

# NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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## WORKSHOPTALKS

### When workers' own time begins

by Htun Lin

Karl Marx praised the success of English workers in agitating for the ten-hour day: "In place of the pompous catalogue of the 'inalienable rights of man' comes the modest Magna Carta of a legally limited working-day which shall make clear 'when the time which the worker sells is ended, and when his own begins.'"

This is the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta. A group of 13th-century English barons forced King John to sign the Magna Carta on June 15, 1215 to protect their rights and property against a tyrannical king. The interests of the common man were hardly apparent in the minds of the men who brokered the agreement.

But one provision held that "No freeman shall be arrested or imprisoned," or otherwise harmed, "except by the lawful judgment of his equals and according to the law of the land," the essential sense of the doctrine of "presumption of innocence."

#### WHO MUST RESPECT OUR RIGHTS?

In the U.S., the Magna Carta was enshrined in the Bill of Rights as the promise that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law," and that "In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury." However that list of rights has in actuality been a list of rights denied. Even today, those

continued on p. 3

## EDITORIAL Black Lives Matter NOW!

A burly white cop grabs a 14-year-old Black girl's hair and pushes her face into the ground, pausing to wave his gun at two teenage boys who rush to her defense. The video of Cpl. Eric Casebolt's June 5 attack on Dejerria Becton and other kids at a pool party in McKinney, Texas, went viral because it was simultaneously shocking and commonplace. In 2015 USA, protests were inevitable and were heard around the world.

Similarly, the fact that Baltimore cops murdered Freddie Gray in April is sickeningly familiar. As Billy Murphy said at Gray's packed funeral, "Most of us are not here because we knew Freddie Gray, but we're all here because we know lots of Freddie Grays!" That is not only the story of Baltimore but of the whole racist country.

#### NEW IS THE NEVER-ENDING REVOLT

What is new is not the killings but the revolt that has been snowballing since the 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin. Now people who live where racist killings by cops and vigilantes are part of everyday life are not the only ones forced to think about what they mean.

The intensity of revolt has compelled responses, from a predominantly Black, multiracial outpouring of youth at protests, to recognition in the mass media that have so often disregarded the killings and protests, to solidarity from movements seeking liberation for women, Queers, immigrants and workers. All feel the gravitational pull of "Black Lives Matter" precisely because of the power of its challenge to this society, a power rooted in the revolt that has been fermenting all along.

Suddenly, the enduring segregation and poverty

continued on p. 8

#### ON THE INSIDE

- p. 2 After Srebrenica, a Women's Court
- p. 3 Chicago teachers prepare to strike!
- p. 4 Meaning of revolutionary archives
- p. 9 Winds of change from Canada?
- p. 12 Racist terrorism in Charleston

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## Refugees risk death fleeing war, terror and climate chaos

by Ron Kelch

"Where are human rights? Where is humanity?" exclaimed Naser Alden Abdulaziz, as French border police stopped him from crossing the border from Italy. Abdulaziz is fleeing the hell of a decade of ethnic violence and genocide in Darfur, Sudan, and, along with others from Libya and Eritrea, demonstrated and started a hunger strike at the border, declaring they will never return. Millions of human beings on the move all over the world are putting the global political and economic system on trial, exposing its rhetoric about human rights for what it really is: a callous disregard for the mass of humanity suffering economic destitution, ethnic violence, climate disaster, perpetual war and terror under the regime of global capitalism.

#### ROHINGYA FLEE IMPENDING GENOCIDE

More than a million Rohingya, who have lived for generations in Burma's Rakhine province, have been declared a non-people in their own country since 1982. Subjected to perpetual ethnic violence and concentrated into squalid camps by Buddhist security forces, thousands have packed into tiny boats dubbed "floating coffins" provided by profiteering smugglers. They are taken out to sea, along with starving Bangladeshis and other South Asians escaping poverty—all trying to find a place to live. When navy vessels of neighboring countries—Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia—encounter them, a few provisions are handed out if they're lucky, but then the vessels sail away.

Australia's anti-immigrant Prime Minister Tony Abbott not only adamantly shut down any suggestion the Rohingya could go there, but, in violation of international law, has his forces stop boats and reward each member of smuggling crews \$5,000 to take refugees to Indonesian waters. Bodies keep washing up on shores. Many of those who manage to land alive are discovered later in mass graves in Thailand and Malaysia.

Israeli writer Ben Samuels aptly compared the Rohingya flotilla to the SS St. Louis, which in 1939 was packed with Jews escaping the Holocaust, many of whom were killed upon returning to Europe after they were denied entry everywhere including Miami, where the State Department declared they'd have to "await their turns." (See "Jews in 1939, Rohingya in 2015: Will



Rohingya refugees, exhausted and starving, trying to find a safe harbor.

the world act to prevent a 21st century SS St. Louis?" Haaretz, May 28, 2015.)

Burma is a country of many minorities who have suffered racial violence at the hands of Burmese nationalistic Buddhists. The Muslim Rohingya face genocidal elimination. A week before an emergency meeting of local powers in Bangkok, which supposedly reversed the policy of turning stranded refugee boats back out to sea, Burma passed a Population Control Health Care Bill, making it a law that women in areas having a high population growth rate, that is, Muslim areas, space each child at least three years apart.

"Democracy" is supposedly on the agenda in Burma today, yet the iconic leader of the movement, Aung San Suu Kyi, whose father was a Burmese nationalist, refuses to even mention the existence of Rohingya. Bishop Desmond Tutu, a fellow Nobel Peace laureate,

warned her: "A country that ... fails to acknowledge and protect the dignity and worth of all its people, is not a free country." Tutu also speaks against the frequent violent mob attacks in his own South Africa against non-citizen foreigners from the rest of Africa.

When Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir showed up at an African Union summit held in South Africa, South Africa's High Court prohibited Bashir

from leaving the country until it decided whether to turn him over to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the Hague. The ICC had issued a warrant for Bashir's arrest in 2009 for his role in the genocide in Sudan's Darfur region—the first 21st century genocide. Instead of honoring the court's directive, the ruling African National Congress let him fly back to Sudan. South Africa had signed the treaty to honor ICC rulings and miserably failed its own test of being a democracy under the rule of law. Bashir's military unleashed and cooperated with marauding Arab militias, the Janjaweed, against fellow Muslims in non-Arab villages in Darfur. Over 480,000 have been killed, 2.8 million are displaced refugees, many still in danger and seeking safe haven, and the number of women and girls raped is in the tens of thousands. Many try to make their way to Europe through Libya.

Another flotilla of boat people fleeing war, terror, poverty and even climate change in Africa have faced

continued on p. 10

## Yemen: where dreams are impossible

**Sana'a, Yemen**—Under the control of religious armed militias, Yemenis live a humiliating life and die in insulting ways! Now death is the closest thing to Yemenis, whereas our dreams have become impossible.

The Saudi-led coalition airstrikes never care about civilians when targeting Houthi sites or where arms are stored—which are mostly in cities, especially in Sana'a and Sada.

#### BOTH SIDES TARGET CIVILIANS

It seems that the Houthis and their allies treat the dead, injured and detainees as ISIS does. I expected this, for all the extremist religious groups in the Arab world have the same starting points.

In the earlier days of the conflict, I watched a video that showed a woman trying to save an armed man who was with the popular resistance and was injured by Houthis near her house in Taiz. The Houthis shot the woman dead! That day I said to friends: This scene reflects the barbaric methods of the internal invaders, the Houthis and their allies, and their extremist religious thoughts and background. I expected that this would continue and we would see more brutality in the

future.

**In Aden, Taiz and Al-Dhale, where the street battles are more violent between Houthis and the popular resistance, Houthis shell the residential areas randomly. They prevent injured people getting to hospitals; they let them bleed to death. The dead stay in the streets, no one can get to them. Birds and dogs can be seen eating the corpses!**

These scenes are only a sample of daily events in Yemen.

It is known that new movements always are cautious about bothering or abusing citizens, as they are trying to attract supporters. So why don't religious movements, like Houthis, ISIS, etc., care about that?

There are many reasons. One could be that these movements are messy and brutal. When we evaluate them we should remember their secret policies. They don't abide by the laws of peace or war. They don't respect the laws of nature either. This is like all of the current Islamic religious movements. Dictatorial regimes have an affinity for these beliefs, which explains the alliance between Houthis and the former president,

continued on p. 3

# Twenty years after Srebrenica: A Women's Court demands justice

**WOMAN  
AS  
REASON**

by Terry Moon

Twenty years ago in July 1995, over 8,000 mostly men and boys were massacred in Srebrenica, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Supposedly protecting a “safe area,” the 400-strong UN “peacekeepers” did nothing while thousands were murdered, almost in front of their eyes.

## NAMING RAPE A CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY

At the same time, over 30,000 Bosniak women, children and the old were forced from their homes. During the three years of war, thousands of Bosnian women were brutally raped, many murdered, many sexually tortured, all as a deliberate tactic of war to target and savage civilians and non-combatants; to destroy a people determined to live a multi-ethnic existence. The intent was genocide. It was the experience of these women, backed up by a massive outcry, that forced the UN to name rape in war, for the first time, as both torture and a crime against humanity.

*News & Letters* wrote shortly before the massacre in an Editorial (“Rwanda, Bosnia and genocide in the 1990s,” April 1995):

“Facing, drawing the correct lessons from, and then acting against genocide in Rwanda and Bosnia is not a separate question from combating racism and fascism at home—it is the same question... We need to support and learn from the emancipatory, multi-ethnic forces in Bosnia and Rwanda which, under tremendous pressure to mimic their enemies’ ethnic chauvinism, have instead attempted to remain true to the ideal of a non-racist society.”

That passion to “remain true to the ideal of a non-racist society” is being realized in a unique project: the convening in Sarajevo, Bosnia, on May 7 of the Women’s Court on war crimes against women during the war in the 1990s.

## NOW, FINALLY, A WOMEN’S COURT

The very way they have organized the Court over five years, involving women from the entire region, shows that passion. Women came together from all corners of the former Yugoslavia to demand justice for the



Dennis Jarvis  
One of several monuments in Mostar, Bosnia, in remembrance of the horrors of war.

crimes committed against them during the wars and the suffering that followed. Women participating are from regions that were involved in the multi-sided war: Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Srebrenica, Croatia, Kosova, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and more.

As Marieme Helie Lucas, a founder of Women Living Under Muslim Laws, writes:

“This [convening of the Women’s Court], in and of itself, is a huge achievement, at a time when Europe is plagued with the rise of nationalisms, of extreme right-wing forces that divide people along ethnic and religious lines; at a time when attempts are made to homogenize nations and to exclude minorities and diversity; at a time when even citizens of one country are further separated by the construction of antagonistic ‘communities.’... The fact that women came together from all the nations of ex-Yugoslavia is not just a powerful show of solidarity across boundaries. It is also a political stand, defying the destructive, extreme rightwing forces at work in the region and in the whole of Europe.”

Women in Black-Belgrade (WiB-B), Serbia, did a tremendous amount of work to bring the Women’s Court into being. It was WiB-B who, in the midst of that war, stood on the street corners in Belgrade and condemned the deadly aggression of their own government. They were spat on, screamed at, threatened with death and physically attacked.

They persisted then and kept persisting for 20 years to make sure that the world does not forget

and that the criminals are named. They helped make it possible for women who suffered unimaginable loss and atrocities, to make it imaginable, to name and speak the reality of inhumanity and to articulate what must be done and how to move forward.

The process of bringing the Women’s Court into being changed women’s lives. The Women’s Court is the opportunity for women from the region to finally demand justice and to tell not only what happened to them in their own words, but also what needs to happen for them to receive justice and peace. While the Women’s Court has no power in the bourgeois sense, as Marieme Lucas explains, “it will name the crimes and the perpetrators, it will denounce the links between the different forms of violence that women suffer till today in the former Yugoslavia as a consequence of the wars, it will demand justice and, relying on ‘the power of international women’s solidarity,’ commit to monitoring the responses from concerned authorities.”

The power of the Women’s Court is also revealed by the women who testified: “We are women who fight for justice. I will always live in solidarity with these women. Together we can laugh and cry. I only wish that this group of women would rule the world.”

## What is Transgender solidarity?

Feminists who support Caitlyn Jenner in any way, please remember that this person fully supports taking away your access to birth control, locking up our children and friends in prisons, denying full equality and autonomy to other LGBTQ people, supports war, deportation raids and all kinds of other evil stuff.

Is that somebody who you want to spend your time and energy supporting?

**If you’re interested in showing solidarity with Trans people, listen to us when we talk about political issues that affect our lives. Listen to Trans women of color, Trans people who have been transitioning longer than the horde of white tumblr Trans activists who know everything about gender after 25 years of white het male privilege and six weeks of estrogen shots.**

If you want to help us, check in on your Trans woman friend to see how she is. A lot of us live in abusive relationships, have extreme financial troubles, mental health issues, or are sporadically houseless.

