is the pathway forward has been the ground of Pink Tide governments. Along with the destructive power of neoliberal capitalism and U.S. economic-military hegemony, it is such statism that is the source of the limitations and contradictions within the "golden, virtuous Latin American decade."

Let's briefly see what has happened with progressive governments in Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia and Venezuela. (For a fuller discussion of Venezuela and Bolivia see my *Utopia and the Dialectic in Latin American Liberation*, Brill, 2015.)

WITH PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENTS?

In **Brazil**, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and his Workers Party could not have been elected president without the massive support of many Brazilian social movements. Yet in power, the focus of the Party was not on eliciting the talents and ideas from people in these movements so much as it was managing the capitalist economy with an increased participation of the state under Workers Party control.

To be sure, da Silva directed a much-needed redistribution of basic resources to the poorest sectors of Brazilian society, lifting millions out of poverty. But controlling the state apparatus, not eliciting the fullest participation of the masses in determining their own future, was the Workers Party focus.

When the economic downturn hit, the masses saw only more mismanagement of the economy and extreme corruption on all sides. What social state was there for the masses to defend when the social movements had been mostly marginalized during the decade-plus of

Workers Party rule?

In **Argentina**, where the extreme economic crisis at the beginning of this century brought masses to the streets—including new organizational forms such as neighborhood assemblies, factory occupations and unemployed worker/activist groups—what finally came to the fore was left Peronism, hardly a radical alternative. With the Kirchners some of the creative social movements from below were co-opted, others were marginalized. For close to a decade the economy grew, but there were no substantial changes in the social-political-economic terrain. When the economy once again went south, what was there for social movements to defend?

In **Bolivia**, from 2000 to 2005 powerful social movements—the Water War in Cochabamba, the coca growers led by Evo Morales, rebellions in the Indigenous countryside—combined, including major manifestations from the Indigenous city of El Alto above La Paz, to finally bring an end to the authoritarian, murderous rule of Sanchez de Lozada. That resulted in the election of Morales as Bolivia's first Indigenous president. However, rather than a constituent assembly of social movements to write a new constitution, as the movements had demanded, Morales and others substituted an assembly of political parties.

State formation and party politics took precedence over social movements from below. This could be seen in various confrontations, particularly with Indigenous groups, whether it was over the government's attempt to increase gas prices or the struggles over developmentalism via the attempt to build a road in the TIPNIS. Many Indigenous communities are asking for a different path.

In **Venezuela**, Chavez, particularly after the population en masse came out to stop a coup in the making against his Presidency, moved to construct what he termed "Socialism for the 21st Century." Certainly his rhetoric, and in part his programs, were the most radical of the progressive governments in Latin America. However, at the same time contradictions were present.

How does one construct socialism while being completely dependent on capitalism's supreme commodity, oil? As charismatic a leader as Chavez surely was, can socialism be constructed from the top down, without a proletarian and peasant base? What happens when the price of that crucial commodity collapses and the charismatic leader is no longer present? Witness Venezuela today.

III. Transcending the Present Moment

Three interrelated principles are needed to work out ways to transcend the present moment: 1. A view of the Latin American masses as reason as well as force of social transformation. 2. A willingness to throw out the concept that statism, state-capitalism, is any transition to socialism, to a future new humanism. 3. Seeing the need and accepting the challenge to work out a philosophy of revolution that, at one and the same time, *is founded* on the historic dialectic put forth most fully in the methodology and vision of Marx's Marxism, and *is open* to the needed re-creation as a philosophy of revolution for our time in relation to the objective moment, *and to the masses'* movement from practice that is itself a form of theory.

* * *

There can be no doubt that it has been the action and thought of the Latin American masses that has been, is, and will be the crucial source for social transformation. No party program, no would-be radical organization that is not in a profound, open, listening and learning relation to the mass movements can hope to make a serious contribution.

In our rightful hatred of private capitalism and of imperialism from the North, we cannot allow ourselves to be diverted from comprehending the grave historical contradictions of so-called Communism (read state-capitalism) in the 20th century, and now proclaimed anew by some would-be Latin American revolutionaries and others in the first decades of the 21st century. Neither the fetishism of state property and state planning nor the fetishism of a vanguard party-to-lead are viable pathways to the new world that humanity demands.

Without philosophical preparation for social transformation, for uprooting in the fullest emancipatory sense, no thoroughgoing Latin American revolutions are possible. Emancipatory dialectic thought is not an academic exercise, but the needed labor of mind, head and action, if we are going to once and for all uproot capitalism in all its economic-political and social forms, and freely bring forth new human beginnings.

To pre-order *Utopia and the Dialectic in Latin American Liberation*, see page 7.

ELECTION STIRS BATTLES IN THOUGHT AND IN LIFE

As a Lesbian, a woman, an American citizen, there is no unifying behind this president-elect. He plans to dismantle my constitutional right to marry the person I love. He plans to dismantle my reproductive rights to my own body. He has demonized my fellow American-Muslim, Latino, and African-American citizens and has empowered the racist and narrow-minded who walk among us. They can be your doctor, your cousin, your dentist, your father. They are scared of supposedly losing their special privileges and have chosen a president-elect bent on dividing this country. Trump supporters have blood on your hands and have been conned by a narcissistic tyrant. You have not chosen unity and have abandoned me once again. You have picked a fight with me once again. Don't be surprised when I show up to defend myself.

**SCD
Philadelphia**

Establishment parties and media focused too much on Trump the personality, at the dire expense of any real discussion of issues. The pain and suffering endured by the working class of the U.S. (and beyond) trumps all the rest of the lies diligently exposed by reporters that Trump has been caught mouthing. Left or right, everyone now loves to talk about "revolution." But *what kind* of revolution? The election may be over, but the battle of ideas has only just begun.

**Immigrant worker
Northern California**

The antagonisms that have appeared have been there a long time. Liberals and leftists have generally ignored, or written off, a huge sector of the population in the U.S. What appears on the surface as a sort of nihilism is actually a sense of desperation, of nothing left to lose. In California a Proposition to end the death penalty was defeated by a wide margin, and one to hasten its execution also passed by a large majority. That concerns me.

**Revolutionary
Oakland**

Here in Mexico there has been much interest and worry about a Trump presidency. For weeks before the election, and now even more so after, people have come up to me asking about the possibility, and now reality, of Trump winning. There have as well been a few demonstrations in Mexico City protesting Trump. So many have family and friends without papers in the U.S. and Trump's racist comments about Mexicans who have crossed the border have become an urgent concrete threat to their lives.

**Eugene Walker
Mexico**

Was the election rigged? Sure! Disenfranchisement occurs when people move and can't find out their polling location. When they can't read legalese proposals. When people without ID aren't told they can sign an affidavit and vote. When they serve some time in prison. When working people can't get to the polls or are too tired, or have to pick up children or care for a sick relative. Or when people are homeless. Disenfranchisement and voter suppression are endemic in capitalist USA.

**Susan Van Gelder
Detroit**

President Bill Clinton's administration pushed for the massive prison-building and exploding incarceration rate in the 1990s, creating a huge population of felons and ex-felons who cannot vote in many states. Many of them would have voted for Clinton in this election.

**Voter
Florida**

READERS' VIEWS

The Faith, Life and Hope Mission in West Chicago has people in sanctuary and many pending cases of immigration. We will be fighting for their rights and will not be intimidated by threats. In the wake of Donald Trump's election, we will be announcing a series of activities to continue fighting deportations and continue to maintain our sanctuaries to protect our communities from deportations. We will also be demanding a halt to deportation for our brothers Lorenzo Solórzano and Juan Vera.

**Immigrant activist
Wheaton, Ill.**

Bernie Sanders was the first person in national political life in the U.S. since the 1930s and 1940s to openly use words like "socialist" in positive contexts. Considerable numbers of people had no problems with his efforts, thus putting the big lie to all the secret "socialists" and secret "communists" of several generations. What did Marx say about acting in our own right, and in our own name, and for ourselves?

**Séamas Cain
Vermont**

Though both Clinton and Trump are oppressors, Trump is the most extreme. Hillary is supported by Wall Street and Goldman Sachs, contributors to capitalist exploitation and oppression the world over, but she does have policies influenced by Bernie Sanders and a background in helping poor people. Trump's policies are racist, sexist, Islamophobic and homophobic. His biggest supporters are people like that racist bigot of a coward David Duke. His VP Mike Pence is a disgusting epitome of ultra-extreme racism and homophobia. Could this country get any more disastrous? Look at the senseless killing of unarmed Black men by racist pig-cops. We are not going to keep accepting oppression without struggle or resistance.

**Prisoner
Wisconsin**

DEEP RACISM IN THE USA

I took my kids with me to Mississippi to get furniture that was posted online. We ended up at a house with a giant Confederate flag on the garage and a man on the porch with a prominently placed swastika tattoo. A woman came out and offered to have her husband load the furniture into my van. Then she looked at my children. She said that I had beautiful children, and that she could tell they were Native American. I thanked her but told her they are Mexican. She looked over her shoulder at her husband and then back to me. She said very firmly "No, they are Native American." I immediately understood. She asked her husband to go inside and check something on the stove. She helped me load the furniture and then I left. I reassured my 10-year-old daughter that men like him are a dying breed. Today I'm not so sure.

