"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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The Arab Spring is ongoing

In an inspiring show of bravery and defiance, thousands of Egyptians took to the streets in September to protest the corrupt, authoritarian regime of President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi. Having taken

EDITORIAL

power through the military hijacking of the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 that

overthrew longtime dictator Hosni Mubarak, Sisi cemented his rule through the murder of thousands of protesters in 2013.

The regime has branded all dissenters as "terrorists," including those who protested a rise in subway fares last year. Egyptian prisons currently hold over 60,000 political prisoners, many subject to torture. Yet in the face of this, new protests erupted in Cairo, Alexandria, Suez, in smaller towns in the south, and in the textile center of Mahalla al-Kubra.

The Sisi regime—supported by the U.S., UK, France, and Saudi Arabia—responded with guns, tear gas, and at least 2,000 more arrests. Those arrested included human rights lawyer Mahienour el-Massry, journalist Khaled Dawoud, and political scientist Hassan Nafea.

Over one-third of Egyptians live below the poverty line. The country is undergoing harsh austerity measures and cuts to subsidies on electricity and gas. Sisi's brutal regime, while temporarily containing social revolution, has solved none of society's problems.

CALLS FOR REVOLUTION IN IRAQ

In Iraq, mass protests erupted Oct. 1 in Baghdad and other cities. Protesters decried unemployment—which stands at over 10%, and over 30% among

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT Generations in jail

by Robert Taliaferro

One child's first contact with the prison industrial complex came when he was ten years old. His father had been sentenced to 15 years in prison for aggravated assault, and every couple months, if they had the money, he and his mother would embark on a six-hour round trip to the prison, for a two-hour visit. When they got to the visiting area both would wait their turn to be pat searched by prison staff; then they would be herded into the visiting room along with hundreds of other visitors.

His father died while incarcerated after his involvement in a prison altercation. After his mother started using drugs, Child Protective Services removed him from the house and entered him into foster care. Eventually his mother was also jailed and he never saw her again.

KIDS WHO ONLY KNOW INCARCERATION

Another 16-year-old had a different experience. His father went to prison and they stayed in close contact. Four years later they became cellmates when he was arrested for selling meth. He and his father write weekly letters to his other siblings, and his mother, all of whom are currently doing time for a variety of charges.

When the first child aged out of foster care, he did so without family or community support; he lacked a high school diploma or GED and had no money or assets. Within two hours he was on his way to be institutionalized again, following in his parents' footsteps to prison, after walking into a grocery store and attempting to rob the cashier.

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ONLINE:www.newsandletters.org

GM strikers fight capital's drive to impoverish workers

Some of the thousands of UAW workers who, on Oct. 11, 2019, marched the

picket lines on strike against General Motors.

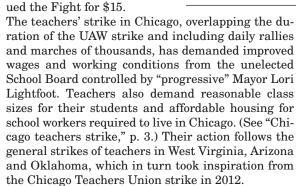
by Bob McGuire

United Auto Workers (UAW), 49,000 strong, struck General Motors on Sept. 16 and picketed around the clock for 33 days. Workers ended the strike by narrowly ratifying a four-year contract.

The number of strikers alone was an indicator of the restructuring that GM had carried out, even since the brief strike of 2007 when 73,000 auto workers went out, or the 1970 strike when 400,000 GM workers maintained a bitter strike for 67

UAW

Despite their diminished numbers, striking GM auto workers-in the tradition of railroad workers, coal miners and steelworkersstill command the spotlight as a critical front facing U.S. capitalism. They join workers in the vanguard of the labor movements on other Low-wage fronts. workers have contin-



Workers from plants that GM had closed made clear on the picket lines that their number one issue was restoring jobs at their home plants. Those who were still working had been transferred, commuting hundreds of miles in some cases.

PATH OF DESTRUCTION IN THE DRIVE FOR PROFIT

GM was holding closed factories hostage going into negotiations. GM closed down four plants, forcing workers to bargain just to regain the previous status quo. GM shut the Lordstown, Ohio, plant—a site of historic resistance in the 1970s. GM had opened the plant far from any city in the expectation that the workforce, including veterans hired just back from Vietnam, would be less rebellious than at plants in Detroit where Black caucuses and rank-and-file caucuses confronted the Big 3 automakers.

They also shuttered the Warren, Michigan, Transmission Plant and the White Marsh plant near Baltimore, built in 2000, as well as the Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly Plant. That plant had opened in 1985 with so much robot technology that just 3,000 workers assembled the Cadillacs that 16,500 workers had been doing before. GM profited off the

four million vehicles that workers had built there for more than 30 years, yet they slated it for permanent closure.

In the end, the Detroit-Hamtramck Plant was the bone that GM tossed to UAW negotiators, agreeing to invest \$3 billion to build electric trucks there with the promise of restoring 2,200 jobs. The price for the reopening of Detroit-Hamtramck was the union's endorsement of shutdowns at the three other sites.

The capitalization at the Detroit-Hamtramck Plant would be well over one million dollars per worker. At the time of the 1970 strike, when 400,000 auto workers went out for 67 days, GM's system-wide capitalization was around \$45,000 per worker. Even in the 1970s, capitalism's mass of profits could not protect it from a crisis in 1974-75 caused by, as Karl Marx had foreseen, the declin-

ing rate of profit—the result of the need to extract ever more surplus value from fewer workers as dead labor (capital) increases. GM has forced workers to pay for this decline in the rate of profit at the point of production, whether in U.S. plants or in Mexico or China.

TWO-TIER WORKERS

One worker after another on the picket line said the key reason they were enthusiastically staying out was to fix the two-tier, three-tier, four-tier system where one worker could be doing the same job as a worker making half as much, and lacking benefits. After Reagan fired air traffic controllers in 1981, corporations reacted to that war on labor and to his encouragement of scabs as replacement workers, by demanding giveback contracts.

They forced two-tier wage and benefits systems on many industries. Two-tier plagued workers for years until union workers could undo most of the evil effects. But then UAW *mis* leaders responded to GM's threats of bankruptcy in 2007 by agreeing to a new two-tier system, establishing a gulf between veteran workers and new permanent workers hired after 2007. This forced the new-hires to work eight years to get parity on wages with existing workers, and denied them pensions.

GM's threat to go bankrupt was real—only the \$32 billion federal bailouts in 2008 and 2009 restored them to solvency. But despite the bailouts, and despite the obscenely large profits at GM now, the split between permanent workers remains. What makes it far worse is the company's increasing use of temporary workers. Temp workers begin at half

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Kurds in U.S protest Trump's betrayal

San Francisco, Calif.—On Oct. 13, several hundred people, mostly Kurds, gathered in downtown

Union Square to protest Donald Trump's giving Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan the green light to invade the Kurdish-held part of Syria. At the time of the demonstration, the military assault on border towns and mass exodus of civilian population from Erdoğan's projected 20-mile corridor had already started.

Speakers pointed out the long history of betrayals of the Kurds, who are a stateless and persecuted minority in several countries in the area. One prominent sign read: Kurds have "No Friends but Mountains." Some saw in the Rojavan Kurds, who were the men and women ground troops dying in the fight to defeat

in state structures."

ISIS, "a democratic alternative to patriarchy

Along with many "Hands off Rojava" signs, others read "Stop Fascist Turkey," "Erdoğan is a War



Criminal," "Yin/Jiyan/Azadi" (women/life/freedom) and "Feminism without Borders."

Many of the Kurds at the demonstration were

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Sexism, racism and incarceration in Brazil

Oakland, Calif.—Firestorm, a project of California Coalition for Women Prisoners that connects with prisoners' struggles around the world, held a forum on Oct. 6 with Brazilian Black women activists.

Sara Branco, a Black feminist, spoke of Bra-

zil's racist history, saying: Brazil was the last country in the Western world to abolish slavery. By 1888 about four million slaves had been imported from Africa, 40% of the total number of slaves brought to the Americas.

BRAZIL AND THE U.S.: FOUNDED ON RACISM

Brazil encouraged white immigrants. Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, German. Blacks were homeless and starving,

but there was money for the white immigrants. Brazil was known as an open country, a country for immigrants, though it was built mostly by slave labor.

Being Black has only negative connotations: poor, uneducated, unemployed and violent. People have a hard time saying, I'm a Black person. Even now only 54% of the population admit to being Black, but actually it is much more.

It's possible to discuss class in Brazil, but not race. There is an acknowledgement that people lack opportunities, but it's claimed it is because they are poor. But poverty has a color in Brazil. Poor people are Black.

Things started changing when the Workers' Party came to power in 2003. Reparations included class-based affirmative action, which helped Blacks, though did not acknowledge race.

'ONE OF THE BEST LAWS IN THE WORLD'

A new law punished domestic violence, one of the best laws in the world. Still, Black women die 54% more than white women. No one talks about violence against us. Every 23 minutes a young boy is killed. To face violence, we do not need to invest more money in security but in education, healthcare and things like that.

Isadora Salomao, an Afro-Brazilian activist for human rights: I am an activist in political parties in Brazil for 20 years, first in the Workers' Party, then the Socialism and Liberty Party. My perspective is social and intersectional on president Jair Bolsonaro's impact on people's lives, specifically Black women's lives.

An example of how Bolsonaro's policies affect us is the March 20, 2018, assassination of popular Rio city councilor Marielle Franco [a Black Lesbian elected in 2016, known for her work in *favelas*]. There was not even an investigation into her murder [the prime suspect being a policeman photographed with Bolsonaro].

There has not been any investment in social welfare for 20 years. Lives of Black women are worse than ever. The Black population has never heard of retirement benefits. Most have jobs without benefits. The administration defends "minimum state" when it comes to rights and "maximum state" when it comes to control. They are giving away our heritage, such as the Amazon.

A majority of the working class, mostly Blacks and women, are endangered. We need to organize to overcome capitalism and talk about a system that would look at these issues in a more profound way.

'RELEASE MY MOM'

Nana Oliveira, a lawyer and Black feminist activist, coordinates the project "Release My Mom," aimed to free jailed women: I am part of a popular advocacy group named Maria Felipa. We fight for women's freedom. We hold events to bring women's incarceration to the attention of the population. "Release My Mom," is meant to provoke people to realize that when they incarcerate mothers, that affects

Illinois NOW Meets

Chicago—The Illinois National Organization for Women (NOW) 2019 Conference, "Women, Justice and the Justice System," met on the weekend of Oct. 12. It explored many areas of the criminal injustice system where imprisoned women—of color, Queer, young and old, documented and undocumented—experience violence. The big push was for the renewal of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was allowed to expire this spring.

The House passed it but the challenge will be in the Senate, where Republican senators are held willing captive by the National Rifle Association which is for the "boyfriend loophole," which would allow guns to physically abusive ex-boyfriends and stalkers with previous convictions. The House bill does not include the "boyfriend loophole." —Elise

children. Brazil has over 40,000 women prisoners.

In 2007 we worked in a prison for women. The majority did not have a lawyer. The court-appointed lawyer told them, "You'll be with your family in 15 days." It was a lie. Many wom-

Urszula Wislanka for News & Letters

From the left: Sara Branco, Nana Oliveira, and Isadora Salomao.

en don't even know if they were convicted of anything.

Public defenders are few, and in some cities there are none. They will not even see you for at least six months. Judges are not elected, they pass a test. Only rich white people have the means to study for the test.

Women who are convicted are sentenced for more years than men for the same crime, even in the same case! There are many inequalities: 62% of

incarcerated women are Black; 45% have not been convicted; 50% are under 29 years old; 50% didn't finish high school; 72% are single; 74% have kids; 70% have been committed for more than four years.

WOMEN JAILED, CHILDREN LOST

A lot of women don't know who their children are with, and the police don't care about them when they arrest the woman. There are no child protective services. Women prisoners are not able to find out the fate of their children for three years or more!

A cell designed for 8 houses up to 29 prisoners. You have only one set of clothes. Money raised for women prisoners does not reach them. They don't even have pads. They use bread as sanitary pads. A supreme court decision said that women with children should not wait for their sentencing in jail. But that decision is not respected. It shows a lack of democracy.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In September, in Morocco, over 7,000 women and some men put themselves at risk of arrest by signing a statement that they have broken "unfair and obsolete" laws. Laws against abortion and sex outside of marriage are frequently broken but selectively enforced against political dissidents. The statement was written by author Leila Slimani and filmmaker Sonia Terrab and published on the front page of *Le Monde*. It was prompted by Hajar Raissouni, a 28-year-old reporter whose arrest for unmarried sex and abortion is widely thought to be politically motivated and sparked protests. Terrab stated, "I am amazed at how strong and courageous Moroccan women are right now—especially the young ones."

Thousands of South African women and male allies demonstrated in September at the Cape Town parliament for days, protesting governmental failure to address increasing violence against women. They wore black cloths and chains; signs read, "Enough is Enough," "My Body is Not Your Crime Scene," "Actions Not Words," "NotInMyName," and "SAShutDown." President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the crowd, promising reforms, but a banner read "Cyril Isn't Serious." Protesters marched around the Johannesburg stock exchange, shutting down parts of South Africa's financial capital. At Vancouver City Centre Station, Canadian women held a solidarity march.

In Canada, in September, the Ontario Provincial Police announced that in May it would no longer release the genders of crime suspects and victims. Myrna Dawson of the Canadian Femicide Observatory stated, "...[I]f they go this route, there is no way to track men's violence against women and there's no way to track transphobic violence." Feminist writer Heather Mallick stated, "secrecy harms women," and likened it to the Alberta police's earlier refusal to provide names of women murdered by their partners to "protect family privacy."

