

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

“Human power is its own end”—Karl Marx

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Trump's attack on climate and labor

Announcing that he would withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Agreement on climate change, President Donald Trump spouted one self-serving lie after another. The key lie was that he was acting on behalf of U.S. workers.

EDITORIAL His actions show he cares nothing about the lives of the workers of the U.S. and the world. His message is that their only role is to labor and be exploited by capitalists, whose profits are the same as the nation's wealth. All the land's resources—coal, oil, natural gas, soil, water, minerals, crops, livestock, and human beings who have to work for a living—are nothing to him unless they are exploited and turned into profits for capital.

In the process, the planet will be plunged into catastrophic climate change, dooming civilization and probably the human species, along with millions of other species.

REALITY OF CLIMATE CHAOS SINKS IN

Increasingly, people—even Republicans—are aware that climate change is real, without having to hear of the latest scientific studies of the accelerated melting of ice on Greenland and Antarctica, which could raise sea levels by over 20 feet; or that in eight years two-thirds of humanity will live in water-stressed conditions. This time Trump did not even repeat his usual lie that climate change is a hoax. He merely claimed that doing anything real about it would devastate the economy.

Trump's words speak of “American workers, who I love...and I happen to love the coal miners.” But his actions have been to undo safety regulations and environmental protections for workers, to attack their healthcare coverage, reduce overtime pay requirements, appoint anti-labor administrators and judges like Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch.

Prattling about “our economy, our workers, our sovereignty,” the con man in chief pictured other countries taking “our wealth.” He prefers the wealth

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

‘Not Your Negro’

by Faruq

“I Am Not Your Negro” is the title of a documentary film produced by Raoul Peck, who also published the book, *I Am Not Your Negro: A Companion Edition to the Documentary Film Directed by Raoul Peck* (Vintage; Mti edition, 2017). At first glance the word “Negro” raises the question: Have not the people who were once called Negroes detached themselves from this racist description? However, as an abstract statement, the title has power which resonates with those same people.

The power of the title rests in its inherent nature, which speaks to the liberation of New Afrikan people here in Amerika. The title is the rejection of an imposed state of being and, at the same time, the irrepressible spirit to reclaim the dignity of selfhood.

But the dignity of selfhood is inseparable from the determination to create the physical space where selfhood can develop completely. From an historical perspective the title has been a statement of the irrepressible yearning of New Afrikans since the beginning of our enslavement in Amerika.

THE FILMMAKER

Raoul Peck is an itinerant Haitian, meaning he has lived in Congo, France, Germany and Amerika. As a filmmaker, he has garnered acclaim for his historical, political and artistic works. As a young

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

The struggle for immigrants' rights challenges humanity

by Buddy Bell

The massive increase in inhuman attacks against immigrants and undocumented people is spurring new activism and urgency among those who refuse to accept arbitrary and legalistic excuses for denial of the human right to freedom. Abraham Medina, an organizer in Orange County, Calif., who took part in a Ramadan iftar meal of tacos shared between Latino and Muslim community members, asks: “What does it mean to defend the human dignity of all people regardless of immigration status?”

Inserting that question into the discussion has become crucial since the inauguration of Donald Trump as U.S. President, who defined himself with character attacks on non-whites, non-Christians and foreigners. He quickened the pace of deportations and is on his way to removing all of the stops that former President Barack Obama had in place, even while Obama was presiding over a record rate of deportations.

The sensationalist February arrest of Romulo Avelica-Gonzalez, as he dropped his daughters off at a Los Angeles school, doubled as intimidation theater for undocumented people trying to go about daily life. As a result, work positions have gone unfilled, use of sick days has risen and English as a Second Language and GED programs have seen decreased attendance. Student absences at all grade levels have gone up, as parents opt to keep children at home.

TRUMP PURPOSELY STOKES FEAR

Recipients of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) were able to legally procure employment over the last five years, but Trump fired the opening salvo against their personal and labor security by having Daniel Ramirez Medina locked up in a Tacoma, Wash., jail after agents came to his home to arrest his father. The agents stated without offering evidence that Ramirez was a member of a gang. By the time he got a bond hearing, he had been incarcerated six weeks. Since his arrest, more DACA recipients with no criminal record were arrested in Portland, Ore., Los Angeles, San Diego, San Antonio, and Jackson, Miss. In the Mississippi incident, Daniela Vargas was followed and arrested by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers after speaking at a rally.

Even in cases where an immigrant has a petty misdemeanor conviction or an arrest but no conviction, much of the administration's ability to deport them hinges on the vagueness of the term “aggravated felony” for immigration purposes. Because there is no definition,

Counter-fascist rally in Portland

Portland, Ore.—On June 4, by the time my friends and I arrived downtown near Terry Schruck Plaza where the fascists planned their “Free Speech Rally,” Donald Trump's supporters were trickling in while the counterprotesters were already out in huge numbers. Later reports said the fascists were outnumbered ten to one.

To the south in Chapman Square, a strong showing of anti-fascist groups watched the police who had shown up in militarized riot gear and were staring down the counterprotesters. Cops dictated that people could only cross Madison Street if they were going south, away from the fascists, and took to further traffic control in an aggressive manner.

FASCISTS CONVERGE

Inside Chapman Square, antifa groups chatted, shared fruit and popsicles and handed out pamphlets documenting the major white-supremacist

the government can apply it to any conceivable crime, thereby making more people eligible for detention and deportation.

A case soon to be heard by the Supreme Court, *Esquivel-Quintana v. Sessions*, may set a definition. Leaving it the way it is would continue to devastate

National Day Labor Organizing Network



Romulo Avelica-Gonzalez. Inset: a picture of his arrest when he dropped his two daughters off at school in Los Angeles. Since then his conviction of receipt of stolen property has been vacated.

undocumented Black people in particular, since institutional racism is present in the arrest process and all the way through to the immigration courtroom, where judges make largely subjective decisions relative to regular criminal proceedings. One fifth of people who end up deported by reason of committing an “aggravated felony” are Black.

A separate case before the Supreme

Court challenges indefinite detention of immigrants. Lower courts held that denying detainees bond hearings for years at a time is unconstitutional, but the practice yields more profit for private prison companies. These companies bet big when they helped fill Trump's campaign coffers, and Attorney General Jeff Sessions paid out by reversing the Obama Justice Department's decision to phase out private detention contracting.

PROFITING FROM IMMIGRANT DETENTION

More than 65% of immigrant detainees are placed in private facilities, up from 25% in 2005. An opening proposal for the 2018 federal budget includes \$1.5 billion to expand detention capacity beyond the 34,000 beds ICE is required to maintain according to federal law. In mid-April, Sessions declared that the department would hire 125 more judges over the next two years to preside over immigration cases, which are heavily backlogged. By the end of the month, ICE's deputy director resigned to take a job at Geo Group, a private prison company expected to bid on a Bureau of Prisons contract for a new 9,500-bed facility.

That revolving-door development, combined with Sessions' moves to increase prosecution and terms of confinement are evidence of major steps along a path to state capitalism, where industry becomes lawmaker and judge.

To this end, an aristocracy of labor is finding a voice in the leadership of the border patrol and customs police unions. It is abetted by rank-and-file agents who go above and beyond the voracious bans and executive orders coming from Trump. Concurrent with the issuance of Trump's first order to ban admittance to the U.S. for nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries, many customs agents at airports and land borders jumped to pressure immigrants into signing documents saying they voluntarily give up their visas. Border patrol agents are directed by their union to “obey now, grieve later” and to use ex-

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players. Featured in the pamphlet was Kyle Chapman, known online as “Based Stickman” due to videos showing him beating anti-fascist protesters with sticks. Chapman organized the rally and invited a who's who of the fascist, racist community: Proud Boys, Militiamen and Nazis.

The call for these groups to converge on Terry Schruck Plaza came on the heels of a major public attack in Portland in which Jeremy Christian, a known white supremacist, attacked two women of color on a MAX train, one of whom is Muslim. Ricky John Best and Taliesin Myrddin Namkai-Meche came to the women's aid. Christian stabbed them to death. A third man, Micah Fletcher, was also stabbed, but survived. While some decried the attacks as a horrible, stand alone incident, the truth is that white supremacy has existed in Portland and Oregon for some time—until 1926, it was illegal for

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WOMAN AS REASON

Syrian Families For Freedom

by Terry Moon

The video shows an older Syrian woman, her name is Fadwa; she is part of a new group, Families for Freedom. She says: “It was 5:05 when [my husband and son] called me to say they had just got into the car and they were driving home. It turned 6:00, then 7:00, but they never arrived home. They were kidnapped at Damascus airport on their return from China. Ever since that day I have had no information about them. But I stayed strong because I needed to do something for them. I started searching for them.

“A young woman called me to say they were forming a group for women: Families for Freedom. Our sons, our husbands and our loved ones are in prison. We wanted our voices heard by the whole world.

“I will never get tired or defeated. I don’t think the women with me will be defeated either. They keep demanding freedom for their children. We were five women holding the pictures of our loved ones. I didn’t know which picture to hold, my husband’s or my son’s. The young people behind me held the picture of my son. The protest was very moving. I felt that I belonged among these wonderful women.

“I feel extreme pain inside me, but I was strong and stood tall because I am demanding what is right and we will make the world listen.”

CHALLENGE TO MILITARISM’S MENTALITY

As the world is learning of the Nazi-copied crematoriums in Syria, used to burn the bodies of perhaps hundreds of thousands of civilians picked up for no better reason than being in the wrong place at the wrong time, the “wrong” religion, or turned in by someone who holds a grudge or by a person who has money or something else to gain, women are organizing, as they have for decades, to bring their family members home.

In an open letter, Families for Freedom write to the delegates attending the Syrian “peace” talks, to Syrian armed groups and the Syrian, Russian, Turkish and Iranian governments:

“The fate of 100,000 arbitrarily detained and forcibly disappeared sons and daughters is not a file for your military talks in Astana. We do not accept prisoner exchanges arranged between military sides as a replacement for a real solution to the horror of mass detention in Syria....

“It is precisely the peaceful detainees, those who have never picked up a gun, who will suffer from the detainees file being taken up in Astana. Who will be there to advocate for them when the military sides begin conducting prisoner exchanges for their own

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Regretfully the Organisation Intersex International Australia announced that the government of South Australia rejected the Darlington Statement that 20 Intersex organizations of New Zealand and Australia had agreed on in April. The Statement provided guidance for officially recognizing Intersex people on their birth certificates and for prohibiting “normalization” surgery on infants before the age of informed consent. It says “the word ‘intersex,’ and the intersex human rights movement, belong equally to all people born with variations of sex characteristics, irrespective of our gender identities, genders, legal sex classifications and sexual orientations.” The government now mischaracterizes Intersex people as Transgender or gender diverse.

On May 17, Beirut, Lebanon, held its first Pride celebration and recognized the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia. A judge’s ruling that denying intimate relations to homosexual persons “would amount to discrimination, and was therefore contrary to the law.” The the work of Lebanese LGBT rights groups Helem and Legal Agenda, made the celebration possible.

In June, dozens of U.S. cities marked one year since the Pulse Nightclub mass shooting in Orlando, Fla. U.S. flags were flown at half mast, giant rainbow lights were displayed on buildings, vigils were held, candles were lit and church bells were rung—one candle and one ring for each of the 49 people who were killed. Most of those killed were Latinx, many of them from Puerto Rico.

people? Our civilians will be forgotten.”

Who, indeed, will be there? Families for Freedom has been banned from attending.

LONG LINE OF WOMEN INSPIRED REVOLT

What Families for Freedom is doing is not new. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo ushered in a new stage of revolt against the kind of government terrorism that grabs innocent people off the streets, or in front of wives, grandparents, brothers and sisters. Beginning in the 1970s, for years they marched in the center of Buenos Aires, Argentina, with the names of their missing children painted or sewn into their headscarves. They began this at the height of the junta’s power and were one reason for its downfall. Their protests were as consistent as they were open, and there was nothing to prevent them from being murdered as well.

Women in Syria have been a vital part of the Free Syrian movement through six years of one of the most brutal wars against civilians the world has seen. Now women are trying to make sure they have a say in what justice is to mean; to make clear that no society can ever go back to being normal, to business as usual, until all questions are answered, until all the guilty are punished, and until all the innocent are free. They intend to make sure that “never again” is not to be only a heartbreaking plea, but a fact. These Syrian women have our greatest solidarity, as well as the knowledge that with their actions they have taught theoreticians where theory comes from.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

Sisters Uncut is a direct-action group founded by survivors of abuse and their allies in 2014 to protect domestic violence services from austerity cuts in the UK. Shelters there turn away two-thirds of women seeking help. In May, they occupied the closed Holloway Women’s Prison, holding workshops and demanding the space be used for domestic violence services and affordable housing. One activist stated, “If the government has money for mega prisons, they have money for domestic violence support services. Forty-six percent of women in prison are domestic violence survivors—if they had the support they needed, it’s likely they wouldn’t end up in prison.”

In 2015 Lola Omolola started a facebook group, Female in Nigeria, now called FIN, for women to tell personal stories without judgement. She was compelled by Boko Haram’s kidnapping of 200 girls from the rural Nigerian town of Chibok. She stated, “I knew the cause of it. When you grow up in a place where a woman’s voice is not even valid, everything reinforces the idea that we’re not good enough. Between the ages of three and six I noticed that whenever a girl shows any sign of self-awareness she gets silenced. When I said anything, I got a pinch.” The group now has over a million members who describe experiences of abuse, rape and the isolation of being single mothers or lesbians. The facebook setting is secret because Omolola has been called “the devil” and a “corrupter of young women” by church groups. If she gets funding, she wants to build physical centers where women can have these discussions safely.