**Teresa
Memphis**

I keep seeing statements from the Left that lean toward a "revolt of the underclass" interpretation of Trump's election, as with Brexit. As if all those Black women, who voted almost unanimously against Trump, Black men, Latinos, majority of workers, or LGBTs, did so because they were out-of-touch elites. I feel a burning hatred for this idea that Trump voters are working-class people who must be "understood" as misplacing their protest against their sufferings

under capitalism into support for racism and misogyny. That is the opposite to my experience of working-class existence. It's a denial of the history that my mother lived out, defending the right of Black women to work as telephone operators. It's a denial of the experience of myself and others in opposing the dominant racism of our largely working-class neighborhood. It's already a surrender of one's ground to fascism. I don't have to understand the "concerns" of the Confederacy, the KKK or the Nazis. Or Marine Le Pen, or Vladimir Putin, or Bashar al-Assad, or...right down to those Trump-touting idiots who spit on everything I respect or value, in lieu of the beatings they'd love to get down to presently.

**Gerard Emmett
Chicago**

Long live President Trump. All you commies can go to hell. Trump is going to do to the Muslims what Hitler did to the Jews. President Trump is going to cleanse the USA of all the filth.

**Fascist troll
Southern California**

Hate crimes against Muslims have gone up sharply after Trump winning the election. It is increasingly alarming that there have been multiple incidents reported at colleges and schools. A teacher in Georgia was removed from class after allegedly going on a racist tirade against undocumented immigrants. At a Wake County public meeting, I brought up that the school board has to do more in training teachers and it is their responsibility to provide safety and security for students.

**Muslim American
Wake County, N.C.**

On Nov. 5, a funeral procession of Black people going through the Mt. Greenwood neighborhood of Chicago was disrupted by whites. An off-duty Chicago police officer shot at 25-year-old Joshua Beal through the window of a car, ran up to the car and continued to fire on Beal. Cops did little to protect the grieving family, who waited hours for cops to release their cars, when a white man came up wielding a bat and shouting expletives. A large crowd of white people shouted, "CPD," "Blue Lives Matter," and "N-----s, go home." We support Joshua Beal's family during this tragic time, their demand for the police to immediately release Joshua's brother Michael, and their demand to file murder charges against all Chicago police officers involved in the killing of Joshua Beal.

**People's Response Team supporter
Chicago**

WOMEN FIGHT BACK

While I admire Colin Kaepernick, it's important to know that women came first. In 1973 the all-Black cheerleading squad at Brown University stayed seated for the National Anthem before a basketball game in Providence, R.I. The Providence City Council censured the squad. Surprisingly, the University's president defended them.

**Women's liberationist
Chicago**

Pence, Ryan, Cruz, etc. are no better than Trump. They objectify and control women and our bodies. Forced pregnancy is rape and ideas and laws that enforce traditional gender roles are objectification. Makeup or veil, no difference. I'm disgusted that the Republican establishment pretends to be shocked and different—as if we all didn't know this is how Trump be-

haves, abusing women in his personal life. But remember, women's lives are just a distraction from the "real" issues.

**Feminist
Midwest**

INDIGENOUS STRUGGLES

Some of the most important things in the article on the N&L website, "Chicago solidarity action with Native resistance to oil pipeline in North Dakota," are how the protesters talk about environmental justice/racism. While they feel the effects first, they know it affects everyone, so in their struggle to protect themselves, they're struggling to protect everyone and the earth.

**Standing Rock backer
Illinois**

On Sept. 17, a coalition of American Indians marched in South Central Los Angeles calling for Leonard Peltier to be freed. He has been incarcerated for 41 years for aiding and abetting the killing of two FBI agents on the Pine Ridge Reservation in North Dakota. At City Hall we were met by anti-TPP and anti-prison activists, the Brown Berets, Aztec dancers, Mexican youth performing hip-hop poems, and talks by Indigenous activists including Crow Ghost, who brought up the peaceful protestors at Standing Rock



North Dakota. G.Z. Sedeki, activist, ex-prisoner, ex-Black Panther, said, "I have been to Standing Rock.

It's an honor to show our solidarity and unity." He concluded, "Write to Leonard, it makes a difference in his spirit: Leonard Peltier, #89637-132, USP Coleman I, PO Box 1033, Colman, Florida 33521."

**Basho
Los Angeles**

GLOBAL (IN)HUMANITY

So nice to read "Syrian Revolution: humanity on trial" (Sept.-Oct. N&L). It was something other than the either/or thinking that seems to rule the thinking of the right, middle and much of the left. What the article says about how we are trained by catch-phrases to view Syrians as simply The Enemy in such a way that we collude in the murder of innocents, reminds me of the ways cults hold intellectual and psychological power over their members by making sure they all participate directly and indirectly in crimes and by making sure their dependence on the cult leadership is stronger than their criticism of it.

**Social worker
Los Angeles**

Recently, a wonderful student that I studied with in Malaysia lost family members in the Saudi airstrikes on Yemen. The Saudi and Yemeni communities in Malaysia continue to be close. They play football together, they pray beside each other. They have been incredibly supportive of each other in these tough times. On facebook, we tend to debate about "politics" as if it's something out "there." As if it's separate from our everyday lives. It's not. In troubling times like this we should wholeheartedly condemn any attack on innocents, and despite our political views, should mourn with each other.

**World citizen
Malaysia**

WHY READ N&L?

That I don't understand the news without N&L input is one of the main reasons I subscribe. Thank you for working on and doing analysis.

**Faithful reader
Midwest**

THE DIALECTIC OF HISTORY vs. RETROGRESSION

In the hands of a dialectician, a category like African nationalism is illuminated as not only evolving but transforming into its opposite (“Nigeria: a retreat, not a victory,” by Raya Dunayevskaya, Sept.-Oct. *N&L*). We see how it went from a universalist idea to a mass movement, and then disclosed a new unifying force with labor’s eruption. But the pull of the world market sucks in leaders who separated from the self-activity of masses; statist nationalism regresses into exploitation and war. When that dialectic of history is not grasped, history becomes prey to all sorts of re-writing, which is a key element of far-right ideology.

**Franklin Dmitryev
Chicago**

Not to reduce Marx’s philosophy of revolution to “a theory”—or, in other words, not to separate “social critique” from the absolute subjective-objective mass movement of becoming—but to keep them as a unity, is the major challenge that thinker-activists and social movements face today. “Epigones discard Marxist-Humanist philosophy” (Sept.-Oct. *N&L*) gives us a wake-up call about this. Along with the unity of theory and practice comes the question of organization, which is the “third term” in this dialectical view. But, when one gives up “on this exceedingly difficult task,” as the authors criticized in the essay seemed to do, the only option remaining for theoreticians is their own plan “to work out an alternative to capitalism.”



**J.G.F. Héctor
Mexico City**

Anderson, Hudis and Kliman have forgotten the history of Marxist-Humanism, a body of ideas with deep roots in the 1949-50 West Virginia coal miners’ strike. That action by workers was in fact a breakthrough in theory. The miners didn’t ask how they should be paid or how the products of labor should be distributed or consumed,

but asked instead, “What kind of labor should we be doing?” That moment helped lead to the emergence of Marxist-Humanism as a distinct philosophy. These pretenders have not escaped the fetish of the commodity and have fallen back to decades before the mid-20th century in their thinking. In fact, however they may characterize themselves, they have unwittingly abandoned Marxism altogether for a flood of abstractions that lead to Nowheresville.

**Former tire builder
Detroit**

For those who never met Hudis but may read his writings, the essay offered an outstanding overview of his attempts to redefine Raya Dunayevskaya’s view of Marxism. Having an ego is okay, but not when it creates misinformation to disseminate a theory based upon egoism rather than concrete information. I find it disturbing how Hudis is trying to hijack the Marxist-Humanist concept and redefine it with his own person. That he and others are trying to marginalize Dunayevskaya’s original thoughts is troublesome. How do you redefine theories, ideas, philosophies that are well-established principles with a concrete analysis of the idea, and try to make them your own based on ego and subterfuge?

**Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin**



PRISONERS, SUPPORTERS SPEAK

I am in a 24/7 disciplinary segregation program at Hancock State Prison. I am determined to spend the nine months that I have to do in this program educating myself and expanding my mind in new ways. I have always identified myself as a socialist but am very interested in learning as much about any other political viewpoints as possible.

**Prisoner
Sparta, Ga.**

In June 2016, Transsexual female Eva Contreras went on a hunger strike in a California state prison. Eva, who is serving a life sentence, has been refused female housing even as a post-op (having forced the prison to castrate

her via a lawsuit), and again when she had her California birth certificate amended to record her sex as female in 2015 under a new law that allows Transsexuals in California to amend their birth certificate with or without genital surgery. Eva’s hunger strike lasted 45 days before she was transported by ambulance to a community hospital where she spent several days recuperating after losing 44 pounds. Still, the prison refuses to act. Eva has initiated a lawsuit for housing in a women’s prison that is pending and will also sue for damages for having her rights, under the Constitutions of California and the U.S., violated.