In September, the Mexican state of Oaxaca decriminalized abortion during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Activist Magaly Lopez stated illegal abortions are the third largest cause of maternal deaths in that state. She said, "The women who die are poor and cannot pay for safe abortions. They are judged and sentenced to death by a system which believes it is dangerous for them to make decisions about their bodies." Mexico City is the only other jurisdiction to decriminalize abortion, and 20 states have placed constitutional prohibitions on it. The Mexican supreme court recently allowed abortions in cases of rape, and a bill before Congress would offer amnesty to women convicted for an abortion.

If the laws were respected, 40% of prisoners would be free. Only 10% are in prison for violent crimes. Our problem is racism. When a white person goes before the judge, 40% of the time they go free. A Black person will not.

The U.S. incarcerates Black people too, which makes a discussion between South and North America important.

Several issues were discussed during the period following the presentations, including the Black Lives Matter movement in the U.S. The issues were brought home by two Bay Area Black Lives Matter mothers whose sons were killed by police. They spoke about their fight for justice, especially in outlying communities, which do not have an established structure of support.

The struggle continues!

—Urszula Wislanka

Detransitioners and Lesbians speak out

In August, 28-year-old Charlie Evans, who had criticized Get the L Out on Twitter as a Transman last year, now marched with the group as a Detransitioner and Bisexual woman. Like last year, this group of Lesbians and allies marched unannounced at the front of several Pride parades in the UK and Europe.

Protesting the exploitation of Lesbians by the LGBTQ movement and the pharmaceutical/medical industries, signs read "Stop Drugging Lesbian Youth," "Lesbian Not Queer," "Gender Ideology Harms Lesbians," and "Cotton Ceiling = Rape." This year, they were joined by radical feminist pro-Lesbian groups, ReSisters United, Object, and Make More Noise. The parades in Leeds and Manchester, UK, were also joined by several Detransitioners. When bystanders shouted, "You are Transphobic," they responded "No, we are Detransitioners!" They reported positive responses from Lesbian bystanders.

In September, in Leeds, radical Lesbian feminists organized the first Lesbian Strength march since the 1980s. Several speakers described the extreme difficulties still faced by Lesbians. They explained why more want to separate from the LGBTQ movement to focus on issues affecting lesbians specifically and women generally.

MORE STUDIES NEEDED

In her speech, Charlie Evans stated, "There are few studies behind detransition rates, but I can tell you there are thousands of us. Our voices are hidden because we're seen by the queer community as just collateral damage for the greater good. Many are gender non-conforming Lesbians raised in gendered homes where the roles of girls and boys were strictly defined." She and other speakers discussed sexual abuse and harassment of Lesbians within the Queer movement. This is also discussed in "Lesbians at Ground Zero," a study by Get the L Out. Many Lesbians and other feminists also object to the Queer movement's support of prostitution, pornography, and surrogacy. The march and demonstrations were dedicated to Magdalen Berns, the late YouTuber who discussed these issues, giving many Lesbians a sense of community.

Evans and fellow marcher Thomasin were interviewed by "Gentle" Ben on her YouTube channel, GNC Centric. Ben, also a Lesbian Detransitioner, has used her channel to discuss her experiences and the effects of the internet on young people in general. Thomasin stated the YouTube discussions by the Detransitioners of the Pique Resilience Project had helped her accept herself as a Lesbian. All agreed that being around strong, butch, adult Lesbians comfortable in their own skin had eased their dysphoria. Medical professionals, parents, teachers, friends, and the internet affirmed that they must be transgender. They rejected the notion that transitioning had been their own "mistakes" as individuals because all of society had led them into it.

They agreed Detransitioners need to "meet up in real life, hug each other, tell each other we are not totally insane. You are so socially isolated when we detransition. When we form large groups, scientists will have to take note and say, no, there are Detransitioners in every country. We need to research this since it is bigger than we thought it was." They discussed plans to reach out to girls to help them discuss their anxieties about becoming women in a sexist society. They expressed optimism for the younger generation, observing they are learning to think more critically.

Evan's new charity Detransitioner Advocacy Network has already been contacted by hundreds who want assistance. —Adele

L.A. plans gains for rideshare drivers

Los Angeles—The City of Los Angeles will conduct a study of how best to write and enforce a minimum wage for drivers who work on the ride-hailing apps Uber and Lyft. A baseline goal of \$30 an hour was approved on Oct. 15—it is meant to consist of \$15 in wages and \$15 covering expenses such as gas, rental lease, insurance, and vehicle depreciation. In New York City, a baseline of \$27.86 an hour has been in effect since February.

Manuel Ramos, speaking at a rally of several hundred members of the Mobile Workers Alliance outside City Hall on the day of the motion, explained that each day he drives "more than 10 hours, more than 25 different trips, more than 150 miles. Believe me, it's all necessary in order to survive and maintain my family.

"In this city we, the drivers, sometimes fall short of minimum wage, and day by day the companies try to pay us less, even while our expenses rise. We, the drivers, literally keep the economy of Los Angeles moving. We make it possible for people to go at any hour to any location. We are not demanding anything abnormal, only a just part of what we make possible."

The promised gains for rideshare drivers come

Letter from Mexico

Women fight violence

by J.G.F. Héctor

In August, thousands of women from feminist organizations and students demonstrated in Mexico City against the increasing gender violence in the country's capital. The protest was triggered by the decision by the local police to allow four officers back on the job despite being accused of raping a 17-year-old girl.

Some women demanded implementation of the "gender alert" in the city, a legal measure that is supposed to compel the government to direct more economic and logistic resources to make women's human rights respected. Others demanded the resignation of the female city mayor. Still others, enraged by all the violence—individual and state—against them, painted and destroyed official monuments and buildings, including a police station.

WOMEN, NOT POLICE, CALLED VIOLENT

The government and press focused all their attention on the "violence" of the protest and in punishing the ones responsible for the "destruction," while paying lip service to the question of stopping gender violence, if not ignoring it altogether.

Official institutions are proving incapable of solving the alarming violence against women in Mexico. Indeed, they seem to increase it by trying to address security issues with more and more police officers. And this, in a supposed "Left" administration.

By going beyond "peaceful channels of protest"—making demands to the government, which doesn't listen and can't do anything—women are expressing implicitly that the current system, with all its institutions, should be destroyed if we are to uproot sexism and patriarchy from this world.

After this destruction, however, a second moment should be achieved: the construction of the new. By keeping together this double rhythm of revolution—the negation of the old, from which the positive then arises and develops—we can give birth to a truly new non-classist, non-sexist, non-racist human society. This is both a practical and philosophical task, and it can be fulfilled by the actions and thoughts of the subjects from below—women, workers, peasants, etc.—in conjunction with a full-blown philosophy of human liberation.

IF WOMEN NO LONGER WERE OBJECTS

The women who demonstrated against the escalating gender violence in the city are aiming for a society where being a woman would no longer mean being an object that can be raped or have her human rights negated by individuals and state institutions.

To make such a society a reality, a new view of the Man/Woman relationship—the most fundamental of all relationships, according to Marx—should be developed and concretized. This necessarily implies a critique of the alienated labor relationships in capitalist society, as well as the recognition of the need to overcome them.

A philosophy of human liberation encompasses this. It is, therefore, an anti-capitalistic and anti-patriarchal view of the future. One cannot fully destroy one without destroying the other. While having women at its "front, center, back and side, so that others don't deviate," as the Zapatista Indigenous women put it, such a view needs the joint action of men and women, workers, peasants, students and all the other revolutionary subjects with the common aim of burning down the perverse capitalist relationships and of building in their place a new human society.

after groundbreaking, day-long strikes on March 25 and May 8 (see "Uber and Lyft drivers strike against pay cuts," May-June 2019 N&L). It was organized by the grassroots union Rideshare Drivers United (RSDU).

RIDESHARE DRIVERS STRIKE

Through the popularity of the two strikes, the union grew to $6{,}000$ members by summer. With several caravans to Sacramento and more local actions such as one at Lyft's Los Angeles headquarters on July 2 (see "Lyft drivers fight for labor rights," Sept.-Oct. 2019 N&L), RSDU members lobbied state assembly members and the governor for the passage of Assembly Bill 5.

Signed in September and effective next January, AB5 legislates what the state Supreme Court had ordered more than a year prior: Uber/Lyft drivers and most other gig workers are legally defined as employees and not independent contractors. With this, the claim of Uber and Lyft that they are technology companies and not transportation companies has been twice rejected in California.

A few enormous benefits of reclassification will perhaps include application of the Affordable Care Act mandating a group health insurance pool for workers and the fact that the companies would have to kick in half of FICA taxes (Social Security, Medicare) just like any other employer.

As of now, responsibility still falls 100% on gig workers to pay their FICA liability out of their own pockets. Driver members of the RSDU organization could appeal to the National Labor Relations Board for recognition and legal protections.

In September, a lawyer for Uber told the Sacramento Bee that the company would "continue to treat drivers as independent contractors" and was "prepared to fight in court to defend that position to avoid damage to its business model." Both Uber and Lyft have amassed a \$90 million war chest to finance a repeal effort by ballot initiative.

Uber's "business model" has always been finding new ways to shortchange workers. The apps were constantly shuffling and reshuffling per-mile pay and bonus algorithms, even before drivers orga-

HOLD UBER & LYFT ACCOUNTABLE

"These companies are predatory, they're never going to do right by drivers. It's up to the people and the cities to hold them accountable, just like the city council did here today," said Eduardo Belalcazar, who drove for Lyft 15 hours a day while in college. "Like many Latino students in this city, I had to work to maintain myself.

"The city of L.A. is a very expensive place to live, and for my generation it's even harder. I leased a car from Lyft and it ended up consuming most of my time. I drove more and more to come up with money to pay my lease. A \$30 living wage is going to do so much for people like me and everyone here behind

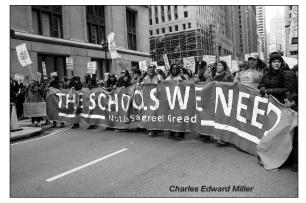
Hong Kong defiance

Demonstrations of thousands in Hong Kong led by young people have entered a fifth month. That is despite the authorities, headed by Chief Executive of Hong Kong Carrie Lam, digging out a law enacted under British colonialism to try to stifle dissent. Without legislative review, Lam used the 1922 Emergency Powers Act to force through a ban on masks in public, in hopes that protesters would give up their campaign for democracy in Hong Kong. Instead, marchers who had never worn masks donned masks in defiance of the law.

Despite the hits that the economy has taken since June, with demonstrations of more than a million people on two occasions, public sentiment is against the undemocratic Hong Kong authorities and its police state tactics that now include two people shot by police. Shoppers in one mall intervened when police charged at protesters there and forced the police to retreat.

China's ruler Xi Jinping, whose troops have been parading just across the border with Hong Kong, promised "crushed bodies and shattered bones' for opponents of his rule. China used its economic might beyond its borders even to the toy department of life—that is, sports—by demanding that the National Basketball Association remove Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey for tweeting "Fight for Freedom, Stand with Hong Kong." Since Morey was not fired, TV in China, which represented almost 10% of NBA revenue, has not aired this season's NBA games. Despite that, Mike Pence accused the NBA of supporting Chinese Communists, forgetting that his boss Donald Trump had on Oct. 1 personally congratulated Xi on the 70th anniversary -Bob McGuire of Communist Party rule.

CTU teachers strike!



Striking Chicago teachers surround City Hall on Oct. 23, 2019. Their banner reads, "The schools we need, not LaSalle Street greed."

Chicago—Standing with teachers of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) from Oct. 17 when they went on strike was inspiring! It is a shame that teachers' demands to end their terrible working conditions, which are the learning conditions of their students, had little response from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and Mayor Lori Lightfoot. That led to closed schools for the duration of the strike. Lightfoot broke her Mayoral campaign promise that teachers would have no reason to strike.

IT'S NOT THE MONEY IT'S THE CONDITIONS

Around 25 teachers, other education personnel, and sympathizers gathered in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood near Gale Elementary School and Gale Academy in the 49th Ward on Oct. 17, the first day of the strike. More than half of the cars and trucks that went by honked, showing their solidarity. Among the signs were: "On Strike for My Students," "Mayor Lightfoot Our Strike/Your Watch," "On Strike for a Fair Contract" and "We are doing this for our Special Education Students." One of the chants struck at the heart of the matter, "What do we want? A fair contract! When do we want it? Now!"

At a recent 49th Ward meeting about public education, a participant said that if the CTU's only concern was money, the strike probably wouldn't even happen. The strike is over limiting class size, having a nurse and a librarian in every school every day and a counselor for every 250 students, more bilingual and special education teachers and staff, sanctuary schools, teacher assistants, a living wage for clerks and other largely African-American and Latinx paraprofessionals, affordable housing for teachers and staff, and a continuation of the moratorium on charter schools.

The moratorium on opening new charter schools will remain. Lightfoot announced she was ending that moratorium but was forced to change her stance. She maintains, however, that there is no money for the CTU's demands regarding personnel. But Tax Incremental Funds (TIF) that divert a portion of funds to the Mayor's control and usually are handed over to well-connected developers could be used. Former Mayor Rahm Emanuel used TIF to avoid another strike following the one in 2012.