In June, the chancellor of the University of Colorado received a slap on the wrist: a 10-day suspension without pay for his failure to report to authorities the allegations of domestic violence by an assistant football coach. The athletic director and the head football coach were each ordered to pay \$100,000 from their salaries of about \$2 million per year to domestic violence organizations. The university denied that their motivation for not reporting the assistant coach to university or law enforcement authorities was so he could participate in an upcoming game. After the game, the assistant coach was suspended and resigned. He was charged with five felony assaults for repeated, severe physical and verbal domestic abuse.

Maddy Rasmussen, an 18-year-old high school student who interned at a women’s rights organization and an abortion clinic, created the first online map showing all of the abortion providers in the U.S. Previous maps by Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Fund only included clinics in their own networks. The map’s website, Safe Place Project, has a list of restrictive laws that Rasmussen plans to keep up to date.

Review: Pimp State

Pimp State: Sex, Money and the Future of Equality by Kat Banyard (Faber & Faber, 2016).

This is one of a new wave of feminist books challenging the notion that the sex industry, including prostitution, stripping and pornographic films, should be either legalized or decriminalized. Some proponents of the sex workers rights movement state these should be treated as any other service jobs, others that decriminalization would make them more humane and easier to leave. Many feminists have supported the sex workers rights movement because it is promoted by organizations purporting to be run by women working in the sex trades.

DEBUNKING IDEAS ABOUT SEX WORK

Kat Banyard states these organizations are actually run by pimps, brothel owners and traffickers. She quotes a spokeswoman for the International Union of Sex Workers admitting this about her organization at a formal hearing with Northern Ireland’s Justice Committee. Also, in 2015, Alejandro Gil, the vice president of the Global Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP), was convicted of sex trafficking. NSWP influenced Amnesty International, the World Health Organization, the UN Population Fund and the Joint UN Programme on AIDS to adopt policies advocating the decriminalization of “sex work.”

Banyard also goes into detail as to how decriminalization benefits pimps financially, increases prostitution and trafficking and causes more harm to the women involved as well as to all women.

She explains that the sex industry is institutionalized sexual abuse in which women are required to perform sex acts many times a day, an unnatural situation causing physical damage, while pretending to like it. Most also need to pay for drug addictions they develop to deal with physical pain and emotional trauma. With decriminalization, they are now required to rent space as independent contractors in brothels and strip clubs and make rent before earning money for themselves.

In every facet of the industry, they are pushed to perform for longer hours, more extreme acts and have sexual contact with customers in strip clubs in order to be competitive. Directors create abusive pornography to grab consumers’ attention, which affects the sex lives of women whose partners watch it. Customers rate prostituted women online, complaining the women don’t like to be touched or have trouble pretending to like it.

Banyard interviews women in the sex industry and activists trying to help them. Many are groomed by pimps pretending to be loving boyfriends who gradually pressure them into the sex trades. She makes the point that pimping is one and the same with domestic violence. Others enter the industry because of its legality and social acceptability, only to be trapped and traumatized. Her interviewees explain how, “I would say that it hadn’t affected me at all, and that I liked my job, as it gave me the freedom to complete my university studies and be independent. You don’t have the luxury of introspection. You would go mad and then lose your source of income.”

BENEFITS OF ‘THE NORDIC MODEL’

The Nordic Model, in which selling sex is decriminalized but buying and pimping is illegal, has been adopted by Iceland, Norway, Northern Ireland and Canada. It has been successful in greatly decreasing prostitution and trafficking.

Banyard explains how the sex industry is dependent upon mainstream institutions such as governments, banks, credit card companies and retailers that can be pressured to stop supporting it. Activist groups including UK Feminista, Object, End Demand, Embrace Dignity, and White Ribbon are doing this while also educating the public and governments about the harm of the sex industry.

This book is valuable in explaining how, when governments are finally recognizing the equality of women, the sex industry is threatening to demolish it. The book also shows how the sex industry can be completely defeated by exposing its propaganda as myths and lies.

—Adele



Do you have something to say about Women’s Liberation, about feminism, about the fight for freedom? *News & Letters* has a principle that people in struggle speak for themselves. Get in touch with us. See how on page 7. We want to hear from you.

Letter from Mexico

A new moment for revolution?

by J.G.F. Héctor

Mexico City—Around 800 Native people from all over the country met May 26-28 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas, to create an Indigenous Governing Council (IGC) and name its spokeswoman. As the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) announced in October 2016 (see “Letter from Mexico,” Nov.-Dec. 2016 *N&L*), she would run “as an independent candidate for the presidency of the country...in 2018.”

During the next three months, a consultation took place within 523 communities, from which 430 agreed to the proposal (see “Letter from Mexico,” Jan.-Feb. 2017 *N&L*). Now, the IGC has been created with 71 men and women, and María de Jesús Patrio, a Nahua traditional doctor from Jalisco, is its spokeswoman. They had many questions to answer.

Is it the purpose of the IGC to win elections and change things from above?

One of its councilwomen responded: “We are not registering to make an electoral campaign. It can give us means that are not within our hands, like reaching several places through mass media. We will not be asking for votes. We will try to organize people, to articulate their struggles and experiences... This is a campaign for life” (<http://radiozapatista.org/?p=21392>).

Another councilman said: “We’re not going to stop until we’ve stepped on the corpse of the capitalist Hydra...We want a new country, for this one was built as a racist and sexist society. We want a country where there is freedom, democracy, justice.”

Will non-Indigenous people be excluded from the National Indigenous Council?

“We call on the thousands of Mexicans who have stopped counting their dead and disappeared and who, with grief and suffering, have raised their fists and risked their own lives to charge forward without fear of the size of the enemy; those who have seen that there are paths forward...hidden by corruption, repression, disrespect, and exploitation...”

“We trust the dignity and honesty of those who struggle: teachers, students, campesinos, workers and day laborers, and we want to deepen the cracks that each of them has forged in dismantling the power from above...We want to make so many cracks that they become our honest and anti-capitalist government” (<http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx/2017/05/31/the-time-has-come/>).

The proposal is thus for everyone from below: How can we take part in it?

No revolutionary transformation is possible without the actions and thoughts of the ones from below. The “campaign” of the IGC, therefore, will be about going throughout the country eliciting from them, and we certainly need to take part in this. However, another contribution is required: As the CNI recognized in its Fifth Congress, it is not enough to get together to share our pains and denounce capital. We have to “take the offensive” (“Voces del Congreso...”, http://www.praxisenamericalatina.org/numero_12.pdf).

Taking the offensive means developing a broad emancipatory view, rooted in dialectic-

Learning from miners

Chicago—In the assisted living facility where I live, most people are as old as I am, 92 or even older. Everyone knows I was a coal miner. It fascinates many people, and so it opens the door for me in many respects: When I speak, people listen.

Among the aides at the assisted living facility, there is one woman with whom I am reading a basic work by Raya Dunayevskaya, *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*. When she gets through working, she starts reading it, marks where she left off, and then picks it up next time.

Another woman is studying G.W.F. Hegel. She started with *Phenomenology of Mind*. I told her it is difficult, but she is gaining some knowledge. I am pleased with that development. I don’t yet know what will come from these contacts. I hope to report more on it next year.

—Andy Phillips

Andy Phillips is the co-author of *The Coal Miners’ General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.*

cal philosophy that can reach the voices and actions from below. That is necessary so that they can embrace that philosophy as their own, unifying theory and practice and unleashing the process of self-development, self-movement, that can give birth to new thoughts and actions on the road to a new society.

Implicitly, the CNI is already doing this, by the creation of its IGC. Now it’s time to do it explicitly, as method that will make it possible to turn this new historical moment in Mexico into the beginning of the needed Mexican and world revolution.

Spectrum strikers hanging tough



Trade unionists come out in force to support the striking Spectrum Communications workers.

New York City—Three months into the strike begun at the end of March by workers at Spectrum (formerly Time Warner Cable), a strike captain with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers told *News & Letters* on a picket line in front of a Spectrum store in Manhattan that Spectrum management has drawn a line in the sand and is refusing to negotiate with the union. They are hiring replacement workers and bringing in scabs.

But the union is hanging just as tough, and strikers, who have been working without a contract since 2013, have no intention of backing down. At the picket line, strikers and allies from other unions chanted, “What do we want? A contract! When do we want it? Now!” Picketers circled in front of the Manhattan Spectrum Center, bringing the strike to the attention of the public and appealing for support.

Earlier in the year, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman charged Spectrum and its parent corporation with deliberately deceiving consumers about their services. The union is putting pressure on city government to revoke Spectrum’s right to provide services here. There is no end in sight for this titanic battle.

—Natalia Spiegel

Which vision for rebuilding Detroit?

Detroit—Does housing in Detroit in 2017 mean large tracts of vacant land and substandard houses ripe for development and easy slumlord profit, or a focus for community organizing to take back our city? Capitalism drives the first view, but what philosophy guides the vision for recreating?

Downtown development, widely described as “Detroit is coming back,” has not reached most of the 139 square miles of the city. Losses of population, industry and jobs since the 1950s, and foreclosures since the Great Recession, have destroyed a third of decent-quality homes built between 1910 and 1960.

Recently Detroit Eviction Defense led a team of community members, UAW volunteers, and professors and students from the University of Michigan Dearborn to conduct action research in a square mile neighborhood in Northwest Detroit. The team asked renters if they had landlords not paying property taxes or doing repairs on the houses. They identified owners of multiple properties with a pattern of slumlord behavior. They invited renters and homeowners with housing problems to a workshop where

Baby Jayden Khoza

Durban, South Africa—On May 29, the Foreman Road community in Clare Estate, Durban, came under serious police assault after a road blockade organized earlier that morning. That protest had been disruptive, but it was peaceful. Baby Jayden Khoza, two weeks old, lost his life during the brutal police assault on the community.

Baby Jayden did not die during a protest. He was killed during a police assault on the Foreman Road community following a protest.

On May 30 more than a thousand people gathered in an open assembly in the Foreman Road settlement. A decision to honor Jayden Khoza with a memorial service on June 1 was taken. Once again we have to honor the dignity of our dead, a dignity that we are denied in life by this society and this government.

POOR KILLED LIKE ANIMALS

In South Africa impoverished Black people are treated like dirt. We can be killed like animals. It is taken as normal that we should live in mud, raise our children in constant fires, be driven out of our homes and cities with bulldozers and rubber bullets, tortured, slandered, and murdered when we gather and insist on the recognition of our human dignity.

Everyday the richness of the possibilities for our lives comes under assault from an oppressive society. It is not just the police who beat us. It is a system of oppression. Racism, capitalism and the gangster state combine to make a world where some of us live with tear gas, fire, prisons, the destruction of our homes, torture and murder; while those who say that they represent us, and who demand that we accept our own oppression, are buying homes in Dubai.

Jayden’s parents are traumatized. We are glad, though, that the Foreman Road community has shown support at this difficult time for the Khoza family. Our strength can only come from our togetherness. Our lives and our future depend on that.

JUSTICE FOR JAYDEN KHOZA!

The movement is working together with our legal team to ensure that justice is done. We will ensure that the post-mortem will be conducted by an independent doctor who will leave no stone unturned. We will sue the police. The police Minister will be made to answer.

We feel the pain that this family is feeling. Any of us could find ourselves in the same position. Every night we go to sleep knowing that that night, or the next day, could bring a fire, the land invasions unit, an assassin, armed party thugs, or the police.

Most importantly we will continue to organize for land, housing and dignity. We will continue to fight for, protect and advance the interests of the impoverished and marginalized.

As long as we continue to be denied land we will occupy land. As long as the politicians continue to refuse to engage us on a democratic basis, we will blockade roads in protest.

Jayden Khoza. Say his name. Jayden Khoza.

—Abahlali baseMjondolo Movement

lawyers and housing experts from the United Community Housing Coalition assisted them.

The Detroit People’s Platform also addressed Detroit’s housing crisis in a recent statement: “We are asked to believe that there are no alternatives, and that the present prioritization of wealthy developers’ ability to make profit over residents’ ability to remain in Detroit is...not only inevitable but correct.

“We assert, however, that there are many alternatives...We will continue to organize for a Detroit that remains majority African American; that practices development without displacement; that facilitates community control of land and permanently affordable housing; that is governed by its people and for the benefit of all of its people, especially those with the greatest need. Detroit...is a people, a culture and a history. It cannot and does not deserve to move forward without those who have labored and planted our lives here.”

This vision to overcome the divide between haves and have nots is cropping up all over the city as we watch money and new development pouring into downtown. To realize it would mean a revolutionary change in all areas—social, economic, racial. Yet the solution proposed by the Detroit People’s Platform is hardly revolutionary, let alone realistic.

They propose “creating a fully-funded housing trust fund with dedicated revenue for the creation, preservation or operations of permanently affordable housing...for those making \$20,070 or less each year.”

Who has the money for such a fund? Developers! We already know what they want. A housing trust fund that is a “mechanism to grow the pie for everyone’s benefit” is not only a pipe dream but also makes no changes to the social dynamics that created the problem for the past 70 years.

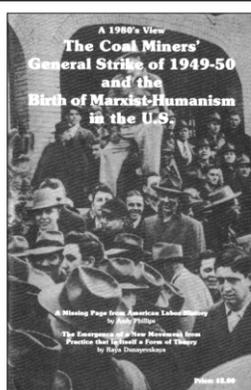
—Susan Van Gelder

Read about this first industry-wide strike against automation in U.S. history—

The Coal Miners’ General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.

“A Missing Page from American Labor History,” by Andy Phillips
 “The Emergence of a New Movement from Practice that is Itself a Form of Theory,” by Raya Dunayevskaya

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: Continuing to mark the 150th anniversary of Karl Marx's Capital, Vol. I, we present in two parts lightly edited excerpts from "Marx's Transcendence of and Return to Hegel's Dialectic," a 1968 draft chapter for Dunayevskaya's book Philosophy and Revolution. This section was titled "A Concrete Universal: Marx's Capital." The whole can be found in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #4227.

by Raya Dunayevskaya

If Marx did not leave behind him a "Logic" (with a capital letter), he did leave the logic of Capital...In Capital Marx applied to a single science, logic, dialectics and the theory of knowledge of materialism (three words are not needed; it is one and the same thing).