**Transgender Accountability Panel
Delano, Calif.**

Comrade Keith “Malik” Washington, Deputy Chair of the New Afrikan Black Panther Party/Prison Chapter-Texas Region, is in long-term solitary confinement. They are using the “inciting to riot” disciplinary charge. But, when Norris Hicks and Malik called for the Work Stoppage to go down in April—a nonviolent protest strike action—that went right over their heads. The focus is on him now to take the heat for the work stoppage. Malik can use any reading material. Use your utmost letter-writing skills and observe attention to content to the best of your clever, experienced abilities. Write him at: Keith “Malik” Washington, TDC # 1487958, Eastham Unit, 2665 Prison Rd. 1, Lovelady, TX 75851. They are rejecting anything that relates even remotely to Black Lives Matter, race, strikes or police. What we need is documentation when you write to see just how much they are violating basic human rights of free expression, and write often if you can. Also, if you have free subscriptions of anything edifying for him to read, he would appreciate anything that you can send.

**Twitch, on behalf of
End Prison Slavery in Texas Movement**

It was very uplifting to read in “Shut down all of today’s Alcatrazes!” that folks in San Francisco at the day of outreach regarding 23-hour-a-day solitary confinement helped many people realize, as the rest of the world does, that that is torture. The solidarity shown by prisoners in protests

against solitary confinement, such as hunger strikes, is key in making this world human. We should all be doing that educational outreach.

**Activist
Chicago**



N&L is one of the most righteous publications in the world, because you represent all oppressed nations

and provide a vociferous voice for the voiceless and the most deprived and disenfranchise people on earth.

**Prisoner
Wisconsin**

The Michigan Dept. of Corrections offers college classes and vocational programs to prisoners about to be released. I believe in rehabilitation for all. To disregard the needs of the longer-term prison population is damaging to the prisoners, the state and the community. Education reaches beyond the prisoner into one’s family and community. Everybody deserves a chance to change.

**Prisoner
Kincheloe, Mich.**

Prison groups and individuals need to put aside their differences and unify against the real enemies of the world’s peoples. The enemies being the capitalist system, the U.S. government (the world’s biggest terrorist organization), the Western nations’ military-industrial complexes and the super-rich that basically control what happens in the world. Please sign me up for a subscription. One can never have enough revolutionary information.

**Prisoner
Olney Springs, Colo.**

TO OUR READERS: Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to N&L? Due to increasing requests we are creating a fund for sending other literature to prisoners who cannot pay, such as the Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers pamphlet. Postage costs for those are much higher.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

by Raya Dunayevskaya

- Marxism and Freedom: from 1776 until Today**
Foreword by Joel Kovel \$24.95
- Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** \$24.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women’s Liberation, and Marx’s Philosophy of Revolution 1991 edition.**
Foreword by Adrienne Rich \$24.95
- Women’s Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** \$24.95
- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx** \$24.95
- Crossroads of History: Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East** \$10.00
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism** \$10.00
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings** \$3.00 paperback, \$10.00 hardcover
- American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard** 40th anniversary edition \$10.00
- Marx’s Capital and Today’s Global Crisis**
Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff \$8.00
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II** \$8.00
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions** \$5.00
- Guides to Collection and Supplement to Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development**
Full description of 17,000-page microfilm collection \$5.00
- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development** A 17,000-page microfilm collection available from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202 \$165.00

Dunayevskaya en Español

- Marxismo y libertad** \$10.00
- Filosofía y revolución** \$10.00
- Rosa Luxemburgo, la liberación femenina, y la filosofía marxista de revolución** \$10.00
- Una trilogía de revolución todo en un solo libro: Marxismo y libertad; Filosofía y revolución; y Rosa Luxemburgo la liberación femenina y la filosofía marxista de la revolución** \$25.00
- La liberación femenina y la dialéctica de la revolución: Tratando de alcanzar el futuro** \$10.00
- El poder de la negatividad: Escritos sobre la dialéctica en Hegel y Marx** \$10.00
- Contradicciones históricas en la civilización de Estados Unidos: Las masas afroamericanas como vanguardia** \$8.00

by Charles Denby

- Indignant Heart: A Black Worker’s Journal**
Includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya \$14.95

by Eugene Gogol

- Towards a Dialectic of Philosophy and Organization** \$27.95
- Utopia and the Dialectic in Latin American Liberation** (pre-order) \$27.95

Other publications

- The Coal Miners’ General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism In the U.S.**
by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya \$8.00
- Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy & the Needed American Revolution**
by John Alan \$10.00
- Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers: ‘We want to be validated as human’** \$5.00

- Voices from within the Prison Walls**
by D. A. Sheldon \$8.00
- Working Women for Freedom**
by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes \$8.00
- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western ‘Civilization’** \$10.00
- On 100th Anniversary of the First General Strike in the U.S.** by Terry Moon and Ron Brokmeyer \$8.00

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Movement for human emancipation

Learning from history, to be able to catch what is significant in your own activity, is a life and death question. Philosophy is necessary when people need to break through the barriers that are mostly in the mind. —Raya Dunayevskaya

Urszula Wislanka's "open letter" asked, "The power of humanism, where do we go from here?" It was written to stir a discussion and advance philosophical clarity as it relates to Prisoners' Human Rights Movement. PHRM's Blue Print was authored to give direction and continuity to the prisoners' movement.

The Blue Print is calling upon us prisoners to be steadfast in projecting our humanism and be vigilant against forces capable of disrupting our forward motion. Our activity is to be rooted in the lawful procedures of human rights protocols, nationally and internationally, not separate from the five core demands listed in the Blue Print appendix. The immediacy of our struggle for the full recognition of our humanity is a part of the mass movement for total human emancipation. This larger perspective is the underlying historical significance of the Blue Print.

The historical record of the last half of the 20th century and the early part of 21st shows how previous revolutions were aborted. A philosophy of revolution cannot be left to be worked out in the midst of struggle. Our present moment is the unpleasant result of a philosophical void. No one had dealt with the critical question: "What happens after" the expropriation of power by the masses? We are not even close to the point where the expropriation of power is within our grasp. However, our historical obligation demands we attempt to think it through.

The open letter speaks to those who call ourselves revolutionary. The idea of humanism does not exhaust itself in our particular demands but keeps determining itself in the ongoing unfolding of new human relations as "mutually recognized self-determining free beings." The open letter is an attempt to establish the philosophical bulwark preventing what Frantz Fanon posited: "the dialectic ... changing into the logic of equilibrium," where

Shared Journey inside solitary

Editor's note: Below we print an excerpt from part 2 of "Shared Journey inside the Tombs of California's Solitary Confinement Torture Chambers" by Baridi "X" Williamson.

I went inside my heart to survive the torture

When I entered this California branch of the New Jim Crow system of mass incarceration thirty-two years ago, there was nothing in my mind that could have prepared me for the torturous ordeal that awaited my arrival to this prison station along my life's journey—especially the last 20-plus years of being buried alive in the state government's solitary confinement torture prison tombs.

It was the clear insight that was shared by a Freedom Fighter named George Jackson, who tells us in his internationally-acclaimed publication that "It takes some serious psychological adjustments to deal with prison life." (*Soledad Brother*.)

There I was staring this inhumane, cruel and torturous 'creature' in its face, as I entered that strange man-made diabolical construct called "Pelican Bay SHU" in the early 1990s. And just as Jackson said, "Nothing can prepare you for this." In January, 1995 U.S. federal court Judge Thelton Henderson described the conditions behind the Pelican Bay SHU walls:

"The Prison setting at Pelican Bay SHU offers a tremendous potential for abuse by guards who have powerful weapons and enormous manpower at their disposal and exercise nearly total control over the inmates under their supervision.

"Adding to this volatile mix is the fact that the prison setting of the SHU is far removed from the usual sights and sounds of everyday life. From the outside, the SHU resembles a massive bunker; from the inside, it is a windowless labyrinth of cells and walls, sealed off from the outside world by walls, gates and guards. The physical environment thus reinforces a sense of isolation and detachment from the outside world and helps create 'palpable distance from ordinary compunctions, inhibitions, and community norms.' (Madrid v. Gomez, 889 Fed. Supp. 1146.)"

It was only after the historic California Hunger Strikes (2011-2013) that we were able to finally break through CDCr's secret redwood (Del Norte County/Crescent City) curtain wall of lies that hides their torture. But by then, the damage of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder—Solitary Confinement had already been done. This is why it is taking some of us so long to try to share with you—the Outside World Humynity—what we just experienced. It is the trauma that we must face, to grasp and expose to you.

—Baridi "X" Williamson

static forms of party, unions, laws and culture conceal the true conditions of men and women and attempt to stultify the self-development of humanity." (See *Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought*, p. 49.)

The open letter draws out the historical potential of the Blue Print in our present moment. It provides the reader the opportunity to envision what we have at hand. Can we meet the challenge of practice as set out in the Blue Print, which is also a form of humanist theory and realize the Absolute as the self-moving idea of freedom? Isn't this the deeper philosophical content to the Blue Print's statement, "We are beacons of collective building"?