Outrageously, there is a state law that teachers cannot strike over personnel needs and class size. Nevertheless, the CTU makes clear its demands regarding them. The movement to repeal that law must continue.

Lightfoot said the CTU and CPS were close to a deal, but then demanded teachers show up for work while negotiations continue! Teachers were just as determined and spirited on the seventh day of the strike with a massive rally in the Loop. I'll be back at the picket line while the strike continues.

-Network 49 Education Committee member

How did the resistance in Hong Kong arise, and what is the line from Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping?

Read: Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel

to Sartre and From Marx to Mao by Raya

Dungyeyskaya (See page 7 to order)

Dunayevskaya (See page 7 to order) Includes: Chapter 5 The Thought of Mao Zedong

A. Discontinuities and ContinuitiesB. From Contradiction to Contradiction to Contradiction

C. Alienation and Revolution

Emeritus (2008-2011).

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: The impeachment inquiry, and especially the Trump administration's reaction to it, recalls the Watergate break-in and cover-up that led to President Richard Nixon's 1974 resignation. It is not only that Donald Trump is bent on subordinating the whole machinery of state to his personal power and vengeance against any who dare challenge him, such as the harnessing of the Department of Justice to open a wide-ranging criminal inquiry into whoever may have helped the Robert Mueller probe into his election campaign. It is not only Trump's repeated flagrant violation of the "phony" Constitution, the law and court orders, including continuing separation of children from their families at the border. It is also that the Republican Party has made itself his vehicle, as when Republican Representatives mobbed the impeachment hearings to disrupt them. And it is also that Democratic and Republican administrations since Reagan have steadily been reinstating Nixon's totalitarian reach, which had been pushed back after Watergate.

Raya Dunayevskaya's Oct. 20, 1973, "Perspectives 1973-1974" report (Raya Dunayevskaya Collection #4964), which is excerpted here, begins by analyzing the global politics of counter-revolution, and the Watergate crisis as an integral part of it. The failure of Nixon's drive for single-party rule led to a breathing space, but only a momentary one, which put the movement to the test. The bulk of the excerpt is therefore the discussion of practicing dialectics and working out the unity of philosophy and revolution for the current moment of crisis. Footnotes were added by the editors.

The few phases of Richard Nixon's counter-revolution that have aborted (or at least been exposed) and have given us a momentary breathing space, have been followed with Congressional and academic euphoria around the new intellectualistic Secretary of State with the mailed fist. Too many have already forgotten that it was Henry Kissinger who kept the Vietnam War going for "four more years" to extract, or rather to fool the American people that Nixon has extracted, "peace with honor"; forgotten that Kissinger had never opposed the Vietnam War-not when it began with "advisers" in the Kennedy regime, not when it became genocidal war in the Johnson years, much less during the Nixon regime. Dr. Strangelove Kissinger had always practiced "benign neglect" 1 that made sure wars would erupt in Latin America, indeed, made them erupt, be it during the Bay of Pigs (and let's not forget those CIA agents, practiced in incompetence there, were the ones directing Watergate)² or the Chilean counter-revolution.

From the start (and before) [West Europe's rulers] knew exactly what was involved for this putrid capitalistic system that had long outlived its usefulness: *each* had his/her 1968; *each* has been kept in pieces ever since despite the fact that they came out the "victors."

Although the *counter*-revolution not only has all the military might and the financial resources and the state power, and despite the fatal error of the near-revolution in failing to unite the philosophic vision of liberation with its revolts, still so great was the fall of the Humpty Dumpty capitalistic system that all the superpowers in the world could not put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Put more precisely, they all knew that "the enemy" was not abroad but at home. That is, they all considered their own masses—labor, youth, Women Liberationists and, above all, minorities, Black or "immigrant" labor—all these were their "real enemy" and "therefore" they had to display their class solidarity with that foreign nuclear power they hated and envied and depended on so much: Nixonland-USA.

III. PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION AS AN ONGOING PROCESS

Philosophy and Revolution as an ongoing process rather than a final result is the need of the hour, and "the hour" is an historic period—the present moving toward the future. It is *actual*.

The first thing we have to do to *practice* dialectics is to hold in hand, in mind, two opposites. Thus, we are to look not alone at the new threats that have surfaced with the *counter*-revolution in Chile, the Middle East war in which we support neither side, much less consider them mere coincidences severed

tionary approach across the board.

2. Nixon's Watergate burglars included Frank Sturgis and E. Howard Hunt, who helped organize Kennedy's 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion intended to overthrow Cuba's Fidel Castro.

Urgently needed in a time of political crisis

Philosophy and revolution as process

from the world situation

But we also must consider the absolute opposite to the counter-revolutions spurting all around us—the wildcatters that have begun a new phase in labor struggles, the youth who just toppled the military oligarchy in Thailand, the Black Dimension which, at this high stage of labor militancy, has sensed an affinity of ideas with white labor in struggle against the labor bureaucracy and with a *philosophy* of liberation.

And, because we are going to view them philosophically, we will also take one more look at the rulers in Nixonland and its intelligentsia. I doubt very much that Moynihan (and Kissinger, much less that idiot president, Richard Milhous Nixon) knew that the "theory" of "benign neglect" was but the lowest, most vulgar, empiric reductionism of what G.W.F. Hegel had designated as Absolute Indifference. One of the many exciting characteristics of the works of that genius Hegel is that the Absolute is not an ultimate which appears only at the end of "the system."

Far from Hegel's Absolutes being the ontological ultimate ascribed to them, there is an Absolute in *each* stage of cognition and of reality. In the Doctrine of Being, that Absolute is the lowly Absolute Indif-



Protest in Washington DC, Oct. 21, 1973

ference. What our intellectual midgets never dreamed about in thinking up "benign neglect" is that the *philosophic* indifference likewise has *movement*, the movement emerging precisely from the neglect, the negative.

Hegel warns us that Absolute Indifference cannot "attain to Essence," but it is a *transition* to it. Its dialectic manifests itself when it collapses, *breaks*

down totally. We are then compelled, if we wish to move forward, to start all over again with new beginnings, new categories, different types of measures.

Those new categories in the Doctrine of Essence—Show, Appearance, Ground, etc.—abound in the all-pervading Contradiction which keeps multiplying, deepening, until it bursts into total crisis, Actuality. Reaching for the Absolute like a bolt out of the blue, they cannot attain to Subject, become enmeshed in Absolute Substance, a high enough stage way past Indifference, the mark of another great philosopher, Baruch Spinoza. The merit in his philosophy, Karl Marx saw, was in his recognition that "every determination is a negation." If you say this is, you're also saying that is not. But it is not second negativity. Rather, it is the Great Divide Hegel marked off from all other systems as he discovered that only Subject, self-negativity, absolute negativity, can resolve contradiction.

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Are the rulers merely deluding themselves that, with philosophy, they can get the "Left" to follow them? Judging by even that section of the Left that looks for philosophy but is enamored with the Frankfurt School dialecticians, there is more than a grain of truth in the delusion of Mao Zedong. Here-Frankfurt, I mean—was a School, back in 1923 when it was founded, but especially in the 1930s, who rejected Reformism and wished also independence from existing state Marxism, and who wished not to be mere academics, shouting to the skies praise of praxis. That they preferred aphorisms to Hegel's "Absolutes" is no accident, though it would take a book to explain in full how aphorisms, like guerrilla shortcuts, are neither revolution nor philosophy. The point here is that like any sophistry, aphorisms can

serve opposites, both academics and mindless activists.

So do listen to how revolutionary it can sound. The current favorite is from Adorno: "Philosophy which once seemed outmoded is now alive because the moment of its realization has been missed." The single grain of truth in this statement—we surely haven't "realized" philosophy in the Marxian sense of achieved total freedom—shouldn't that act as spur to "realize" it, rather than make philosophy as still one other form of escapism? And doesn't it call for the other truth Marx singled out, that the bourgeoise and its intellectual prizefighters could not realize it since bourgeois consciousness was false consciousness, mere ideology rather than a total outlook, a philosophy of liberation?

Translated into action, or, more precisely put, unified with action, shouldn't that compel resistance both to Stalinist "peaceful co-existence" (that, in the concrete, today, also envelops Mao's China) and Chetype guerrilla warfare as if that hadn't also failed? Why not, instead, go, for once, back to Marx and work out for this age the unity of philosophy and revolution, theory and practice, and not via any pseudo-socialist parliamentarism?

I'd hate to have to count how many pamphlets will now be written on the "dialectics of revolution," all offering new blueprints for new "strategies," none of which will reveal the slightest awareness of the Marxian dialectics that it is impossible to tear out, root and branch, the old decrepit society and the "new" state-capitalist one calling itself Communist unless that struggle is governed by absolute negativity—the Marxian philosophy of liberation.

If we are to *practice* dialectics, *daily*, let's take a second look at Chapter One of *Philosophy and Revolution*—"Absolute Negativity as New Beginning." The title isn't something to be learned by rote, nor can it become mere definition, *phenomenal as that in itself would be*, since all, Marxists and non-Marxist alike, have always looked at absolute as ultimate, rather than as new beginning.

Still, if it were left as mere definition instead of a *compelling methodology* for every single new event, objective and subjective, national, international, local, organizational (whether that be organization as ourselves, or as mass activity), no direction could flow to the action in any given situation.

Let me try to put it another way. The dialectic method, that "algebra of revolution," is not just a mathematical formula, or tool, conceptual or "strategic," for penetrating the contradictions of reality, serious a task as that is. The very fact that Hegel employs the word, Absolute, not alone to Idea but to Methodology-the Absolute Method being the dialectic of negativity, absolute negativity-means that "new beginning" is a process, a becoming never a mere being; always a becoming. As we saw all the way from Absolute Indifference in the Doctrine of Being, through Actuality in the Doctrine of Essence, the "result," the Notion inseparable from Reality, was there from the beginning but it couldn't possibly manifest itself except through development, could become full-blown only when the objective and the subjective found unity in a subject.

To point to that is our uniqueness. It comes in with new beginnings, whether these be wildcatters and youth, Blacks and Women Liberationists, and even intellectuals who can no longer stand the oppressive reality and *hunger* to root out contradictions with all these new forces and passions and Reason of Revolution.

And when someone asks: "Yes, but what can we do?" is it really inconsequential when, along with pointing to the activities we are engaged in, for us to say: Yes, we also are working out a philosophy, practicing dialectics, not alone in theory but in organization, for with us it is not "the party to lead" that is the unifying force, but Marx's philosophy?

3. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York: Continuum, 1995), p. 3.

Some writings of Raya Dunayevskaya relating to Nixon's resignation under shadow of impeachment

From News & Letters (https://newsandletters.org/1970s/)

- * June-July 1973 Editorial Article: "Politics of Counter-Revolution: Watergate and the 'Year of Europe' "
- * July 1974 Lead Article: "Playing Politics with Nuclear Fuel: Nixon-Kissinger Journey to Save 'the Presidency'"
- * October 1974 Editorial Article: "U.S. Instigations Increase Danger of Global Minefield" – accompanied by unsigned front-page breaking news article: "High Politics in U.S.A.—One King Absolves Another":

The decadent capitalistic system was willing to make Nixon, who had been so perfectly produced in

its own image, the culprit of Watergate only because it was so utterly certain of the "ultimate" unconditional pardon for Nixon.

From the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection

* Draft Perspectives, 1973-1974 (#4952):

It is by no accident that Lenin listed disorder within the capitalist class as one prerequisite to a pre-revolutionary situation. Imperative, therefore, becomes the challenge to use every second of the breather gained. Objectively and subjectively this puts the movement to the test.

- * Perspectives, 1973–1974 (#4964)
- * Draft Perspectives, 1974-1975 (#5005)

* "On the Threshold: Philosophic Preparation for Revolution" (September 1974, #5022)

^{1.} As part of the Nixon administration, Daniel Patrick Moynihan advocated a policy of "benign neglect" toward Black America, meaning in practice a rollback of what the Civil Rights Movement had won. Dunayevskaya saw the administration applying a similar counter-revolutionary approach across the board.

ESSAY

Black August, from 1971 to 2011-13

Editor's note: Below we print a talk given in the San Francisco Bay Area by Faruq in August of 2019.

by Faruq

Once again we are within the month of August, which carries a historic meaning for us activists and revolutionary thinkers. Naturally we want to participate in practical activities promoting this historical meaning.

Black August Memorial as a concept and a commemoration came into existence in 1979, the year I returned to prison. The idea emerged as a legacy of prisoners, such as W. L. Nolan, Sweet Jug Miller and Cleveland Edwards, who were assassinated on the O-wing yard of Soledad Prison.

O-wing was a notorious lock-up unit, where violence was common. When those prisoners came out to the yard, everyone knew that something would happen. In fact Nolan, Miller and Edwards were attacked by white prisoners. A guard shot into the yard from the tower. A white prisoner was hit with a ricochet bullet and lost a testicle. The three Black prisoners were left to die bleeding out on the concrete.

CONNECTION TO REVOLUTIONARY PRINCIPLES

A grand jury exonerated the guard who shot the

prisoners. Shortly after, a guard was killed at Soledad, supposedly in retaliation for the murders of the three Black prisoners. George Jackson and two others were accused of killing the guard.¹

A cadre of revolutionary thinkers in the Adjustment Center at San Quentin projected the idea of Black August Memorial in order to reconnect with the revolutionary principles of those who made the ultimate sacrifice to

liberate oppressed people. George Jackson in particular came to the fore as a leading revolutionary thinker via his writings and discovery of a humanism inseparable from revolution. He is honored as a martyr who died in a prison revolt of 1971.