—Lenin, *Philosophic Notebooks*

As we saw, there is a great deal more to Marxian methodology than the "application" of Hegelian dialectics to economic data. To whatever extent, the dialectic method enabled Marx's "free movement in matter" insofar as refusing to accept the *given* concrete—in our case, a commodity—as the real, the truth is that Marx could not have disclosed the fetishism of commodities except by *transcending* both Hegel and Ricardo, both "abstract materialism" and historian-compilers of a collection of lifeless facts.

Put differently, it is the *uniqueness* of Marxian materialist dialectics, which is both class-rooted and Humanist, and that enables it to see the *praxis* of revolutionaries, of freely associated men in the Paris Commune "storming the heavens," establishing both a new social order and stripping from the old its fetishism of commodities.

It is this uniqueness which has something vital to say to us today, and on no question more cogently than on "Machines," to which Automation has imparted a new urgency. On this question, as in all else concerning Marx as theoretician and as revolutionary, the 1860s are the crucial years, the decisive years when theory and practice fused into the philosophic whole we know as Marxism.

It is of the essence, therefore, not so much to hold fast to the "results" as to follow the *process* of change so that we can ourselves work out its implications for our age. Thus, it is easy enough to trace the changes in the very concept of technology from its appearance in the *Communist Manifesto* as the instrument of bourgeois revolution, through its manifestation in the *Grundrisse* as the material foundation for the proletariat's use in abrogating value production, to its full-blown essence and notion in *Capital* as "a mechanical monster whose body fills whole factories, and whose demon power, at first veiled under the slow and measured motions of his giant limbs, at length breaks out into the fast and furious whirl of his countless working organs."¹ But there is no easy answer to whether what has been written before the 1860s was discarded. For the answer is two-fold, is contradictory, and yet is true in both of its parts.

TECHNOLOGY, METHODOLOGY, AND WORKERS' REVOLTS

History does nothing; it "possesses no colossal riches," it "fights no fight." It is rather man—real, living man—who acts, possesses and fights everything. It is by no means "History" which uses man as a means to carry out its ends as if it were a person apart; rather History is nothing but the activity of man in pursuit of his ends.

—Marx and Engels, *The Holy Family*

There is no doubt whatever that the period between the 1857-1858 Notebooks (that were not intended for publication and that have since become famous as the *Grundrisse*) and the 1867-75 editions of *Capital* was a period of total change, both of the method of presentation and of what Marx presented on the subject of Machines. Thus, the restructuring of the *Grundrisse* and the *Critique of Political Economy* as they developed into *Capital* meant a great deal more than the fact that the material had grown into four books. It meant a *separation* of analysis of the spheres of production, circulation and the forms of the process as a whole, in which would also be included the history of the theories of surplus value.

Of necessity, this signified not only a sharp and fundamental distinction between the essential function of machines in production and their appearance in the market, but that there be no rush to deal with their possible function in a non-value-producing society, for the need was to be *concrete*, historically precise, and, far from skipping stages to get to the end, to keep eyes riveted on men in history, *at work*.

Thus the decision to make room, in the first volume of *Capital*, for a new section on "The Working Day" meant, at one and the same time, a dramatic and basic shift in the concept of theory, from one of counterposing one's theories to those of other

1. *Capital*, Vol. I (Charles H. Kerr, 1906), pp. 416-17.

A concrete universal: Marx's *Capital*

theoreticians, to that of watching the birth of theory emerging out of the developing class struggles.

Insofar as the subject of technology was concerned, deep insight into the transformation of subject to object, of the perverse relationship of machine as "subject" dominating men as "object," naturally entailed seeing the machine as "the enemy." Indeed, the greater part of the first volume of *Capital*—Parts II through V, or some 400 pages devoted to the process of production—is, precisely, this; **the method of analysis is nothing other than the process of development of essential relationship of subject to object.** It is therefore totally and completely opposed to the idea that the worker is already "watchman and regulator," a phrase used in the *Grundrisse*.

Thus, finally, the many new developments in Marx's theoretical discoveries, his creation of original categories, in the decade between the two works, would seem to have torn everything up by its roots.

For example, to the extent that, at the time of the 1857-58 Notebooks, the dual character of labor had not been fully worked out so that unity of opposites from which *all* development proceeded, there was, of necessity, the tendency to be altogether too brief with the stage described in *Capital* as the stage of manufacture where "capital celebrated its orgies" (p. 305). It is certainly true that, in the *Grundrisse*, there is altogether too much emphasis on the *material*, that is to say, the technological, foundation of the new social order.



A worker in an automated factory in China, 2010.

At the same time, there is also no doubt that Marx, at no time, was looking at the expanding material forces as if they were "the condition, the activity, the purpose of liberation"; but that, on the contrary, he was talking of the expanding human forces as "the motive force of history." They and they alone could abrogate the exploitative value relations of capitalist society; their activity and theirs alone would resolve contradictions and it is for them and them alone that the expansion of the material forces was intended. Marx spoke eloquently enough on this subject in the *Grundrisse*.²

The exchange of living labor against materialized labor, i.e., the existence of social labor in the form of the antagonism between capital and wage labor, is the last stage in the development of the value relationship and of production based on value. It presupposes the decisive factor in the creation of wealth is the amount of direct working time....But the more modern industry develops, the creation of wealth becomes less dependent on working time....Labor no longer appears so much enclosed in the process of production but rather man relates himself to it as watchman and regulator....Once direct labor has ceased to be the direct source of wealth, labor time must cease to be its measure, and, consequently, exchange value the measure of use value. The surplus labor of the masses has ceased to be the condition for the development of social wealth just as the idleness of the few has ceased to be the condition for the development of the universal capacities of the human mind. With this, the mode of production based on exchange value collapses and the immediate material process of production is stripped of its scantiness and its antagonistic form. Thus it is not the reduction of labor time to create surplus labor but the reduction of the necessary labor of society to a minimum which is then in accord with (entspricht) the artistic, scientific, etc., education of the individuals through the free time and the means created for everyman, for the free development of the individual....The measure of wealth

2. The section is entitled "Die Letzte Entwicklung des Wertverhältnisses und der auf dem Wert Beruhenden Produktion" pp. 591-2: 599-6. [*Grundrisse* (Pelican Books, 1973), pp. 705-06]

will then no longer be labor time, but leisure time.

That anyone could conclude from this that it is Automation, here and now, which is creating "the material foundation" for the new, with or without the proletariat doing the overthrowing of the old, is only further proof of the fact that our age is ridden with such irreconcilable opposites as to have produced the disintegration of thought. We see this range before our eyes from those who see our times to be "the end of ideology," the age of the "one-dimensional man," "the critique of dialectical reason," leaving us all to accept terror as the way to communal life!

So overwhelmed by the total mechanization of life that Automation seems to imply are philosophers even close to Marxism that they seem to have embarked on a search for some new principle of reality apart from either materialism or idealism or its unity in Humanism.

Jean-Paul Sartre has even introduced the question of sexuality into the machine as the daydream of the worker subjected to automated production. Naturally, he opposes such dehumanization. Naturally, he wants, not to reject Marxism, but to revivify "today's Marxism" by making the human being central to it. But to the extent that neither he nor the other philosophers close to Marxism go down to where the worker is in the process of production or listen to his thoughts, the result is that, instead of holding on tight to the fact that Man alone is Freedom and

Reason, they endow technology with rationality and capacity to be its own transcendence, or they consider "the Party" to be able to do so for Man. Philosophers who, yesterday, saw in the *movement* of Reason the tendency to go beyond ontology, i.e., beyond philosophy "as such," today very nearly degrade ontology to technology. All the more reason for us to watch Marx *at work* on technology....

Moreover, his materialist conception of history notwithstanding, he seemed constantly amazed to find that scientists and philosophers would in all but their own specialty, accept the given as the real.

Thus, on June 18, 1862, he wrote Engels: "Remarkable that Darwin in the animal and plant kingdom reveals anew his English society with its division of labor, competition, opening of new markets, 'inventions' and Malthusian 'struggle for existence.' This is the Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and this bears a resemblance to Hegel in his *Phenomenology* in which civil society is described as 'the spiritual kingdom of animals' while with Darwin the animal kingdom represents civil society."

He was to put a similar thought directly in the section on Machines in *Capital*: "A critical history of technology would show how little any of the inventions of the 18th century are the work of a single individual....The weak points in abstract materialism of natural science, a materialism that excludes history and its process, are at once evident from the abstract and ideological conceptions of its spokesmen, whenever they venture beyond the bounds of their specialty" (p. 406 fn.).

In Marx's case even "pure research" was never restricted to "science as such," but included the study of the Blue Books, those reports of the British factory inspectors Marx made so famous, "practical courses," history of all class struggles and some histories that had not yet been written, so that once he settled down to work out the actual relations at the point of production, new categories emerged.

Once he entered the process of production and saw that machines had indeed no other existence than that which they fulfill in the factory, then the *domination*, utter and unquestioned and oppressive, of capital over all else was seen in the very change of title for his main work from that of *Critique of Political Economy* to *Capital*.

His two major original categories—constant capital and variable capital—showed that not only do machines in the factory exist as capital, but so does living labor, the only distinction between the two kinds of capital being that one was constantly undergoing a variation in magnitude, that is to say, living labor was exploited, made to produce many unpaid hours of labor.

The fact that he wouldn't permit the publication of his own lecture on "Value, Price and Profit" until after he completed *Capital* is further proof that only the latter contained the whole of his theory, without which no single element could be fully understood.

Take his category, labor power, which was not in the *Grundrisse* or *Critique* or the pamphlets; in a word, hadn't been fully worked out until *Capital* itself was.

To be continued

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

by Francis Sitel

Paris, France—Among the multiple paradoxes that characterize the presidential spectacle here in France, there is one in particular that deserves attention: the difficulties of many leading candidacies to decide whether they have been successful or whether they have experienced defeat.

On the evening of April 23 [the first round of voting] when it became clear that Left candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon would not be in the runoff, rather than emphasize the enormous success that the 7,000,000 votes for him signified, he did not hide the fact that he considered it a major defeat.

A similar example on the other side: On May 7, Marine Le Pen surpassed the threshold of 10,000,000 votes in the runoff, and yet, she is “beaten.” A “defeat,” then, that it seems will have very important consequences for her and for the [neo-fascist] National Front.

It even reaches centrist Emmanuel Macron, the big-time winner and now President of France, about whom certain interpretations tend to throw doubt on the nature of his victory, which resulted perhaps from incredible luck, that is to say, an historical accident.

We can interpret this surprising motif as having the quality of a symptom, the expression of a complex reality that brings together intersecting factors, perhaps by chance, and structural evolutions that were a long time coming.

AN IMPROBABLE CONJUNCTURE OF CONJOINING FACTORS

The dizzying character of the unfolding of electoral events manifested itself as a succession of “surprises” that have permanently turned the framework of the election upside-down, and brought down any pre-conceived scenarios.

Let us remember the renunciation of President François Hollande, which provoked the scrapping of the element that gives structure to a presidential election: the evaluation of the outgoing president and the offer of an alternative.

For Les Républicains/LR and the Parti Socialiste/PS, primary elections were bundles of surprises: the elimination of former Prime Minister Alain Juppé and former President Nicolas Sarkozy in favor of former Prime Minister François Fillon and the elimination of former Prime Minister Manuel Valls, to the benefit of Socialist Party candidate Benoît Hamon.

LR was dragged down by the mishap of Fillon, an enigmatic character who, having totally lost credibility, was able to maintain the strength of his candidacy.

While the candidates coming out of the primaries saw themselves diminished in value, those who imposed themselves from outside of that primary process, thus projecting an entirely different logic, grew in power: Le Pen, Macron, and Mélenchon.

NOT ALL METEORS FALL FROM THE SKY

That in a few months, without the support of a major established political party, this very young man should get himself elected President of the Republic, is indeed extraordinary.

That Macron overcame the two competitors who touted themes similar to his own—political renewal, the transcendence of the Left/Right divide, the movement against the old parties—is not only by the good graces of his youth and competency. It’s also for a more critical reason. He was the one who was in position to fill the space left open by the successive elimination of those who are “naturally” presidential (those who deserve the label “statesman”): Hollande, Juppé, Sarkozy, Fillon, even Valls.

In that topsy-turvy context, the ruling class decided that Macron was the *man for the job*. From then on, barring any contingencies or surprises, he should win. Naïve indeed, he who imagines that those in power will entrust to the political lottery and to the whimsical citizens the choice of who will lead, not just this or that party or local collectivity, but The State!

The French presidential election

‘En Marche,’ indeed! Toward what?

French journalist Natasha Polony explains this determining fact very well:

“Men are one thing, structures are another. And power structures use men far more than they will admit to themselves. The astonishing success of the new president owes not so much to his own brilliance or the aspirations for social change of French voters, as to the wishes of those who saw in him their best tool, those generous donors from the financial sector or the corporations, those high government officials who meticulously paved the way for him. Might Emmanuel Macron envision a French ‘spoils system’? Yet, for the very first time, it would not be necessary—the men in place at Bercy [the Finance Ministry], at the Treasury, and even in most of the cabinet ministries have already been bought out” (Le Figaro, May 13, 2017).

It remains that if Macron was the providential man of the hour, it is only individually, and it is in no

- The historic double score obtained in the first round (7,680,000 votes) and the second round (10,450,000).

- The qualitative leap by the National Front with its integration into the traditional game: Le Pen’s endorsement by Nicolas Dupont-Aignan [a first-round candidate from the right-wing Debout la France party]; the impact of the millions who refused to vote in the second round between Macron and Le Pen; and the distortion caused by the notion of “populism.”