**You can help your Trans man friend find an affirming and understanding OB/GYN, or just be there to hear him rant about his complex emotions. Anything is better than arguing with Trans people about the relevance of Bruce Jenner.**

If so many Trans women would take off the fake eyelashes so they can see further than the bullshit lies of glamorous pseudo-representation, they’d understand that the very same systems that create celebrity Trans people like Caitlyn Jenner are the systems that seek our collective destruction.

—Jaz: anti-capitalist, feminist activist

## Deborah Cunningham 1945-2015

Deborah Cunningham was an ADAPT activist and Executive Director of the Memphis Center for Independent Living (MCIL). When she died on May 7, the movement lost a tireless, creative, committed activist, feminist and thinker. She worked with and for MCIL since its inception in 1982 and became Executive Director in 1989.

### DISABILITY UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Tim Wheat, a photographer and longtime disability rights activist, wrote of Deborah:

“Before there was any home and community options in Tennessee, Deborah was the ‘conductor’ of the Disability Underground Railroad that moved people with disabilities from institutionalization into their own homes...”

“There’s not one person in the whole of Tennessee who has been freed from a nursing home or saved from entering one who does not owe their freedom, in no small part, to Deborah Cunningham,” said MCIL board member Louis Patrick. “There’s not an accessible movie theater space in Memphis and its environs that Deborah, an avid movie fan, did not lobby hard for. Ditto the spaces, concessions and restrooms at the Liberty Bowl are substantially the result of Deborah’s efforts.”

News and Letters Committees worked with ADAPT, MCIL and Deborah for many years. One particular event stands out. Deborah and friend Renee, both in ADAPT, were waiting for a bus and one came by with a wheelchair lift, but instead of stopping to pick them up, the driver “braked, then pulled off. He refused to stop. The bus wasn’t crowded, he just didn’t want to pick us up,” Deborah and Renee wrote in the Aug.-Sept. 2002 issue of *News & Letters*.

They started calling the Transit Authority to get a ride back to work. They called everyone they could think of, including the manager and president of MATA (Memphis Area Transit Authority). They either got no



Terry Moon/News & Letters

responses or had their calls transferred to another line with no response.

Another wheelchair-accessible bus came by, but picked up someone across the street, and left them. Then, “We saw a mainline bus coming and decided to block it... Then a MATAplus bus did pull up... When we started towards it, the driver of the bus we were blocking took off, and so did the MATAplus bus. So we decided to block the van of a MATA supervisor who came out here. The police are here,” they wrote, “but MATA is not going to prosecute us for blocking their bus because they know that they’re in the wrong and totally incompetent.”

**Deborah and Renee had been out in the 90+ degree Memphis sun for hours but did not budge until MATA sent a bus to pick them up and take them home. Then Deborah continued to pressure MATA to decently serve those with disabilities.**

I loved working with Deborah. She was committed to human rights and freedom and she brought a new dimension to the struggle for both women’s and disability rights because in her mind and actions, they were never separate. We are all diminished when someone like Deborah dies. We will always miss her militant voice and being.

—Terry Moon

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## WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

Although the Indian government banned Leslee Udwin’s new documentary *India’s Daughters* for being “too shocking,” the film is very popular and is encouraging the younger generation in their fight against rape culture. The film centers on the 2012 gang rape and murder of Jyoti Singh in Delhi, which provoked widespread demonstrations throughout India, and it analyzes and criticizes the way rapists think. More recent anti-rape actions include Sunitha Krishnan’s “Shame the Rapist” campaign, which she started Feb. 5 by posting videos of rapes on YouTube. She blurred the faces of the victims, enhanced the faces of the rapists, and asked for help in identifying them. On March 19, 20-year-old student Pradnya Mandhare dragged a stranger who had molested her in public to a police station by his hair.

\* \* \*

In Beijing, China, veteran activist Feng Yuan has been monitoring the situation of the “Feminist Five.” These young activists were arrested for “creating disturbance” by planning to post anti-groping stickers on buses and trains in several cities. They were released in April after worldwide protests and condemnation from the UN. There is still the possibility they may go to prison, and police are still investigating them, with one pulled back into an eight-hour interrogation. They have no income and are forbidden to speak to the press, travel, or use their own cell phones.

\* \* \*

Backline is an online feminist nonprofit known for its “Talkline,” which provides unbiased, secular counseling and connects callers to pregnancy, parenting, abortion, and adoption resources. On May 2, it expanded, opening the brick-and-mortar All-Options Pregnancy Resource Center in Bloomington, Ind., to provide in-person peer counseling and support groups on pregnancy loss, infertility, abortion and adoption. It also offers free pregnancy tests, diapers and baby clothes and gives referrals to abortion providers, breastfeeding classes, HIV testing and LGBTQI resources.

# Chicago teachers prepare to strike

**Chicago**—Over 1,000 teachers and labor supporters rallied in Chicago on June 9, three weeks before the Chicago Teachers Union contract expires. The plaza of the Thompson Center was a sea of red T-shirts with teachers and other unionists chanting “This means war!” about the contract battle ahead.

Teachers gained the current contract in 2012 only by maintaining their strike for nine days, defying Mayor Rahm Emanuel and his appointed school board and threats that strikers’ jobs would be gone. But the teachers had the support of students and parents and the solidarity of unions and rank-and-file workers throughout the area. They demonstrated that support, literally, on a daily basis with large, loud, colorful marches of as many as 10,000 union supporters around the Loop and in the neighborhoods.

Emanuel, who closed 52 more public schools and siphoned off more public school money to the crony capitalists who control the strings of privatized charter schools, is still the enemy. But at today’s rally, far more of the signs teachers carried and the slogans they chanted identified Gov. Bruce Rauner as their main adversary and the foe of working people.

The newly elected billionaire governor of Illinois does not control the state legislature, yet he is demanding that legislators pass his package of union-busting “reforms” just as Republican governors in Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan had pushed through.

**Gov. Rauner has refused to release tens of millions of dollars already in the budget, approved for schools and the most basic services of food, health and shelter, holding the poor and workers hostage to extort passage of his union-busting bills.**



Bob McGuire/News & Letters

He has urged the school board to declare bankruptcy and shake off contractual obligations including union rules, wages and pension obligations. As CTU president Karen Lewis stated, the schools are “broke by choice.” The 3% a year board counter-offer to CTU wage demands is essentially a wage freeze.

The governor has declared open class warfare on workers in Illinois. The enthusiasm of the rally and the march down LaSalle Street promises that teachers fighting for a contract in coming months will be shock troops in that class war.

—Bob McGuire

## Dreams die in Yemen

continued from p. 1

Ali Abdullah Saleh, who used religious groups to justify his internal war against the southern governorates in 1994, as well as his three decades in power.

In fact, the differences between all the current religious movements are small; they all do the same things against humans: they kill people, impose their control and thoughts by arms and terrorism, they destroy the social fabric; they don’t believe that a democratic nation is legitimate. For them, might makes right.

### ANTI-DEMOCRATIC IDEOLOGY WIDESPREAD

Some extremist religious movements accept democracy as a tactic, as did the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. But the literature of such groups is in total contrast with democratic values.

Houthis participated in the dialogue in Yemen, but in the end, they turned the table and took full control of the state by force.

**Now there are almost one million displaced Yemenis. Over 20 million are in urgent need of food. Most of the hospitals throughout the country are unable to receive patients, due to the lack of fuel and medicine.**

According to my observation, most of the aid that was donated by international organizations has been taken by Houthis, especially fuel. Most of the people who fled their houses live in schools or in friends’ houses and have no basic services.

In Sana’a, where I live, people spend most of their time standing in lines waiting for water given by donors. They do the same thing for gas. Many journalists, politicians and human rights activists are still detained by Houthis. Some of them were used as human shields.

Many Yemeni civilians are now saying that they prefer death instead of this humiliating life!

—Khaled Al-Hamdani

*Editor’s note: More in-person reports on Yemen can be found on the News and Letters Committees website: <http://newsandletters.org/tag/yemen/>*

## WORKSHOPTALKS

continued from p. 1

rights stop abruptly inside the gates of Guantanamo or Rikers Island.

Kalief Browder was a 17-year-old Black youth, a U.S. citizen, when he was detained at Rikers Island, New York City’s infamous jail, for three years without a trial on suspicion of stealing a backpack. There was no due process for him. Browder was determined to get his day in court to prove his own innocence and rejected plea bargains. But the District Attorney kept delaying his trial month after month in order to force him to accept a plea bargain.

### SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND DEATH

Browder recently took his own life to stop the pain which resulted from the mental torture of near-constant solitary confinement and multiple beatings which he had endured at Rikers Island.

**Our rights and freedoms have been defined negatively as putting limits on the power of the state, as in the lawless injustice at Rikers Island. But runaway executive power doesn’t end with police brutality and criminal injustice that the Black Lives Matter movement is calling to account. Abuse of due process extends to the factory floor, where company foremen assert unfettered power over us workers. Their corporate power is backed by the power of the state, represented by the police and military might.**

Marx took a long view of realizing freedom in a positive sense. Capitalism, in Marx’s day, used up three generations of workers in a single generation of working days without time limits. The struggle for the eight-hour day spread across the U.S. after the victory over slavery in the Civil War. Marx then traced the generations-long struggle for a normal working day.

The labor movement got labor laws on working conditions and health and safety regulations enacted by Congress and state legislatures, including overtime rules. But with the help of union bureaucrats who have betrayed the workers’ long struggle, company management can put the burden of compliance on the individual worker.

### WORKERS ISOLATED BY DESIGN

In practice, the work flow in the shop is now designed to compel the worker, often in isolation by design, to meet a quota set by the company. In order to meet that quota, workers are forced to violate existing rules and regulations themselves, working through lunches and breaks, and often off the clock with unpaid overtime, to “get the job done.”

Marx said that, by its very nature, capitalism will ultimately create its own gravediggers arising from its army of the unemployed. The point for us workers is, through our own collective thought and practice, to let the rulers know that we dig these graves not for ourselves, but for them. Only then can we transcend capitalism’s concept of time by declaring our own concept of “time as space for human development.”

# UAW makes new effort to organize VW

**Detroit**—The United Auto Workers, claiming to represent over 55% of the workers at the Volkswagen plant in Chattanooga, Tenn., has demanded exclusive bargaining rights for the workers. VW, however, said it will continue to meet with the American Council of Employees, which was established by anti-union forces.

VW provides each union varying privileges depending on its level of representation: representing 15% of the workers, a union can use a meeting room, post literature and meet monthly with management; representing 30%, the union also meets quarterly with a member of the executive committee.

A union representing 45% of the workers also meets every other week with management and the executive committee. The meetings deal with matters of concern to the workers in the plant, but have varying degrees of enforcement based on the degree of representation.

Last year, when the union representation vote was held, the company had actually supported the establishment of a union. Chattanooga was the only VW plant in the world without a Workers Council, which it could have created if the UAW had won. While the UAW expected to easily win, it did not realize how virulent and powerful anti-union sentiment remained in the South. Coupled with support for the opposition from national anti-union forces and state politicians in Tennessee, the UAW lost the election.

This did not deter the UAW, which established Local Union 42 and continued its drive to unionize the plant. This strategy seems to be successful and may be used to organize other foreign-owned plants in the South—a South which has successfully resisted UAW organizing for more than half a century.

There remains another serious question about the strategy of cooperation with management, and how successful that will be. The historic sentiment of the rank-and-file workers is to seek leaders who are fighters. They will be watching closely to see how UAW President Dennis Williams measures up in upcoming contract negotiations.

—Andy Phillips

## S. China Sea dispute

The exchange of threats between China and the U.S. over once uninhabited specks of land and submerged reefs in the South China Sea has heated up. As China has expanded its ambitious campaign of dredging, land reclamation, garrisoning troops and erecting military facilities in the Spratly Islands near Malaysia and Brunei, the U.S. has repeatedly called for its halt.

Both Vietnam and the Philippines have done island building on reefs they claimed, but have loudly protested China’s. Its construction and militarization in the South China Sea in the last two years has dwarfed all other countries. They fear China’s military near their shores and what it claims.

### ‘NINE-DASH LINE’

Claims by Chiang Kai-shek in 1947, before the Chinese Revolution drove him and his Nationalist Party to refuge on Taiwan, are the basis of the “nine-dash line,” whose outline hugging the beaches of Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines would make the South China Sea a Chinese lake. The U.S., which treated the Caribbean as its own American lake as it sent troops to Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Grenada over the last century, has escalated verbal warnings to China, warning them against fortifying its island constructions, and has directed military ships and planes to pass where China claims sovereignty.