George Jackson

What I want to emphasize here is what he said, "Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation, understand that fascism is already here, that people are dying who could be saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution." At that time, coming together was impossible, the racial divides were too great.

These ideas spread, especially among some Black prisoners who internalized them and began to live them. My own engagement with those ideas helped me develop as a human being. My life gained meaning and purpose. I wanted to have a sense of my own history and live with dignity. A consequence for me, and many others, was also a longer prison sentence, as well as a two-decades long stint in solitary confinement. It was not any criminal behavior on our part, but just exploring those ideas that got us validated as "worst of the worst." In my case, the validation was based on having in my possession a $San\ Francisco\ Bay\ View\$ article on Black August.

The Black August Memorial expresses the fundamental need to protect and project the history of the people, in this case people of Black Afrikan descent, formerly chattel slaves. As Frantz Fanon put it, "Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it." Each one of us is presented with a historical reality. How do you respond? You then have to live with consequences. I can't see my life without these ideas. There is no middle: you are either fighting against or cooperating with what is.

Black August is a link in our long history of a racially oppressed people's struggle for freedom. Here are a few of the events we are commemorating: Aug. 21, 1791 was the beginning of the revolution in Haiti. On August 30, 1800, Gabriel Prosser planned to lead Virginia slaves to attack Richmond. In July 1822 Denmark Vesey planned a rebellion in Charleston. Nat Turner's slave rebellion began on Aug. 21, 1831. Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad started in August. The March on Washington took place in Au-

 For more details, see The Melancholy History of Soledad Prison: In Which a Utopian Scheme Turns Bedlam by Min S. Yee, Harper's Magazine Press, 1973 gust 1963. the Watts Rebellion was in August 1965. Jonathan Jackson, James McClain, and William A. Christmas were killed during the Marin Courthouse Rebellion on August 7, 1970. George Jackson was killed during a San Quentin rebellion on August 21, 1971.

New Afrikans displayed a rebellious spirit in all the months of the year. If we cannot easily name a very long list of events that happened in every month, it is only a sign of how much of our history has been lost to us.

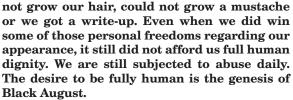
THE ESSENCE OF BLACK AUGUST IS THE IDEA OF HUMANISM

Black August is an attempt to move forward, to discover the idea of freedom for this generation. Black August distinguishes itself from the so-called Black bourgeois political struggle, which has done little to liberate us from racialized oppression, because their form of struggle leads to co-optation.

By contrast Black August does not seek accommodation from the dominant forces. At its core is self-determination, freedom as the ability to control not just our basic needs, such as air, water, food, clothing and shelter, but also the ability to have control of our destiny, to determine the quality of our lives, to determine our activity in our every-day lives.

Black August's essence is the idea of hu-

manism. The inhumane conditions of prisons in general. and its racist treatment of Black prisoners in particular, birthed resistance. **Prisoners** reach for their humanity-that is not a hyperbole. Because we are prisoners, convicted of violating some so-called laws of larger society, we are forced to submit to treatment that denies us our human dignity. We are strip-searched, chained, yelled at while standing in line, etc. We could



George Jackson's response to this entrenched racism was humanism. He urged us, "Settle your quarrels, come together, understand the reality of our situation... Do what must be done, discover your humanity and your love in revolution." But he was ahead of his time. Only some decades later did that idea grow and materialize in the conditions of solitary confinement, when prisoners started talking to each other across racial divides.

We were put in solitary because supposedly we were "the worst of the worst," the cause of much violence in prison. But after they locked us up, the violence escalated rapidly.

CDCr's (California Department of Correction and rehabilitation) policy of "snitch or die" brought those of us designated as "worst of the worst" together. "Snitch or die" meant that you either snitch on someone or die in solitary, there was no other way out. Being entombed at Pelican Bay security housing units (SHU) had a consequence unintended by prisoncrats: giving us an opportunity to communicate with each other across racial lines.

PRISONERS BREAK WITH RACISM

We broke with the racial gang-identification CDCr forced on us. Representatives of each racial group stepped to the fore and came up with the idea of ending hostilities based on race. From those talks came the historic *Agreement to End Hostilities*.² It was a direct challenge to our conditions in solitary and in prison in general.

Those representatives of each group were incredibly courageous. In addition to organizing support for the 2011-13 hunger strikes and participating in them, they faced opposition to accept the *Agreement* from some of their own people.

It's important that prisoners accept *The Agreement*, even if they don't know the deep history of it. The guards foment resentment between races. *The Agreement* is not a peace treaty. Its intent is that if you have a dispute with

2. For full text of *The Agreement* in English and in Spanish see https://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.files.word-press.com/2018/03/agreementtoendhostilities_engspan. pdf. If you do not have access to the internet, write to News & Letters, 228 S. Wabash, Room 230, Chicago, IL 60604

someone, settle it with that individual, don't get your homeboys to attack him and his homeboys. In those situations, every prisoner loses.

The good news is that *The Agreement* is still holding. There have been no major events between racial groups. Most of the violence now is due to the



yard integration, people in Sensitive Needs Yards being re-introduced into general population.

WE OBJECT TO KILLING OUR MINDS

The idea in the 2011 hunger strike was to get out of the SHU, to object to being killed, starting with the killing of our minds. We may not have believed it was going to work. It was a surprise how many people joined the strike. We knew that we had a few families outside who supported us, but we didn't really know how many prisoners in the general population had joined us, especially in 2013, when CDCr admitted 30,000 joined the hunger strike in many of California's prisons.

The power of our unity forced CDCr into "damage control." They had to admit that indeterminate solitary confinement was wrong. They built Pelican Bay for one reason only, to hold people in solitary. To have changed that policy was a real victory for us. Thousands of prisoners were released from solitary. I was released to general population and eventually was able to leave prison altogether.³

False constructs broke down. Because prisoners recognized something about themselves and their connections with other prisoners, they began to see each other as human beings. In 2011 we proved that CDCr's constructed racial divisions are not who we are. *The Agreement* is expressly cross-racial.

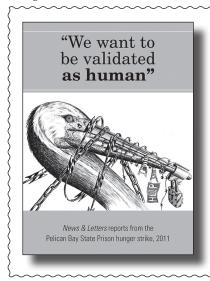
CDCr is not an isolated institution. Fomenting racial divisions is a tool of the capitalist class. Trump and Trumpism is but the latest personification of that tendency. As I mentioned, George Jackson was ahead of his time when he said "fascism is already here."

Celebrating Black August is an opportunity to re-kindle the struggle for total liberation from racist oppression, and thus set forth a new man and woman. New men and women are people who have purged themselves of the false constructs erected by capitalism.

The idea that freedom is who we are, what we are by nature, keeps reappearing in history in new particular expressions. Isn't it time to stop looking for quick organizational answers, like a conspiracy, of which Nat Turner was accused? Isn't it time to stop just hoping only for spontaneous new moments of the idea's appearance? They are happening now and will certainly continue to come in ever new forms, like, for example, Black Lives Matter. It is time to connect with the idea itself. Nat Turner said it well, when after his apprehension he told his captors: "...but cannot you think that the same idea [freedom] prompted others as well as myself to this undertaking?"

Can the idea that links Black August events, from Nat Turner in 1831 to victory over CDCr in 2011-13, explicitly inform our future?

3. See my articles, "Learning the meaning of parole," Nov-Dec. 2018 News & Letters, and "What is freedom?" July-Aug. 2019 News & Letters.



reports on the historic 2011 hunger strikes against indefinite solitary confinement. To order see p. 7.

YOUTH CLIMATE STRIKES

I am particularly impressed with and inspired by the youth and the elderly who are pushing for IMMEDI-ATE ACTION to be taken to ameliorate, to reverse-yes, that's possible IF the correct actions start occurring NOW—what I call climate damage. On Sept. 20 my husband and I marched in San Francisco with 1000 Grand-

mothers For Future Generations Bay Area, one of the locals of the larger 1000 GFFG. They especially advocate Indigenous for peoples and other peoples on the frontlines, which



includes those in the developing world who are already hardest impacted by climate damage. Youth, thank you for shouting at us adults and keep shouting! All of us who live on planet Earth-human, fauna and flora-need your activism, your passion and your ideas.

Midwest environmentalist San Francisco, Calif.

I was unable to attend Detroit's Climate Strike, which a friend reported drew about 700 people. There was little advance publicity here and all news was dominated by (1) the Detroit Youth Choir's second-place finish on "America's Got Talent" and (2) the Detroit Lions winning some football games. Although the choir didn't win the million-dollar prize, local foundations gave the group a locally-sourced \$1,000,000. I am very glad for the support DYC received, but can't help thinking what other worthy efforts could do with similar resources, like funding rehab of blighted houses that will otherwise be demolished. However, political and social will is lacking.

> **Susan Van Gelder Detroit**

truckers demonized Alberta Greta Thunberg, seeing her as their enemy, rather than capitalists' exploitation of independent truckers or the imminent threat of self-driving trucks that the industry expects to introduce. It shows how useful it is for bosses to preach that both classes are united around jobs, jobs, jobs. Trump was touting "Bring back coal" in 2016. The reality was that if he brought back coal it would bring back jobs for just the handful of heavy equipment operators leveling mountain tops and depositing them to leach into creeks and rivers. Bring Jobs Back or a vision of a world of Green Jobs are stopgap dead ends. The road to take, the self-activity of the youth in the Climate Strike movement, is not separated from the goal, a society where self-activity is possible over the continued expansion of capi-**Retired truck driver** tal.

Our nation cannot afford to debate the pros and cons of climate change and its effects on our lives. The time for taking the strongest possible measures to reverse global warming is here—in fact, we are already decades late in responding to this catastrophe. It is our great fortune that children have not yet become as apathetic and passive as older people. These courageous children and young people are the greatest hope for the survival of the human race. The need of the moment is not to question and doubt these intelligent youth. Instead it's our responsibility to feel their aliveness and be inspired by their authentic enthusiasm and concern for the welfare of our Earth and our lives. We must rejoice and respect their timely insights!

> **Rama Kumar** Fairfax, Calif.

SOCIALISM AND ECOLOGY

Regarding "Socialism and Ecol-

READERS'VIEW

system is the cause of climate disaster and the destruction of the earth and its diverse life forms. As major capitalist countries like the U.S., China, Russia, Brazil, Japan, destroy the environment for resources, more greenhouse gases are released that increase global warming. The logging industry together with worsening fires destroys CO₂-absorbing trees. The workers under the capitalist labor process work not to fulfill their human potential but to get food, shelter, clothing needs, as well as transportation, education and entertainment wants. A socialism created through elections, as electing Bernie Sanders into capitalist government, will not work. Big money corporations have too much leverage there. We need a socialism created from the masses from below together with anticapitalist educators, scientists, technologists, environmentalists, intellectuals and activists.

> Basho **Los Angeles**

In a short, powerful confrontation with world leaders at the UN on Sept. 23, 16-year-old Greta Thunberg personified the maturity of our age, which is in inverse ratio to the supposed maturity of the adults in charge. The clarity and content of this 16-year-old's message demands that any Marxist-Humanist perspective on "Ecology and Socialism" must also begin with ecology as a dimension of Marx's idea of freedom.

> **Ron Kelch** Oakland, Calif.

Now there are dozens of articles about how socialism is the solution to climate change. You would think they would put workers' self-activity at the center of it, but they don't. One I just read defined socialism as public ownership plus democratic control of production and society. Supposedly "democracy" solves the problem of the destructiveness of the "socialism" of the USSR and China. Articles like that devolve into a discussion of "socialist" policies for the government. They miss what your essay on "Socialism and Ecology" points out: only on the basis of a revolutionary change in which self-activity is the driving force, and in its very nature drives to break down the division between mental and manual labor, can we halt the direction toward ever more accumulation of capital.

Revolutionary environmentalist Southern California

The bleak vision of life on earth if it warms even two more degrees is the logical and ultimate expression of capitalism. The science was there for all to see long before Greta Thunberg walked out of school. The science was clear before Al Gore won an Oscar. The science was obvious to in-house scientists at Exxon in the 1970s, and it was obvious to Exxon that something had to be done. So what was done was shelving the science, if not perverting it.

In Marx's time, factories with unlimited working hours consumed three generations in a single generation. Today not just three generations but all future generations are at stake as we face climate catastrophe. Once again it will not be the response of capitalists that could dodge that catastrophe; it will be up to workers and youth and Indigenous activists to save capitalism from itself. But this time it will be all for naught if we don't also save the earth from capitalism.

Warehouse worker Chicago

N&L is the only publication of its kind! Wish I had known about it earlier in my prison time. I have made efforts to inform other prisoners about *N&L*. I especially enjoyed the "What Is Socialism?" essays and articles by Faruq.

Prisoner Asheville, N.C.

COUNTER-REVOLUTION AND REVOLT IN MIDEAST

I'm extremely frustrated with the news that Trump will allow a Turkish invasion of northern Syria. People say Trump sold out the Kurds, and this is of course true. But the process of selling out the Kurds has been one we've watched for years. It's been a cruel, years long, incremental plan of false promises; of Kurds being sent to the battlefield and the U.S. inching closer and closer towards Ankara while pretending to be impartial. When ISIS was "defeated," the plan was already set in motion. The Kurds would be betrayed, it was only a matter of when. Keep lying, get into the territory and pull out, hope nothing happens. If it doesn't, you'll be fine. If a problem is brought to birth, escape and deny responsibility. Either way, it'll be fine. This is the American way.