- The National Front is positioned as the opposition to Macron, which puts it in confrontation with the new presidential majority, and allows it to present its own parameters (for example, regarding the European Union and the Euro) as the “alternative” in the coming years.

Is it not a problem that “system change” is put forward as possible through an electoral victory (and a presidential one at that)? By the electoral route, one can try to prevent the adversary from acting, or to create conditions for important reforms, that is, to create an opening in the use of political power, but beyond that? What is a “citizens’ revolution”? The “big sweep” makes sense from the National Front side. A large part of the voters for Marine Le Pen seem to *know* the meaning of their vote: “Turn the tables!” That is to say, to trigger a political upset, assuming that one doesn’t know where it will lead. But the Left?

As for Macron, he has achieved a spectacular triumph: to present himself as “outside the system,” he, the purest product of that system!

3. And the Left?

Pulled in two directions by a past that weighs it down and innovative adventurism, the Left, in its various components, is facing existential challenges. It has to shed the

illusions that distort its perceptions of the balance of forces and reality, and deal with the ambiguities that undermine it, which include:

- “The Left,” yes or no?

When a party of those who call themselves and perceive themselves as being of “The Left” meets a new and “modern” Right, can it claim to be of the “Left”? It is necessary to take into account that the vast majority of the vote for Mélenchon was a vote of the Left (of ordinary people, young, strong in the traditional leftist sectors), but in favor of a project not in the framework of the radical Left, nor even of the Left in general.

- If we retain the framework of the Left, do we recognize that it is necessarily pluralist, and with what consequences?

- The days of parties, in the diversity of their realities, is it past? If so, in favor of what kind of organization or movement?

- Between a restored Fifth Republic and a hazy Sixth one, what possibilities for democracy?

We can hardly ignore that these questions are already being asked (but very confusedly) at the time of the legislative elections.

Macron symbolizes an acceleration of history; he is the bearer of a strategic plan of destabilization and of remolding the political field, as well as an unprecedented ideological synthesis aspiring to respond to contemporary challenges. If the class-conscious Left wishes to survive, it will have to tear itself away from certain destructive burdens, to lift itself to the level of such a challenge, which calls for a political and cultural rearmament of great magnitude.

May 15, 2017
Translated by D. Chêneville



Pablo Tupin-Noriega
May 10, 2016, demonstration in Toulouse, France, against the government decree forcing through anti-worker “labor reform” law. Emmanuel Macron was Finance Minister then.

one’s interest to forget that he is not without talent. Not least was perceiving the changes in society, and having the audacity to bet on them: hope for a change of political leadership, the chance to break up the central political space by shaking up the traditional parties that were in great difficulty, and doing this by using the National Front as a lever.

When the ruling class understands that everything has to change so that nothing changes, this indicates that it is effectively time for great mutations.

The challenge is to grasp what they are.

SOME OPEN QUESTIONS

1. What is the strategic significance of Macron’s election?

If Macron’s success is incontestable, his potential to change the political field is not yet clear. Yet it is great. To underestimate it would be to repeat the error which once led to the belief that his rise to power was only a momentary bubble ready to burst.

His strategic wager is to build a central bloc (“both of the Left and the Right”). It is already won with the presidency, reinforced by the nomination of Edouard Philippe [as Prime Minister]. It means that two facts are likely to form the structure of the future: 1. The marginalization of the Left (the “radical” Left as much as the social democratic Left); and 2. The establishment of the National Front as the “Opposition” to the presidential majority.

The impotence of different components of the Left who have not rallied behind the Macron project to respond to that future seems evident. And equally the impotence of the Right, to avoid its own division, confronted as it is by an enterprise that has it by the throat. Contrary to what certain commentaries say, it is not a question of simple “poaching” or “spoils of war” (the Sarkozist model of 2007), but a *political demonstration*: with Macron, the Right (or a part of it) could govern—and in doing so remain the Right (unlike Macron, formerly of the Left).

Those two themes combine with a third element, “objective complicity” with the National Front to pose a new dividing line between globalists/patriots, instead of the opposition of progressives/conservatives. The logic is to present the Macron synthesis as a viable response to the anti-European, nationalist and racist populism of the National Front. This requires legitimizing neoliberalism as the only possible future in terms of the economy, the society, and the relation of liberalism to freedom and rights. Who would not see that such a divide would be destructive to the class-conscious Left?

2. What future for the National Front?

Despite strong murmuring within the National Front and the extreme Right resulting from this entirely relative defeat for Marine Le Pen (which confirm the damages generated by illusions about the possibility of an upset electoral victory, calling itself “outside the system”), we have to caution ourselves to not forget some fundamental facts:

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PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLT VS. TRUMPISM

The Draft Perspectives (“Philosophy and Revolt Confront Trump’s Drive to Fascism,” May-June *N&L*) poses that we can’t “apply” dialectics. We have to recreate it by listening to and understanding what the movements from below have to tell us, as well as by helping these movements to fully embrace/unleash their self-development toward freedom. This is precisely the meaning of one of its last phrases: “It is crucial to recognize both the indispensability of the movement from practice and at the same time the indispensability of its unity with theoretic preparation for revolution, if we are to help change the objective course of the world.” That’s a very powerful statement. Still, I would have liked that the parts dedicated to critiquing fascism—particularly, Trumpism—were shorter, and the ones that grasp the meaning of the movements from below, longer. The analysis of other important parts of the world in rebellion, like Latin America or Africa, could have been included. **J.G.F. Héctor Mexico City**



The thing that I fear most is that the opposition to Trump often becomes separated from social class and from its roots in labor. I am happy that the Draft Perspectives addresses this. It’s not so much Trump as it is the vacuum on what is called the “Left” that allowed his election to happen. That void continues as different sectors of the ruling class and different elitist “leftists” attempt to take advantage of this disaster to promote their self-limiting ideologies, and try to blame the situation on exogenous forces rather than their own failures. To be part of the “Resistance” is relatively easy, but to reach for truly new beginnings is another thing altogether. The Draft Perspectives for 2017 have been well thought through and are a great new beginning. **Malcolm Bay Area, Calif.**

TRUMP AND THE LEFT

Trump wants senior citizens to suffer. His initial budget called for the elimination of community development block grants that fund, among other things, Meals On Wheels, which helps feed seniors. That budget called for cuts to Medicaid, heating and rental assistance and State Health Insurance Programs that provide guidance to seniors on their Medicare. Even as the marches and other events for Pride took place, Trump’s budget sought to keep out the voices of LGBT seniors, dropping them from the annual National Survey of Older Americans Act Participants. The administration retreated after an uproar. I am heartened by the ongoing resistance to Trump. Seniors, their organizations and other supporters, such as the Services for LGBT Seniors/SAGE, are seeking ways to help seniors anyway. **Born in Tokyo Chicago**

Thousands of protesters in Los Angeles marched on April 15, demanding President Trump release his tax returns. People were shouting in unison: “Release your taxes,” “You work for us, not Russia,” “Fighting sexism is fighting fascism,” “Impeach Trump!” Protesters included middle school children with their parents and adults—young and old. A young girl’s sign reflected the spirit of our times: “I can do this every weekend.” Other subjects addressed by protesters included “My body, my choice,” “We are all Americans,” “NO deportations!” and “I welcome you to America.” I saw people expressing their willingness

READERS’ VIEWS

to challenge and change what Trump paints as “America First.” He pretends to protect the rights of workers while his treatment of the Las Vegas men and women who worked in his hotels and tried to form a union show what Trump really stands for. **Mannel Los Angeles**

It is not just the mainstream media that fails to distinguish between rebels and reactionaries. Noam Chomsky was interviewed on Democracy Now and essentially did the same thing. He said no one can report from the rebel side in Syria because they execute those who don’t say what they want said. Your web statement “Trump won’t smash Assad’s genocidal regime—support the Syrian Revolution!” is my first time hearing about Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and her trip to Syria, in sympathy with the Assad regime. Among Left/progressive activists, the depravity of leaders like Trump and Bush seem to inspire a knee-jerk defensiveness for opposition state actors. I used to be that way with Chavez and to lesser extent Castro. Why should we choose one or the other? Why not choose the people building a new society in opposition to both private and state capitalism? **Buddy Los Angeles**

INJUSTICE TO IMMIGRANTS

I am writing to call for fair and unbiased immigration hearings for both Hugo Mejia and Rodrigo Nunez. It seems unjust that they were ever arrested in the first place. As a long-time resident of Fairfax, Calif., I see and meet so many hard-working and friendly people from Mexico and Central America. They generally work much longer shifts than most other workers in town; and I’m sure that they are not being paid that well for all their efforts. The migrants in the U.S. deserve to be treated much better and more humanely than the government is treating them. President Trump was totally wrong to have set such a horrible example by saying cruel and untrue things about them. **Ramakumar Fairfax, Calif.**

ANTI-WOMAN, ANTI-LABOR UBER

All the revelations about the toxic culture at Uber—including sexual harassment, sexism and bullying—are true, but we should remember that it was toxic from the get-go. Uber was started to destroy and replace the taxi business, regardless of the consequences for the drivers. **Feminist Chicago**

ACT UP

I’m a Gay white man living with AIDS for over 30 years. I agree with most of what Mr. Gordon wrote (“30 Years Later: AIDS activism and ACT UP Chicago,” Nov.-Dec. 2011 *N&L*). We were ACT UP Chicago colleagues. I always have and still support people of color and women. I was not one of the single-issue Gay white men. I have always recognized the dignity and value of all human life. I believe that we are all in



this together. And I stood up to other Gay white men who were not as sympathetic to the plight of others. ACT UP Chicago was comprised of different people at different times who came together to fight AIDS. Some were seasoned activists. Others were HIV+ Gay men who were dying and afraid. It was a time of great urgency. **Bill McMillan Chicago**

FROM IRAN...

A new video shows poor people protesting inside an Iranian bank for taking their life savings. The vulnerable poor—seniors, chronically ill and other low-income folks—are the primary victims of Iranian banks that promised super-high interest. People counted on paying rent, medication, education out of the “great deal.” Only a couple of months after they open an account, banks stop paying interest. Then they refuse to pay the principal and voila: Money vanished altogether in the black hole of bankers’ pockets. The poor now have not a penny left from their life savings. Meanwhile, bankers are fully protected by the government. **Abbas Goya London, UK**

...TO MEXICO

We the Mexicans are suffering and fighting for change, but we are divided. The Mexican government is not going to yield power, but still I support any struggle as long as it’s to throw out the present government. Political party work is hard but the other side is not doing anything, just condemning the political parties. Mexican people are indignant, they can’t take it no more. If people don’t want the parties, they should show what they want. If we allow these parties to take another six years, we won’t be able to throw out the government because once the transnationals are exploiting the natural resources they’re not going anywhere. Anyone that speaks out will be disappeared. That’s why the army is out in the streets. A law coming up will allow them into your house with no warrant. They disappear you. **Ramón Los Angeles**

It’s sad that we don’t know what’s happening in Mexico with the power the government has now, supported by the U.S. That’s why the work of the Zapatistas is important. They have shown us that even in these circumstances, we are all capable of doing something like they are doing. Of course the government goes against them with brutality, inhumanity. But they’ve been able to construct a good civilization there that serves their community with healthcare and education. They’re showing us it’s doable. The government, paramilitaries and narcos kill thousands of people but those people are learning too. They’ve been working on the National Indigenous Congress for years now and organizing. Maybe you don’t have weapons, but organize with thought. They’re showing us that that’s what gives the good result they have there, in Chiapas specifically. Weapons without thought do nothing. **Antonia Los Angeles**

WHY READ NEWS & LETTERS?

I really appreciate and am energized by your newspaper! You keep me abreast of every aspect of the work being done and how much more needs to be done. You speak my language and

you educate me in the terminology of the moment that best expresses and frames our movement. You do an excellent job of exposing the enemies of the common people and calling them on their various evil machinations. I share this paper with two other comrades of like mind here in the prison. *N&L* links us to a struggle that is greater than each of us and through that connection we become part of a larger family. I personally am so eager to get released and aid this cause. You’ve even opened my eyes to the causes of other groups whom I might not otherwise feel akin to (LGBTQ issues, for example). I am a Muslim, but I realize now that we all stand united as humans or we all fall to imperialism, capitalism and the rising tide of free-market fascism.

Prisoner Norco, Calif.

When I read *N&L*, I am reminded of the torch of freedom and that through the efforts of many it continues to burn brightly beyond the walls of this prison. I gain knowledge of the many struggles people across the globe face and endure with a spirit of solidarity and determination to write their own futures. Your newspaper gives me hope that there is a place where my voice will be heard even if it is in disagreement and that a sounding board for ideas is out there. Your newspaper is shared with other men here who are tired of the national, politically tied news syndicates and whose bodies swell against the chains of oppression. Thank you for sharing your labors with us. **Prisoner Beaumont, Tex.**

There is an insatiable desire to *do* something to help people become more aware of the BS going on in the world. Though I knew I wasn’t the only one who feels this way, I didn’t realize we had a tangible voice until a fellow inmate handed me your paper. Now I feel this hope and relief that all is not lost, just not as loud...yet. I would like a subscription to your paper, please. I’ll be released come August of this year so my address will change. I’ll include it at the end, and I’ll actually be able to donate \$ to this awesome paper. **Prisoner Delano, Calif.**

I enjoy reading *N&L*, it is very informative and enlightens me to the ongoing struggles around our world. So many things are kept as secrets from us, even in the free world. I love the open-mindedness and honesty in your newspaper. Keep up the great work! **Prisoner Daytona Beach, Fla.**

To our readers in prison—

Prisoncrats sometimes choose to return an issue to us undelivered, but if you have been moved—to another prison, or within the same prison—the USPS will not forward newspapers. Help us keep *N&L* in your hands by letting us know your change of address, including when you are released. When you leave prison your donor subscription can continue to your new address for one additional year.