—Bro. Faruq

Long-term solitary continues in Penn.

I would like to comment on your article, "Humanism: A way forward for prisoners," published in your Sept.-Oct. issue.

In the state of Pennsylvania the use of long-term solitary confinement has not ended. Pennsylvania Department of Corrections officials allege that it has. Yet they continue to utilize long-term solitary confinement for the smallest things.

I've been held in solitary confinement for the last nine years and seven months. I was 18 years old when they locked me in a small cell. At the age of 28 I'm still being confined. I'm due for release on May 12, 2018. I was one of the many prisoners abused at the infamous Secure Special Needs Unit that sparked the investigation of inmate abuse at SCI-Cresson.

I've fought for justice, yet this country doesn't desire equality for prisoners. Men that I've known personally or known by name found that death was the quickest way to physical freedom. They committed suicide while in solitary confinement. Most recently at the prison I'm at, a prisoner killed himself while in general population. He'd simply had enough.

For those fighting solitary confinement, please remember that your fight is a long uphill battle. It will take effort from the masses. In Pennsylvania you rarely have the solidarity that you would find in California or Wisconsin. Prisoners in Pennsylvania die at high rates for a long time before someone recognizes there's a problem.

I really would like to say thank you to all the convicts in California for making solitary confinement their target, for standing up to fight rather than kneel. Be well.

—C.B., Pennsylvania prisoner

Need for lifelong self-development

I am California state prisoner Jesse Perez. I write to forward a financial contribution to your organization, and share a bit of background.

Last November, an epic decade-long and multi-suit litigation effort—specifically challenging my 10-year placement and retention in solitary confinement—culminated in a Federal jury trial in San Francisco. (See "Prisoner beats legal odds to win guard retaliation suit," January-February 2016 *News & Letters*.)

The jury found the defendants, all guards employed by California's correctional agency, guilty of unconstitutional retaliation aimed at keeping me in solitary confinement indefinitely. The Jury verdict included a modest damage award.

"...Not any concern (about) the mis-impression...that Mr. Perez is a saint or something like that..." was the court's partial attempt to focus the attorney's tactical debate on whether to inform the jury about the omission of my past acts. Considering the case, the court's remark was as denotative as any—but it stood with me.

Dressed in my trial suit while shackled with waist and ankle chains, I sat alone in a cold cell awaiting a verdict. In that moment, the court's comment about me and my past reverberated in my mind—and still does. I can remember thinking, as I do now, that I am indeed a flawed person.

I also believe, however, that individual flaws do not define who we are as persons. And that the project of developing ourselves is lifelong. We have but one life to make it count for something, and that something I choose is balance.

I'd like to be able to look back and know with certainty that I also contributed positively to the lives of others. And so my aim is clear.

Thank you for your efforts and sacrifices on behalf of others. Please accept this minor contribution in the service of the same.

Pleasant days, health and expansion to the spirit.

—Jesse Perez

Free Russian radical Ildar Dadin!

Chicago—Opponents of Russian President Vladimir Putin's reign of terror gathered in Chicago's Millennium Park on Nov. 6 to stand vigil against the torture of Ildar Dadin and other political prisoners in Russia. Dadin was sentenced in December 2015 to three years in prison for violating Russia's revised, more repressive law on public assembly by two acts of solitary protests in Moscow.



As if three years imprisonment for one-man pickets defending political prisoners and opposing Putin were not draconian enough, Dadin has been subjected to repeated acts of torture. He was able to smuggle a letter out that accused the prison administration of sending gangs of ten or more to beat him daily. Other times he has been suspended from the ceiling by his wrists.

Ironically, Chicago Park Security asserted that there was no right to public assembly in Millennium Park, so they evicted all of us in solidarity with Dadin from three different locations. However, nobody was arrested—the ascension of Putin lackey Donald Trump is still weeks away.

—Bob McGuire

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Wisconsin prison destroys books

continued from p. 1

classification—destroyed.

I'm furious that such ignorance is allowed to exist and have a position of authority. The end result was that any book in the library with so much as a pencil mark was removed, destroyed and called "contraband."

My language books on learning devices (tapes, etc.) were ordered removed under the premise that prisoners could use the materials to learn a language in order to speak in code! This obtusely ludicrous reasoning is just another example of how authority is abused in a prison setting.

Education—both self-education and structured education—is one of the primary ways that a prisoner can become aware of their potential and move towards intellectual independence. Education is the key to power. Nowhere is that more necessary than it is for a prisoner. Education teaches us to embrace the idea that we can move beyond our current situation and be better for that move. Yet, in this Wisconsin prison, personal staff vendettas took precedence over educational opportunity.

BURNING BOOKS, PUNISHING IDEAS

The end result was the destruction of hundreds of books. Even books and magazines donated by prisoners, community members, or outside libraries were subjected to this process with no regard to their educational or intrinsic value. Once a person gets to the point where they arbitrarily destroy books simply because they have the power to do so, it's not a far step before they try to limit and punish ideas and the people who hold them.

These were processes used by fanatics such as Savonarola, Hitler, Stalin, Mao and others. Book burnings are a fundamental abrogation of rights that we see in dictatorships and abusive governments around the world. Yet our nation practices such hypocrisy here in the heartland.

To all the fanatics everywhere who burn books or remove them indiscriminately from the shelves of libraries, here's what Franklin Delano Roosevelt said in 1942: "Books cannot be killed by fire. People die, but books never die. No man and no force can abolish memory. No man and no force can put thought in a concentration camp forever. No man and no force can take from the world the books that embody man's eternal fight against tyranny of every kind...We know books are weapons...always...make them weapons for man's freedom."

When you attempt to destroy books, all you do is add fuel to the fires of revolution.

Letter from Mexico

Teachers and Indigenous Congress

by J.G.F. Héctor

During September and October the four-month protests by the teachers against the “educational reform” came to an end. The National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) made a proposal for having an Indigenous Governing Council, represented by an Indigenous woman, participate in the 2018 presidential elections.

NEW PHASE OF TEACHERS’ MOVEMENT

In the middle of September the dissident teachers decided to end their strikes and sit-ins against the “educational reform.” They had failed to force the government to call the “reform” off. However, as a spokesperson from Chiapas posed it: “The fact that we aren’t right now in the streets doesn’t mean that the movement is over. We have retreated to our communities, [for] we’ve understood that our task is to be in constant dialogue with them.”

It is time to go back to the communities, with whom the teachers have been working for years, and whose residents supported them fully in their protests. It is from there where the idea and practice of a non-capitalist, non-elitist education can keep developing which would be in tune with the desires of the masses.

After four months of facing the government’s refusal to listen to the teachers, as well as its repression, has the time come for the movement to make a leap forward and work harder on the creation of its autonomy? In that case, what would be the responsibility of revolutionary activist-thinkers?

INDIGENOUS WOMAN CANDIDATE

From Oct. 9-14 the Indigenous communities—including the Zapatistas—held their fifth congress in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas. At the end they declared “to name an Indigenous Governing Council whose will would be manifest by an indig-



Demonstration by Mexican teachers against school privatization

enous woman, a CNI delegate, as an independent candidate to the presidency of the country under the name of the CNI and the EZLN in the electoral process of 2018.”

After this announcement, a large number of “critics from the Left” accused the EZLN and the CNI of being naïve and “idealistic,” and denounced them for colluding with the government to divide the votes of the “Left.” The truth is, however, that the proposal opened a new way forward for the masses, especially for the Indigenous peoples. As the EZLN-CNI communication states: “Our struggle is not for power, which we do not seek. Rather, we call on all of the ordinary peoples and civil society to organize to put a stop to this destruction and strengthen our resistances and rebellions, that is, the defense of the life of every person, family, collective, community, or barrio.”

This new proposal is an extension of EZLN-CNI’s decades-long effort of building autonomy from below—its “revolutionary methodology.” As a CNI representative said: “It is about using the electoral period to build what is ours.” It aims to elicit the voices and actions of those from below, nationwide, in order to know how they are resisting capitalism and, at the same time, trying to build something new. Indeed, at the forums organized since then by Zapatista supporters, we have been able to hear the Indigenous people themselves, especially Indigenous women.

It is this way of working which constitutes the greatest strength and gives revolutionary meaning to the EZLN-CNI experience. In Mexico we now have the opportunity to take part in this new moment opened by the fifth CNI: Helping to develop the actions and thoughts of the oppressed in the cities and countryside, to the point where a new society could be born. This future society, as the Zapatistas say, “is only possible upon the ruins of capitalism.” Are we up to the task?

LALIT confronts colonization of Diego Garcia

Editor’s note: As we go to press, the British Government’s Supreme Court refused to give Diego Garcia back to its inhabitants. They cannot return to their own land, while the British will continue to lease the island to the U.S. for their military base until 2036! Peter Grant, Scottish National Party lawmaker, rightly labeled the move “a return to the days of the arrogant colonial Britain that should have been consigned to the dustbin of history 100 years ago.”