Mohammed E.

Contemporary Left, particularly in the West, has these three characteristics:

- * Civil rights advocacy as the dominant form of their activism
- * Reformism as their ultimate radicalism
- * Pro-Islamist anti-U.S. as their highest form of internationalism!

The above converts the Left in general to puppets of an array of powers as they too confront emancipationseeking masses in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Lebanon and Iran.

> **Abbas Goya** London, UK



Massive protest in Baghdad, Iraq, Oct. 26, 2019.

Lebanon is burning-forest fires have consumed large areas, leaving people homeless and destitute. Many blame the government for lack of an adequate response. But this tragedy is nowhere on U.S. mainstream media, even as revolt is exploding in Lebanon. A college student in Michigan with family in Lebanon has a campaign on FundRazr: "Help Lebanon Go Green Again" to assist people in crisis and to replant Lebanon's forests. I thought your readers would want to know.

Environmentalist Michigan

AUTO AND TEACHER STRIKES

In Detroit, there are several new elements to the GM strike. The older workers are denouncing the two-tier wage system as vehemently as their younger co-workers. Wage demands are rarely mentioned, except to end the two-tier system and to grant permanent status and a raise to temporary workers (called perma-temps because temporary is seemingly measured in geological eons, like the ice ages). They also want to see the lowertier workers gain full wage parity in a lot less than the eight years in the current contract.

Meanwhile, there are massive ripple effects of the strike to local small businesses. One owner of a company that trucks parts to GM factories may have already gone out of business, with dozens of trucks sitting idle. He said that even when the strike ends it would take him weeks to get his business up to speed again.

> **Observer Detroit**

Chicago The Teachers' Union strike that began Oct. 17 reveals that the gains of the 2012 strike are the building blocks for today's actions. Despite Chicago Public Schools closing 50 or more schools in 2013, the vision of creating "Schools Chicago's children deserve" lives on. This vision energized grassroots organizing of teachers



and school communities in statewide strikes over the past seven years in West Virginia, California and North Carolina. Even the media narrative has changed from claiming that teachers only want more money, to reporting first and foremost the demands for support staffing including librarians, music and art teachers, nurses, and social workers. **Retired Teacher New Jersey**

The striking Chicago teachers will not let go the demand for social workers and nurses in every school. For the last five, six years, that has been the focus for Chicagoland and so many other urban centers. There's a focus on trauma support because some of the children experience something like war zone trauma. People who want to support the strike should ask the picketing teachers about their demands around social work, and having a nurse in every school, particularly focused on trauma.

> **Teacher Chicagoland**

BREXIT AND LABOR

Amid the increasing political and legal maneuvers of a divided Parliament and Prime Minister Boris Johnson over Brexit, three realities emerge. One: despite all the economic reasons for British citizens to remain in the European Union, racism against immigrants from Asia, Africa and the Middle East has motivated many to decide that leaving is better. Two: the "deal" that Prime Minister Johnson worked out eliminated many workers' rights and protections that had been elements of the previous agreement. Three: huge numbers of British, Scottish and Northern Irish citizens continue to see the folly of Brexit and continue to protest.

Shaking My Head USA

To our incarcerated readers

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.

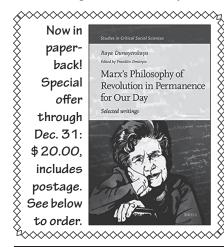
We welcome your contributions to N&L and for our website. There are some things we cannot provide. We do not match up pen pals. N&L cannot help prisoners with individual legal cases, and we cannot offer legal advice or access to attorneys. This paper is a place where the voices of people engaged in struggles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

ogy" (Sept.-Oct. N&L): the capitalist

PERMANENT REVOLUTION AND THE DIALECTIC

Too bad there was not room for a fuller title than "Permanent Revolution and Dialectic" for Raya Dunavevskava's discussion in the Sept.-Oct. N&L. Perhaps "Permanent Revolution's Relation to the Hegelian Dialectic of Absolute Negativity: in Marx's Thought, as Forces of Revolution as Reason, and in its Significance for Today." Unwieldy, but it gives an indication of what she was grappling with. What's been lost in much of the discussion by today's Marxologists is Marx's deep indebtedness and at the same time profound critique/recreation of Hegel's dialectic in relation to a recognition by Marx of subjects of revolution as Mind as well as muscle of social transformation. Without that, the meaning of Marx's revolution in permanence for our day is lost. Dunayevskaya is intent on recovering the development of Marx's concept of permanent revolution—particularly its rootedness in Hegel's dialectic of absolute negativity and in the revolutionary subjects of his day. Marx's permanent revolution has philosophic origins and the flesh and blood of his day's emancipatory struggles. Dunayevskaya points out a trail of Marx's concept to her day. Isn't our task to explore the significance of this concept for the 21st century? **Eugene Walker Mexico City**

"Permanent Revolution and the Dialectic" begins with Karl Marx after the suppression of the 1848 Revolutions that he had been immersed in. The conclusions Marx drew, the opposite of the depression that many revolu-



tionaries fell into politically, preserved the high point of the defeated revolution in his category of revolution in permanence. Dunayevskaya was able



to measure selfthe described Marxists of her day against Marx's

Marxism, and single out new revolutionary impulses shaking off imperialism in Africa and Asia or revolting against state-capitalism calling itself Communism. Marx and Dunayevskaya couldn't be more relevant to the Syrian Revolution, which wrested control of most of the country from Bashar al-Assad and was governed by autonomous committees, only to be pushed close to defeat by Assad's counter-revolutionary partners Russia and Iran. Yet revolutionaries are determined their accomplishments be preserved for the next revolution in **Bob McGuire** Syria or the world. Chicago

Articles on the thought of G.W.F. Hegel are very interesting. Harder to wrap my head around than Kant. Thank you. Prisoner Walpole, Mass.

VOICES FROM BEHIND BARS

I like that N&L calls for unity among the marginalized masses, but as an incarcerated individual the only thing I am seeing is one's race. We are divided by racial lines, and it's my belief that the system (Dept. of Corrections) encourages this division among prisoners. As long as we're fighting among ourselves, we'll never address the real problem, the prison-industrial complex. We live in miserable conditions, hungry, cold, and under constant attack by staff both psychologically and physically. One hundred yards from where I'm writing these lines, beyond the barbed-wire fence, lies one of the richest nations, but we live in constant lack, in constant need of basic necessities. **Prisoner**

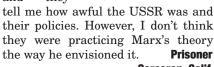
Aberdeen, Wash.

I think that innocent people are given life sentences for money. It supposedly costs \$75,000 a year per inmate. I live here and I can assure you, it costs no more than \$5,000 a year for me. The other \$70,000 is going directly in someone's pockets. That is \$150,000 a year for a six by eight two-man cellthe most expensive hotel in the world! Yet my continental breakfast is garbage. That may be because prison officials regularly pilfer the food budget. Pure greed! And all of this profit is in a state-run institution that is supposed to be non-profit. Thieves in a suit and tie! They are the ones with guns and jails. Who can fight that? **Prisoner**

Calipatria, Calif.

I like N&L. However, I still have no idea what Marx's theory will look like in modern society. I want an example of how everything will work, like education, rights, workforce, police, government. Will people be free to do what they want? Can I become a billionaire? Growing up in America, all you get is propaganda about Marx's theory. Always comparing it to the evil USSR.

I have a friend who lived in counthat try was under USSR rule, and thev



Corcoran, Calif.

You have been shining a new light in my eyes on things that are happening that I don't hear anywhere else. I enjoy your articles. I have learned a lot. Please keep up the hard work and **Prisoner** keep the light shining.

Kenedy, Texas

I would appreciate a copy of your Pelican Bay Hunger Strikes pamphlet. We are experiencing similar problems with the sadistic prisoncrats who run things here. In 2015 thanks to the Mandela Rules SHU/seg time was lowered drastically here. A lot of staff were upset. Now they are sticking us with as many rule violations as possible for each situation so they can stack seg time from 30 days to several 30-day periods run consecutively. They are using unconstitutional "gang activity" charges in order to apply "administrative control," which is simply a different title that allows them to keep one in segregation for an additional 90 days. I learned to hate in prison!

West Liberty, Ky.

I'd like to see more promotion of the right to vote for all inmates. We need a voice in government.

> Prisoner Newport, Ark.

I grew up Black on the south side of Houston. The education system in Texas, much like the rest of Amerikkka, is culturally biased and tries to blind us to the history of the real world. N&L is some of the best education out there, and I share the paper with anyone who is willing to listen, open up their mind, and learn. I have known a small bit about Marx through the years, but I didn't begin to study and fully understand his philosophy till about five years ago. I love N&L because it's a fearless paper all about truth. All of the mainstream media are whitewashed and print just to entertain and program weak minds. *N&L* holds nothing back and educates readers on what's real. I would love to continue my subscription and give a huge thanks to y'all and the donors who help us stay connected to the real news. We are all one and will not fall.

Your brother in struggle Midway, Texas

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.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTER

by Raya Dunayevskaya

- ☐ Marxism and Freedom: from 1776 until Today Foreword by Joel Kovel \$24.95
- ☐ Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao \$24.95
- ☐ Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution 1991 edition. Foreword by Adrienne Rich \$24.95
- ☐ Russia: From Proletarian Revolution to State-Capitalist Counter-Revolution
- ☐ Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence MEWI for Our Day \$24.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future \$24.95
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- □ Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions
- ☐ Guides to Collection and Supplement to Raya **Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism:** A Half Century of Its World Development

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- □ El poder de la negatividad: Escritos sobre la dialéctica en Hegel y Marx \$10.00
- ☐ Contradicciones históricas en la civilización de Estados Unidos: Las masas afroamericanas como vanguardia

by Charles Denby

☐ Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal Includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya \$14.95

by Eugene Gogol

- ☐ Towards a Dialectic of Philosophy and Organization \$27.95
- ☐ Utopia and the Dialectic in Latin American Liberation \$27.95

Other publications

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

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

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Greta Thunberg: *No One Is Too Small*

No One Is Too Small to Make a Difference, by Greta Thunberg (Penguin Books, 2019) is a beau-



tiful collection of speeches, and one Facebook post, by the now 16-year-old Swedish trailblazer of climate school strikes. With clarity and bluntness, they express the attitudes of the youth movement. Millions of people were moved by video of Thunberg's speech at the Sept. 23 UN Climate Action Summit during the week of the third Global Climate Strike. Coming after the book's publication, that

speech is not included here. This collection, touching on all Thunberg's main themes, is worth reading.

'EVERYTHING NEEDS TO CHANGE'

She never lets go of the need to recognize the crisis and confront it now—that it means "Everything needs to change. And it has to start today." Again and again, she declares that we need to "change the system, "with "permanent and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society," that we need new politics, new economics, a whole new way of thinking. This flows from a better understanding of the science than most policymakers and business leaders have.

Thunberg bluntly tells economic and political leaders she does not believe they will rise to the challenge—but "change is coming, whether you like it or not." She criticizes their dedication to economic growth, their selling the youth's future "so that a small number of people could make unimaginable amounts of money. But it is the sufferinger

money....But it is the sufferings of the many which pay for the luxuries of the few." She attacks the idea that everyone is to blame for the climate crisis.

No wonder she is the target of vicious, dishonest, anti-youth attacks! Thunberg turns it around sim-

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

continued from p. 1

Both stories are examples of generational incarceration, the trend of familial imprisonment exacerbated by the confinement of one or more family members—especially parents—and the risks associated with these incarcerations on their children.

It is estimated that at least 1.5% of the population of the U.S. is incarcerated, while another 2% to 3% are under some other form of judicial sanction (parole or probation). It is also estimated that everyone in the country has at least one family member, friend, or acquaintance who is currently confined or under some sort of sanction which risks confinement.

Several million children have at least one parent, sibling, or other family member locked up in a state, federal, or county prison. The negative effects that a child might suffer when one or both of their parents are incarcerated can range from antisocial behavior to drug use or eventual incarceration, completing a cycle.

PRISON BECOMES A RITE OF PASSAGE

What's frightening and disturbing is that, with such a high rate of incarceration, the alleged deterrent effect of imprisonment is nonexistent as the practice has become so mainstream that it appears to be more a rite of passage—especially in predominantly minority neighborhoods—than punishment. This seems to be especially true as more states waive younger juveniles to be tried as adults.

The end result is an exacerbation of the conditions that reinforce generational incarceration by ensuring that a younger group of prisoners spend more years in prison due to their tender ages when first incarcerated. This also means that the only social interactions they will be familiar with are those within prison walls.

We cannot accurately determine the number of children who are incarcerated as a direct result of a familial imprisonment anymore than we can determine how many children avoid incarceration after the confinement of a parent or other family member; no statistics are kept regarding such factors.

What we can determine, however, is the continued negative social impact that generational incarceration has on families and communities of color, especially when prison is being used less as a deterrent and more as a form of social, cultural, and economical control.

ply enough, pointing out that the personal attacks reveal an inability to attack the movement and the science. She refuses to apologize for being young—"if everyone listened to the scientists and the facts that I constantly refer to then no one would have to listen to me or any of the other hundreds of thousands of school-children on strike for the climate across the world"—or for having Asperger's.