The response from China has been to reassert that construction in the Spratly Islands is no different than building roads in China itself and to warn the U.S. against military movements in the South China Sea. The Communist Party-run newspaper *Global Times* was far more bellicose: “If the United States’ bottom line is that China has to halt its activities, then a U.S.-China war is inevitable in the South China Sea.”

China has raised war threats before, for instance against Taiwan rejecting the One China policy in favor of independence. Belligerence toward Taiwan was always an empty threat as long as Taiwan was the source of much of the capital that allowed China to exploit its ever-expanding working class.

### OPPOSITION IN HONG KONG AND AT HOME

Likewise China, for all its manipulation of politics in Hong Kong, because it is their conduit for world capital, has tolerated opposition there—including Occupy Hong Kong and commemorations of the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen Square massacre—without dissolving its special status.

But the threat of skirmishes and even all-out war between capitalist powers might be more real over a submerged reef in the South China Sea. Whether China’s rulers feel the need to undercut the class opposition among workers on strike by injecting a dose of patriotic fever, or the government of a neighboring country feels compelled to yield not one rock of its sovereignty, the situation is incendiary.

—Bob McGuire

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## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's note: In celebrating the online publication of the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection (see p. 5), we present excerpts of the Introduction/Overview she wrote to the last volume she donated. Besides describing the volume's contents, this piece takes up the Marxist-Humanist concept of archives as not only retrospective but perspective, in the quest to establish "continuity with the historic course of human development."*

### VOLUME XII: RETROSPECTIVE AND PERSPECTIVE—THE RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA COLLECTION, 1924-1986

#### INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW TO VOLUME XII

Counter-revolutions have a way of repeating themselves during world crises, whether in the Palmer Raids in the 1920s, or in the rise of McCarthyism in the post-World War II period following the 1949 revolution in China and the creation of apartheid South Africa. The struggle now makes it imperative to trace the absolute opposite of the counter-revolution—the revolutions in thought as well as in fact. Our epoch is crucial, not alone because that challenge is the task of this generation, but because in those three decades of the post-World War II world there arose a movement from practice that was itself a form of theory.



Amy Jacques Garvey, early feminist and editor of the *Negro World* and Marcus Garvey's works.

That movement challenged the theoreticians to work out so new a relationship of practice to theory as to have that unity achieve a totally new stage. To get a feeling for the revolutionary opposition in the 1920s, see **Section I, Part A**, especially the

documents on the *Negro Champion*, the organ of the American Negro Labor Congress, on which I worked. Thus, America's Black Dimension, far from being broken by the post-World War I riots against them, gave rise, at one and the same time, to both the largest mass movement of Blacks ever in the U.S., Garveyism, and to the American Negro Labor Congress, which expressed the Russian Revolution in its internationalism.

**"BLACK/RED" WAS ALSO PIVOTAL** in the labor struggle of the 1930s, which transformed the industrial face of the nation with the creation of the CIO. Before the CIO, however, the labor struggles reached their highest point in the San Francisco general strike of 1934. While San Francisco had always been a union town, the strike posed not just a union question or a strike in a single industry—the longshoremen—but a political, revolutionary, general strike in which I was very active. I was then the organizer of the Spartacus Youth Club in Los Angeles. In order to show that these types of revolutionary strikes, far from being "foreign," as the Hearst papers were screaming, were very American, I wrote an article for the *Young Spartacus* (June 1934) which went back to the railroad strikes of the 1870s, concentrating on the very first General Strike in St. Louis—1877—when "the strikers took possession of the city and ruled for an entire week."

#### SOUTHERN TENANT FARMERS UNION

By 1936, when I was living in Washington, D.C., I became active in support of sharecroppers' struggles in the South. Interracial relationships became a key question during the Depression. In Washington, D.C., for example, which was still a "Jim Crow" town except for streetcars, Ralph Bunche... was instrumental in establishing, with the Communists, a new National Negro Congress, and helped the socialists, who had organized the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, to establish the Washington Committee to Aid Agricultural Workers as a support group for the 1936 Arkansas sharecroppers' strike. (See my "Two forgotten pages of Ralph Bunche's life story," *N&L*, March 1972.) I was a member of this committee, which included Carter G. Woodson, founder of the *Journal of Negro History*, and Prof. Dorsey, a political economist at Howard, who was to become the Washington chairman of the International Defense Committee for Leon Trotsky in 1937. The Black Dimension here opened the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa for me, especially since Nnamdi Azikwe was then in the U.S. writing his *Renascent Africa*.

#### TROTSKY'S RUSSIAN LANGUAGE SECRETARY

Along with these new findings from the 1920s and 1930s first being introduced into the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, I want to add also to the section on my work as Russian secretary to Leon Trotsky in 1937-38. The three pieces I translated on the Spanish Revolution, and Leon Trotsky's letter of Jan. 5, 1938,

# The meaning of revolutionary archives

to Shachtman, which informed Shachtman that I was translating part of Trotsky's work, *How the Revolution Armed Itself*, were all part of making the 1917 Russian Revolution so relevant to the 1937 Spanish Revolution that Trotskyists should become both active participants and theoreticians. In a word, what the Trotsky letter doesn't say is that it was done for the Spanish revolutionaries so that they could have the 1917 ground for the 1937 Revolution.

On the other hand, the shock of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939, followed by the outbreak of World War II and Trotsky's call for the defense of Russia, signaled the beginning of the end of world Trotskyism. The many tendencies that sprang up within Trotskyism questioned the very nature of the Russian state and the Russian economy, rather than just the political bureaucratization that Stalin introduced and that Trotsky had fought.

I plunged into the study of all the Russian Five-Year Plans. What the new additions to documents on the theory of state-capitalism reveal is that, at the same time I was engaged in research on the Russian economy of 1928-39, I was translating for myself philosophic works of Marx, those that were listed by Ryazanov as "Preparatory Works for the Holy Family" and which we now know as the famous *Humanist Essays* [also known as Marx's *Paris Manuscripts* or *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*], as well as Lenin's *Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic*. My translations have now been found in their very first form. (See #8845.) In a word, the relationship between philosophy and economics was intensified. Indeed, by the 1940s I saw philosophy as inherent in new revolutionary forces—labor, Black, women, youth.

#### STATE-CAPITALISM AS A WORLD STAGE

Thus the studies in state-capitalism were integral to the intensified activities in the 1940s with, once again, the Black Dimension being pivotal. See especially the documents on my debate with David Coolidge (Ernest Rice McKinney), #9008. The Schomburg Collection in New York was the place where I did much of my research on Black America, which was reflected in my 1948 article, "Maintain the Schomburg Collection!"

In 1947 the Fourth International allowed me to present the theory of state-capitalism at their world conference in France. I debated Ernest Mandel (Ernest Germain) there. What is most memorable from that trip was, however, not the Trotskyists but the meeting with a Camerounian who told me of the revolution they had when the Germans left and the "Free French" were going to return. (See my 1947 letters, #661.)

**WHEN I COMPLETED THE TRANSLATION** of Lenin's *Abstract of Hegel's Science of Logic* in 1949, I looked for a publisher for it, knocking on many doors and meeting with the Columbia University Russian Department, but publication had to wait until 1957 with my *Marxism and Freedom*. The many letters in this period disclose the relationship of philosophy and economics—specifically of Hegel's *Science of Logic* to Marx's *Capital*—and connect those studies to the letters I wrote to miners on the general strike in 1950. These reveal that I was changing the form of my work on state-capitalism and Marxism to what became *Marxism and Freedom*. (See Section III for the letters of this period.)

#### BREAKUP OF 'JOHNSON-FOREST' TENDENCY

It all resulted in the breakup of the state-capitalist tendency known as "Johnson-Forest," and the critique of all post-Marx Marxists. I called for a reorganization of Marxist groupings, and the theoretical work that resulted in 1957-58, *Marxism and Freedom*, spelled its aim out as re-establishing Marxism in its original form, which Marx called a "thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism." That period saw my first attempt to make an outline of what would become the Marxist-Humanist Archives. (See #9357).

The whole question of the relationship of any ongoing event with the past, with the very concept of Archives, depends on the two opposite words—continuity and discontinuity. Whereas only great divides in epochs, in cognition, in personality, are crucial, and may relate to turning points in history, no discontinuity can really achieve that type of new epochal "moment" unless it has established continuity with the historic course of human development.

**NATURALLY, THE SIGNIFICANCE** of archives for any Marxist-Humanist has, as ground, what we learned from Marx's Archives, especially from the writings in his last decade, and especially the *Ethnological Notebooks* which were first transcribed in 1972. That work cast a totally new illumination both on Marx's multilinearity as it relates to his studies of pre-capitalism and indeed the whole course of human development. These *Notebooks* so integrally related the "new moments" of Marx's last decade that it made it possible to grasp Marx's Marxism as a totality. In a word, the new moments of his last decade, and the very first writings of his break from capitalism and his founding of a whole new continent of thought and of revolution in 1843-44, were one continuous development of what Marx called a "new Humanism." This is the reason why we considered the 1880s a "trail to the 1980s." Put differently, neither the first nor the last of Marx's new moments were a question of something that happened in the 19th century, but became an imperative for our age.

To return to 1958, that was the year DeGaulle came to power in France and I saw, at one and the same time, a new form of fascism and the imperative need for new international relations of those who opposed both poles of capitalism—U.S. and Russia—whether they held fully to the theory of state-capitalism or not. A correspondence developed with *Battaglia Comunista* in Italy (Onorato Damen); Grandizo Munis, a Spanish exile; Chaulieu [Cornelius Castoriadis] and Vega [Albert Masó], as well as Jean Malaquais in France; and Harry McShane in Britain. An International Conference was held in Milan, Italy, in November 1959, and I made a trip to Europe to attend and hold other discussions. I had in my hand for the trip *Marxism and Freedom* as well as our new pamphlet, *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions*, and I insisted that all those who attended had to focus on the new revolutions in the Third World. I asked that the African comrades be invited. (I continued corresponding with Africans until I went to Africa in 1962, and they helped map my trip to Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, and the Gambia.)

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

The European International Conference itself, while not grounded in philosophy, Marxist-Humanist or otherwise, and not agreeing with my analysis of the very new African Revolutions, did approve my motion to continue discussion on a regular basis in the Italian journal, *Prometeo*. Out of this trip, a Marxist-Humanist group was established in Britain, headed by Harry McShane.

The pivotal points of my address to the International Conference were further developed in the 1960 Thesis, "The World Crisis and the Theoretic Void," which was published in Italian and French in *Prometeo*, the publication of the International Center of Correspondence. (Onorato Damen had introduced me to the publisher La Nuovo Italia, which published the Italian edition of *Marxism and Freedom*.)

#### DIALOGUE WITH AFRICAN REVOLUTIONARIES

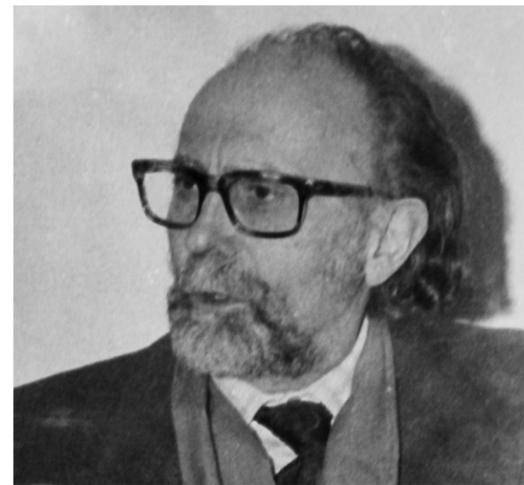
The new correspondence that is now being added includes communication with Leopold Senghor, Sekou Toure, and Nnamdi Azikwe, as well as the letter to Thomas Kanza, UN Ambassador from the Congo, on the death of Patrice Lumumba. The trip to West Africa in 1962 is thus now more fully documented and shows more than just the fact that *Présence Africaine* published my article "Marxist-Humanism," which I had originally titled "African Socialism: Why Not a New International?" That didn't impede my activities and writings on the American scene, as witness the new contributions we now make of my articles for *The Activist*, the student journal at Oberlin College for which I was both sponsor and writer, as well as a critic of some of their writings, like that of Tracey Strong on China.

**THE THIRD WORLD WAS** naturally not only Africa, but also Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. Most relevant and important here is my correspondence with Silvio Frondizi, the great Argentinian independent Marxist who was murdered by the fascist

continued on p. 6



From right, Raya Dunayevskaya, Natalia Trotsky, Jean Van Heijenoort, Leon Trotsky and Joe Hansen, in Mexico, 1938.



Silvio Frondizi, "the great Argentinian independent Marxist."