We welcome your contributions to *N&L* and for our website. There are some things we cannot provide. We do not match up pen pals. *N&L* cannot help prisoners with individual legal cases, and we cannot offer legal advice or access to attorneys. We don’t have the resources to do that work. But this paper is a place where the voices of people engaged in struggles inside and outside prison walls can be heard speaking for themselves.

COOPERATIVE FORM OF LABOR VS. ABSTRACT LABOR



It's interesting to read Dunayevskaya's 1951 preparatory work of what would become seven years later *Marxism and Freedom* ("The Cooperative Form of Labor vs. Abstract Labor and Despotism Plan," May-June *N&L*). Dunayevskaya was following Marx's steps, in how he was trying to recreate a dialectic in which there is no separation between subject and object. The phrase "Management over social labor which in manufacture was 'purely subjective' is now 'purely objective'" speaks precisely to the relationship between such elements: Machinery is not merely "objective," but carries within a human (subjective) relationship, which in capitalism has become objectified—therefore "purely objective." The understanding of this subjective/objective relationship is crucial for the development of a full-blown dialectic of freedom.

Dunayevskaya's analysis of cooperative labor focuses on production, which only comprises 15% of today's U.S. workforce (not so in China). Yet it still blows away the illusions about the "sharing economy." Companies like Uber say they enable drivers and riders to share cooperatively, but the company itself manipulates drivers into working longer than they intend, nudges them toward areas where they will make less money, and cares not whether they make a living wage as long as the company is extracting profit. There's no true sharing under these despotic, alienated conditions.

Héctor Mexico City

Environmental activist Southern California

Environmental activist Southern California

MARX VS. TRUMP-PUTIN

The Syrian revolutionary cited by Emmett ("Marx's Marxism vs. Trump-Putin Barbarism," March-April *N&L*) aptly says, "After all this slaughter, we ask, do the Syrian people not belong to the human community?" However, Emmett's conclusion isn't clear as to exactly what Marx's "power of abstraction" has to do with this immanently diverse, revolutionary human subject. Marx began *Capital* with the power of abstraction in its particular capitalist incarnation: the commodity-form of the product of labor—capitalist reality and its logical unfolding at its purest. The commodity-form shapes capitalist social life. It leads to totally inhuman results, the domination of things, commodities and capital, over the humans who create them. What has to come to the fore is not alone confronting external necessity but the internal necessity of the Idea of freedom and its movement.

Ron Kelch Oakland, Calif.

I agree with much of Gerry Emmett's essay, but am concerned that there is a lot about culture, but not very much about social class and that there is a lot about Trump-Putin, but not enough about Marx. We are confronting alarming levels of intolerance. It is at the very point where someone is excluded from the revolution that the counter-revolution from within the revolution begins. If we neglect to place these dimensions explicitly within the struggle to end class relations, then we rob them of their revolutionary content. Marx favored a society of freely associated human beings, but was very specific that we arrive there as "freely associated labor." It is in the labor process that we confront the question of freedom and necessity. This is where we need to focus to uproot capitalism in all of its forms.

D. Chêneville Bay Area, Calif.

VOICES FROM BEHIND BARS

In response to your article, "No police during mental health crises," I

would like to say mental health in jail is very much an oxymoron. For some time I have suffered from an illness called schizoaffective disorder, and psychosis played a major role in why I was incarcerated. In my time in the California Department of Corrections and "rehabilitation" (CDCr), I have received no help, and am only watched to see if I take my medication. I do see a therapist once every two months, but these visits seem to annoy him, and I am quickly shuffled out the door and sent on my way. The CDCr is doing no part in actually helping those with mental health issues. I am very concerned about my release, and feel I will likely end up in the same situation I was in before being locked up—homeless and unable to get proper care. On another note, I appreciate the paper and look forward to reading more in the future.

Prisoner Vacaville, Calif.

I took some time to concentrate my efforts toward starting a youth/youth offender program here within the prison where I'm currently serving my life sentence. In this process *N&L* has been crucial concerning my awareness of current events. I have not had the time to read pretty much anything else. Needless to say I have come to look forward to receiving my paper and disseminating it accordingly. This program (True Start) is very important to me. At the age of 16 approximately 25 years ago, I entered into the adult prison system as a youth offender. Alone I had to foster an identity based on the personalities within my surrounding. I'm looking for assistance and guidance to get this program up and running.

Jamal Lewis #26238/000977290b East Jersey State Prison, Lock Bag 'R', Rahway, NJ 07065

Thanks for providing a platform for so many of the oppressed. After the war in the Middle East, the military prison population increased exponentially and many remain unaware. We are constantly confronted with biased investigations, disproportionate legal representation, false clemency and

parole hopes, and a lengthy equally flawed appellate process. This process contributes to veteran homelessness, veteran unemployment, and ultimately mass incarceration. If we all continue to fight and support each other, change will come. Power in numbers. We have so many options to incarceration but the Army has developed a \$95 million facility that must be filled.

Dr. Dwayne M. Williams Sr. CPT, U.S. Army Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Here at SCI Frackville they cover up for their prison guards. Hopefully this will shine some light on the corruption here and uncover the suppression of truth, including all surprises, cunning dissembling and unfairness with which I have been treated. I do not feel safe here at SCI Frackville. My life is in great danger. I filed numerous Prison Rape Elimination Act complaints and grievances asking to put separations on prison guards who sexually harassed me and retaliated against me for reporting their behavior. But the jail failed to take action to keep me safe and placed me in harm's way. I'm scared for my life.

Wooz Shavaryea Taylor Frackville, Pa.



TO OUR READERS:

Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to *N&L*? It will be shared with many others. A donation of \$8 pays for a subscription plus the *Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers* pamphlet to be sent to a prisoner. Prisoners are eligible to continue their free subscriptions when they first get released, a time when the system tries to make them forget the struggle.

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Solidarity with Folsom hunger strike

Folsom, Calif.—On May 26 several prisoners at Folsom State Prison’s administrative segregation (ad-seg)—a form of tortuous solitary confinement similar to the infamous Security Housing Unit (SHU)—began a 21-day hunger strike to call attention to gross violations of their basic human rights and demand that prison officials honor prisoners’ legal rights. Their demands included adequate access to legal assistance, meaningful education and rehabilitative programs, and an end to the cruelty and sleep deprivation of so-called “welfare checks.”

Officials retaliated by transferring striking prisoners to different tiers and other prisons, hoping to defeat their solidarity and depriving them of outside contact. Loved ones have to wait several weeks before they are allowed to visit a prisoner at a new facility. Officials issued rules violation reports for “causing mass disturbance” or for outside communication—though a hunger strike is clearly not a “disturbance” in the sense of a fight or a riot, and communicating with outside is still legal.

RALLIES AT FOLSOM AND IN LOS ANGELES

On June 4 about 100 people demonstrated in front of Folsom prison in a show of support for prisoners’ humanity. Others demonstrated in Los Angeles at the same time. A former SHU prisoner speaking at Folsom’s gate expressed his admiration for those inside, since there is very little history of prisoners winning anything from prison administrations. Prisoners’ victories depend on outside support.

Another former prisoner said, “Liberation is treated as a disease in prison. They want to stamp it out.” Another spoke of the permanent harm caused by solitary confinement, it can cause you to literally lose your mind. “What-

China’s tentacles

China hosted its Belt and Road Forum in May as Trump, under the banner of America First, unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Accord and sowed doubts among old allies with his praise for North Korea’s Kim and Russia’s Putin. China moved to fill the vacuum created by Trump’s disengaging from Europe and Asia to dangle before assembled world leaders a trillion dollars of infrastructure investment—highways, high-speed rail, ports, bridges and energy projects—across Eurasia.

Xi Jinping announced in 2013 the two-pronged Belt and Road initiative: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. Some nations fear that the Belt and Road initiative, while evoking ancient trade routes, would use Chinese financing and technology through mountain, steppe and ocean to make all roads lead to China.

But Belt and Road is intended first to control China’s people. When the Great Recession of 2008 crushed China’s double-digit production rise, workers increased strikes and job actions, protesting theft of severance pay as factories stuttered just as wages had been driven up tenfold by strike action against both company and state power.

Massive borrowing (currently adding 15% of the GDP each year to the debt) has kept GDP growth above 6% per year to ward off revolt of the entire working class. Monumental Belt and Road construction projects would address the chronic overproduction of steel, cement and other commodities that heavy borrowing has produced.

The spotlight shone on Ivanka Trump’s line of shoes, made under conditions which would shame any family capable of shame, is a rare glimpse at the worker intimidation, extension of the working day and theft of overtime pay that are standard in Chinese factories. China Labor Watch reported that the government detained one worker-activist at that factory, and that two others were missing altogether.

Huajian, the factory owner, has already moved part of its shoe manufacture to Ethiopia, employing 5,000 workers there, and threatens remaining workers in China with imminent job loss. Today’s China followed the route of Ming Dynasty admiral Zheng He to East Africa and built an electric railroad linking Djibouti to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Huajian followed.

Maps, even very old maps, have been the excuse for war by China, from its invasion of Tibet in 1950 and the Sino-Indian War in 1960 to China’s island building and garrisoning on coral reefs in the South China Sea. The maps linking Xinjiang to Turkey and Tibet to South Asia threaten continued repression of Uighur and Tibetan self-determination by China’s rulers.

—Bob McGuire

ever you call those units, they are here to destroy people.”

One striker’s loved one said, “We stand united, and we won’t stop until their demands are met.” Allegra, daughter of Hugo Pinell, who was murdered at Folsom two years ago, spoke about the “right to stand up for our loved ones inside! It is our right to protest! Prisoners’ rights are human rights! Those men are putting their lives on the line to be treated as a human being!”

A lawyer, who worked with the prisoners who staged the historic hunger strikes against indefinite solitary confinement in 2011-13, recalled that those prisoners risked their lives, not for themselves but to ensure that what happened to them would not keep happen-

ing to younger prisoners. She pointed to just how remarkable the “Agreement to End Hostilities” is, identifying the system, not each other, as the enemy.

AFTER PELICAN BAY HUNGER STRIKE

As a result of the settlement of a suit from that hunger strike, CDCr released many prisoners from the SHU, and now those officials who hate the legal settlement are putting people in ad-seg indefinitely. Conditions in ad-seg are worse in many instances than SHU. They were meant as very temporary housing, and prisoners there are not allowed any of their property or papers. You have nothing but the four walls closing in on you.

A psychiatrist who used to work at Pelican Bay Prison spoke. She had resigned because she saw that, even after 22 years of court oversight, CDC couldn’t be changed from the inside. Prison only exacerbates mental illness—solitary is torture! There are only two psychologists at Pelican Bay for the 25% of prisoners with mental illness.

Human connections define us as human beings, and getting transferred to Pelican Bay breaks those connections. Prisoners in isolation do not seek treatment, because anything they say to their “health provider” will be used by guards to torture them. They suffer in silence until they can’t anymore. The psychiatrist ended by saying, “Changing laws is not enough! We have to change our communities.”

—Urszula Wislanka

Los Angeles Rebellion 25 years later

Los Angeles—On April 29, the 25th Anniversary of the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion, over 500 people, Black, Latinx, Asian and white, marched through the streets starting from Florence and Normandie, where the Rebellion began. CADRE (Community Asset Development Redefining Education), SAJE (Strategic Action for a Just Economy), LACAN (Los Angeles Community Action Network) brought many of the marchers. The Rebellion started in 1992 after a jury acquitted the four LAPD cops whose videotaped beating of Rodney King enraged a nation.

Then too, the community was incensed over the murder of Latasha Harlins, a 15-year-old Black girl who was shot in the back of the head by a Korean store owner who accused her of stealing a bottle of orange juice. Leaders of the Asian community worked to bring Blacks, Asians, and Latinx together to commemorate the Rebellion.

The Rebellion engulfed the city, and was an expression of the frustrations of the poor who lacked housing, healthcare and economic opportunity. After 25 years there is still fear in the streets of police brutality and the shooting of unarmed people—especially Black men, here and throughout the country.

A speaker from CADRE said, “We want the schools to teach Black history and Latinx history as it was, not just from their side. Schools are calling the cops on kids before they call the parents, even when a student is just tardy.”

A mother there with her daughter said, “We are empowering the parents to ask questions of the principals. We teach them that they have the right to ask for an investigation of matters regarding their children.” Marchers demanded teachers from the community, and respect from school administrators.

One mother brought up another issue: “We need healthy restaurants and markets not just liquor stores and fast food places.” Many Blacks think diabetes is a disease particular to them.

The march showed that together we can replace a social structure that no longer respects us. We are in this together.

—Mannel

EDITORIAL *Imperial* *Carve-up of Syria?*

On June 18, the U.S. shot down a Syrian Su-22 attack jet that had fired upon U.S.-allied Kurdish militias. The incident, along with the shooting down of two Iranian drones, shows the U.S. is serious about consolidating its presence in Syria. This determination to stay indicates something of its longer range plan for a territorial division of the country by the occupying powers.

Since 2011, the U.S. hypocritically refused to impose a No-Fly Zone to defend the Syrian people. It justifies its current intervention as part of the war against ISIS, a war that has been fought by Syrian revolutionaries for years. Yet it has allowed the genocidal Assad regime and its Russian patron complete freedom in attacking liberated areas. This shell game has always been a U.S. imperialist policy, but it wasn’t until the Trump administration that its logic was fully pursued. That is the logic that becomes inexorable when the masses are not allowed their self-activity.