While the British claim that it would be impractical to give the island back to its rightful inhabitants, they did not see the impracticality 50 years ago of forcibly removing the native population by murder-

ing their pets and refusing to let people return from shopping or medical trips, thus splitting up families. (See “Freedom for the Chagos Archipelago!” Sept.-Oct. 2016 News & Letters.)

No doubt Britain is dancing to the U.S.’s tune as the U.S. base on Diego Garcia has supported 50 years of military operations including Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan; it has also been used for secret rendition flights of suspected terrorists.

The Chagossians now turn to the international community. The struggle continues.

In the name of LALIT, I would like to thank you very much for the copies of *News & Letters* with the article on Diego Garcia and the letter of support that we referred to at our Conference. Your support contributed to creating the kind of internationalist spirit that makes victory possible in these struggles.

Our Action Conference on Diego Garcia held in Mauritius on Oct. 1-2 was a success beyond our wildest dreams, and we hope its effects continue to be felt and help get the base closed; the whole of Mauritius, including Chagos, decolonized; and the Chagossians getting the freedom to return home.

Speeches at the Conference covered the “now-ness” of the 50-year-old issue, the history of the struggle against this colonial military occupation, the changing “stakes” over the years, what victory will be, and what dangers face us as we seek this victory.

Olivier Bancoult gave his “Report Back” from the UN, where he was part of the Mauritius delegation alongside the Prime Minister. His report included a revelation that he had been offered money by the British State in a bribe for him to withdraw from the Mauritius delegation. The British High Commission put out a denial, but Olivier maintained he has proof.

We can expect retaliation by the British and U.S. They will do everything they can to get the Mauritian State not to go ahead with the Resolution still on the UN Agenda to bring Britain before the International Court of Justice at The Hague. A mere “Advisory Opinion” has sent both the UK and U.S. into a little frenzy of intimidation. Britain’s defeat at the Tribunal under the Law of the Sea has made both the UK and USA very jumpy, especially as it means the renewal by Britain of its illegal lease of Diego Garcia to the USA for the base can no longer be accomplished legally.

If there is any way you can get this issue into the media in the U.S., we will send you links we have with mainstream journalists who might want to take it up.

—Alain Ah Vee, for LALIT

Revisiting Fanon

Oakland, Calif.—Frantz Fanon’s humanism is coming alive in various discussions in new ways. Instead of focusing on violence, Faruq, a prisoner who participated in the successful hunger strikes against long-term solitary confinement in California, honed in on the role of compassion and *empathy*.

Faruq summarized Fanon’s idea in a recent letter to us: “Yes to life, yes to love, and what is most human: freedom...‘The ultimate search must be for the ideal where there is transformation of the subjective certainty of one’s own self-worth into an universally valid objective truth’ ...the birth of a human world of reciprocal recognitions.”

We also recently attended a showing of a new movie *Concerning Violence*, followed by a discussion by Black movement activists. *Concerning Violence* presents scenes from African revolutions of the 1960s and 70s narrated with some of Fanon’s discussion of violence in his *Wretched of the Earth*. The movie addressed the necessity of spontaneous violence as the only way to confront the total violence of colonialism. It ends with Fanon’s conclusion: the call for the movement to leave Europe behind with its abstract humanism and bring forth a new Humanism.

Though the discussion didn’t include input from the audience, the panel, who declined to be recorded, gave a new take on Fanon’s humanism. For example, Malkia Cyril, from the Center for Media Justice, said that when Fanon says we have to use all means, that does not mean just violence. As an example, she pointed to the struggle against long-term solitary confinement, which effectively used non-violent hunger strikes.

Alicia Garza, of the Black Lives Matter coalition, said that Black Lives Matter is a project of re-humanization. Fanon talks about humanity as our real, raw reactions to oppression. It releases what we long for most. In our vision, what is deserving of dignity? People try to re-humanize themselves by exercising whatever power we have.

Garza posed questions: how do we not become what we oppose? What does freedom look like? Who are we if we lose compassion? She called the African independence movements of the 1960s and ’70s “revolutionary experiments.” Yet they all ended badly.

She asked: in the process of change how do we hold onto our humanism? What do we do to ensure that the world we build is full of humanity which previous generations were not able to get to? How do we make that historical leap? Garza’s question, how do we make sure that humanism and not some awful regime comes out at the other end, is crucial.

Fanon never made a fetish out of a particular tactic but was asking how to avoid the cowardice of the intellectual who falls into neocolonialism, creates a new single-party state and a new separation of “brains and muscle.” Fanon saw humanism as an original untidy idea, the idea of freedom, propounded as an absolute deep in the mass movement.

The ongoing reexamination of Fanon’s humanism, by various participants in the struggle for a new society, no doubt will continue. We’d like to hear more from you.

—Marxist-Humanists

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Participants at Black Transgender Lives Matter vigils held for murdered Black Transgender woman T.T. Saffore want violence and murder against Transgender and gender-nonconforming people to be reported, and reported accurately. Initial police reports often misgender the victims. Activists call for the same support for Black Transgender and gender-nonconforming people that cisgender Black men would receive from their communities of color.

* * *

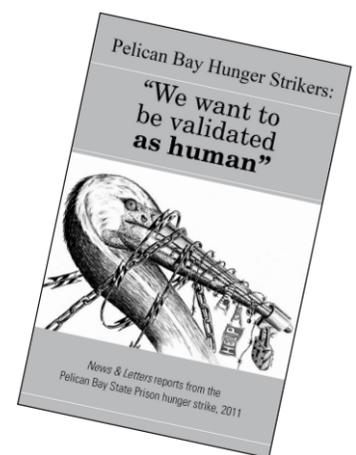
Japanese LGBTQ students are bullied without consequence in a culture where group mentality is so important that individualism is squashed. Students report that teachers call Queer students weird and do not prevent open jokes about them. Teachers say LGBTQ students disrupt harmony in school and are the main cause of AIDS. Japan’s anti-bullying policies exclude sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes.

* * *

In September Pakistan’s National Commission for Human Rights demanded an investigation into the violent attack against a Transgender woman in Peshawar. Protests in Pakistan have raised awareness of the rape, murder, harassment and assault targeting Transgender and Intersex women, and even the medical care they are denied.

* * *

What did partners Thomas Rees and Joshua Bardwell do after a security guard at Sainsbury, a grocery store in East London, England, demanded they leave because a customer had complained about them holding hands in public? They organized a kiss-in at the store the following Saturday, in which many same-sex couples participated!



Includes Faruq’s reports on the historic 2011 hunger strikes against indeterminate solitary confinement.

To order, see p. 7

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TRADE UNION COUNCIL CHICAGO, IL

TAMPCO PRESS 457 Franklin Dmitryev, National Organizer, News and Letters Committees. Terry Moon, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor (1983-1999). Olga Domanski, National Organizer (1958-2015). John Alan, National Editorial Board Member Emeritus (2008-2011).

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No to Trump! No to fascism! Fight for a human society!

continued from p. 1

vision of the past that rolls back all the gains made by people of color, women and workers in the last century and a half—as long as its stench was perfumed by Trump's fake promises of prosperity, such as bringing back the jobs lost in the coal and steel regions of the "Rust Belt" and Appalachia.

Now he tilts toward dismantling not only Obamacare but Medicare, and undermining Social Security by privatizing it. His game plan is to distract from his fraudulent promises by eliminating labor, safety and environmental regulations, and by attacking scapegoats, in the first instance with more mass deportations and giving the police a free hand under the cry of "law and order."

His supporters bought into the demagogue's Big Lies and handed him a platform to inundate the country with racist, misogynist, authoritarian false consciousness and, when he feels the time is ripe, provocations to violence.

The media aided this ideological onslaught by constantly broadcasting Trump's sound bites and treating even the most extreme statements as legitimate political discourse. This was especially easy for Fox News, which has been presenting far-right racism as mainstream for two decades. Facebook reinforced it with echo-chamber "targeting" of users with what they supposedly want.

The media's description of Trump's base as "working class" is distorted. They lump in the petty bourgeoisie—small business owners, managers and bureaucrats—with the working class, as long as they lack four-year college degrees. Some of his greatest supporters are those paid wages to suppress the working class—police, prison guards, border guards—but to count that as working-class support is abstract sociological empiricism.

In reality, Trump lost the vote among people with household income under \$100,000. But fewer of them vote—and Republicans made voting more difficult for them, especially in Black and Latino areas. Trump lost in Nevada, where workers knew him concretely as the hotel employer who wouldn't sign a contract with unionized employees so that he can continue to pay them \$3 an hour less.

Trump did win the white vote, including a significant number of white workers who had voted for Obama. But it was not enough in the end to gain him a majority. Like George W. Bush in 2000, he lost the vote but will be anointed president due to the Electoral College (tilted by voter suppression), which was invented by the Founding Fathers to inhibit democracy and protect the institution of slavery.

LURCHING TOWARD CATASTROPHE

The Republicans will have single-party control of the federal government and of about half the states—partly due to gerrymandering, suppressing the votes of people of color and young people, and the racist denial of voting rights to millions of people convicted of felonies. Soon Trump will appoint at least one Supreme Court justice, and probably more, locking in a reactionary court for the foreseeable future. The Religious Right is celebrating their deal with the devil, having decided that destroying legal abortion and LGBTQ rights was an end that justified overlooking what they had previously claimed to be paramount, the candidate's faith and character.