# Now available online! The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, the Marxist-Humanist Archives

## View them at [www.rayadunayevskaya.org](http://www.rayadunayevskaya.org)

*“The whole question of the relationship of any ongoing event with the past, with the very concept of Archives, depends on the two opposite words—continuity and discontinuity. Whereas only great divides in epochs, in cognition, in personality, are crucial, and may relate to turning points in history, no discontinuity can really achieve that type of new epochal ‘moment’ unless it has established continuity with the historic course of human development.”*

—Raya Dunayevskaya

When Dunayevskaya donated her Archives to Wayne State University, she made two stipulations: first, that she would organize the Archives herself, and, second, that they would be open to anyone who wanted to study them.

The new website of the Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund presents the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection as she organized it herself, together with the posthumous Supplement. Importantly, it makes the Archives available



Yoshimasa Yukiama, translator of the Japanese edition of *Marxism and Freedom*; Raya Dunayevskaya; and Charles Denby (1969)

to anyone who can access the website: theoretically over three billion people. This is in addition to the entire 60 years of *News & Letters* newspaper available

on the News and Letters Committees website: [www.newsandletters.org](http://www.newsandletters.org). The first 55 years are also hosted on the Marxists Internet Archive at [www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/news-and-letters/index.htm](http://www.marxists.org/history/etol/newspape/news-and-letters/index.htm).

This is an incredible resource for revolutionaries and scholars, seeking not only to understand the history of freedom struggles and the conditions in which they occur but to advance them today so as to transform the world. The Collection encompasses the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism developed by Dunayevskaya during a lifetime in the revolutionary movement. Its over 17,000 pages are a resource for students, researchers and activists in fields as diverse as philosophy, women’s studies, social theory, intellectual history and Black studies. Her writings spanned the world: her contributions to Soviet and East European studies, as well as to African and Middle Eastern regional studies, have been widely praised.

Just a few of the correspondents included are Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, Leon Trotsky, Natalia Trotsky, Adrienne Rich, Grace Lee Boggs, C.L.R. James, Cornelius Castoriadis, Meridel LeSueur, Nnamdi Azikwe, Tadayuki Tsushima, Zagorka Golubovic, Louis Dupré, Sekou Toure and Maria Barreno.

Herbert Marcuse called Dunayevskaya’s writings on the Marxian dialectic “an oasis in the desert of Marxism,”

and stressed her argument that “Marxian economics and politics are throughout philosophy,” while “the latter is from the beginning economics and politics.”

Stay tuned as new additions to both websites go online in coming months.



Raya Dunayevskaya; Charles Denby, editor of *News & Letters* and author of *Indignant Heart*; and Ethel Dunbar, “Way of the World” columnist and contributor to *Indignant Heart*

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The Raya Dunayevskaya Memorial Fund,  
228 S. Wabash, Room 230, Chicago, IL 60604.**

# From Dunayevskaya's writings: The meaning of revolutionary archives

continued from p. 4

regime. He had in fact translated *Marxism and Freedom*, but was unable to publish it. Nearly all of my major works have now been translated and published in Spanish. Erich Fromm was instrumental in introducing my work to the publishing house, Siglo XXI.

The section on the battle of ideas speaks well enough for itself, whether it is correspondence with Silvio Frondizi or Alisdair MacIntyre, with Erich Fromm or Peter Bergmann, Jean Malaquais or Paul Piccone, Dixon Colley or John O'Neill, or even C.L.R. James and Grace Chin Lee, or whether it was with Leon Trotsky or Yoshimasa Yukiya. Indeed, the correspondence and some of the interviews would result in a chapter within a book itself. I am referring to a 1965 Hong Kong interview, which became a part of a chapter of *Philosophy and Revolution*. The Chinese refugee I interviewed, "Jade," was so taken with my chapter "The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung" in *Marxism and Freedom* that she translated it into Chinese and sent it to the underground at Peking University, where she had been a student. That was in 1966, at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

## THE TRIP I MADE TO JAPAN

has been reported in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection before, but the new that is added now is especially important for two reasons. It wasn't only my *Marxism and Freedom* that was translated and published in Japan, but also News and Letters Committees pamphlets like Charles Denby's *Workers Battle Automation* and other new voices from the Black Revolution. The Zenshin (the Japan Revolutionary Communist League) sponsored my many lectures throughout the Islands. Also new is the typescript of my talk in Japan on Hegel.

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF LENIN AND HEGEL

What is of the essence in the 1970s were the new open doors in academia in the U.S. In 1970, the year of the 200th anniversary of Hegel's birth and 100th of Lenin's, the battle of ideas kept crisscrossing between the Left and academia. The specific essay which was



Raya Dunayevskaya

to attract special attention was "The Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin," which became the basis for my talk to a conference of the then young New Left philosophic journal, *Telos*. The Yugoslav journal *Praxis* then reprinted it, and so did the Italian journal *Aut Aut*. That work was not just on Lenin, but on Hegel, and it became a part of the section in *Philosophy and Revolution* on "Why Hegel? Why Now?" This allowed me to present a paper at the 1974 conference of the Hegel Society of America. What is new in **Volume XII** is the documentation of the critiques of my views on Hegel that came from old radicals like Peter Bergmann (1974) as well as a critique of my interpretation of Hegel's Absolute Method by George Armstrong Kelly in his *Hegel's Retreat from Eleusis* (1978). I answered Kelly in the introduction to my 1982 edition of *Philosophy and Revolution*. Also new is my letter to Bertell Ollman in critique of the academic classes in socialism, especially Marx's *Capital*.

**THE 1970S WERE IN GENERAL** characterized by a new passion for a philosophy of revolution. On the one hand, it was spurred by the fact that the 1960s revolutions had been aborted at their highest point, 1968. On the other hand, it was the very counter-revolution of the early 1970s against Vietnam, when both Russia and China were rolling out the red carpet for Nixon, that made the youth, the Black Dimension, and even some old radicals, begin to ask questions serious enough to have them attempt to work out a new philosophy of revolution for their age. At any rate, they were ready to listen and not to dismiss theoreticians on any superficial basis of age. Rather, they themselves wanted to see a continuity as well as a discontinuity in Marxism.

This became the more intense when finally Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* were transcribed in the 1970s and the whole question of the relation of technologically advanced countries to underdeveloped countries was seen in a new light—the multilinearism of Marx—as he turned anew to the idea of pre-capitalist societies and the then new science of anthropology. Just as this new objective/subjective situation led us to create the category of "post-Marx Marxism" as a pejorative in the 1982 publication of *Rosa*

*Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, so the 1983 Marx Centenary Tour, with this work in hand, opened new doors, especially in the Black Dimension and Women's Liberation.

**THE BLACK DIMENSION**, which was central in *News & Letters* from its birth with a Black production worker, Charles Denby, as its editor, remains intrinsic to our body of ideas and has just been spelled out again in our latest publication, a new expanded edition of *Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought*. This booklet includes appendices on Negritude and Language by René Depestre and Ngugi wa Thiong'o as well as my Political-Philosophic Letter, "Grenada: Counter-Revolution and Revolution." It as well includes this recent communication we received directly from a group of South African revolutionaries:

"We can understand why the Marxist-Humanists felt a need to call themselves not just Marxists but Marxist-Humanists, because the humanism has been removed from Marx to such an extent that people thought they could come with certain theories and ideas just from the top—the intellectuals theorizing and telling the people how to liberate themselves."

Raya Dunayevskaya, February 28, 1986

## MARXIST-HUMANIST CONCEPT OF ARCHIVES

Postscript, April 10, 1986

Between the time (February) when Volume XII was handed in for microfilming, and its release for public view by Wayne State University Walter Reuther Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs (April), *News & Letters* has created a new cover for the Guide to the entire twelve-volume collection. This new title for the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—"Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development"—reflects the range of the new discoveries of old manuscripts predating 1941, as well as extending the collection to 1985/86. Put differently, the 1930s are the focal point now. The Depression signaled the end of private capitalism, while out of the Spanish Civil War there emerged a new kind of revolutionary who posed questions not only against Stalinism but against Trotskyism, indeed against all established Marxists. The 1981 Introductory Note to the Archives repeats what we said when we first handed in the Collection in 1969: "The entire collection is divided into two parts. Part One covers Marxist-Humanism in its origin as State-Capitalist theory... Part Two ... covers the period 1955 to 1981, and details the development of Marxist-Humanism" as organization and as philosophy. With the addition of Volume XII, the new cover more fully reflects the whole range, "Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development."

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**BLACK LIVES AS SUBJECT**

The revolts in Ferguson and Baltimore involved development of consciousness of self as Subjects with power to transform. The Ayotzinapa revolt is for us in Mexico what Black Lives Matter is for the U.S. When these students become Subjects, action becomes masses in motion. This is happening all over the world.

**Woman revolutionary  
Mexico City**

\*\*\*

Slavery was a particular struggle for Black people in the U.S. for centuries, but Black people are also bound to the universal of the world today. Some say that Black Lives Matter is a bourgeois appeal to universal human rights. But that is not what the movement is about. The history of Blackness is a history of exploitation and most recently of abandonment. BLM is not just a scream for human rights but a scream of creation of a Black political Subject.



**Mohammed  
Pennsylvania**

\*\*\*

Youth I meet in Black Lives Matter have a vision of a different society beyond not getting killed or jailed. The ISO is focusing on identity politics as some huge problem of BLM. The real relations in this society, including the particular relationship between white people and Black youth, cannot be wished away. You have to be actively working through that human relation.

**Activist  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

The miseducation or non-education of Black and Brown youth is another form of state violence. Yet panelists I heard at the Left Forum on a “Black Liberation Manifesto for the 21st Century” still need to appreciate that the masses they hope to guide can contribute to the theoretical direction of the movement.

**Retired teacher  
Detroit**

\*\*\*

A Black youth at a protest said, “It’s not about Black and white. I just want to be human.” When he says all lives matter, it’s not the same as when Bill O’Reilly says it. Whites like him are imagining they already live in this post-racial utopia. Reactionaries don’t say “Black lives matter” because they fear condemning themselves.

**Black revolutionary  
Pennsylvania**

\*\*\*

The Left got away from the centrality of the Black movement. Black people fleshing out the self-determination of the idea on the ground makes the crucial difference in freedom today. That is the kind of idea we need to revive.

**David  
Bay Area**

**RUSSIA IN CRISIS**

One thing that is worrying me is that, at a time when all media attention is focused on Ukraine, there is a lack of interest to what is happening in Russia itself. The list of repressed socialists is growing, these are the people fighting at the forefront against the Russian aggression, and they are fully forgotten by international left and labor movements.

**Russian labor activist  
Geneva**

**NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US**

“What kind of labor will I be allowed to do?” is a question of people with disabilities. There is a tracking of people with disabilities to be a Walmart greeter or to work at McDonald’s. One young man said that after working as a greeter for six months he realized it was terrible. He had higher aspirations. Yet rather than asking what he could do

**READERS’ VIEWS**

with his artificial limbs, other employers would look at his missing limbs and say, “We don’t think you can do what we need.” They complained about him being a fire hazard. People hope to be listened to, rather than just reduced to their disabilities, having decisions made about their lives by politicians who don’t care about them. “Nothing about us without us” is our motto.

**Activist  
Chicago**

\*\*\*

I am pleased that I came across this dynamite publication in these times of imperialism. I especially admire the fact that *N&L* has a disabilities news section inclusive of all: race, religion, gender, disability and politics.

**Prisoner  
Frackville, Penn.**

\*\*\*

Prisoners at New York City’s notorious Rikers Island prison who have any sort of mental diagnosis or received medication inside are being released almost 12 hours after regular prisoners—so late that they are denied access to social service agencies, many of which close at 5:00 PM. People with any sort of mental diagnosis receive secondhand treatment, whether in prison or in a hospital.

**Recently out from Rikers  
New York City**

**HOMELESSNESS IN L.A.**

Downtown Los Angeles is being gentrified. The authorities want Skid Row out of there. Little Tokyo is being gentrified, too. It used to be cheap enough for artists to live there. This is the area where the women’s center is, dealing with women who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse. It is also a place where people with disabilities can come out, instead of being confined in their homes. Every corner is wheelchair-accessible. Skid Row organizing allies with renters, too, who are losing their homes due to home prices rising. Home-care workers, lots of them Black and Latina women, are there at the struggle for a \$15 minimum wage.

**Basho  
Los Angeles**

**CENTRAL CANADA ALLIANCE**

In Canada there is an ominous new “Central Canada Alliance” between Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne and Québec Premier Philippe Couillard against the other provinces. So much for “Canadian unity”! Wynne, because she is a Lesbian, presents herself as an “empowerment” figure, though she only empowers the very rich. She claims that Ontario is a “have-not” province, though it has 40% of the population and already dominates Canada oppressively. Just as Couillard is pushing the “Plan Nord” appropriation of Québec territory and resources for international corporations, Wynne has the “Ring of Fire” development in Northern Ontario, which they both intend to implement by the theft of Québec hydroelectric power—without any consent from the people of either province.