Dialectics is here too—not the word but the spirit of Karl Marx's "In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary":

"We live in a strange world, where children must sacrifice their own education in order to protest against the destruction of their future.

"Where the people who have contributed the least to this crisis are the ones who are going to be affected the most.

"Where politicians say it's too expensive to save the world, while spending trillions of euros subsidizing fossil fuels.



Greta Thunberg together with activists in the school strike for the climate outside the Swedish Parliament on Friday, April 12, 2019.

"We live in a strange world, where no one dares to look beyond our current political systems even though it's clear that the answers we seek will not be found within the politics of today."

These speeches are not theoretical texts. They are brilliant rhetoric that captures the passions of the youth movement. Nevertheless, the need for theory emerges because the book illuminates where the movement's thought needs to be clarified.

THE NEED FOR THEORY EMERGES

Thunberg wisely says the youth do not have all the answers, but that turns into the demand for decision-makers to "unite behind the science." It is a powerful political demand that undercuts claims that children don't know enough to tell adults what to do. Science has been under blatant attack by oil companies and their allies and shills. However, asking the rulers to unite behind the science leaves the decisions in their hands and invites them to continue distorting scientific findings and pretending that policy and "the market" are in a separate realm. The insight that all aspects of society have to change needs to be carried through here too.

The call for politicians to "set your differences aside" recognizes conflicts between parties, between nations, and between "the sufferings of the many" and "the luxuries of the few." Again, the system needs to change fundamentally, because those conflicts cannot just be set aside.

As this book makes clear, total change of the system is what the movement is reaching for, and Thunberg's passionate, powerful speeches help articulate that.

—Franklin Dmitryev

A different me from 20 years ago

Twenty years ago, when I was 20, you could not have convinced me that my life up to then, everyday violence and gangs, was not "normal."

Hearing shots during breakfast and hiding under the table were normal for us. Even just two years ago, when I was applying for a commutation of my sentence, I thought only of returning to my family, to the way life was 20 years ago.

Now I see that my family wants the "me" of 20 years ago, they want me back to return to the way we have lived.

But I have changed. I still value the principles my family taught me, like loyalty. But now I feel loyalty to humanity. Acts of human kindness move me.

If and when I get out of here I want to help others who have suffered. I want to help victims of natural disasters, or wars, or other tragedies. This is how I envision my future. —Life Without Parole prisoner

Readers: We want to hear from you! Write to us or email! See contact information, p. 9.

Rebuilding our lives

Oakland, Calif.—On Oct. 19 the organization A New Way of Life, a re-entry program for women rebuilding their lives after prison, presented their new project: Testif-I, a living library story-telling event aiming to change public dialogue on mass incarceration. Over lunch we sat around tables, and former prisoners told their stories. They encouraged questions and participation from others. After 20 minutes at one table, we moved onto another table, and another story.

One of the former prisoners we heard from was Katie Dixon. A young Black woman first arrested at age 11, after spending a total of eight years in prison she is now focused on building publicity for prisoners' success stories. Lydia Lozano, a Mexican-American mother who found it almost impossible to find a job since she has a conviction on her record, now works as a peer parent advocate at A New Way of Life. London Croudy, a Black woman coerced into taking a plea deal for a crime she did not commit, did nine years in federal prison and is now a fellow at Legal Services for Prisoners with Children. There were others, including Terah Lawyer (see "Creating homes for ex-prisoners," Sept.-Oct. N&L).

What shone through in every story was the profound change each of the former prisoners made in themselves. This society produces a lot of broken people. Prison aims to break them again, even more. Yet these women found their humanity in themselves in response to the de-humanization they experienced before and during prison. Now they are devoting their lives to helping others, one person, one story, at a time.

—Urszula

Save the rainforest!

Beverly Hills, Calif.—On Sept. 27, a coalition of about 400 activists gathered in front of Brazil's Consulate here to protest the policies of the Brazilian government—especially its negligence regarding the burning of the Amazon rainforest—and to express their indignation toward the policies of the U.S. government for not participating in the world Paris Agreement to reduce greenhouse gases. As Greta Thunberg mentioned, the leaders are not doing anything substantial to prevent worldwide pollution. According to the World Health Organization, 13 people are dying every minute from air pollution. Meanwhile the Amazon forest, known as "the lungs of the earth," is burning.

By the afternoon, the protest extended to the four corners of the intersection. According to the Center for International Environmental Law, the incineration of only one by-product of capital, plastic, will generate 850 million metric tons of greenhouse gases—equal to the emission from 189 new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plants. Multiply that by the immense number of industries taking in the Earth's resources and spitting out products that are not needed!

"I think it's important to be at the Brazilian consulate because the Earth is the only home that we have," said young activist Rebecca Porter. "It has sustained us for so long, and it doesn't make any sense to be killing the planet that sustains you. We don't have anywhere else to go. We definitely need wide-scale policy changes to help protect it. I do what I can at home, but our government needs to get behind the goal of creating change, pass the Green New Deal, and head in that direction. Our situation now is very problematic and not getting any better."

Many protesters were carrying signs saying "End Capitalism." It may prove a Herculean task to move this monstrosity out of the way, but the need and the willingness to participate in offering a replacement for this system is the real challenge. What human relationship do we agree on to replace capitalism? Since the human imagination has created the capital relationship, it can also come up with its antithesis, which will be the beginning of what Marx had called "permanent revolution."

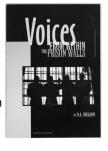
—Mannel

Voices from within the Prison Walls

-by D. A. Sheldon

From the Preface: "This pamphlet is written by a prisoner who has experienced

America's hell-holes first hand. But it is not just a solitary voice. It is the product of an active back-and-forth with dozens, and indeed hundreds of others." To order see page 7. Add an extra \$5 and we'll send a subscription to a prisoner for free.



'For Sama': video as **Syrian revolt**

Evanston, III.—Documentary filmmaker Joshka Wessels, a professor at the University of Malmö in Sweden with experience in Syria since 1997, spoke at Northwestern University and the Evanston Public Library on Sept. 30 on her book Documenting Syria. The peaceful mass demonstrations of March 2011 that began the nearly nine-year-long Syrian Revolution did not come out of a creative void, she said; rather they followed three generations of resistance to the 40-year dynasty of Assad. With the realities of resistance so dangerous to the Hafez al-Assad and then the Bashar al-Assad regime, filmmakers, like poets and journalists, worked knowing they risked long sentences in regime prisons.

Wessels chronicled around 246 documentary films from the eve of the Syrian Revolution on. In 2010 young filmmakers made a video of sheltering refugees from drought in the northeast. They were the Greta Thunbergs of 2010, clandestinely giving aid to eco-refugees, Wessels said.

DOCUMENTING THE REVOLUTION

Filmmaker Bassel Shehadeh went to Homs to document multi-religious demonstrations. His last film was Streets of Freedom, before he was killed in 2012.

A host of activists have uploaded videos of the death and destruction from barrel bombs and of continued marches against Assad. Assad apologists have questioned the legitimacy of video from liberated areas under attack and sometimes without power. Wessels said the answer was USB sticks and satellites using signal encryption.

From 2014 on, underground networks in Ragga documented atrocities under ISIS rule. Wessels asked them, why risk your life? All answered: We smelled freedom and wanted to show the world.

In spite of Assad regime lies that the White Helmets, who rescued victims from bomb rubble, were "terrorists," an Oscar nomination gave Last Men in Aleppo a wider audience. In the same tradition of recording and preserving the truth, the newly released documentary For Sama must be seen.

The filmmaker, Waad Al-Khateab, explains the title as a letter to her daughter Sama, born during the revolution, on why her parents continued their defiance in Aleppo rather than joining the millions as refugees. Waad's home was in Aleppo, a center of liberated Syria, and from the beginning she recorded exuberant peaceful demonstrations.

Her "home movies" caught the wider truth of the Syrian Revolution under the bombardment of Assad, and then Putin, because her close friend, later her husband, was on the front lines of the resistance as a medical school graduate who ran one of the makeshift hospitals. When that hospital was bombed, the space he found to reopen, since it was not known as a hospital, became the last hospital standing as Russians using UN-supplied GPS locations targeted every other hospital. The end of the movie shows the even greater privation of the sixmonth-long siege of Aleppo at the end of 2016.

SAVING ONE LIFE

During the siege we find human moments large and small. More people share apartments as bombings destroy East Aleppo, and little Sama plays like life is normal. We see how thrilling a single pomegranate was for the pregnant Waad. The staff delivered a seemingly dead infant from the lifeless body of his mother. They worked on him for minute after minute—the collective gasp from the ER staff on screen as the baby opened his eyes was echoed by the gasps of audience members, all agreeing that rescuing even one life from genocide was a victory.

The movie ends as buses expel the surviving population of liberated Aleppo into Idlib. But the Syrian Revolution still refuses to die despite nine years of repression. -Free Syria activist

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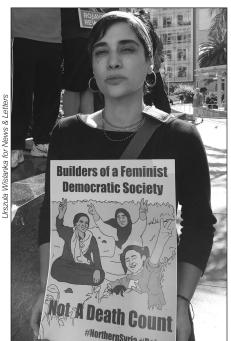
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Kurds in U.S. protest Trump's betrayal

continued from p. 1

exiles who won asylum from the brutal assault on Kurds in Turkey. They appealed for help in protecting people in northern Syria. They recounted that Erdoğan's militias are pulling over cars, ordering passengers out, shooting them, and all the while be-



and proud of their actions. The films brazenly posted on social media. The crassness of Trump's betrayal of the U.S.-allied Kurds northern

fol-Syria, lowing phone conversawith tion Erdoğan, even

shocked the

tary and political establishment in Washington. In Trump's world only authoritarian strongmen who crush opposition within their own country get respect. It is akin to capitalist CEOs who use people until they can discard them with impunity, except here those discarded face not just unemployment but wholesale slaughter or joining the global army of refugees subjected to an inhuman status and treat-

-Marxist-Humanists

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Hundreds of Palestinians on Aug. 1 protested the stabbing of a Palestinian Transgender teenager named Tamra outside an LGBTQ youth center in Tel Aviv. They demanded "Liberation without restraints—not by the occupiers and not by the patriarchy!" (Thanks to Rula Khaleileh of Women Against Violence.) Two days later, to commemorate a Queer teen murdered one year ago, thousands marched against transphobia and violence against LGBTQ people.

Women and Children First (WCF) in Chicago was vandalized three times this autumn with anti-Transgender stickers like those used against a feminist bookseller in Liverpool. Other neighboring businesses reported similar incidents. On Oct. 20, Transgender people and their supporters gathered in WCF's neighborhood to hear speakers calling for support of Trans people and denouncing hate. Many wrote Trans-affirming messages in chalk on the sidewalks and windows of the bookstore.

Several teachers guit and two families removed their children from Kings High School, in Shoreline, Wash. over the Christian school's new policy that faculty must sign a document stating the Bible is inerrant and, therefore, sexual expression is only allowed within heterosexual marriage. Via social media, numerous students and families are protesting the policy and supporting Queer students and their families. Kings is part of the \$100 million corporation CRISTO, which also runs retirement communities, radio stations and international relief work.

Ames, Iowa, is ignoring the Federal Highway Administration's order to remove their rainbow crosswalks. The FHWA claimed the colorful crosswalks could be distracting to drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians and cause collisions. City attorney Mark Lambert replied the crosswalks are compliant and the federal government has no say about Ames city streets. Two crosswalks are in LGBT Pride colors, one is in Transgender Pride colors and one is in Nonbinary Pride colors.

Crossroads

History

Crossroads of History: Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East ON SALE: Only \$8 postpaid through December 31 if you mention this ad.



Los Angeles-On Oct. 15, more than 140 Los Angeles residents signed up to give public comment regarding a proposed ordinance to require setbacks of at least 2.500 feet between homes and oil derricks and refineries.

Sherri Lear introduced herself as "a single mom, a resident of San Pedro and a business owner in Torrance. I live in the shadows of the Phillips 66 refinery, and I work in the shadows of the Torrance refinery. If you come down to Wilmington you will see that these are literally next to people's backyards. They are in the parking lot at the Carson Target, in parking lots of churches. There are zero setbacks."

Only days after firefighters had quelled a ferocious blaze in the mountains north of Porter Ranch, Calif., where a major natural gas leak had been detected at a SoCalGas facility in 2016, John Carran reminded the chamber that "the hills of Aliso Canyon are charred black right now. A hundred thousand people had to evacuate during the fires and had to wonder if there would be another explosion."

Meanwhile, just before 2:00 p.m., a NuStar refinery caught fire 20 miles north of Oakland. A contractor told KPIX that he dove into a drainage ditch to avoid being burned to death in an explosion.

As 100,000 gallons of ethanol continued to burn for seven hours, I-80 was closed in both directions.

Residents were told to shelter inside their homes and to cover the thresholds of exterior doors

The Arab Spring lives

continued from p. 1

youth—political corruption, crumbling infrastructure, and shortages of electricity and clean water. As in Egypt, the state security apparatus, supported by the U.S. and Iran, responded with extreme brutality.

Thousands were shot, with over one hundred protesters killed and over 6,000 injured. Hundreds were arrested. Journalists, broadcast outlets, and the internet were also targeted in an effort to stop news of this brutality from reaching the outside world.

Most of the protests occurred in Shi'a districts. Despite this, snipers from Iranian-run Shi'a militias were used to fire on the crowds from Baghdad rooftops. The call for justice quickly escalated to a nonsectarian call for social revolution.