As Trump and Congress trample birth control, healthcare, the social safety net, labor unions and environmental regulation, and wipe out safeguards against surveillance, voter disenfranchisement, suppression of radical dissent and police violence, do not expect the Supreme Court to stand in their way. Quite the contrary: it may throw out some Constitutional rights now taken for granted.

Nor is the Court or Congress likely to fess if Trump carries out his promise to bring back torture, or when his plans for deporting millions of people necessarily lead to an expansion of the already existing horrors of the immigrant detention centers. Kris Kobach, a white supremacist on Trump's transition team, wants to reinstate a post-9/11 database of immigrants from certain countries that was stopped because it was useless and discriminated against Muslims. Trump campaigner Carl Higbie defended the initiative, citing the World War II Japanese internment camps as a "historical, factual precedent to do things that are not politically popular."

Trump's nominee for Attorney General is Jeff Sessions. Having prosecuted civil rights activists for registering Black people to vote, he would now be in a position to block enforcement of the parts of the Voting Rights Act that the Supreme Court has not

already erased. An anti-abortion fanatic, he can persecute women's clinics while giving a pass to anti-abortion terrorism.

But the most highly placed white supremacist misogynist of all, after Trump, is Stephen Bannon, whose appointment as "chief strategist" for the White House was praised by KKK and Nazi leaders. After Bannon took over Breitbart News, he turned it into what he described as "the platform for the alt-right," meaning the internet-savvy contemporary sexist and white supremacist movement. His friend Andrew Breitbart lauded him as "the Leni Riefenstahl of the Tea Party movement."

After taking over the Republican Party and forcing its establishment to heel, Trump has turned its strategic direction over to the new version of the Nazis. In response, the Democrats meekly promised to work with him and enable a "smooth transition."

AGAINST BANKRUPTCY OF THOUGHT

The opposite to this bankruptcy of thought can be seen in movements such as Black Lives Matter, which arise from lived experience, and are putting U.S. political democracy on trial. And at the moment that the media fixated on election politics, the largest national prison strike in U.S. history began in 24 states Sept. 9 to fight cruel conditions and slave labor. Prisoners even convinced guards at an Alabama prison to go on strike against the dangerous conditions that provoke violence.

Women's struggles for new human relations pervaded the election season, in which misogyny was spewed not only at Hillary Clinton but at any woman who dared challenge the Republican nominee. A growing list of women testified about being assaulted by the macho fascist Trump, who was caught on tape bragging about how his celebrity status granted him the ability to sexually assault women with impunity. Millions of women shared their own stories of assault on the internet after blogger Kelly Oxford tweeted that when she was 12 an old man carried out the kind of sexual assault on her that Trump bragged about.

Indigenous resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline (see articles, p. 11) revealed the fault lines in society that the political system covers over. The vicious repression of nonviolent water protectors lay bare the savagery underlying the decaying system that vomits up a Trump to fend off its overthrow. At the same time, a jury acquitted the white right-wingers who had carried out an armed occupation of the Malheur Wildlife National Refuge, threatened federal agents, and desecrated Native cultural artifacts. The contrast was unavoidable.

On climate change, Trump is committed to a course that would be catastrophic for the entire human race. Having called climate science a hoax perpetrated by the Chinese, he aims to kill international agreements and all climate action at home. Under his policies, the goal of limiting global warming to 2°C would be out of reach. He promises to expand coal, oil and gas extraction and push through the Keystone XL pipeline. His personal investment in the company building the Dakota Access Pipeline makes his stance on that obvious.

The total separation of thought from reality that threatens the life-sustaining capacity of the planet is a way of thinking organic to the capitalist businessman. Clouding the judgment of many who looked past Trump's endless stream of brash lies, racist slurs or outrageous sexist comments and behavior was his constant ranting against the political establishment in the name of being "for" the people.

This pure negativity, what Hegel called "a certainty of its own actuality and the non-actuality of the world," has no regard for objective conditions, either of nature or the economy. The real crisis today, as in the 1930s Great Depression, is the growing displacement of workers, while only living labor, not robots, can create new value that makes accumulation possible. That is why the rate of capitalist accumulation has been collapsing globally.

When the low rate of accumulation leads to capitalists and capitalist nations fighting over pieces of the pie, tensions rise over trade and access to resources such as oil and water. Capitalist spirit devolves into the global emergence of a nationalist, racist, voluntarist—that is, fascist—subjectivity which portends shifting alliances and total war.

TIME TO FIGHT IN ACTIVITY AND THOUGHT

This must be stopped. To wait four years for another election would be to give up. That nothing short of revolution can suffice is clearer than ever, as unprecedented reaction is entrenching itself in all three branches of the government with a fascist

at its head, doubling down on climate change denial and nuclear-armed militarism. Civilization's survival is called into question unless this rotten political and economic system and its ideology are abolished.

We must fight this backward movement here and now and in doing so not disarm ourselves by failing to project the need for social transformation fundamental enough to pull out fascism's roots in capitalism, which is intertwined with racism, sexism, heterosexism and imperialism. Let us not limit ourselves to being against this new form of fascism, or even against capitalism, but release the power of the freedom movements by aiding their unity with the philosophy of freedom for the reconstruction of society on totally new beginnings.

What Raya Dunayevskaya declared has never been more urgent: "The totality of the world crisis today, and the need for a total change, compels philosophy, a total outlook." This is the missing link for projecting a truly revolutionary perspective.

Many in various movements are stating their resolve to keep fighting. Confidence in the power of the idea, which is at the same time confidence in the masses, is what will allow us not only to keep fighting, but to keep working at the needed rethinking, the unity of theory and practice, so that revolution can succeed and bring forth a new human society.

Review: *White Trash*

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America by Nancy Isenberg (Viking Press, New York), 2016, is a timely book even before the results of the Nov. 8 election made its urgency clear.

The gaping hole in our understanding of social class leads to intractable problems. There is more residue from the British past, and the American Revolution was more incomplete, than most are aware of. It was slavery and the brutal British class system—one in which land ownership determined one's perceived human worth—that was held over from the British. In fact, slavery came into being largely because the British ruling class was unable to control rebellious English and Scottish workers.

BRITISH CONTEMPT FOR THE POOR

As Nancy Isenberg documents, the British rulers saw the English and Scottish poor as "waste people," and the American colony not so much a land of plenty but a "wasteland," a dumping ground for those they saw as the dregs of society. Often people were shipped to the New World as punishment for petty crimes. Once in the colonies, they had no land and were seen as "squatters," "rubbish," "clay-eaters," and various words relating to sewage.

There is a wealth of material in *White Trash* about women's history, relations between American Indians and settlers and the brutal conditions of children. A lot of "American heroes" fall from their pedestals in this work, including Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Theodore Roosevelt, to name just a few.

From Isenberg's careful examination of history we learn that the Civil War was not only about the preservation of slavery by the landed Southern aristocracy, but was also about keeping poor whites in poverty so they could not challenge plantation owners for land or economic advancement. This was revealed in widespread resistance to the Confederacy among poor whites, which led to the formation of West Virginia and to sabotage of the Confederate war effort. The rise of Andrew Johnson was a result.

The most chilling part of this history is the pre-occupation of the colonial rulers, and then the new U.S. rulers, with "breeding" and "bloodlines," which in the early 20th century took the form of eugenics. The discussions of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and Lyndon B. Johnson and the Great Society, open possibilities for further study.

NEEDED NEW AWARENESS

The last chapter of the book deals with cultural portrayals of poor whites. "Trailer trash" is a common post-WWII epithet. Today, many political personalities, conservative, liberal and a few leftist, engage in some brutal denigration of poor whites. The bigoted term "white trash" is widely used, hence the title and the timeliness of this book. The epilogue speaks of the need for a new awareness of our present social reality and our past.

White Trash offers us a history that can do a great deal to end the separation of Black and white in the U.S. The mere act of mingling and listening to others offers us the possibility for new beginnings. One of the roots of Marxist-Humanism grew out of an event in Appalachia: the 1949-50 Coal Miners' General Strike, the first strike against automation. It was there that the question emerged of "what kind of work should we, as human beings, be doing?"

White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America can help in changing today's grim reality and opening paths to a new human society.

—D. Chêneville



Clinic defenders like these at Mississippi's only surviving abortion clinic are preparing to fight anew against Trump's promised attacks on women's right to abortion and birth control.

EDITORIAL**Stop the Dakota Access Pipeline now!**

The resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) has become a beacon for all Indigenous peoples and all the forces trying to resist the ruling system—and has been assaulted with ferocious repression.

Members of hundreds of tribes from all over the U.S. have joined the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe at the Sacred Stone Camp in an unprecedented gathering of peoples, which has become the focal point for rising decolonization, environmental and other struggles by Indigenous peoples worldwide. Over 10,000 people have participated in the Camp and nearby direct actions.¹

YOUTH AT THE FORE

The camp in a remote and often freezing part of North Dakota began on April 1, near where the pipeline, which is to carry up to 570,000 barrels of fracked Bakken shale oil daily to Illinois, is supposed to dive underneath the Missouri River. Its route was shifted from Bismarck to the Standing Rock area because of concerns that white people's water could be polluted by oil spills.