**D. Chêneville, Ti-Ouistiti  
California and Québec**

**PERSPECTIVES & PHILOSOPHY**

One of the things I like most in the Draft Perspectives Thesis (“Decaying social order shows need for philosophy, revolution,” May-June *N&L*) is the role philosophy plays. “Philosophy is no less indispensable than activism for the movement to result in the kind of fundamental transformation needed.” It poses that, in Egypt, “lacking a philosophy of revolution, the movement fell prey to capitalist ideology that substituted elections for real self-determination,” and

philosophically critiques Left parties in Greece and in Spain. We are referring here to a philosophy not separated from the movement from masses: a philosophy that goes to practice and therefore aids the self-determination of the Idea of revolution.

**Reader  
Mexico**

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Masses have their own dialectic and create “spontaneously” their own organizations. The main objective of a group like News and Letters Committees is not that the masses “join” this organization, but to aid the masses and other thinkers to unchain the dialectic (in thought and in action) of their liberation movements. Marxist-Humanism points toward the self-determination of the Idea as an historical need to overthrow capitalism. This activity requires the mediation of organization (philosophically rooted), but not organization as a fixed particular.

**Activist-thinker  
Mexico City**

**ELDERLY TO THE STREETS?**

My 94-year-old mother resides in an assisted living and supported living home. She called in tears about a notice posted on the bulletin board informing residents of impending budget cuts that Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner wants to make and how the proposed cuts to Medicare and Medicaid could cause the facility to close and displace all its residents, with most of them having no place to go. The residents and staff of the facility got together and sent over 200 postcards to legislators demanding that they not make the cuts and letting them know that the residents will lose their home if they do. Now, my mother calls me every day to find out what is going on. She admits that she always felt that because she is a white, middle-class citizen, she would never have to worry about things like this. She has always complained about me being an activist. Not anymore.

**Suzanne  
Chicago**

**WOMEN AND YEMEN HALF-PEACE**

Yemen’s peace talks in Geneva: “Congrats, you have an all-male panel!” Keep on excluding women, “half” of the society, and you’ll end up with “half” peace, idiot patriarchal male politicians! Only one female, among dozens of males. They didn’t even bother to put her in the pictures. The point is, gender equality must be taken seriously in the representation of the different sides in these talks.

**Afrah Nasser  
Sweden**

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The electricity generating station in Sana’a, Yemen, has been out of service since April 12. We are living here without any public services. The situation is more horrific than is being shown in the media. We sometimes stay three days without electricity, then it comes only for one hour. Actually we are in hell. Today people who want to move from one street to another have to ride lorries instead of buses and taxis because of the lack of petroleum products and their hiked-up price. Then there was the awful day when a massive explosion rocked the capital of Yemen. Saudi-led coalition warplanes targeted a missile depot in Mount Noqum. It caused an unknown number of deaths and injures of Yemeni civilians. Thick black smoke rose skyward, and other debris was scattered across residential areas, terrifying the residents of the city. Such actions demonstrate that all the parties engaged in the conflict in Yemen don’t care about civilians’ safety.

**Yemeni Citizen  
Sana’a**

**LABOR AND CLIMATE JUSTICE**

“People’s Climate Movement-NY: Organizing for Next Steps” brought together at the Left Forum some of the organizations that had participated in the September 2014 People’s Climate March. Speakers from DC37 (a union of mostly public employees) spoke of difficulties in organizing around climate justice as a union issue. Ray Figueroa of the Community Garden Coalition indicated that activists in the South Bronx recognized the inextricable linkage of issues, as in their effort to stop Fresh Direct from getting taxpayer dollars to garage their delivery trucks in the South Bronx. The trucks pollute and Fresh Direct siphons jobs from, and doesn’t serve, poor communities and food deserts. However, no one mentioned the reasons they decided not to march to the UN Headquarters in September, a political decision that diluted the impact of the march.

**Susan Van Gelder  
Detroit**

**DIALECTIC & WOMEN’S LIBERATION**

“The tape machine has been the ‘magic box’ that recorded what [masses] think” (“The dialectic and women’s liberation,” May-June *N&L*) captures the essence of the relation between theory and practice in a Marxist-Humanist organization. Because “the self-development is not of the careerist woman, but the woman who thought she didn’t know how to speak.” Correspondence, the tape machine, are then transformed into revolutionary means, for they let us know the voice of the “voiceless,” the practice as a form in itself of theory. However, that is not enough: correspondence and the tape machine turn really into that just when we “are rooted in philosophy.”

Women in a two-year long strike here are creating with their actions of resistance, with their “simple” thoughts, no less than a new world, with new human relations, in practice as well as in theory. With what is happening today in Turkey and the Middle East, could we say that women are there the most important element (not the only one) in the process of social uprooting?

**J.G.F. Hector  
Mexico City**

**VOICES FROM BEHIND THE BARS**

Transgender women in the New York City prison system who have had their names and genders legally changed are being housed with male inmates.



Also, prisoners who previously received estrogen in patch form (the safest form according to specialists) are being denied the patch and thus forced to take estrogen pills, which are notorious for causing blood clots that can be fatal.

The prison medical establishment does not care about the quality of care prisoners receive.

**Natalia Spiegel  
Queens, N.Y.**

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Thank you for the gift subscription to *N&L*—and for keeping it a printed newspaper. It’s a voice of the people, especially those trapped behind these walls of oppression and repression, who do not have access to the Internet. *N&L* is our form of social media, and keeps us abreast of what’s going on in the real world—and not just what the government-controlled TV media is pumping through. *N&L* is always an interesting read. And I read every word in every issue.

**Prisoner  
Represa, Calif.**

*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.*

# Black Lives Matter actions: Baltimore, Oakland, Los Angeles

## Chicago's solidarity with Baltimore

**Chicago, Ill.**—What is the truth about Freddie Gray's death? He was murdered by the notoriously racist and brutal Baltimore Police. Baltimore has exploded in anger because of the attempt to *obscure* this obvious fact. This generation serves notice: That shell game is over.

The same clarity about the system was displayed by hundreds of determined youth who took to the streets of Chicago in solidarity with Baltimore protests. Chicago attempted a similar cover-up in the trial of Officer Dante Servin for his murder of Rekia Boyd in 2012.

State's Attorney Anita Alvarez formulated charges against Servin so that he would be found not guilty. He was off duty when he murdered Rekia, used an unregistered gun, and fired over his shoulder from his car. Yet charges of "involuntary manslaughter" and "reckless conduct" were dismissed because one of his shots hit the man he says he was aiming at, Rekia's boyfriend Antonio Cross, who was holding a cell phone.

Questionable legal precedent holds that if a cop hits the person he aims at, he can't be found guilty of recklessness—no matter who else he shoots and kills. This is a "legalism" that stinks of totalitarianism.

On April 28, hundreds gathered outside Chicago Police Department headquarters to show love and respect for Rekia Boyd, Freddie Gray, Michael Brown, and all the others whose Black lives matter. The crowd was largely young and multicultural. Sponsors included We Charge Genocide, Black Lives Matter-Chicago and Black Youth Project 100. Speakers, including Airicka Gordon-Taylor, a relative of Emmett Till, kept the focus on Black history as revolutionary history.

Following the rally, hundreds marched through the South Side despite opposition from the police. We marched and chanted down several streets, with police finally drawing a line at the University of Chicago.

As we marched through the South Side streets, the crowd continued to grow. This movement will also continue and grow. In Baltimore, Chicago and Ferguson, a new generation of revolutionaries sent back the message: *From now on, there will be no business as usual!*

—Gerry Emmett

## Becoming a handicap activist

My involvement as an activist began after I had three strokes, and Transient Ischemic Attacks (TIA's). I had graduated from Kennedy-King College and majored in Special Education. I went for a teaching job and during the interview explained that I had epilepsy, even though I didn't have to as I wasn't in a wheelchair then. I got the job, but about a year later they fired me. In my job I talked to the children about disabilities, taught them sign language and explained that people with a disability have a different way of doing things. The parents were very supportive.

I explained to the school that I also used sign language and that a person with a disability has a right to an interpreter, but they refused to get one.

I filed a complaint and had a meeting with a mediator. But instead of discussing my case they talked about going to lunch. They said my work was fine but they couldn't do anything. That was the last time I was able to work with pre-school children.

When I was in the hospital I had a problem getting an interpreter. I have the right, but they wouldn't provide one. I had to write everything down and get them to look at it. This happened at numerous hospitals.

**I was in a car accident years ago. When I was discharged from the hospital, I was told I was being sent to an outpatient rehab center. But what they did—without consulting me—was send me to a nursing home for no good reason. I've seen many people put in nursing homes and stay there for years. They wouldn't contact my family. Finally my brother found me and got me released. It was like I had been kidnapped.**

I am always asking for ramps at buildings that don't have them. For support I reach out to the Chicago Hearing Society, Access Living and ADAPT.

It's important to know that there is support out there and a way to fight back. Now I make phone calls to legislators. Contacting the governor, the media, talking one-on-one, whatever it takes to get things done.

Freedom means being able to do things for oneself. No "pity parties." Sometimes I need a little help. But Governor Bruce Rauner's cuts make it hard. My food stamps went from \$300 to \$50 a month. This is a huge problem for many people.

I was arrested for the first time at my first national action with ADAPT. The police kept warning us that we were going to get arrested. If that's what it takes to be heard, then fine.

It's important to never give up, even if you get tired and discouraged. Those in power need to know that we are not going away. Things may slow me down but I am not going to stop. Stopping is not an option.

—Chicago disability rights activist

## Oakland's killer cops



**Oakland, Calif.**—On June 12, 200 demonstrators blocked the intersection at Lakeshore and Lake Park Avenues. There, in the early morning of June 6, 30-year-old Demouria Hogg, father of three, fell asleep waiting for the stoplight to change. After failing for two hours to rouse him, the Oakland police smashed a window to gain entry. The suddenly awakened Hogg was fatally shot twice less than a minute later. While police have yet to release their own video recordings, they immediately released a photo of a handgun lying on the front seat. Police have not said the gun was a factor, only that "there was a struggle." A large banner read: "Sleeping while Black is not a crime."

—Participant

## Secretive LAPD

**Los Angeles**—On June 9 the L.A. Police Commission came out of a secret meeting to announce that only one of the two officers involved in killing unarmed Black youth Ezell Ford (diagnosed as bipolar) on Aug. 11, 2014, was guilty of violating LAPD policy. Chief Beck doesn't have to make the punishment public. Previously Beck stated that the killing was justified, revealing his estrangement from human rights.

Before the Commission went into secret deliberation, Tritobia Ford, Ezell's mother, pleaded, "I beg you. He wanted to live. He walked the streets. I didn't want him to walk the streets—but that was his right, and he didn't deserve to die for it." Ford was shot three times and the wound on his back had a muzzle imprint showing the gun was fired at close range.

*Los Angeles Times* reporter Steve Lopez said, "Try to put yourself in this situation. The police shoot and kill a member of your family and you can't get answers about why it happened..." Merrick Bobb of the Police Assessment Resource Center said, "I'd say things here in Los Angeles are as transparent as mud. There's too



by Suzanne Rose

A young Black man who participated in the Ferguson protests and had mental health issues was shot and killed by police in St. Louis, Mo., in April. Thaddeus McCarroll was holding a knife and a Bible when he emerged from his mother's house. He had no gun and had not threatened or attacked anyone. Yet police opened fire on him as soon as he stepped out the door. His mother called the police, thinking that they would get her son help, when he started talking about "revolution" and locked himself in the house. She explained the situation to police when they arrived, but instead of bringing in specialists who could deal with the mental issues that Thaddeus was facing, they immediately surrounded the house and escalated the situation.

\* \* \*

On June 10, disability rights activists from Not Dead Yet Pennsylvania and New Jersey Centers for Independent Living, as well as groups representing parents of people with disabilities, marched to Princeton University to protest. They publicly denounced recent statements by Professor Peter Singer promoting the killing of disabled infants through denial of healthcare. They asked Princeton to take other steps to address what the activists described as Singer's "hate speech" toward disabled people. Singer has been promoting public policy that would legalize the killing of disabled infants in their first month of life.

\* \* \*

A woman who uses a wheelchair was forced to crawl onto an American Airlines commuter plane in San Diego because the airline wouldn't provide her with an available access ramp. Theresa Purcell, a hip-hop artist who has a neurological disorder that limits her mobility, filed a lawsuit against the airline on June 5. She says the humiliating incident happened despite her having told the gate agent before her flight that she would need an access ramp. The ramp was never set up. When she got to the plane she asked the crew for a portable ramp. They refused because it would delay the flight. Purcell had to crawl up a narrow flight of stairs and then down the aisle to her seat while the rest of the passengers on the plane watched.

little information about officer-involved shootings and other uses of deadly force."

On March 1, another unarmed Black man, Charly Leundeou Keunang, also known as Africa, was killed by five or six LAPD officers in Skid Row. In both cases, police used the excuse that the victim was reaching for a gun. LA CAN, a human rights organization, has been asking the LA Police Commission for justice for Charly Keunang for weeks. There has been no response.