In bombing ISIS’s “capital” of Raqqa, hundreds of civilians have been massacred, some by illegal (in civilian areas) white phosphorus munitions. Up to 200,000 people have become refugees from the fighting there. This horror is being visited upon a city that was once liberated from Assad and that ISIS was only able to occupy by using U.S. weapons taken from Iraqi forces. It is a city that has continually resisted ISIS’s rule since 2014—which has included everything from heroic civil activists who formed Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently to those in the clandestine armed resistance.

U.S. MIRRORS RUSSIAN TERROR

The U.S. assault on Raqqa (and Mosul in Iraq) both mirrors and draws attention away from the barbaric Russian and Assad regime assaults on Free Syrian areas like Aleppo (where rape, robbery and torture continue after Assad’s “victory”) and Free Daraa, where a similar mix of conventional and illegal weapons are being used to terrorize civilians. Ever-growing testimony and documentation from the Syrian regime’s prisons and military hospitals show how these institutions lent themselves to genocide.

Yet the Syrian Revolution continues. The people of Free Idlib have managed to hold off the regime and survive the bombing, and also push back against the (formerly al-Qaeda) fundamentalists that make up the counter-revolution within the revolution. These reactionary forces have been resisted from Idlib City to rural Maarat al-Numan. New unrest continues to develop among the Druze in Suweida as well.

Both the U.S. and Russia are sending a message to these grassroots forces. The message is, “We control your destiny.” There is a message for Iran as well. “You have done the work of counter-revolution. For this you have been paid,” says U.S. imperialism, “Don’t try to go beyond this role.”

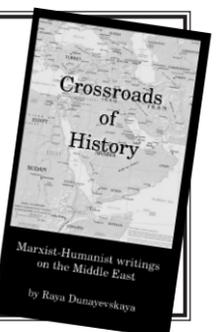
WHAT IS THE ‘ENDGAME’?

In response to the U.S. shooting down the Su-22, Russia announced that its military would target any U.S. aircraft flying west of the Euphrates River. This is less a military threat than it is another territorial claim. The Iranians are desperate to push their own claims further, to establish a corridor to Iraq. To that end they have finally launched their own attacks against ISIS and against U.S.-allied forces, and also have launched a ballistic missile strike at ISIS-occupied Deir Ezzor.

But Iran has no military air capability in Syria. The Assad regime has two air forces, its own and Russia’s, on the sufferance of the U.S. and Turkey. The Kurds and their allies have U.S. and coalition air support. The regime has its legal façade of international recognition. The Kurdish PYD (Democratic Union Party) has demonstrated its opportunism. The logic of the situation requires these forces to push toward military victories over ISIS and Free Syria alike.

The U.S., Russia and, to an extent, Turkey would then be one step closer to the point at which they might hope to be able to impose a “solution” on the “crisis” of the Syrian Revolution. Without the consent of the Syrian people, this remains as unlikely and visionary an end as any battle of Dabiq or Armageddon. It has, however, delivered us back to Calgacus’ verdict on Rome: “They make a desolation and call it peace.”

Read *Crossroads of History: Marxist-Humanist writings on the Middle East*, by Raya Dunayevskaya
Only \$8 postpaid through December 31.



Decommissioning nuclear reactors

Every industrial project eventually has to close. Economic reasons are usually the cause, but nuclear power plants (NPP) have sometimes been shut for safety reasons. They are susceptible to aging because the ravages of ionizing radiation and high energy particles in their interior cause the reactor vessel to become brittle. It might crack with a rapid influx of water necessary to cool it in case of an accident. Cracking would let the water leak out, subjecting the plant to overheating, meltdown and explosion.

No owner wants to see their installation go the way of Chernobyl, Fukushima Daiichi, or Three Mile Island. So, in 1991, rather than pay for the expensive annealing process to “cure” embrittlement, nine owners of the Yankee Rowe nuclear power plant shut it down prematurely. Genkai, a reactor in Japan, is not being considered for restart because its vessel is embrittled. In the North American Great Lakes Basin, the Palisades plant is seriously embrittled, but Entergy, its owner, has fought efforts to close it. Now it is scheduled to close for economic reasons.

ECONOMICS OVER SAFETY

Competition with cheaper fossil fuels is the biggest reason why decommissioning NPPs is in full swing. To keep plants open, owners are extorting money from ratepayers and taxpayers with specters of massive bailouts. The nuclear industry is already one of the most heavily subsidized by the U.S. public.

We have subsidized the nuclear project from the beginning. It began before 1942 with the development of controlled and uncontrolled reactions. (Some scientists feared that one experiment, the Castle Bravo Shot in March 1945, would set the atmosphere on fire.) The cost to develop this technology was billions in 1940s money. Whole cities were established to make space for huge plutonium production facilities in Oak Ridge, Tenn., and Rocky Flats, Colo. The cost of secrecy alone was more than most governments could afford.

Many experimental reactors were built to discover how the menace of nuclear power could be brought to such a level that the public would accept the risk. Secrecy and obfuscation characterized every step of the way.

‘Science Not Silence’



Participants in “Science Not Silence” march in Washington, D.C.

Pasadena, Calif.—On April 22 at 9:00 AM, about 1,000 people rallied at the campus of Cal Tech under the banner of “Science Not Silence,” and made ready to march in defense of science and of rational thought itself. The marchers paraded toward downtown and arrived an hour later at Memorial Park.

One demonstrator told us, “We will fall behind other countries if Trump cuts funds for science.” Another said, “They even want to erase data that helps predict the weather!” Some creative signs carried by the science defenders included: “Resist, so that bacteria won’t,” “Evidence of electron fraud: currently negative,” “Make the Earth cool again,” “Grab them by the data,” and “I’m with her” pointing to a picture of the earth. One man felt his sign summed it all up: “More science, less Trump.”

The American Association of University Women, which advocates a fair chance and encouragement for women and girls to explore STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields was visible at the march and represented among the various speakers. We were buoyed by people driving by and honking their horns in support.

In this city where Albert Einstein briefly lived and where his archives are kept, another marcher’s sign invoked his wise counsel: “Blind belief in authority is the greatest enemy of truth.” By extension, it is also one of the greatest threats to human survival on planet Earth. —Buddy Bell and Mannel

Insurance cannot be purchased for NPPs, so, in case of an accident, tax- and rate-payers are on the hook for the cost. In addition, the Department of Energy owns the high-level radioactive waste (HLRW) or spent fuel, which is about one million times more radioactive and much more dangerous than the original fuel. We citizens pay the cost for all of this.

None of this takes into account the human and environmental cost. Most complaints have not been honored by the U.S., so citizens pay their own medical costs and shepherders who lost whole herds in the 1950s were forced to go out of business.

THE AGE OF DECOMMISSIONING

Nuclear power, however, cannot thrive because it wreaks havoc throughout the fuel cycle. From mining to decommissioning, it generates passionate opposition from its victims and capital costs so great that only the government can back its loans.

The recent debacle at Vogtle units three and four in Georgia and Summer units two and three in South Carolina revealed the bankruptcy of Toshiba—a 140-year-old stalwart of Japanese innovation—and Westinghouse. Billions of dollars were spent. Although it has not yet been finalized, maybe the powers that be will not throw good money after bad and will abandon these white elephants. In the meantime a \$6.5 billion loan guarantee from the Department of Energy (you and me) is pending in the case of Vogtle.

Now the crumbling fleet of U.S. NPPs approaches the age of decommissioning for good reasons. But big questions remain: How is decommissioning being regulated to protect public safety? How can nuclear communities undergo a transition to new and productive jobs for the stranded workers? Since the 1980s, the Department of Energy owns the HLRW, what is going to happen to it?

Stay tuned.

—January

EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

created by workers be taken away by bosses and by parasites like himself, and natural resources and infrastructure be given away to corporations.

Trump claims that the Paris Agreement does not eliminate coal jobs but transfers them to other countries. This is as much a shell game as all his claims to save jobs. The reality is that capitalism always destroys jobs as well as communities and calls it progress.

CAPITALISTS NEED NOT FEAR AGREEMENT

How little protecting the economy has to do with the withdrawal is shown by the many big oil and other companies that wanted the U.S. to stay in the Paris Agreement. They do not fear it precisely because the agreement is so weak and inadequate. That Trump spurned their advice reveals that his aim is to attack all environmental and social movements. The negation of liberatory movements is as characteristic of his administration as it is of fascism.

Above all Trump is trying to divide white workers from such movements and prevent workers from having a voice as workers, as he fights their independent organizing and workplace regulations. Workers are supposed to think their interests are the same as those of the capitalists, in opposition to the workers of other countries who are supposedly “laughing at us.” We are supposed to be grateful for the privilege of having a job where we are exploited. Pay no attention to the con man laughing at the employees and contractors he refused to pay, and at the supporters who would vote for him even if he should “stand in the middle of 5th Avenue and shoot somebody.”

Despite Trump’s bluster, there will be no “new deal.” Weak as it is, the Paris Agreement is the best that international capitalism could come up with. From the 1992 Earth Summit to the 2015 Paris negotiations, the U.S. has been one of the biggest obstacles to stopping climate change. Trump’s policy reversal only pushes the greenhouse gas pedal to the metal, ratifying what he has set in motion on the policy front with efforts to roll back every environmental and safety regulation he can, such as Obama’s Clean Power Plan, and to open all fossil fuel reserves to exploitation.

The solution is *not* to spread illusions about international negotiations, Democratic politicians, or city and state “clean energy” projects. What is needed is to confront capitalism’s suicidal path both in immediate battles, such as the Indigenous-led resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline and the many other struggles inspired by it (see “Standing Rock: the struggle continues,” March-April *N&L*), and in raising the banner of a new society of freely associated labor, where humanity and nature are not just the means to capital’s growth but where human power is its own end.



by Suzanne Rose and Franklin Dmitryev

After the Senate “healthcare” bill was released June 22, dozens of protesters from ADAPT held a die-in outside Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell’s office. Chanting “No cuts to Medicaid,” many were dragged out of their wheelchairs by cops. One said, “The government wants to kill me.” About 200 people with disabilities—many of whom rely on Medicaid-funded home services—had taken actions in Washington on May 15-16, demanding that President Trump honor disability rights as constitutional rights, specifically the right to live integrated lives in the community, as against forced institutionalization. Another group sat in in front of Ivanka Trump’s house for the rights of women with disabilities, pointing out that the vast majority of people in nursing homes, paid attendants, and unpaid or informal caregivers are women.

Penny Mordaunt, the UK Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, endorsed forced institutionalization—which is happening when local authorities refuse to fund services needed for people to continue to live at home. A disability rights activist pointed out that Mordaunt implied “that sole control of that decision-making process could or should be in the hands of medical professionals [which] appears to go against the principles of independent living and seems reminiscent of the decades-outdated ‘medical model’ of disability.”

Most states in the U.S. still shuttle far too many people with disabilities into nursing homes rather than providing home or community services. The House and Senate bills to repeal the Affordable Care Act would worsen the situation by gutting Medicaid funding. At the same time many nursing homes are under fire for throwing out patients when they run out of Medicare coverage. Maryland is suing NMS Healthcare, alleging that NMS sent residents with complex medical needs to homeless shelters or to unlicensed board-and-care facilities. In one case a woman with severe dementia was dropped off in front of the home of her son, who “found her wandering around several hours later” on a 95-degree day.

Disability rights activists were among the protesters chanting in the Illinois House gallery on May 30 demanding a budget that funds social services. The day marked the 700th without a state budget, with wide-ranging effects from cutbacks in education and healthcare to loss of pay for caregivers to people with disabilities. While some protesters were dragged out of the House, hundreds more demonstrated elsewhere in Springfield.

All four prisoners whom Arkansas rushed to execute in April had disabilities. While no systematic data exist, mental health advocates and death penalty defense lawyers agree that the vast majority of prisoners on death row have severe mental illness, cognitive impairment and/or a history of extreme trauma, often in childhood.

October: The Story of the Russian Revolution

“October is still ground zero for arguments about fundamental, radical social change. Its degradation was not a given, was not written in any stars.”

—China Miéville

I am a student of revolutionary history (May 1968, the English 1640s, the Paris Commune), but have largely ignored both the French and the Russian Revolutions because they ended so badly. For the case of Russia I have found a remedy in *October: The Story of the Russian Revolution* by China Miéville.

Miéville is, arguably, the greatest living science fiction writer. *October* is a thrill to read. I finished its 300-plus pages in a single session.

The book begins with a prehistory of 1917, a chapter on the February Revolution, then a month-by-month, blow-by-blow series of chapters ending with “Red October” and a wistful epilogue.

I knew that the provisional government brought about in February of that fateful year was extraordinarily weak, but I didn’t realize that it was bound to end with either a right-wing coup under someone like General Kornilov or with a further revolution led by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks.

Lenin is so vilified for what the USSR became that I had not appreciated how important he was. October makes it clear there would not be “Red October” without him.

Miéville includes a “further reading” of more than 50 books. I intend to read many of them, and by October 2017 I’ll almost pass as an expert in some quarters.

—Anarchist friend of Marxist-Humanism

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Struggle for immigrants' rights challenges humanity

continued from p. 1

treme caution before declaring an exception, such as when an order is illegal. These unions also lobbied successfully for the public hiring of 5,000 new border agents, a 25% increase in the force. Union officials appear on radio and TV to advocate for more immigration prisons, courts, walls and fences. They get especially angry recounting cases where an asylum applicant is released to await trial at a relative's home, rather than inside a detention center.

THE FIGHT AGAINST INHUMANITY

Pushing back against the prison lobby were activists in Phoenix, who chained themselves to the state Capitol on March 30 right before a Senate vote. The bill would have required immigrants in prison to serve a higher percentage of their sentence before being deported. It was narrowly voted down in the Arizona Senate.

On May 1, close to 475 immigrants detained in a Geo Group prison in Tacoma, Wash., began a hunger strike and dozens of supporters camped out in the street in front of the detention center.