ANTI-SECTARIANISM IN LEBANON

Later in October, the Lebanese government's plan to tax a popular messaging app sparked nationwide protests against corruption, unemployment, inflation and public debt. As in Egypt and Iraq, the class basis of these protests was clear. The poor, whether Shi'a, Sunni, or Christian, rose up against their own "leaders." Shi'a protesters openly criticized Hezbollah leader Hasran Nasrallah.

Significantly, support was expressed for Syrian refugees threatened by the government with deportation back to the genocidal clutches of the Assad regime and its Russian, Iranian, and Hezbollah backers.

In return, Free Syrians in Idlib expressed solidarity with the Lebanese demonstrations, as well as those in Iraq and Egypt.

These protests continue to develop. At the same time, as if to symbolize the state of the nation, wildfires made worse through climate change and government neglect have been consuming the legendary forests of Lebanon, whose flag bears the central image of the cedar tree.

RULING CLASS LIED TO THEMSELVES

Together with ongoing revolutionary uprisings in Sudan and Algeria, and even recent free elections in Tunisia, this moment gives the lie to the bourgeoisie's illusions and reveals the widespread desire, shared across the region, for a new, human society.

The rulers' fear that this passion from below could coalesce around a thought, a philosophy of revolution, drives them to double down on nationalistic, militaristic and religious-reactionary ideology and their illusions: that the existing order of exploitation and injustice could retreat behind its fortress walls of prisons and concentration camps; its bloated militaries; its armed borders; its surveillance cams and police databases; its mythologies of racism and religious bigotry. That every human impulse to solidarity and freedom could be melted down in this inferno and reminted into one endlessly repeated stamp of the commodity form.

In response to al-Thawra, the Arab Spring revolutions of 2011, the bourgeois world order gambled on violence, even genocidal violence, to drown the masses' humanism in blood and nightmare. They have now clearly lost that terrible gamble.

Washington and Moscow, Beijing, London, and Paris, with all their clients, allies, and surrogates, have only succeeded in passing the final verdict on themselves and their brutal, hypocritical order.

GM strike ends

continued from p. 1

pay and without healthcare or other benefits, not to mention the widespread employment of subcontractors within the factory under yet other conditions.

The new contract does not dismantle that



G.M strikers walking the picket line at night on Oct. 16, 2019.

system; it chips away at the damaging divisions by shortening the time to four years for second-tier workers before they will receive the full wage and offering a path for workers, laboring for years as temps, to finally become permanent. But it does not restore what any union representing its workers should fight for: equal treatment for all union brothers and sisters. What will stop GM now from hiring even more temps, even with the antagonism of the rank and file, and what will the provision of giving the union a voice in hiring temps mean beyond legitimizing the temp's second-class status?

Commentators included as "wins" for workers issues where they did not lose further ground. The contract kept workers' contribution to healthcare at 3%. At the beginning of negotiations GM had demanded that workers pay more for their healthcare than the current 3% of wages. In the 2007 contract GM had established a separate fund for healthcare and benefit obligations that would be administered by the UAW. Petroleum companies accepting billions in annual subsidies from the U.S. Treasury and auto companies forcing bailouts have been skilled at supping at the public trough. Now workers rebel at getting a few crumbs while the bailed out companies are rolling in profits. Universal healthcare would sharply lower GM's labor costs and increase the surplus value it squeezes out of its workers. But somehow, on this issue, GM is not outdoing Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders in demanding Medicare For All.

BUY AMERICAN?

GM is the Big 3 company most invested in factories in Mexico, expanding production in the last five years and even building its Cadillacs there while paying wages of under \$3 an hour. It refused to budge on bringing production back to the U.S. This despite the fact that Japanese, Korean, German and other European automakers consider the wages for U.S. labor cheap enough to exploit. In fact, they now assemble more "foreign" cars in the U.S. than GM, Ford and Fiat Chrysler build. UAW negotiators raised the issue of returning production back to U.S. plants, or at least gaining guarantees that more production would not be moved out of the country. But they did not make those issues a deal-breaker.

Instead the UAW appeared to work with GM to craft an agreement with just enough in it for ratification from the rank and file. Workers who had spent almost five weeks on the picket line, nearly all of it collecting just \$250 in weekly strike benefits did ratify it, 57% to 43%. The big carrot is the ratification bonus of \$11,000 for permanent workers and \$4,500 for temps. The full hourly wage is raised to \$32.32, with 3% raises in the first and third years, and lump sum payments in the other years.

ORGANIZING IN THE SOUTH

By tradition this GM contract would be the model for contracts with Ford and Fiat Chrysler. But beyond that, some workers campaigning for union representation in foreign-owned auto plants in the South are counting on this strike to energize their fellow workers. Even with some striking GM workers openly suspicious about the kind of contract union bureaucrats would return, and with UAW President Gary Jones under the cloud of an FBI raid of his home, the strength of 49,000 workers speaking out on the picket lines might be an inspiration.

The failure of the UAW in its announced policy in the 1950s and 1960s of union organizing in the South, which *News & Letters* Founding Editor Charles Denby attributed to the failure to confront racism, has had consequences in the number of nonunion auto plants today. Likewise, the working class in Detroit and Flint and Hermosillo, Mexico and Shanghai, all are opposing a common enemy. A common enemy calls for acts of solidarity across regions and across borders.

と必 HANDICAPTHIS!

by Tim Finnigan

In a victory for disability rights, the U.S. Supreme Court has refused to review a lower court ruling allowing a blind plaintiff to sue Domino's Pizza under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) over the company's inaccessible website. The ruling held that the ADA applies to business websites as well as physical premises. This is an issue that goes far beyond just ordering pizza. As Chris Danielsen of the National Federation of the Blind stated, "Had Domino's succeeded in getting a ruling that the ADA doesn't cover the internet, the ability of blind people to participate in 21st-Century society would have been in jeopardy."



Disability
rights advocate
Marca Bristo
passed away Sept.
8, at age 66, following a long battle
with cancer. Paralyzed from the
chest down after
a diving accident
at age 23, Bristo
played a signifi-

cant role in helping to pass the ADA in 1990. She was also a founder and CEO of Access Living in Chicago, an organization that works to promote independent living. Bristo was one of that generation of activists, influenced by the Black and women's liberation movements, who "reframed the disability experience from a health issue into a civil rights issue," as she said.

A chain of Orange County, California, residential care homes for people with disabilities has been assessed over \$1 million in back wages and penalties. The chain paid its workers, mostly immigrants from the Philippines, as little as \$4 an hour for working up to 87 hours per week. This isn't rare in California. Since 2016, U.S. labor officials assessed over \$3 million in back wages owed to over 1,500 healthcare workers there. Since 2014, state officials have also issued citations for over \$12.8 million in back wages and penalties.

This June, British rock climber Jesse Dufton, who was born with rod-cone dystrophy, became the first blind climber to lead the ascent of the Old Man of Hoy, an intimidatingly sheer 450foot sandstone rock formation in the Orkney Islands of northern Scotland. His



Jesse Dufton and climbing partner Molly Thompson at the summit of Bamford Edge.

feat is documented in a new film, "Climbing Blind," which is being shown in the UK.

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The 5th anniversary of Ayotzinapa



Protesters outside the Attorney General's office in Mexico City demanding the safe return of the students, November 2014.

Mexico City—Lies, evasion, cover-up and assemblies around the events of Ayotzinapa were the only response during the entire time of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto's corrupt government. Ten months after Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) took office, he has only held meetings with the relatives of the 43 Ayotzinapa disappeared students, giving a "beautiful speech" and taking pictures with them. But what is the result?

'LIVE THEY TOOK THEM...'

For five painful years, with determination and dignity the mothers and fathers of Ayotzinapa have sought their children, the 43 students of the Isidro Burgos normal school. The students were disappeared from the streets of Ayotzinapa. Their parents demanded justice, including the imprisonment of all involved in this horrendous crime and its cover-up.

"...WE WANT THEM BACK ALIVE!"

The students' relatives and the normalists—young men and women from several normal schools who have often accompanied them—have touched all in Mexico with their demand: "Live they took them, we want them back alive!" Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in solidarity. They know that the disappearance of the 43 youth was not only an horrific act by drug traffickers, but it was carried out with the full support of the government.

There has been a growing awareness of the rot, impunity, corruption and criminality that has characterized Mexican society for decades and made the disappearance of the 43 students—and dozens (or hundreds?) of others possible. The rejection in the last election of the Institutional Revolutionary/National Action parties shows that a good part of Mexico is saying "Enough is enough!" And yet, only weeks before this fifth anniversary of the disappearance of the 43 students, a judge released 24 police officers from prison who were implicated in their kidnappings! This occurred after El Gil, a narco leader suspected of being involved in the kidnappings, was also released.

During these five years, local, state and the federal government, have poorly investigated, with dozens of arrests often accompanied by torture to obtain "confessions." Earlier, Peña Nieto's administration blocked the work of a group of experts from Argentina, who had made valuable contributions to an authentic investigation.

How can we know the truth when judges, the attorney general, the army, prosecutors and state and local officials—perhaps all of them "friends" of drug trafficking gangs—are bogging down the investigation? The deputy secretary of Human Rights, Population and Migration of the Ministry of the Interior, Alejandro Encinas, made a strong statement attacking the "misery" of justice here in Mexico. But he has no real power to transform the situation.

WHAT THE PARENTS HAVE TAUGHT US

Can the fight against the "corruption" of AMLO change anything fundamental? The disease in Mexico is more serious than the "misery" of justice, or what political elections can cure. A more fundamental transformation of society is needed. The answer is not in any "political solution," or even in new arrests.

An emancipatory solution must begin with the awareness of what the mothers and fathers of Ayotzinapa have taught us. Their refusal to be "bought," their insistence on continuing the search for their children, demanding truth and obtaining justice is what points us in the direction of the required change: a profound social transformation.

Implicit in the demands of the fathers and mothers for the return of their children is a challenge of achieving a social transformation that ends impunity, corruption and rot. Implicit in its permanent mobilization is the search for a new human beginning in Mexico. Can we make explicit what has been implicit in the demands of the 43 Ayotzinapa students' parents, their demands for answers and justice; the concrete need for a permanent revolution that throws away the old society and begins the construction of a new one on truly human principles? This is the challenge we have before us.

-- Editorial, translated from Praxis en América Latina

Voices of young and old from the Global Climate Strike

Global Climate Strike

Chicago—On the first day of the third Global Climate Strike, Sept. 20, thousands of people, mostly teenagers, marched to the Loop and rallied. Across the world, four million people participated—the biggest climate action ever. newsandletters.org was one of 7,371 websites that observed the Digital Climate Strike. The events, 5,800 actions in 163 countries, continued with 2.7 million more people in various places for a week, before and after the UN's Climate Action Summit on Sept. 23, culminating in a Sept. 27 Earth General Strike.

YOUTH TAKE THE LEAD



Jeda untuk Iklim: Global Climate Strike, Sept. 20, 2019, in Jakarta,

Hearing the chants dominated by children's voices was quite moving. So was seeing so many very young people coming out in all seriousness to call for a drastic social transformation to save their future and the future of humanity from the climate and extinction catastrophe. We are already living through its early stages, and it will grow much worse if business as usual is allowed to steamroll on.

As we rallied, six named tropical cyclones were swirling in the Atlantic and Eastern Pacific—tying a modern record. One, Hurricane Humberto, had brushed the Bahamas a week earlier—complicating its recovery from the disaster wrought by Hurricane Dorian—and then subjected Bermuda to hurricane-force winds. Another, Tropical Storm Imelda, dumped more than 40 inches of rain on parts of Texas, causing catastrophic flooding, much of it in places flooded by Hurricane Harvey two years ago; Imelda and Harvey both broke rainfall records. More and more intense hurricanes and cyclone-caused flooding can be expected with global warming.

This was no trick of brilliant scheduling for the climate strike, since every week brings a new climate disaster, according to a recent UN report.

The difficulties in store for the movement are shown by the fact that in China, the country where the largest amount of greenhouse gases is currently being emitted, no strike was allowed to happen. That is not for lack of concern by the youth, as in 16-year-old Howey Ou's solitary climate strike in Guilin earlier this year until the police forced her to stop. The Communist Party tightly controls information, portraying leader Xi Jinping as constructing an "ecological civilization" and making the country a climate leader, while stamping out reports of pollution and the effects of the continuing massive burning of coal and construction of more coal-fired power plants abroad. The government has even set up its own "China Youth Climate Action Network," whose line is that youth need to "work with" the government rather than protest.

CAPITALIST LIE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

The difficulties are seen as well in the West. Countries like the U.S.—which has emitted the greatest amount of greenhouse gases cumulatively—Australia and Brazil are controlled by entrenched capitalist minorities that undermine science, spread lies, and double down on deforestation and fossil fuel production, export and consumption, while slashing environmental regulations. Canada and European countries with greener images talk a good game while pushing production and use of coal and tar sands oil.

That is why the youth are saying, we don't want to hear you talk about climate. We want to see real action. Sixteen-year-old Swedish climate strike pioneer Greta Thunberg told the U.S. Congress:

"Please save your praise. We don't want it. Don't invite us here to just tell us how inspiring we are without actually doing anything about it. We don't want to be heard. We want the science to be heard."