**In January, following months of non-violent marches nationwide against police killings of unarmed Black youth, Black Lives Matter demonstrators occupied the sidewalk in front of LAPD headquarters for 18 days to meet with Chief Beck and demand that he fire the police who killed Ezell Ford. Beck refused to meet.**

Black Lives Matter participants camped out in front of Mayor Eric Garcetti's home for several days and nights demanding he fire Beck. Garcetti appointed Beck and the members of the Police Commission.

An organizer for Black Lives Matter, Don Matkin, stated, "We cannot wait for a single leader as a Malcolm X or a Martin Luther King." Patricia Kelley, another organizer, said, "It's direct action with love and dance. We marched, we cried. This is just a step. It's not over." She also quoted a South African saying, "Nothing about us, without us—is for us."

The struggle isn't over until we have new human relations, everywhere.

—Basho

## EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

in Baltimore became newsworthy. Media reported that the area at the heart of the rebellion has over 30% unemployment and an average income of \$17,000 per year. Some news reports even dared to note that Black unemployment and poverty are both still more than twice that of whites, that over one quarter of U.S. Blacks live below the poverty line and that nearly one in three Black and Latino children are at risk of hunger.

How threatening this revolt is to the power structure was seen in the occupation of Baltimore by National Guard troops and the curfew imposed there. Over two weeks, nearly 500 people were arrested, many of whom were never charged, even though they were held longer than the 24 hours allowed under Maryland law. Some reporters were beaten and jailed for reporting on the protests and their repression, and 12 National Lawyers Guild legal observers were arrested.

The fact that six Baltimore cops were charged so quickly in Freddie Gray's killing is a measure of the revolt's intensity. Protests and other forms of revolt have spread all over the country since the events in Ferguson last year. (See reports on this page.) As #BlackLivesMatter spread, #SayHerName was begun to highlight the often-overlooked killing, rape, and abuse of Black women by police. Dozens of actions were held on May 21 to observe the new National Day of Action to End State Violence Against Black Women and Girls.

Conviction of Freddie Gray's killers is far from certain. Cops are rarely punished even for videotaped crimes. The mild reforms being considered in many cities and states—mainly, body videocameras on cops and better statistics about police violence—do little to address the systemic bias, let alone the fundamental problem that the police as an institution exist to preserve the given social order, which is racist through and through and is based on a class division of society into the rulers and the ruled.

The fact is that "innocent until proven guilty" does not apply in practice to targets of police action—especially Blacks and other people of color, homeless people, Trans people and poor people. All too often, they are punished until proven innocent, and even afterwards.

Kalief Browder's suicide in June is a horrific example. At 16, he was wrongly accused of stealing a backpack and thrown in New York City's Rikers Island jail with an out-of-reach \$3,000 bail. By the time he was released in 2013, he was 20 and his case had been dismissed without going to trial. He had spent most of that time in the torture of solitary confinement and was repeatedly beaten and starved by guards. This is what happens to a teenager who was not convicted!

There are many who see revolts like those in Baltimore and Ferguson as justifiable reactions from people pushed to the limit by an occupying army. What most commentators forget is that no new society can be built without tearing up the existing one by its roots. That is, the only way to get to the second negation is through the first. The Subject has to self-develop through revolutionary self-activity in order to become the Subject of the creation of new human relations.

Often portrayed as mindless destruction and looting, these revolts involved a development of consciousness of self as Subject, of Subject as power to transform, when Subject becomes masses in motion.

We are surely at a new stage of revolt. The question is not whether it is yet a totally new beginning, but rather: What are we going to do to help it become one?

**MAY INTERNATIONAL DAY  
17 AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA  
& TRANSPHOBIA**



The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOT) is observed around the world each year on May 17 to raise awareness of human rights violations against LGBTI people and to advocate for our full human rights.

Louis-Georges Tin founded IDAHOT in 2005 after a year-long campaign by the IDAHOT Committee for official recognition. The committee, which included the World Congress of LGBT Jews, the Coalition of African Lesbians and the International Lesbian and Gay Association, chose May 17 because on that day in 1990, the World Health Organization decided to remove homosexuality as a disease from its *International Classification of Diseases*. Among the countries who observed IDAHOT that first year were Bulgaria, China and Congo, whose events were their first ever for Queer rights.

Transphobia was added to the name of the day in 2009. That year, IDAHOT events were mostly focused on transphobia and the struggle for Transgender rights. In that year, France removed Transgender issues from its list of mental illnesses. Biphobia was added to the day's name in 2014.

IDAHOT observances in 2015 included Namibia's AIDS and Rights Alliance for Southern Africa demanding that all Southern African governments respect and protect LGBTI people's right to freedom of expression as guaranteed in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, so that, among other things, HIV/AIDS may be effectively dealt with.

Almost every European Union institution affirmed that they will continue to legislate for full human rights for Queer people and refuse any discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Thousands turned out in Seoul, South Korea, for IDAHOT festivities, which included a stage show. A joint statement by Queer rights advocates stated they would "fight to create a society where LGBTI people can enjoy dignity and human rights" with a vision of "a plaza of diversity."

Turkey also saw its largest turnout for IDAHOT, in its capital Ankara. A march "for freedom and love" closed Turkey's LGBTI rights group Kaos GL Association's 10th International Anti-Homophobia Meeting, with thousands of attendees.

Those who are determined to win full human rights for LGBTI people show a path to creating a truly human world. —Elise

## Transgender liberation at the Left Forum

The Left Forum this year had two workshops allegedly about Trans liberation. Both were standing room only, showing a lively interest in the subject. But apart from that, the two workshops had virtually nothing in common and the politics of panelists at the first had a great deal to do with Non Gender Conforming superiority over the rest of us.

In the first place, all the panelists vehemently denied that they were Trans or that they belonged to a specific gender identity. They argued that binary gender identification was sexist, colonialist, and racist and that true freedom comes from fighting all gender identity. When a participant in the meeting expressed pride in her womanhood, she was told that this was a reflection of reactionary, internalized colonial politics.

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# Winds of change from Alberta?

With news of the New Democratic Party (NDP) victory and the election of Rachel Notley as Premier in the May 5 Alberta provincial election, there was a little burst of joy across Canada amongst workers, feminists, social democrats, human rights activists, environmentalists, educators, health activists, and others who seek a new human society in Canada. It is not heaven on earth, but it is a *huge* breathing space in the repressive Canadian landscape. It is critically important that we use this time well.

The Tories, or "Progressive-Conservatives," are worse than one could easily describe. In the three weeks between the election and the installation, the outgoing Tory government shredded thousands of valuable Alberta government documents, a Canadian tradition of dubious legality.

The Tories had been in power for over 44 years. They presided over economic chaos, social destabilization, and environmental destruction brought by the tar sands oil "boom," and are promoting the Keystone XL pipeline with lobbyists all over the U.S. In the 1970s, they instituted the forced sterilization of over 3,000 Indigenous and Métis women, then shredded the medical records in 1995 to avoid prosecution. They continued their racist attitudes and policies up to election day. There are over 250 unsolved murders and disappearances of Native women in the province.

**On the federal level, the Tories have been in power under federal Prime Minister Stephen Harper for about nine years, due to the Monarchy's intervention in 2008 to prevent a vote of non-confidence in his government. That act gave him unchallenged power, which he has used ruthlessly. Since then he has worked to dismantle the Canadian social safety net, and remove most environmental and financial regulations. He is now collaborating with the Liberal government in Québec to do so there.**

This NDP victory is a major setback for Harper, and may threaten his chances in the federal elections this fall. He has met his match in Notley, who, unlike the Liberals, is no shrinking violet. The new NDP government may result in more provincial autonomy, in the best sense, and put a brake on Harper's autocratic leadership style.

Although the NDP has a solid majority in the legislature, it got less than half the popular vote. Still, the Tories are not even the official opposition now.



Tar sands protest in Alberta's Athabasca region, June 28, 2014.

That role goes to the conservative break-away Wildrose Party. The conservative *National Post* in Toronto has suddenly discovered the need for "electoral reform" and is piously intoning about "unfairness." Comedians are having a great time.

Though partly friendly to oil interests, Notley is not enthusiastic about the Keystone XL pipeline, which may help stop it. This government will probably be better for Indigenous people, French-English relations across Canada, the social safety net, and the environment.

The election results have deep historical roots. Alberta was a center of prairie populism in the early 20th century and was the first province to elect a social democratic government in the 1930s, and the second, after Saskatchewan, to have government-funded healthcare. The recent arrival of people from all over Canada may have also brought changes in thinking, and the recent drop in oil prices may have had an effect.

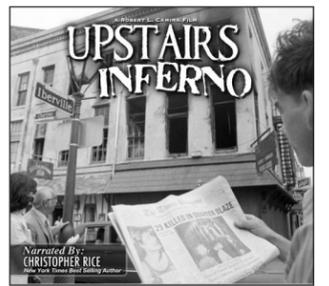
The NDP victory in Alberta is important but is only the tip of the iceberg of the deep and growing discontent of people all over Canada. There is now a new breathing space to fight for a new human society in Canada, and we must use it.

—D. Chêneville and Ti-Ouistiti

## QUEERNOTES

by Elise

The Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities has named *The Up Stairs Lounge Arson: Thirty-two Deaths in a New Orleans Gay Bar June 24, 1973* the 2015 Book of the Year. Like the film *Upstairs Inferno*, in current release, the book relates the worst mass killing in the U.S. of Gay people when, on June 24, 1973, a deliberately set fire raged through the Up Stairs Lounge bar, ending the lives of 32 Gay men. This tragedy sparked the Gay Rights movement in New Orleans.



The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled that Turkey cannot force Transgender people to receive transition surgery or any other Transgender-related medical treatment. The rights organization Transgender Europe points out 20 of the 47 states who signed the ECHR Convention still require Transgender people to be sterilized before undergoing any medical treatment.

The North Carolina legislature overrode Governor McCrory's veto of legislation that allows local officials claiming "sincerely-held" religious beliefs to deny marriage to same-sex couples or couples whose race, faith or behavior might offend the public official. Michigan Governor Snyder signed a bill that allows adoption agencies receiving government money to deny same-sex and unmarried heterosexual couples from adopting children on the grounds of religious objections.

Ho Chi Minh's ICS, a network for GLBT people, launched its campaign for Transgender rights in Vietnam: "My Body—My Rights." The campaign is planned to run for more than a year to provide community and safe space for Transgender people. It is supported by the International "Human Rights, Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Support Fund."

Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of now-defunct bakery Sweet Cakes by Melissa have been ordered to pay \$135,000 in fines to a lesbian couple the Kleins refused to bake a wedding cake for, on the grounds of so-called religious freedom. The Kleins violated the Oregon human rights statute, which bans discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

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For ordering information see page 6.

—Natalia Spiegel

# Refugees risk death fleeing war, terror and climate chaos

continued from p. 1

a similar fate in the Mediterranean. When, in a single incident, as many as 900 perished off the coast of Libya in April, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi saw it as a moment of truth for Europe's oft-touted Enlightenment humanism. Renzi called it our day's Srebrenica, referring to an incident that highlighted the reappearance of genocide in Europe 20 years ago when over 8,000 civilian Bosniaks in a "safe area" under the protection of the UN were murdered by Serbian fascists. (See "20 years after Srebrenica: A Women's Court demands justice," p. 2.) Today's refugee deaths are not accidental but are a direct result of European authorities' barbaric and calculated neglect:



This Tuvaluan girl is holding her sign at a site she picked as an example of environmental degradation. Tuvalu is expected to become covered by the ocean in under 25 years, displacing the entire population.

cutting their sea rescue capacity in an effort to keep out fleeing immigrants.

## GENOCIDAL NATIONALISM ON THE RISE

European officials' main concern is not the immigrants' hell on earth, but avoiding further embarrassment. They proposed to destroy boats in Libyan waters, effectively shutting down any escape for people brutalized by war and terror. The European Court of Human Rights at first found against Italian military ships that returned immigrants to Libya without investigating their right to asylum and international protection. Incredibly, the court later gave the military the right to return refugees to Libya based on assurances from the reigning brutal warlords and fundamentalist authorities that the refugees would not be "subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment."

**Why this totally hypocritical "human rights" posturing? Because what sets rulers' priorities is a growing fascistic undertow of narrow nationalism in Europe. In France we see the rise of Marine Le Pen's National Front, a neo-fascist anti-Muslim party aligned with another neo-fascist, Russia's Vladimir Putin. David Cameron's ruling Conservatives in Britain kowtow to the growing anti-immigrant UK Independence Party. They are now trying to renegotiate terms of their membership in the European Union to be able to exclude non-English from entering.**

In the midst of this crisis, France drastically cut its asylum approvals. On June 2 it bulldozed a refugee tent camp in Paris that was a stopover for many on their way to more sympathetic countries in northern Europe. France and Germany wouldn't even agree to an inadequate European Commission plan to take their shares of 40,000 migrants over the next two years.