Prisoners decried the deplorable conditions, including insufficient quantity and quality of food, delays of several months in trials, poor medical care, and lack of contact visits. By the end of the six-day strike, 750 prisoners were refusing food, and some were refusing water. The staff refused most demands, but minor improvements were made to the menu. The strike is now on pause.

On June 12, another hunger strike broke out in Adelanto, Calif. Nine members of a Migrant Pilgrimage that crossed Mexico in April and May stated: "We are from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. We ask for your attention, because Adelanto is one of the prisons which exist for those who are seeking political asylum. The bond is set impossibly high, and it's a humiliating joke because we are poor, we don't have that kind of money."

On the first day of the strike they joined arms and refused to return to their cells. They were attacked by guards wielding pepper spray. Their list of demands is not just for themselves but for improved conditions for everyone at the prison, including better food, clean water and ultimately asylum status for each one of the inmates held there.

U.S. POLICY BRUTALIZES IMMIGRANTS

The impossibly high bonds, high level of border enforcement, and brutal immigration policies serve a major function in insulating U.S. wealth and resources from those dispossessed by colonialism or by local despots propped up by international capital. Zero-sum thinking mixed with news of continuing lethal violence faced by more than five million Syrian refugees, 1.5 million Congolese refugees, and 20 million people suffering famine in Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen has spurred much anti-refugee and anti-immigrant sentiment.

When in 2016 thousands of Black Haitian refugees came to the U.S. border with Mexico, the knee-jerk response of Trump's base was to hold forth on isolationism and to extol a strong border enforcement system, the fixtures of his campaign.

This year, as the most reactionary elements of Trump's base lobbied to remove the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) afforded to Haitians after they experienced a magnitude seven earthquake in 2010, an email leaked from the account of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) policy chief Kathy Nuebel Kovarik. This staff memo included a directive to "...find any reports of criminal activity by any individual with TPS. Even though it's only a snapshot and not representative of the entire situation, we need more than 'Haiti is really poor' stories." On May 24, TPS for Haitians was extended, but only for another six months, instead of the customary 18.

The staff directive of DHS betrays the lie behind Victims of Immigrant Crime Engagement. A propaganda arm of ICE, this is an initiative to run a support hotline for crime victims who think an immigrant's citizenship status has bearing on the crime. ICE intends to publish a quarterly report studying the effects of such victimization. Lost in all the smoke is the reality that in the U.S., non-citizens commit fewer crimes than citizens. Parallels have been drawn to Nazi efforts to have German citizens write in to their newspapers to report on the misconduct of Jews. A database haphazardly rolled out by the government publicly revealed information about victims who are themselves in immigrant detention,

allowing anyone searching the web to know when and where they would be released.

Writing the next chapter on a different Trump epic fantasy novel are four construction companies that will build border wall prototypes on federal land opposite the impoverished Tijuana neighborhood of Nido de las Águilas. The companies in this lucrative venture have not been identified: Trump's second 2018 request is for \$1.6 billion to build 74 miles of wall, or about \$120,000 per 30-foot section.

INHUMANITY TO IMMIGRANTS IS CHALLENGE TO LEFT

NWDC Resistance/Resistencia al NWDC



Some of the many supporters who camped out in front of the Geo Group owned immigrant detention Center in May 2017.

The discrimination and violence faced by immigrants presents a challenge to Left/Labor and the rest of humanity. It must be made clear that all human beings deserve to reorganize society so that they can survive, associate freely with others and use their own labor to produce what is needed and desirable. Viewed through the distorting lens of capital and the nation-state, this vision is reduced to a privilege for a few. Attempts by unions to reduce the number of arriving

workers fall into this trap of distortion.

Capital tries to counteract its declining rate of profit through artificially low prices of everyday commodities, which allow U.S. corporations to, on average, not raise wages at pace with inflation. They thereby extract more and more of the value created by workers. To keep commodity prices low, the government must maintain the existence of a still lower caste of workers who must work even more cheaply. Generally this group is located outside U.S. borders. They can also be inside the borders without full rights and living in fear.

In an effort to negate this nightmare rather than accommodate it, on Feb. 16 immigrants staged a nationwide Day without Immigrants in which many did not show up for work and some attended pro-immigrant marches instead. More than 100 participants of the campaign who were fired have a case before the National Labor Relations Board which will decide whether the firings were legal.

More marches and strikes occurred in 125 U.S. cities on May 1, when many more immigrants stayed home from work. On May 2, activists in Washington, D.C., escorted some strikers back to work so they would have support when confronting their employers

Throughout the year, there have been accelerated efforts by community organizations to encourage non-citizens to "know your rights" and an increasing number of attorneys are offering pro bono help to those who encounter legal hangups, such as help at airports after the Muslim bans were ordered. A popular mobile app, Relaid, allows people to report police roadblocks and checkpoints and thereby help others avoid them.

CREATIVE WAYS OF FIGHTING BACK

Residents are creating their own roadblocks, like in Los Angeles on Feb. 9, when the street in front of an ICE detention center as well as a nearby highway exit were blocked by protesters for two hours in the evening, after 160 people had been suddenly detained earlier that day in mass raids throughout the city. Further protests specifically against raids have been seen in Chicago, Austin, Tex., and Fairfax, Va. In New York on April 13, protesters filled the atrium of Trump Tower to declare "No Ban, No Wall, No

Raids!" Neighbors of raided homes have physically surrounded ICE vehicles and impeded them from leaving in Los Angeles and in Queens, N.Y.

On June 8, students marched under the banner "Undocumented Unafraid, Transqueer Unashamed" from East Los Angeles City College (LACC) to that city's police headquarters to decry local police assistance to border patrol during recent arrests of community members. Local activist Eduardo Wilches captured the irony of the sanctuary city concept:

"When the city says they're protecting us and they let the border patrol come in, they're not protecting us. It's not enough that we know our rights when they knock on our door, and we know our rights when they get us in the patrol car, and when they take us to the detention center, and we know our rights when they send us to the deportation place. We are not being defended. Defense means they tell the border patrol to get out."

Public officials at all levels have apparently been feeling the heat from people's protests and activities. Only days before the march, the governance structure of East LACC had voted to become a sanctuary campus, following the lead of the L.A. Unified School District.

Cities that declare themselves sanctuary—that deny local cooperation with ICE in varying degrees—are growing in number, despite Trump/Sessions promises to defund them of federal money. Cincinnati, Ohio; Ipswich, Me.; Malibu, Calif.; Pleasant Hill, Calif.; Salem, Mass.; Santa Ana, Calif.; Travis County, Tex. (Austin); and Warrenton, Ore., have voted to become sanctuary cities so far this year, with Santa Ana pledging to phase out a lucrative contract with ICE which allows immigration detainees to be housed in the municipal jail. Pasadena, Calif., added more protections to its sanctuary status after more than 100 people marched on City Hall in late February.

In April, the city council of Lansing, Mich., declared sanctuary status, only to repeal the declaration two days later, caving to threats from a pending state bill that would withhold state money from these cities. Similar anti-sanctuary bills are enacted or under consideration in Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, and Mississippi. On the Texas legislature's last day in session, lawmakers passed a bill to prohibit any sanctuary city provisions from preventing police officers from inquiring about citizenship status, but protesters thronged to the Capitol building, filling the ground floor and every one of three balconies in the atrium. A federal judge partially blocked implementation on June 10.

In contrast, bills being considered in California and Massachusetts could make these "sanctuary states." Another California bill could divest all state funds and state pensions from any company which profits from construction of a border wall. On June 6, Tucson, Ariz., voted on and passed ordinances to do exactly that with the city's contracts.

Chicago activist Tania Unzueta at the People's Summit said, "It's important to put our fights for sanctuary and for what sanctuary means in the context of how people are being attacked. The front line for making sure that people don't get put into deportation proceedings to begin with is our interactions with local police. It is through our interactions that, most often, our names are put on a list, and people are criminalized, and we are found in different ways.... We need to talk about how non-immigrants, particularly people of color, particularly Black, are also targets of law enforcement. How do we create a real separation between immigration and police? How do we deal with the way police act now in Chicago to expand the concept of safety?"

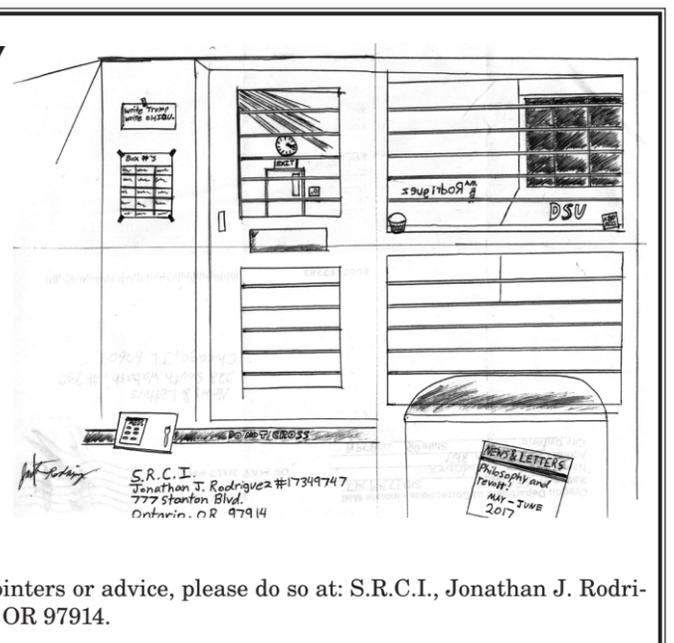
The imagining for a new society has been called forth by new undocumented and immigrant leaders. In imagining, they reconstruct reality.

View from solitary

A lot of folks write about being in Solitary Confinement, which has many names: Detention Hall, The Hole, Disciplinary Segregation, The Can—even Death Row. But not many people at home know what Solitary looks like. So I've included a portrait to illustrate exactly what I see 24/7.

I'm stuck in a box that's 12'x7'x9' and everything is white. I'm lucky I get to 'see' sunlight everyday but I haven't been in the sun/sunlight since Nov. 23, 2016. The only time I leave my cell it's in handcuffs and that's to shower three days a week. What I wouldn't give for a nice hot bath right now. The only thing I have going for me at this point is enrollment in Ohio University distance learning program.

If anyone would like to write me with pointers or advice, please do so at: S.R.C.I., Jonathan J. Rodriguez #17349747, 777 Stanton Blvd., Ontario, OR 97144



Across U.S. students fight fascism

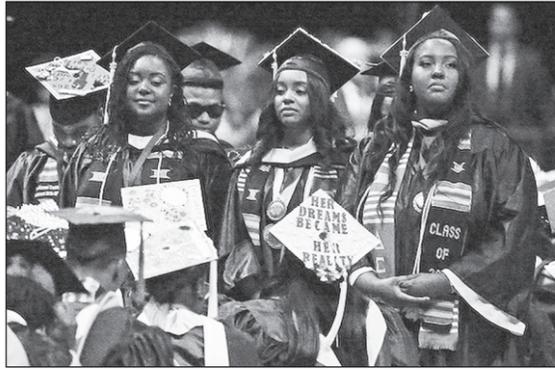
Students around the country protested neo-fascist speakers this spring. Charles Murray, author of *The Bell Curve* that promotes the spurious theory that Blacks are inferior to whites, was a popular target. At Middlebury University in Connecticut, he was met by an angry crowd that prevented him from speaking. As he left, students rocked his car. The University is considering disciplinary action against students involved in the protest.

Despite a petition signed by thousands of students and faculty, Mike Pence was allowed to give the commencement speech at the University of Notre Dame. Hundreds of students turned their backs as he spoke. They marched out in protest, then held an alternative graduation in a near-by park.

Another neo-fascist masquerading

as a conservative, Heather MacDonald, was scheduled to speak at Claremont-McKenna University in California but a loud and vocal crowd of protesters forced her off campus. She authored a book arguing that the police are in danger of being killed by civilians, not the other way around.

Betsy DeVos gave the commencement address at Bethune-Cookman University, an historically Black college. She was greeted by open hostility from the assembled students, who booed and jeered during her remarks. Even prior to her appearance, students, professors, and organizations involved in Black education criticized the University's decision to invite her. One press report described her appear-



Bethune-Cookman University graduates turning their backs during commencement remarks by Betsy DeVos on May 10, 2017.

ance there as a “flop.”

Students took up other issues as well. Hundreds of students at the University of California at Santa Barbara staged a sit-in at the office of the Chancellor, Henry Yang, demanding the university divest from fossil fuels. In a victory for the students, Yang agreed to advocate for divestment.

Hundreds of students at New York's Stony Brook University held sit-ins and demonstrations in early May to protest budget cuts that would especially affect Latinx students. The administration proposed cutting \$1.5 million from the budget of the Humanities and Language Departments.

In mid-May, students at Northwestern University drove out an agent of the infamous ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) who had been invited to speak on campus. The Chicano student group MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) denounced the agent's appearance as “irresponsible” and said that they would not have any dialogue with an agent of such an agency. Students swarmed into the classroom where the agent was scheduled to speak with a banner that said “No More Deportations.” The agent left quickly. The University is threatening disciplinary action, although as of now none has been taken.

—N.S.

Sovereignty for Chagos

Dear Friends of the Diego Garcia/Chagos struggle, The Mauritian Government delegation, which includes Olivier Bancoult and other members of the Chagos Refugees Group, has left for New York for an important UN debate.

On 22 June there will be a General Assembly debate and vote on item 87, in which Mauritius calls for the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague to give an Advisory Opinion on the issue of sovereignty of Chagos, which Britain illegally occupies, and where the U.S. has its Diego Garcia military base. LALIT has long been calling for the Mauritian Government to take this action. Finally, in 2016, we succeeded in forcing them to call for an ICJ Opinion.

Britain managed to get an unusual six-month delay on the debate and vote. But six months was over on June 22. [Editor's note: The UN General Assembly approved Mauritius's resolution 94-15 over UK opposition.]