1 Visit <http://sacredstonecamp.org> for information about how to join or support the camp.

Not my president

Oakland, Calif.—On Nov. 9, the day that Donald Trump's claim to a majority of the Electoral College became clear, an ethnically diverse crowd of 7,000 crammed into Oscar Grant (Frank Ogawa) Plaza to express outrage at Trump's looming control of the U.S. government. Some were there to get a sense of normalcy in the wake of a bizarre and horrifying national disaster.

A Black woman at the mike recounted an incident at the Standing Rock Dakota Access Pipeline occupation: When she witnessed black-clad military-style police attacking Water Protectors (resisters) with batons, dogs and pepper spray, she let loose with a barrage of obscenities. A Native man approached her and said, "Excuse me, sister. Please don't cuss. We're in prayer here." She replied, "No, brother, we're in a war."

Advocates of healing and of fighting were both present, judging from signs that ranged in tone from "Love Will Trump Trump" to "Fuck Trump." During the march a man on the sound truck pointed to riot cops lining the sidewalks, and led marchers in chanting, "If they touch any, they'll face the many."

—David M'oto

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Natalia Siegel

The Fees Must Fall movement in South Africa continues to grow and challenge the ruling ANC government. Student protesters and their supporters, despite receiving promises that college fees would be frozen, are demanding decolonization of the curriculum to rid it of pro-European settler bias. The reaction has been brutal. In recent weeks, more than 500 students have been arrested, with serious injuries as police use pepper spray, rubber bullets and stun grenades and have dragged women by their hair. The task force that South African President Jacob Zuma established to "normalize" the situation at the universities is dominated by members of the internal security apparatus.

* * *

In late September, over 350 students at Boston College rallied to denounce an anti-gay atmosphere at the school after a brazenly anti-gay slur was discovered. Students, covering their mouths with rainbow-colored bandages, equated silence with violence and complained of discrimination against other minorities on campus as well.

* * *

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied health issues affecting LGBTQ high school students, including suicide and attempted suicide, but did not include transgender students in the survey. The Trevor Project, a group focused on the real risk of suicide among LGBTQ youth, in noting the CDC's lack of data on transgender students, stated that over 25% of all transgender youth have tried to commit suicide in the last calendar year.

* * *

In Mid-July, over two dozen Native American youth in Klamath County, Oregon, protested a drainage of polluted water into a key river. They demanded a thorough cleanup of the Klamath Strait Drain, which has damaged downstream communities and valuable salmon and steelhead fishing preserves. They took samples of the polluted water and then marched to downtown Klamath Falls where they had a salmon "die-in." They held signs proclaiming, "Save the Klamath," "BOR (Bureau of Reclamation) Clean Up Your Mess," "Politicians Lie Salmon Die," and "Protect Our Earth, Not Your Profits."

Youth have been at the forefront from the start. Now they have formed the International Indigenous Youth Council, whose spokeswoman, Eryn Wise, says, "We as youth will not be deterred from our ultimate goal: killing the black snake and protecting the water....Our very existence is an act of resistance and we will resist the Dakota Access Pipeline every single day until justice is restored to our Mother."

Hundreds of solidarity actions have taken place across the globe. (See reports on this page.) Where DAPL is to cross the Mississippi River in Iowa, a resistance camp began in August. Women there have blocked construction several times.

This struggle is about Native American sovereignty, action on climate change, and environmental defense. It has become the front line in the clash between the existing capitalist system built on oil, coal, natural gas and nuclear power, and the reach for a new kind of society where human power is its own end.

That is manifested in the battle to stop the civilization-destroying momentum of always extracting more and more fossil fuels and uranium from the ground. Years of the climate movement finally drove President Obama to put his foot ever so lightly on the brake. But Donald Trump, who has investments in the company building DAPL, has promised to push the throttle to the floor, including re-starting the Keystone XL pipeline halted by Obama.

FEROCIOUS REPRESSION

So it is that a band of nonviolent water protectors in a remote rural area found themselves under attack by hundreds of heavily armed police from seven states plus private security.

Over 400 people have been arrested. Another camp, the 1851 Treaty Camp, was set up in the DAPL path, reclaiming unceded Dakota territory included as part of the Standing Rock Reservation in the Ft. Laramie Treaty of 1851. Police violently cleared it. They used tear gas and pepper spray, concussion grenades, shotguns firing bags full of lead shot ("bean bag rounds"), rubber bullets, tasers and a sound cannon.

Cops hit two medics with batons and pulled another medic out of a car he was driving. Another water protector jumped into the car to stop it from running people over.

Linda Black Elk, a medic, reported, "Rows upon

Solidarity with Standing Rock: Water is Life**Chicago: kill the black snake!**

Chicago—On Nov. 4 hundreds gathered at the site of Occupy Chicago five years ago to march in solidarity with Native Americans and other protesters in North Dakota being brutalized and arrested by the hundreds while blocking the Dakota Access Pipeline. Even Cubs fans joined us after the slightly larger World Series celebration earlier in the day.

Marching behind signs and banners like "Stand with Standing Rock," "DAPL Profits off Native Death" and "Native Lives Matter," marchers took to the streets without a permit to block traffic in the financial district, eventually forming an encampment on the front lawn of Mizuho Bank. Mizuho is a major provider of capital to Energy Transfer Partners, the joint venture determined to build the DAPL to move fracked petroleum from North Dakota through Lakota lands in defiance of both their treaty rights and determined mass opposition. (See "Lakota protest Dakota Access oil pipeline," Sept.-Oct. News & Letters.)

A whole series of #NoDAPL actions have occurred in Chicago, each time in coordination with hundreds of actions across the world. On Sept. 13, 150 people gathered at the Kwagulth Indian Totem Pole in Lincoln Park. Native ceremonial elder Singing Man of the Southern Arapaho from Oklahoma stressed that the U.S. had violated every treaty it has reached with Native American peoples, but that this movement can win. That same day, dozens of people blocked streets in Toronto's Financial District, and activists blocked construction of a natural gas pipeline near Hines, Vermont.

By Nov. 12, more than a thousand gathered at Federal Plaza to voice rage at the continued lawless attacks on peaceful Standing Rock protesters including the firing of potentially lethal rubber bullets and filling jails like it was Birmingham, Ala., 1963.

The crowd was swelled by some of the thousands marching daily in defiance of the

rows of white armored militarized police were firing indiscriminately into the water at brown people who were swimming, risking hypothermia, and rowing kayaks and canoes to protect the water and stop a pipeline."

The world recoiled at images of vicious dogs, snouts red with their victims' blood, and of wounded protectors confronted by ranks of fully militarized police in riot gear, deploying military-grade Humvees, armored vehicles and assault rifles.

Just as such images brought intense attention to the Black freedom struggles in 1957 Little Rock and 1965 Alabama, video from North Dakota in September finally broke through the virtual media silence. In retaliation, Morton County issued an arrest warrant for Democracy Now's Amy Goodman and later arrested two journalists from Unicorn Riot.

'DEMOCRACY' EXPOSED

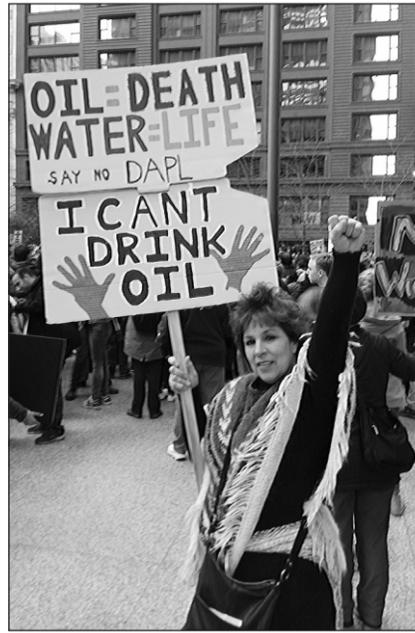
Once again the freedom movements have exposed the hollowness of so-called American democracy. Where Presidents Eisenhower and Johnson were finally forced to send in the National Guard, no such move has yet been made by the current administration.

The federal government has not even followed its own laws. Not only did the Army Corps of Engineers fail to consult the recognized tribal government, it issued permits without a full Environmental Impact Statement and in violation of several statutes. When DAPL construction intentionally destroyed numerous sacred and cultural sites in order to preempt their protection, the Corps failed to invoke the law that would, based on this violation, prohibit issuing any more permits.

Instead, President Obama tried to defuse the movement by calling for the Corps to consider rerouting the pipeline. "Don't reroute it! Shut it down!" was the deafening response.

The repression got so outrageous that two police officers reportedly quit, saying this is not what they signed up for. And Sheriff Dave Mahoney of Wisconsin's Dane County pulled his deputies out of North Dakota, explaining that "a wide cross-section of the community...share the opinion that our deputies should not be involved in this situation."