Refugee camps are also being destroyed in Italy. The governor of Veneto, Luca Zaia from the anti-euro, anti-immigrant Northern League, opposes Renzi's modest rescue efforts. Zaia demanded all services for immigrants be removed because of a supposed negative impact on tourism. When dozens of migrants on the French/Italian border started their sit-in and hunger strike on June 14, demanding freedom to pass through French border controls, Renzi said either Europe takes some of the refugees—most of whom enter through Italy—or Italy will have to deport them.

Many refugees enter Europe through Greece, including 100,000 Syrians who arrived after perilous Mediterranean voyages. Though Greece is in a deep depression, German and international financial overlords are demanding more austerity, knowing well they are aiding the rising fascist anti-immigrant and anti-euro Golden Dawn party that is waiting in the wings.

## UNPRECEDENTED GLOBAL REFUGEE CRISIS

Today an unprecedented number of refugees are on the move, embarking on perilous sea journeys, against a backdrop of a protracted global economic crisis that started in 2007. Four years later, Arab Spring initiated a new drive for self-determination and democracy that spread in public squares throughout the world. Multiple counterrevolutionary states with a seemingly endless reserve of means of violence set out to smother

those pervasive democratic aspirations.

Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad met the persistent and peaceful multi-ethnic struggle for democracy with mass murder conducted with Russian approval and technology. Other states like Iran support Assad, while the reactionary U.S. ally Saudi Arabia supports Sunni fundamentalists who oppose Assad.

**They all participate in the slaughter and the struggle to destroy the secular revolutionaries such as the Free Syrian Army and the Kurdish fighters of Rojava. Since 2011, 11 million Syrians have been displaced, with four million seeking refuge outside the country, and perhaps tens of thousands of women raped.**

Among Islamist Sunni fundamentalists, the totally barbaric terrorists of the Islamic State (ISIS/Daesh) outdid al-Qaeda affiliate al-Nusra in ruthlessly killing civilians and unarmed prisoners and chopping off heads. ISIS also holds substantial territory in Iraq, where another endless civil war—the result of U.S. imperialism's effort to remake that country—has produced an estimated five million refugees and displaced persons.

Turkey now has 1.7 million Syrian refugees. President Tayyip Erdogan, who put down the massive Gezi Park democracy protests in 2013, closed Turkey's border with Syria in March, though tens of thousands of Syrian civilians broke through the those barriers in June. With tanks stationed just across the Syrian border, Erdogan did as little as possible to help Kobani Kurds facing annihilation from ISIS. Turkey's oppressed Kurdish minority then rioted across their southeast enclave. The secular Kobani Kurds survived and continue to gain ground against ISIS.

## STILL NO HOME FOR PALESTINIANS

Palestinians are a stateless people for whom the Yarmouk camp in Syria was no refuge when the Assad regime's siege drove out hundreds of thousands and later allowed the bloodthirsty ISIS to enter. (See "Death in Yarmouk," May-June N&L.) In the last Israeli election, Prime Minister Netanyahu's Jewish statism openly revealed what everyone already knew: Israel never intends to grant statehood or equal rights to the millions of Palestinians living under its brutal occupation, even as it promises to expand its already massive theft of internationally designated Palestinian territory.

In Ukraine, Putin's Russia started a covert war when a popular movement overthrew an authoritarian government. Ukraine's economy, already in dire straits, has contracted 9% and now there are 1.3 million displaced people getting help from a woefully underfunded UN agency. Western European countries reject Ukrainian requests for asylum.

## CLIMATE CHANGE REFUGEES

Today's unprecedented number of refugees fleeing from economic collapse, war and terror has been exacerbated by climate change. More destructive storms and natural disasters disproportionately impact the poor. The ever-expanding Sahara desert is cutting already scarce resources in places like Darfur. On island countries like Tuvalu, rising sea levels are forcing people to emigrate.

**Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, has grown to be a mega-city of 17 million, up from 12 million in 2005. The growth is primarily in a sprawling, squalid, disease-infested shantytown. Dire conditions and deep poverty in the countryside as well as in the urban slums explain why so many boat people come from Bangladesh.**

Much of the city's population growth is due to climate change refugees. The lowlands of Bangladesh have suffered from powerful super-cyclones like the one that hit in 2008, which, helped by rising sea levels, wreaked widespread destruction. The rising sea will inundate one-sixth of the country by 2050, displacing millions. In many areas, fresh water is already turning salty from seawater intrusion, undermining farming.

Today's treatment of refugees of war and economic disaster portends a bleak future for tomorrow's climate refugees.

Global capitalism has been put on trial by minori-

ties and other humans designated as "outsiders." In the U.S. the justice system massively brutalizes and incarcerates minorities and exploits immigrant laborers when they are needed, even as it constantly keeps them in a state of fear through workers' illegal status.

## TODAY'S ARMY OF THE UNEMPLOYED

Today's thoroughly integrated global capitalist production has resulted in stagnant growth and a humongous global surplus army of unemployed human beings. The capitalist regime grew in a humus of a statist system bringing out the vilest, anti-human tendency to make the "other" a scapegoat. This is not new in the history of capitalism. What can stop today's permanent war, terror, climate disaster and genocide from degenerating further than World War II, namely, into nuclear annihilation and/or total destruction of the life-sustaining capacity of the planet?

Only the firmest international solidarity can answer the immigrant's passionate cry, "Where is humanity?" Humanism without borders is a beginning toward realizing Marx's humanism as the fullness of a new society.

## The folly of jailing the elderly and non-violent

*Editor's note: Below we print excerpts of a May 25, 2015, letter to Michigan Governor Rick Snyder from Rand Gould, a prisoner at Thumb Correctional Facility in Lapeer, Mich. To read more about what aging prisoners face, read Gould's article, "Journey to death's door" in the Jan.-Feb. 2015 N&L.*

*Dignity lies in seeing reality for what it is—and acting responsibly in the face of it. —James Peck*

Dear Gov. Snyder:

...Today, I'm writing to thank you for your speech at Goodwill Industries last week outlining steps to be taken to reduce Michigan's considerable prison population, while protecting citizens and saving funds that would be better used to improve the state's roads and schools. Particularly, the steps to send fewer non-violent offenders to prison and to release more elderly prisoners who don't pose a threat.

**...I've come to know many of the elderly long-term and lifer prisoners. I wish it was possible for you to know them as I do, for the overwhelming majority have long ceased to be a threat to public safety, if they ever were. Some of them have served over 50 years, and many began their sentences as juveniles, growing up and growing old in prison. Many of them, like myself, have never received a misconduct report for any type of violent behavior, such as fighting or assault, and if any were written up it was years, if not decades, ago.**

The men I'm fortunate to know are mobile, unlike the utterly helpless men I saw being lifted into and out of wheelchairs at the prison hospital, i.e., Duane Waters, last year. I was shocked to see these pale, frail, ghost-like men kept in prison. What possible purpose could their imprisonment serve?...

As you know, it costs a minimum of \$35,000 a year to house one prisoner and Michigan has over 43,000 prisoners. This figure does not include education costs and the legacy costs from the state's massive prison-building program in the 1980s and '90s. Moreover, this figure doubles to \$70,000 per year for elderly prisoners.... Michigan is in the top ten states with the highest percentage of prisoners over age 55... The National Institute of Corrections classifies prisoners over 50 as "aging" due to the stress of imprisonment and typical lack of appropriate healthcare and nutrition prior to and during incarceration....

**Conversely, the recidivism rate for elderly prisoners who have served over 20 years is around 1% or 2% and rarely involves the commission of a new crime. Yet each elderly prisoner kept locked up for an additional 10 years costs the state approximately \$700,000...**

Here at Thumb Correctional, which has operated for decades with no escapes and minimal violence (unlike, e.g., Kinross), a new administration thinks spending more taxpayer money is the way to go. They've instituted a controlled movement policy, wasting taxpayers' money by erecting unnecessary and dangerous fences within the prison, which funnel prisoners and guards into crowded kill-zones every time yard movement is called. Most prison stabbing and slashing attacks occur in crowds so the attackers can avoid detection, as these administrators well know.... Throwing all this money away may well explain why it is so difficult for Michigan prisoners to see a dentist or doctor or eat a decent meal....

Thank you for your time and consideration and please feel free to contact me regarding any of the above.

—Sincerely, Rand W. Gould

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## Letter from Mexico

## The Zapatistas and Critical Thought

by J.G.F. Héctor

The Zapatistas held a seminar in Chiapas, Mexico, May 3-9 on “Critical Thought in Face of the Hydra of Capitalism.” The concept came from their recognition of the need for revolutionary theory. As the Zapatistas stated in their communication last January: “Critical thinking is necessary for the struggle.” By critical thinking they mean theory.

This does not refer to academic theory. Rather, it comes together with practice: “Neither practice by itself nor theory by itself is enough. Thinking that does not struggle does nothing but make noise. A struggle that does not think repeats its mistakes and does not get up after it falls.”

For more than two decades the Zapatistas have been concretely building a new world. Now it was time to sit down and analyze reality. Thus, the critical thought seminar had as its purpose “making a seedbed of ideas, of analysis, of critical thinking about how the capitalist system currently works,” to see “if the hydra [has] regenerated its multiple heads.”

**At the seminar were theoreticians from throughout the world, as well as from Zapatista communities—from Subcomandantes Moisés and Galeano to Zapatista women who spoke about capitalist oppression against Indigenous people before and after the 1994 Zapatista uprising. All their views were shared with the hundreds in attendance.**

Critical thought as a critique of capitalism, as the Zapatistas realize, plays a key role in social transformation. Furthermore, such thought has arisen from within the Zapatista revolutionary experience. However, critical thought seen just as analysis of reality is not yet critical thought at its fullest expression, for it separates objective study from the subjective forces of revolution.

**What is meant by this? Look at the presentation that could summarize the seminar as a whole: Zapatista Subcomandante Galeano, in the Etcetera document which he presented to the seminar, spoke about the importance of Marx and historical materialism. When he referred to historical materialism, he did so as an inventory of concepts and tools that help us to comprehend capitalism.**

However, to focus alone on Marx’s analysis of capitalism allows us to forget that, behind Marx’s economic categories, there is a whole philosophy of human liberation.

It is Marx’s concept of the dialectical method which posits theory and practice, objectivity and subjectivity, philosophy and revolution, as a unity. According to revolutionary dialectics, practice—the actions and thoughts of the revolutionary masses—is itself a form of theory. This can be developed to its fullest in unity with a theory that, like the Greek god Janus, looks with one face to such actions and thoughts and, with the other, to dialectical philosophy.

Thus theory, or critical thought, is not just an objective analysis of reality, but in its fullest meaning, is the philosophical expression of the thoughts, actions and desires of the revolutionary masses building up a whole new world. This, in my view, is what the Zapatista seminar missed, and what the Zapatista movement needs to reach for, even beyond the greatest peaks it has already attained.

## YOUTH IN ACTION

by Natalia Spiegel

Georgetown University recently announced that it will sell endowment holdings in coal companies. University President John J. DeGioia stated: “The work of understanding and responding to the demands of climate change is urgent and complex.” However, the university’s board noted that only an “insubstantial portion” of the \$1.5 billion endowment is invested in coal companies. GU Fossil Free, the student group pressuring Georgetown to divest its oil, gas and coal stocks, responded: “It is evident that the university made its decisions for mostly financial and public relations reasons. If the board had made their decision for principally moral reasons, then they would have supported full divestment.” GU Fossil Free will continue the struggle.

\* \* \*

A new report in the Index on Censorship, “Fired, Threatened, Imprisoned: is academic freedom being eroded?” looks into the state of academic freedom today. It takes up governmental, economic and social threats against students, teachers and other academics worldwide. It doesn’t spare Western powers like the U.S. and UK, where, it charges, the label of extremism is being used to stop debate. The report also has a chapter on “girls standing up for education,” written by young women from Nigeria, Uganda, and Pakistan.

## Mass march to keep ‘oil in the soil’

**St. Paul, Minn.**—About 5,000 people marched from the banks of the Mississippi to the Minnesota state capitol on June 6, taking advantage of a beautiful day in St. Paul to voice our objections to Enbridge Corporation’s pipeline expansion. Marchers included tar sands, pipeline, coal, oil and fracking protesters, supported by the Sierra Club, Nuclear Energy Information Service of Chicago, Fight For 15 and many First Nations.

**We chanted: “We are the people two! We are united three! We will not let you build this pipeline ONE! We are the people two, etc.” Some of our signs read, “Love water, not oil,” and “Keep the oil in the soil.”**

The program centered on Native American sacred water ceremonies. Indian dancing, singing and speeches were featured. Former Vice-Presidential candidate Winona LaDuke spoke at the kick-off press conference, vowing that First Nations would never stop defending mother earth!