We are calling on the readers of News & Letters to contact your UN representative, or your elected representative, to ensure support for this call for an opinion on Mauritian sovereignty over Chagos.

This is just one of LALIT's three-pronged aim: to re-unite the country by de-colonizing the part of Mauritius (Chagos Archipelago) that the British still colonize (a UN resolution to go to the ICJ will help this), to ensure the unconditional right of return of Chagossians who were so cruelly expelled 50 years ago, and to close the US military base on Chagos.

To see the Mauritian State's formal “Explanatory Memorandum” to UN member states and for background geo-political information, you can write to us visit our site www.lalitmauritius.org

—Lindsey Collen, for LALIT

Free college tuition?

New York City—With a great deal of fanfare and publicity, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo announced earlier this year a program called “Excelsior,” which claimed to provide free tuition for all New York college students. The reality is a little different.

Excelsior is only for students who carry a full credit load. Many students are part-timers who work to support themselves and their families. They are excluded from the program, as are the large number of undocumented students. Furthermore, students have to be New York residents and promise to live in the state for two years after graduation, whether there are jobs available or not. How are they expected to support themselves in an economic climate where graduates find themselves working in fast-food restaurants or worse?

Students who are seeking a second degree are barred from participating in the program. They are also banned from receiving Pell Grants, forcing them to get student loans to finance their education.

All in all, an estimated 30% of New York students are barred from participating in the Excelsior program. Not exactly free tuition for all.

—Angry New Yorker

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Natalia Spiegel

Students at Bayonne High School in New Jersey, walked out of class in late April to protest the elimination of over 200 teaching positions in their school district. School administrators and political leaders were shocked by the massive strike of 200 to 300 students. The town's mayor promised to see if any teachers could be rehired.

* * *

In Independence, Mo., in late April, students protested a climate of racism in their high school, citing two racist Snapchat postings that came from within the school. Students and parents both said that the school tolerated racism. The two students responsible for the racist messages were suspended for one day.

* * *

In early June, students at Venice High School in Calif., walked out of class, demanding that the new principal be fired for being racist. The protesting groups included MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán), the Black Student Union and the Gay Straight Alliance. They cited the fact that she rejected Black History Month celebrations, rejected a call to make school robocalls in Spanish, and refused to allow gender-neutral bathrooms. Also controversial was the firing of the only Black college counselor in the school, who was very popular with students struggling to get into college.

* * *

Hundreds of high school students at the Vernon Township High School in New Jersey staged a peaceful walkout over the appointment of a new principal and demanded that the school's vice-principal be elevated to the position instead. Over half the students walked out. Some carried signs that said “Not My Principal” and “Well-behaved teenagers seldom make history.”

* * *

In Charlotte, N.C., a student was banned from attending her graduation because she was wearing a shirt the principal found objectionable. She was threatened by a security guard with a gun. The principal told her she would be arrested if she did not change her shirt. The student, Summer, told a reporter that she refused to move because she felt that she had to stand up to the pressure.

Countering fascism

continued from p. 1

Black people to even move to the state.

Now, feeling emboldened by a Trump presidency as well as the murders, the fascists were taking to the streets. There were numerous “Make America Great Again” hats, people openly carrying knives in hip holsters, and angry jeering in the direction of counterprotesters. Amongst chants of “Black Lives Matter” and “Nazi scum off the streets,” certain counterprotesters held “All Lives Matter” signs and spurred chants of “USA” in a highly misguided attempt to use nationalism as a deflection against the fascists.

On the west side, workers from a number of labor unions held a banner reading “Labor Against Fascists” and had a sound system shouting down angry white men in the plaza across the street. As one Trump supporter wandered over to the counterprotesters in a “Make America Great Again” hat with a small bullhorn, trying to yell at people face to face, the crowd surrounded him and starting singing in unison, “Move, Trump, get out the way, get out the way, Trump, get out the way!” He lasted for a few seconds before he stomped off.

POLICE PROTECT FASCISM

The Nazis were scheduled to arrive at 2:00 PM, though when they finally made their way to the plaza, there wasn't a huge uptick in attendance. Some arrived in homemade battle gear and held flags decrying diversity as white genocide, but the main shift came in the police presence.

More city cops and federal police arrived all decked out in riot gear and stationed themselves in front of the antifa in Chapman Square. At 3:30, the call went over the police speakers: Chapman was closed and everyone must disperse. There was no reason given for the shutdown but it became apparent: the fascists were allowed to stay as the police turned their attention and flash bangs towards us, hurtling the canisters into the crowd. They followed that with pepper spray and, while many protesters tried to leave, they were blocked to the north, west and east by police.

Militiamen, though presumably there to attend the fascist rally, were spotted illegally assisting police in subduing counterprotesters during arrests. While the police were enacting chemical and physical warfare on protesters, a few blocks away, fascist ralliers waited by their pickup trucks emblazoned with Trump stickers and chatted with police, untouched by any concern of police brutality, protected by their white supremacy.

—Liz Fraser

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

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man trying to make sense of a contradictory world, Peck read many works of literature by writers such as Aimé Césaire, Gabriel García Márquez, Richard Wright and James Baldwin.

Peck referred to those authors as his own because they spoke of the world he knew. They also allowed him to believe that he was more than a footnote or a third-rate character. That experience reflects a similar experience of a prison writer who wrote about his experience via his discovery of Marx, Lenin and Fanon. The two experiences taken together speak to the transformative power of philosophy.

Peck's particular focus on the works of James Baldwin had to do with Baldwin's use of language. He writes how Baldwin gave him a voice, the words, the rhetoric, and with that also the ability to connect the dots. For Peck it was Baldwin's ability to deconstruct stories and situate them in the right order and context. Peck felt he had accumulated some of the vital intellectual ammunition necessary to combat the discord, ignorance and confusion that is an elemental design of capitalist forces in the maintenance of the status quo.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A QUOTE

In developing the documentary film, Peck met with Gloria Karefa-Smart, Baldwin's sista. It was Karefa-Smart who gave Peck access to the biographical rights to Baldwin's life and work. That, of course, opened a dialogue between the two as Peck shared his vision of the project.

Consequently, Karefa-Smart shared a quote of Baldwin's from 1973, the significance of which is its prefiguration of a new society: “There are new metaphors. There are new sounds. There are new relations. Men and women will be different. Children will be different. They will have made money obsolete. Make a man's life worth more than that. Restore the idea of work as joy, not drudgery.”

As profound as the quote is, unfortunately in the book there is no return to it. It is left open as to whether or not Baldwin further developed the content of the quote concretely. The quote shows Baldwin's ability to see beyond the historical barriers that ensnare other thinkers who only seek to recreate capitalism. It is easy to see why Peck has paid attention to Baldwin as an original thinker.

THE DOCUMENTARY FILM

The goal Peck set out to achieve in creating the documentary film was a comparative analysis of Baldwin's indictments of Amerikan racism juxtaposed to the indictments of today. This is not a difficult goal to achieve given that, since Baldwin made his indictments, little has changed. In fact, outside of some window dressing here and there, institutional racism in Amerika has remained intact.

In presenting the intransigence of Amerikan racism, Peck is hoping to create a new paradigm that has the potential of uprooting racism.

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

The recent elections in France and Britain have been a welcome setback for that fascist Right which saw Trump and Brexit as a cresting wave carrying them to state power.

The defeat of Marine Le Pen's bid for the French presidency by an unexpectedly large margin gives the world a slight breathing space. It doesn't cancel the fact that her fascist National Front has effectively established itself as one of the major French parties—as the election also saw the collapse of the left and right “mainstream.”

LEFT RETHINKING?

There are signs of new thinking appearing on the French and European Left. The comments of outgoing Socialist Party Secretary General Jean-Christophe Cambadélis are revealing: “The left must change everything, form and substance, its ideas and its organizations. It is a question of rethinking the roots of progressivism, for its two pillars—the welfare state



Paris Communards on the barricades.

and the continuing extension of freedoms—are being challenged. It is the indispensable foundation of a new political offer on the left to counter both neoliberalism and nationalism.”

The Socialist Party won't be the vehicle for this, however, and neither will Jean-Luc Mélenchon's “Unsubmissive France.” We haven't entered an era of “populist” politics, but rather a period of disorientation among the Left.

Rather than raising the banner of 1789, or of the Popular Front of the 1930s, the needed rethinking will begin from the 1871 Paris Commune and the profound internationalism of the 1960 *Manifesto of the 121*.

New President Emmanuel Macron showed his true colors June 22 when he declared his effective support for the genocidal Assad regime in Syria. His neoliberal policies of cutting social programs, lowering taxes on the rich and privatization of

government will be no less heartless.

A GENUINE ALTERNATIVE?

The British Labour Party's gain of 30 seats in

Parliament, coupled with stunning losses for Theresa May's Conservatives, represented in large part a rejection of the “Carnival of Reaction” (attacks on immigrants, etc.) that followed last year's Brexit vote.

As in France, young voters led in rejecting the Right's racist politics. It will be difficult for Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn to negotiate the exit from the European Union that he signed off on—which by damaging the UK economy could undermine his populist economic program. A dilemma the Conservatives didn't give a damn about.

Saudi threat to Qatar

Donald Trump's Middle East trip solidified U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia's new crown prince Mohammed bin Salman. Salman, architect of the brutal Saudi war in Yemen, also despises Qatar over its support of the Muslim Brotherhood.

But Saudi Arabia's ensuing threats to Qatar seem to make little sense. Qatar is, per capita, the world's wealthiest country. (Though 88% of its 2.6 million population are exploited, non-citizen workers.) It has U.S. ally Turkey's support and is home to the largest U.S. military base in the region.

Qatar isn't Yemen, and the Saudis won't attack it. Qatar will not accept the Saudi demands.

The entire affair distracts from maneuvers in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and Iran believe they have defeated mass uprisings that challenged them from below—now they are in the process of sorting out their relationships to each other and to U.S. imperialism, prodded by nihilist Trump and his ideologue Stephen Bannon.

Nigerian girls freed

Following long negotiations, the fundamentalist cult Boko Haram (Western education is forbidden) released 82 Chibok schoolgirls it kidnapped in 2014. They arrived in the capital, Abuja, May 7. In return, the Nigerian government released five Boko Haram leaders.

The mass kidnapping in April 2014 gave rise to a world outcry and “Bring Back Our Girls” campaign. Earlier, 21 young women had been released through negotiations; 58 managed to escape on their own. Over 100 remain in captivity. Some are reported to have died of illness, snake bites or brutality.

MANY QUESTIONS REMAIN

This is a significant, if partial, victory, but questions remain. The 21 captives previously released are being held in secret by the government. They have had only minimal contact with their families, supposedly for “security” reasons. The depth of mistrust indicates deep divisions in Nigerian society.

The larger question of Boko Haram's insurgency also remain—over 15,000 people killed, and two million made refugees, largely women and children. Thousands of women remain captive. The group has split, with one faction more committed to ISIS, to which Boko Haram pledged allegiance in 2015.

Boko Haram also suffered military defeats. Nigerian government forces are joined in the campaign against it by troops from Cameroon, Niger, and Chad; by U.S. military advisers; and by hundreds of private military contractors. This is the fanatic, confused, suspicious, and corporate face of modern warfare.

Venezuela crisis demands a new vision

The lack of a fully coherent social process, including in the very foundation of “21st century socialism” beginning in the Hugo Chavez era, left the door open for neoliberalism to come roaring back.

Venezuela today is buffeted by a whirlpool of economic, political and social forces causing tremendous human suffering.

The collapse of oil prices and the government's mismanagement of resources have had a severe impact. Venezuela is dependent on the price of oil, capitalism's key commodity. Food, medicine and other essentials are in short supply. Hardships have fallen disproportionately on the urban masses, employed and unemployed.

There have been violent assaults from the Right, with authoritarian responses from President Maduro's government. The vast majority of the masses of Venezuelans have not taken part. However, they have not strongly defended Maduro's rule, which is marked by economic mismanagement, corruption and political manipulation.

PROBLEMS BEGAN IN CHAVEZ ERA

“Socialism” from above with one guiding leader, a military bureaucracy focused primarily on the importance of egalitarian distribution and leaving much room for corruption—all under the guidance of the State with a capital S—cannot be a substitute for constructing socialism from below, beginning with the reorganization of the production process in factory and field controlled by the masses themselves. The legacy of Chavez and of “21st century socialism” in general are seriously called into question.

Do some of these difficulties and contradictions flow not alone from the power of capital—which is not to be underestimated—but as well from the failure by Chavez and those who call themselves socialist or Marxist revolutionaries to work out an eman-

cipatory philosophic vision?

NEW BEGINNING NEEDS VISION

Despite the serious difficulties, there are tendencies within the Left in Venezuela, as well as in the Latin American Left, who are not giving knee-jerk, uncritical support to Maduro. They are trying to work out critical support to the Venezuelan masses, along with opposition to neoliberalism and U.S. imperialism. To do so compels working out an emancipatory vision that can set the ground for theories and practical activities reaching toward a new human society.

—Eugene Walker

Colombian uprising

During years of peace negotiations between the government and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, grassroots groups pushed for issues of racial and economic justice to be heard. With Colombia entering a new stage, the struggle continues.

Some disarming guerrillas are allying with cocaine cartels. Others are being targeted by Rightist paramilitaries. Black and Indigenous communities are under new—or intensifying—threat.

In the main port city, Buenaventura, weeks of demonstrations began May 15 demanding the government recognize a state of emergency. Over 60% of the mostly Black populace are unemployed, and 40% refugees—caught between drug trade violence and corporate exploitation.

Protests and strikes also continued in the mainly Afro-Colombian Department of Choco, where poverty, infant mortality and violence are rife. The demand is for basic rights to public services, healthcare, and education for the descendants of those who mined the gold that built the modern world.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

The articulation of the relationship 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.