The struggle in North Dakota is a powerful manifestation of the vast forces stirring to put all of American civilization on trial. The time is now to support this struggle in practice and in thought.



Standing Rock protester, Chicago, Nov. 12, 2016

Donald Trump presidency, claimed without even a plurality of the popular vote.

Rally speakers included Native American activists, a representative from Black Lives Matter, a young woman reading a moving poem and another with an equally moving chant to begin a Snake Dance to "Kill the Black Snake"—the pipeline violating Native land. Signs everywhere proclaimed "No DAPL" and "Water Is Life." The protests that began as Obama and Hillary Clinton failed to oppose DAPL will continue under Trump, who has vowed to dig and drill.

—Participants

**Oakland: human connections**

Oakland, Calif.—On Sept. 13, 400 people gathered at Frank Ogawa/Oscar Grant Plaza to voice their solidarity with the Standing Rock Lakota who are fighting to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline. It was uplifting to see such a dedicated crowd, and to be reminded that there is a large and committed American Indian community in the East Bay. The high point was in some of the ideas expressed there, and two in particular stand out.

After a number of moving speeches, two Lakota women performed a traditional water ceremony based on the way we are all made largely of water, and are all part of nature. We share, whether we recognize it or not, that we are all of a common substance. This is an opposite view of nature and of human nature to that of capitalism, which tears apart that which is living and human. Another speaker told about what it means to be indigenous, and asked us to get in touch with the indigenous part of ourselves. Our sense of togetherness is not just subjective, but part of the actual world in which we live.

Many people got to know each other. Connections and commitments were made, and people left with the hopes and aspirations of broadening and deepening this movement.

—D. Chêneville with a Lakota activist

WORLD IN VIEW Morocco rises up against the Makhzen

by Gerry Emmett

Thousands of Moroccans took to the streets of various cities following the Oct. 28 death of fish vendor Mouhcine Fikri, 31, in Al-Hoceima. Police had confiscated Fikri's out-of-season swordfish and he was trying to retrieve it from a city garbage truck when he was crushed by the compactor.

Activists say that a police officer on the scene ordered the truck's driver to kill Fikri.

Protesters gathered in front of the parliament in Rabat to chant slogans against the authorities. King Mohammed VI expressed his regrets to the family and promised an investigation.

These protests are the latest in a series of demonstrations, like those against

the harassment of street vendors in Casablanca in 2015. Earlier this year, protests by student teachers against employment cuts in Casablanca, Marrakesh, and other cities were met with violence by authorities. Dozens were injured and the nation was



Peaceful march in Rabat, Morocco on Nov. 7, 2016, in protest of the death of fishmonger Mohsen Fikri.

shocked by photos of bloodied young women.

Morocco had its own mass Arab Spring demonstrations in 2011 when thousands took the streets demanding government reforms and a new constitution.

LEGACY OF 2011...?

Efforts at repression failed to halt those demonstrations and by 2012 they had spread across the nation, brought students together with the working class and reached into occupied Western Sahara. At

that point a new Constitution that gave slightly more authority to parliament was passed—though the King remains the supreme authority. Parliament is dominated by a moderate Islamist party that keeps apart from popular protest.

Frustration at conservatism

and corruption remains a continuing cause of unrest. The slogan in the current demonstrations has been “Mouhcine was killed and the Makhzen is guilty!” *Makhzen* is shorthand for “the State,” and technically means the King, the landowners, military and

Where to now for the Middle East?

continued from page 1

(meagerly) U.S.-supplied Free Syrian Army (FSA) and Turkish forces in Aleppo, while the FSA fights Hezbollah mercenaries who are well-supplied with U.S. weapons through the Lebanese Army—bought and paid for by the Saudis, who also supply Egypt's brutal dictator Sisi, who in turn sends military supplies to Assad. *Stability?*

For years there was a kind of rhetorical Cold War waged by Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia. Much of it was for internal political posturing. But as Assad's repression metastasized, this became a hot war of regional imperialism in which the people of Syria and Yemen especially are being subjected to unbelievable atrocities.

THE DESTRUCTION OF YEMEN

It was the rulers' desire to crush the Arab Spring uprisings, a true existential crisis which made nonsense of their cynical rhetoric, that drove them to act. It should be recalled that Martin Luther King Jr. and Mohandas Gandhi were far more relevant figures to Arab Spring revolutionaries than were Khomeini or bin Laden. The young Alawite lawyer Rima Dali quoted Dr. King's “The means we use to achieve our goals must be as pure as our goals” in 2011 even as the Assad regime arrested her.

Counter-revolution ushered in a nightmare in which Sunni, Shi'a, and “secular” alike commit the most inhuman crimes against each other and others in the name of self-deified state power.

In Yemen, the unified Arab Spring demonstrations that ousted dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh have given way to a situation in which the Iran-backed Houthis are allied with Saleh in fighting the Saudi-backed regime of President Abdrabbu Mansur Hadi, itself a continuation of Saleh's government. Over 10,000

Yemenis have died.

Yemen is one of the world's poorest countries, and faces an acute water shortage. This cynical and cruel war has further led to shortages of food (with 10 million underfed), medicine, and electricity. The Houthi and Saleh forces have forcefully suppressed demonstrations, extorted illegal taxes, and shelled civilian areas. Worse, the Saudis have bombed hospitals, funeral services, and refugee camps, killing thousands of civilians. Like Putin in Syria, they have made a point of targeting civilian infrastructure, resulting in over 2.8 million internally displaced persons and 120,000 refugees.

THE ‘DEAL-MAKER’ ENTERS THE SCENE

Trump has put forward few concrete policy ideas. In Syria, he would double down on what is already a tacit U.S. policy of cooperation with his friend Putin. This policy has shown itself to amount to genocide—hundreds of children are dying in Aleppo, all hospitals have been destroyed—and the collaboration of the two biggest nuclear powers in genocide, both racist, both unscrupulous, will be one of history's worst “terrorist conspiracies.”

Trump may be able to reverse the nuclear deal with Iran. It is opposed by the Republican-controlled Congress. But he will run into differences with Russia, China, France, Germany—countries already taking advantage of business openings to Iran. The Republican Congress is running on old Israeli/Saudi fumes, as is Iran's Supreme Ruler Khamenei when he also threatens to tear up the agreement. Trump will have to figure out who the rubes are.

In a world of coldly calculating, viciously repressive capitalist rulers, Trump has risen to state power as a representative of counter-revolution. In fact, Trump isn't an “outsider” to bourgeois politics, he is its perfect representative.

security men and well-connected civil servants.

LEAST POWER, MOST RESPONSIBILITY

Fikri wasn't even aware of the rule he was accused of violating. Police could have directed their attention to harbor authorities who allowed for the fish's possession and transportation. Following the protests, two interior ministry officers, two fisheries officials and the veterinary chief in the city of Al-Hoceima have been charged with involuntary manslaughter.

Freedom activist professor Maati Monjib, himself a victim of state persecution, said Oct. 31: “The Makhzen, and I am not making allusion here to the state with its legal and legislative meaning, needs to be dismantled. I am making allusion to the Makhzen as an illegal traditional institution. The Makhzen humiliates people, life, and human rights.”

East Europe elections

It was widely remarked that recent elections in Bulgaria and Moldova were victories for Russian President Vladimir Putin. The truth is more revealing and not quite so simple.

The defeat of Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov's hand-picked presidential candidate, Tsetska Tsacheva, by former Air Force Major General Rumen Radev with the support of the Socialist Party, was at least an event giving insight into Russian Putin's world.

BULGARIA: SELF-PROMOTION, BIGOTRY

Borisov is former coach of the national karate team. With the end of Communist Party rule he founded a private security firm staffed by his suddenly unemployed fellow Olympic boxers, wrestlers, karatekas, and weightlifters. He used the political connections made to become Interior Minister, head of the security apparatus, and a relentless self-promoter as alleged fighter of corruption.

Borisov became popular enough to found his own party, inspired by Germany's right-wing Bavarian Christian Social Union, called GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria, the word *gerb* meaning “coat of arms”). As Mayor of Sofia, the capital city, and Prime Minister, he has been the central figure in Bulgarian politics.

He also used European Union membership as a self-promotional tool, but agriculture and industry have lagged, corruption and cronyism are rife at all levels of society, and despite Borisov's law and order pose, no high-level figures have been jailed. It was time for his bubble to burst.

Radev has been rightfully criticized for racism toward immigrants (he has played on bigoted fears of Bulgaria becoming a “migrant ghetto”). This is unfortunately common in a country where a violent refugee hunter can become a reality show “hero.” He's given no sign that he wants to leave the EU, however.

MOLDOVA: ‘SOCIALIST’ HOMOPHOBES

Party of Socialists head Igor Dodon's election as president of Moldova was a clear victory for Putin. These “Socialists” reflect his anti-EU, anti-LGBTQ, bigoted politics. Dodon defeated Maia Sandu, whose personal party, Action and Solidarity, supports the “free market” as well as civil liberties. A referendum on homophobia in the guise of “economics,” this victory for Putin is a human disaster for Moldova and a measure of today's ideological disorientation.

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 between 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 thorough-going 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) ex-

plores 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.