In a day that felt triumphant, Bill McKibben predicted that no other pipeline would ever be built without massive, increasingly implacable protests. “The days of pipelines are over, folks!” he said; and “We are starting to win this, people!”

## Pacific nuclear tests still costing lives

**New York City**—Sixty years, to the day, after the Castle Bravo explosion over the Marshall Islands, Holly Barker, anthropologist at the University of Washington, spoke to us at the “Dynamics of Possible Nuclear Extinction” conference in New York City. Her subject was U.S. policy towards the people most affected by 67 atmospheric nuclear explosions. Those people were the Marshall Islanders.

Now, after six decades, women and their babies experience deep suffering because their island still radiates from the soil, the trees, and the beaches, and, in fact, from the very air. Nuclear radiation prevents normal development of fetuses, producing teratogenic (monstrous) effects.

### MOTHERS TESTIFY

These women and their families tell it best. Speaking at a UN Human Rights meeting on Sept. 13, 2012, Mrs. Lemeyo Abon said:

“To this day women in the Marshall Islands give birth to jellyfish babies, or babies born with no bones in their bodies and translucent skin. Sometimes they are born alive and live for a few minutes or hours, and you can see the blood moving through their bodies before they die.

**“We give birth to babies with missing limbs, or their organs and spinal cords on the outside of their bodies. We never experienced these types of births before the U.S. testing program.**

“We have complained about these births for decades, and we are always told by the U.S. Government that they are not the result of radiation exposure. Yet our language, our history, our stories have no record of these births before the testing program. After the testing program, we’ve had to create new words to describe the creatures we give birth to.”

### NUCLEAR ATTACK ON MARSHALL ISLANDS

In 1986, 31 years after the Castle Bravo thermonuclear explosion—between five and 12 times more powerful than scientists had predicted—researchers found that residents of Rongelap, especially women and children, were getting sick living on the highly contaminated atoll.

**The longer the women lived on Rongelap, the more health complications they developed, such as breast, thyroid, uterine and stomach cancers, and giving birth to mentally retarded children.**

Marshall Islander Lijon Eknilang appeared before the International Court of Justice in The Hague and gave this chilling first-hand account of the effects of nuclear testing in the Pacific: “Women have experienced many reproductive cancers and abnormal births,” Lijon said. “... In privacy, they give birth, not to children as we like to think of them, but to things we could only describe as ‘octopuses,’ ‘apples,’ ‘turtles.’” Lijon has had seven miscarriages, and no live births.

—January



I distributed flyers from the Nuclear Energy Information Service of Chicago (NEIS) and talked to about 40 receptive people about NEIS’s project to document “America’s Chernobyl,” the experience of Native Americans as they try to raise children and protect their families from radiation beaming from the unspeakable filth of active and abandoned uranium mines. Read more at NEIS.org and access the documentary at www.CryingEarth-RiseUp.com.

The protest focused on Enbridge having increased pressure in the already aging Alberta Clipper pipeline and plans to create a new line, Sandpiper, from the Bakken oil fields of North Dakota to Superior, Wisc.

**Transport of tar sands oil is a thorn in the side of all communities on the route. Since a record-breaking Enbridge spill into the Kalamazoo River that has not been cleaned up, and indeed cannot be, neighbors of existing pipelines are wary of them. But communities are equally worried about what have come to be known as bomb trains, like the eight cars that exploded in Lac Mégantic, Ontario.**

In 1953 Enbridge surreptitiously sank a pipeline under the nexus between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron, the Straits of Mackinac. Decay of that pipe is another issue that grates on the sensibilities of First Nations and the other residents of Minnesota, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ontario. Indeed, it eats at almost all who are aware of this threat to the water supply for tens of millions of people.

Our enjoyment of Indian dancing, music, speech and ceremony, along with cries of “This is what democracy looks like!” and “Another world is possible!” indicate the path forward to a just, non-sexist, non-racist future for mankind.

—Participant

## Women prisoners and allies create health fair

**Chowchilla, Calif.**—Prisoner-advocates in Central California Women’s Facility initiated a health information exchange: trauma, surviving it and dealing with the aftermath; gender and sexuality, including Transgender issues; HIV and HEP C; harm reduction; disability health; advocacy and rights for those with chronic illness; family unity and reconciliation.

The June 6 event was huge. California Coalition for Women Prisoners members from the outside co-facilitated tables with CCWP members from the inside.

**Many who have been writing for The Fire Inside for years finally had a chance to meet. People from inside, as well as members of Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project, staffed a Transgender table.**

One of the many information tables advocated being an ally against bullying. The trauma table also included information about dealing with suicide and healing from suicide attempts. A harm reduction card, prepared by prisoners earlier, addressed how to recognize overdose and what one can do within the prison. We had pamphlets on diabetes, heart health and strokes. Juvenile Offenders Committee, one of the sponsoring organizations, had its own table.

One of the prisoners, an LWOP (sentenced to life without parole) who was recognized by everyone there, said that she lives her life by paying it forward every day.

**Many other LWOP prisoners were organizers of the event, setting up tables, staffing them, bringing people to them, and helping with clean-up. The Living Chance Story Project is featuring stories about people who have an LWOP sentence to present them as real people anyone may know.**

Throughout the day a band was playing. It made for a fair-like atmosphere, letting everyone feel more like we were attending a community event. People even got to dance.

The day was not just sharing information about health, but acknowledging people taking care of each other under the worst conditions. Such care does exist in the prison and it needs support to strengthen and reinforce it.

It felt like a huge success and everyone wants to know when we will hold another one.

—An event organizer

## WORLD IN VIEW

by Eugene Walker

In a stunning June 7 election, the People's Democratic Party (HDP), a coalition of Kurds and liberals, won 12% of the vote. It will have 80 seats in Turkey's 550-member parliament. This was part of a sharp rejection of President Erdogan and the 13-year rule of his Justice and Development Party, which lost its absolute majority and faces barriers to any rewriting of the Constitution that would have allowed Erdogan to solidify his rule.

Spontaneous celebrations erupted in many places, people dancing and waving Kurdish flags. For the first time the Kurds have their own representatives in parliament.

### Iran's role in Syria

In a recent interview posted on *Iranian Progressives in Translation*, Syrian revolutionary Yassin al-Haj Saleh summarized the role that the Iranian government, under both "hard-liners" and "reformers," has taken in supporting the fascist Syrian Bashar al-Assad regime. He spoke of the responsibility of revolutionaries to criticize their own government's imperialism. Here are some excerpts:

"Recent reports said that Tehran has spent around \$35 billion in support of the regime. Iran is not only paying the money, it is controlling everything.

"In Syria it is widely thought that the country is under Iranian occupation. And it seems that Tehran is not running the regime's war against its population for only strategic reasons and for gathering more regional cards. The rulers of Iran are also putting their hands on Syrian land and state-owned property. Loans are provided with state-owned land and government property as collateral.

"This is colonialism in the precise meaning of the word. I think the Assad regime could not have stayed in power without submitting the country to a foreign colonial power, not known for its human sentiments towards Syrians or its own subjects. It was Tehran's initiative to build the National Defense Army, which is composed of the Shabiha, loyal sectarian thugs who volunteered to help the regime in crushing the popular protests. Many of them were trained in Iran. This dirty sectarian game will prove shortsighted and self-injuring someday.

"Iranians cannot resist oppression in their country while ignoring the urgent necessity to resist the imperial policies of their country. They have a special responsibility to be eloquent in condemning their government's policies in Syria. Their right to criticize the Syrian opposition, and I am a harsh critic of it, is conditioned by having a clear and principled position against the Iranian involvement and the Assad regime. The more powerful Iran becomes in Syria, the more powerful the present Iranian government will be vis-à-vis the people in Iran."  
—G.E.

## Turkey's election

Women significantly increased their representation. As reported by *ROAR* magazine: "The HDP upholds a 40% gender quota and has introduced a system of co-leadership of one man and one woman at all the different levels of organization, thus drawing a lot of support from feminist groups and from women in general. The party openly recognizes the Armenian genocide, fights for the rights of LGBT individuals, promotes the use of minority languages and has a political program stressing the need for decentralization, horizontal democracy and local



Thousands of women and men marched in cities across Turkey on June 19, protesting the rape and murder of 20-year-old Cansu Kaya, and the wave of femicides. She was the 144th woman killed in Turkey this year. A petition drive against femicide in Turkey has gained 1.1 million signatures so far.

autonomy. Its pluralist program catered to the needs of a wide range of people, and certainly not exclusively the Kurds." Erdogan lost a huge number of Kurdish votes over his reactionary attitude to the defense of Kobane.

The elections demonstrated that the important Gezi Park demonstrations and protests of 2013 haven't been forgotten. Then, millions, encompassing vast sectors of Turkish society, were in the streets throughout the country.

Erdogan was quick to recognize the electoral results. He will not likely cease his authoritarian ways, only seek new ways to impose them. However, he now faces a new reality created by those who wish a very different direction in Turkey.

### Spanish elections

The *indignados* (indignant or outraged ones)—named M-15 after they launched a massive protest movement against conditions of life and labor in Spain on May 15, 2011—have emerged victorious in important municipal elections in dozens of cities, large and small, including Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia.

The May 24 elections delivered a sharp rebuke to the ruling right-wing Partido Popular (PP) of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, and opened the possibility of challenging the two-party cabal—the PP and the Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE)—that has ruled Spain for decades.

The movements that organized in dozens of cities for the municipal elections were diverse: anti-eviction activists, protesters against corrupt banking practices, those demanding universal healthcare, people against privatization, demonstrators for freedom of expression, etc. While much attention has focused on Podemos, a Left party that emerged in 2014 and competed in European parliamentary elections, the movements encompass other progressive electoral coalitions.

While some call this a movement of "civil society" and proudly affirm a "non-ideological position," or pragmatism, as if that were not an ideology—what seems clear is that many in Spain are rejecting the bourgeois ideology of capitalist rule. They are searching for an emancipatory pathway forward. The municipal election campaign against the ruling party was only one small part of that search.  
—Eugene Walker

## Charleston terrorism

The racist murder of nine people at the historic Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., on June 17, is the characteristic U.S. form of terrorism. It is directed against the expression of Black self-determination, specifically Black Lives Matter and the recent protests against the police murder of Walter Scott in North Charleston.

The slain Rev. Clementa Pinckney was involved in the protests and had counseled Scott's family. He also served as a State Senator and got a law passed requiring police body cameras. The other dead included six women and two other men.

Emanuel A.M.E. Church was co-founded by historic freedom fighter Denmark Vesey, whose 1822 insurrection, though it was discovered and crushed, shook up the slave South. The killer upheld the "lost cause" flag of the Confederacy, beside those of apartheid South Africa and Rhodesia.

The struggle to uproot racist terror—whether expressed as legal slavery, the KKK, Jim Crow laws, lynch mobs, imperialism, dogs trained to savage humans, the prison system, or police murders—runs through U.S. history like a red thread. Only the complete uprooting of this racist, capitalist society will finally eliminate its terrorist dregs.  
—Gerry Emmett

## Chile students protest

Once again, as they have done since 2011, Chile's students have taken to the streets by the tens of thousands to demand fundamental education reform. Their earlier fight was to roll back the neoliberal, private-dominated educational system imposed during the Pinochet dictatorship and continued by the rightist President Sebastián Piñera.

This time their struggle was against President Michelle Bachelet, a socialist, who had guided a significant education reform package through the Chilean Congress. The new reforms will, over time, eliminate profits, tuition fees, and selective admissions practices in privately owned primary and secondary schools that receive government money.

Many students, led by the Confederation of Chilean Students, and joined by teachers and others, saw the package as a halfway measure—"not the reform we mobilized for"—that would only modify the commodification of education, not abolish its mercantile base.

**The protesters, who were met by tear gas, water cannons and police batons, are demanding more thoroughgoing reform. What is at stake is made clear by what the Pinochet dictatorship did to Chile's educational system, and by the shadows that dictatorship still casts.**

Before Pinochet, education was a public right with state schools, tuition-free education at the university level, and state-sponsored education at primary and secondary levels. This is what the dictatorship completely destroyed, creating in its place one of the most expensive, elitist systems, where only the rich had access to a decent education. The students and their allies are demanding that this legacy of dictatorship be destroyed root and branch, not just gently trimmed.

Despite having moved beyond the dictatorship, and even to "socialists in power," it has not been through the political process of elections, legislation, etc., that change has primarily occurred. Rather, it has been mobilizations from below, particularly the student demonstrations of recent years, that have opened the door towards social transformation. Will they continue to be a catalyst of authentic change in Chile?  
—E.W.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

### Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

The articulation of the relationship be-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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