At the same time, there is a great stirring of ideas around what deep social problems have prevented real action from happening, and what kind of social transformation is needed to set humanity on a new track. That stirring of ideas has been intensified by the massive activity and the questions the youth have been raising. Both the mass activities and the ferment of ideas will continue to grow.

—Franklin Dmitryev

Climate strikers speak

Chicago—I'm here because I'm thinking about all of humanity. We don't need to destroy people's lands and force them to become climate refugees, although we should welcome them with open arms and stand up against racism or xenophobia. Some places are already uninhabitable. It scares me. It's happening now. I am just amazed that people choose profit over human lives. I need to stand up for my future. I want to feel comfortable having a family and being assured that they will live on a safe earth.

I've never done anything like this. There's something sublime about it. It's powerful. I've known about the climate strike and Greta Thunberg for six months or so, from seeing the news. It's really exciting. The community here is great. And so many people. I hear that millions and millions of people are striking.

—Ashley

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Chicago—I'm here because I care deeply about the environment and I try to do my part. I thought it was not only a good thing, not only something I wanted to do, but a responsibility to be here.

I'm 29 years old. I started learning about global warming around 2000. Later, I was struck by Al Gore's documentary An Inconvenient Truth. I remember learning about the destruction of rainforests and the polar ice cap melting. What really tugged at my heartstrings were the animals dying due to global warming. What really gets me is the humanitarian crisis of people and animals. We share this earth. I think we should all put this together in a more habitable way.

I remember that iconic image of the polar bear so happy and drinking a coke. Seeing documentaries about polar bears swimming with nowhere to get out of the water, dying, felt like a metaphor for my innocent worldview being disillusioned or deferred.

—Laura

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Chicago—I feel called to action because I'm a younger person, and I'll be feeling the effects more than the older people who attempt to stop mitigation efforts. Last year, I did a majority of my projects on climate change efforts and climate change effects from large industries, such as the hotel industry, which is a very big contributor to domestic landfills and other pollution. It intensifies as my interest grows, and I'm ready to do something about it.

I am 18. I don't do as much as I could. I don't have a whole lot of freedom in terms of my time and



scheduling. I use the least amount of plastic I can. I haven't used straws for a year. I was about 16 when I started being active. Obviously, in the last two years, there's been a whole lot more coverage, which is why there's way more people here than before.

Estimations that we achieve a point of no return by 2045 or 2050, are concerning a lot of Generation Z people. We are unable to grasp the full gravity, because we're young and we have other stuff that we're trying to deal with as growing people in America.

Everyone is starting to feel a lot more unified. This is a central issue. It makes me happy that there are so many people. People are going to stop and hear the message and take it to heart. There are all these people that are not only doing it for each other, like everyone here at the rally, but also for people who are going to be reporting on this that will also get the message that everyone wants conveyed

I'm from Chicago, Logan Square. I'm doing a project on changing perceptions and behaviors regarding climate change and mitigation efforts that people can do, hoping to try and change some people who are indifferent to this issue because it's going to affect us all immediately. If people are indifferent to it, it might already be too late.

—Emilio

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Detroit—Detroit's Climate Strike was really cool and inspiring. About 700 people, mostly young, rallied and marched in downtown Detroit. All the speeches were by young people, mostly people of color. They are angry; they understand that life will not be the same in the future.

I went because I feel it is important to support

the young people. They are listening to Greta Thunberg who inspires them and brings tears to our eyes.

I talked to an organizer from a left party who was dismayed that the speakers, some as young as seven years old, were not following the agenda. I told him, "When you were their age, you didn't follow the agenda either."

—Participant

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San Francisco—On Sept. 20, the day of the Global Climate Strike, thousands of people, young and old, marched three miles from the Federal Building over to Market Street, pausing in front of Exxon and Bank of America and other locations to call out corporations. Hundreds of high school and college students led off the march, with a youth marching band playing "Which Side Are You On," and contingents of even younger pre-teen and primary school students along with union members and climate activists of all ages, including a large group of grandmothers.

Marchers carried signs proclaiming: "The Sea Level Is Rising—So Are We"; "Make Earth Cool Again"; "SkolStrejk För Klimatet," in Swedish to honor Greta Thunberg, the 16-year-old who had initiated the school strike movement (see "Greta Thunberg: No One Is Too



Small," p. 8);
"There's No
Planet B";
and, quoting
Dr. Seuss'
The Lorax, "I
speak for the
trees, for the
trees have
no tongues."

Discussions during the march centered on what could slow or reverse climate change, with the young

people leading the movement critical of dead ends like the carbon tax and other panaceas that capitalists might feel they could live with.

—Geezer activist

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Buddy Bell

On Aug. 22 and 28, Papuan students in Jakarta held demonstrations to confront racism and call for self-determination in the Indonesian-controlled half of the island of New Guinea. According to Indonesian news site Kompas.com, students shouted at police to resign over the release of videos in which officers were filmed calling Black-skinned Papuans monkeys and dogs. Protest coordinator Albert Mungguar was quoted by AP: "We are not monkeys. We are human beings who want independence. We ask Indonesia's president to hold a referendum for independence. It's the right solution for the people of Papua." Protesters' home provinces are under de facto martial law amidst a resurgence of pro-independence protests and roadblocks. With Jakarta deploying 45,000 soldiers-including Konstrand Commandos trained and funded by the U.S. and Australia—rifle fire has killed 32 Papuans as of late September. The shortlived nation of West Papua declared independence in 1961 but was arrogantly gifted to Indonesian rulers under the so-called New York Agreement pushed by John Kennedy in 1962.

During the closing remarks of a Sept. 12 presidential debate in Houston, four undocumented audience members with the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium stood up and chanted, "We are DACA recipients, our lives are at risk. Save DACA in the Supreme Court now!" The court will hear arguments on Nov. 14 as to whether Trump is allowed to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. In a Twitter video, the activists explained that they needed to reach the public since the urgent matter of immigration policy had been largely ignored in the debates.

The Miami Beach, Fla., city council on Oct. 16 unanimously passed a resolution drafted by local high school students who participated in the national student strike for the climate on Sept. 20. The resolution requests that state and federal officials begin an "emergency mobilization effort to restore a safe climate." Student John Paul Mejia told the *Miami Herald*: "This is a first step. We need to shift the narrative to understand this as a crisis because that's what it really is." Most of his city sits on porous limestone, only five feet above sea level.

WORLD & VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Trump's deliberately misnamed "withdrawal" of U.S. troops in Syria has drastically changed the situ-



Free Syrians in Idlib show solidarity with Lebanese protesters.

ation on the ground. The revolutionaries in Idlib are even more threatthan ened before, and Demothe cratic Union Party (PYD) government has seen its tenuous autonomy slip away.

The genocidal Assad regime, Rus-

sia's Putin, and Turkey's Erdoğan have been strengthened.

But the Syrian Revolution is not dead. It lives in the solidarity the steadfast activists in Idlib and elsewhere have shown with revolutionary struggles in Sudan, Algeria, Egypt,

Pacific trafficking

The assassination of U.S. human rights lawyer Rachelle Bergeron, acting attorney general for the Pacific island of Yap, has drawn attention to the problem of human trafficking in the region. Bergeron had made enemies as a vocal opponent of such exploitation.

Micronesia, of which Yap is part, Palau, and the Marshall Islands are notorious centers in which island women, including children, are compelled into prostitution in local brothels or shipped to Guam or the U.S. East Asian women are also recruited with the promise of service jobs and then forced into prostitution in the islands.

IMPERIAL EXPLOITATION CONTINUES

There is a parallel problem with forced labor. Local government has largely turned a blind eye to all this, failing to identify potential victims, educate the public about the problem, or investigate and prosecute offenses. A U.S. embassy report last year noted that the Marshall Islands government ignored reports of potential child sex trafficking.

U.S. imperialism is a prime exploiter. Paul Petersen, the Maricopa County, Arizona, assessor, has recently been charged with running an illegal adoption ring that brought countless Marshall Islands women to Arizona, Utah and Arkansas to give birth while he sold off the babies. Dozens of pregnant women at a time might be forced to sleep on bare floors in houses owned by Petersen.

Seaboard Triumph Foods of Sioux City, Iowa, has also been accused of abusing workers recruited under false pretenses in Pohnpei, Micronesia. Employees say they have been physically and emotionally harassed, their passports have been seized, and that the company has issued false social security numbers.

Trump doctrine for a changed world

Iraq and Lebanon. It lives in the rejection expressed by Arabs and Kurds to the return of Assad's genocidal regime to eastern Syria, invited by a collapsing PYD government.

The Revolution also lives in the horror and disgust felt by its theoreticians at the coopting of its symbols by reactionary state power—as has been done by Erdoğan's Turkey. In fact, revolution only exists through human solidarity and critical self-comprehension. This dire moment is not the end of a discussion, but the beginning.

THE DEVIL IN HIS OWN WORDS

Trump's Oct. 23 speech on Syria lays out his counter-revolutionary vision of a changed world. As in the Indian occupation of Kashmir, where he offered to mediate between India and Pakistan, Trump posits the U.S., and even more *himself*, as the central factor in world politics: "This was an outcome created by us...and nobody else, no other nation."

He intends to reorient the U.S.'s PYD allies in line with world capitalism: "We've secured the [Syrian] oil...and we'll be deciding what we're going to do with it in the future." He feels free to do this because of the weakness of the PYD's position: "The war [with Turkey] was going to be vicious and probably not very long."

He reduces the Syrian Revolution, with its creativity and heroism, to "ancient sectarian and tribal conflicts." In this, he builds on the Obama administration's betrayals of the Syrian Revolution, and the failure of bourgeois ideology going back to the Bosnian genocide, even as he cynically cites "President Obama's ill-fated push at regime change."

Most telling are Trump's two "never befores": "We are now an economic powerhouse like never before...We are building up America's military might like never before." Here's the tail of the dragon.

This, at least, is a clear articulation of pure imperialism. As the false idea that the Syrian Revolution has been finally defeated is promoted, the curtain is pulled away.

Ecuadorians resist austerity, repression

It took 11 days of massive resistance, led by Ecuador's revolutionary Indigenous masses alongside Afro Americans, *campesinos*, workers, women, students, environmentalists, LGBT activists and others, to bring the government of Lenin (sic) Moreno to its knees.

Moreno had issued Executive Decree 833, which consisted of austerity measures that were conditions of a \$4.4 billion International Monetary Fund loan. The biggest blow was the termination of decades of gasoline and diesel subsidies that nearly doubled the prices at the pump. In addition, the neoliberal package included privatization and anti-worker measures, expanded resource extraction, and the loosening of environmental protections. In other words, dealing with economic problems caused by the country's dependence on oil/mineral extraction and monoculture by "belt tightening" on the backs of workers and the poor.

MASS POWER IN THE STREETS

Tens of thousands took to the streets, congregating in the capital, blocking roads, occupying government buildings, and disrupting oil operations. They forced the government to declare a state of emergency, and then the government turned tail and fled from Quito to Guayaquil.

The government response to the protests was brutal. Police and military flung tear gas and shot rubber bullets at crowds of protesters. Police brutality was rampant. In the end there were seven deaths, over 1,300 seriously wounded and nearly 1,200 arrests.

After eleven days Moreno caved in and agreed to rescind Decree 833 in exchange for a "dialogue for peace" with the Indigenous leadership. His government survived to live another day and is expected to be hard line in its so-called dialogue. There no doubt will be attempts to divide and conquer, and it is quite possible that another uprising could happen in the near future.

'SOCIALIST' DRIFT TO THE RIGHT

After a military dictatorship in the 1970s, mostly right-wing parties ruled Ecuador until the so-called "citizens revolution" of Rafael Correa in 2006 and his newly minted Alianza País political party. Like most social democrats calling themselves socialist, once in

power hope for change morphed into cronyism, opportunism and corruption. The drift to the right culminated in the full-fledged Pompeo-supported neoliberalism of Correa's former vice president, Moreno. In the upcoming presidential election, parties even further to the right are poised to take power.

The struggle for a "new society" in Ecuador has taken a giant step forward, but it will be met with fierce resistance by the ruling oligarchy and the mainstream media. Change can only come from below, and that is a lesson that has been underscored this month for Ecuador, but also for all of Latin America.

—Ecuador supporter

Chile youth protests

In response to an increase in subway fares—symbolic of the growing inequality in Chilean society, with continuing increases in the costs of health care, electricity, and education—students in Santiago initiated a protest, storming the Metro stations and organizing mass evasion by refusing to pay. They were quickly joined by thousands of protesters throughout the country.

President Sebastián Piñera responded by decreeing a state of emergency in six main cities, seeking to restrict freedom of assembly and mobilization, and ordering thousands of military forces into the streets for the first time since the infamous Augusto Pinochet military dictatorship in the 1990s.

Despite Piñera agreeing to some "reforms," protesters called a two-day general strike for Oct. 26-27. Tens of thousands marched in Santiago and other cities. Police responded with rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannon.

It's important to note that these protests are against the neoliberal policies that Pinochet imposed which, despite "socialist" governments post-Pinochet, have continued to wreak havoc for the mass of working people. Students, secondary and university youth, have been the most militant, leading the social protests in education, and questioning the whole direction of society.

Chile, often held up as an oasis of stability in South America, is showing the deep social contradictions that are at its heart.

—Eugene Walker

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

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

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

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

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

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

We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our Constitution states:

"It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking.

Send for a free copy of the Constitution of News and Letters Committees or see it on our website: www.newsandletters.org.