

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Racism and the Confederate flag

by Robert Taliaferro

There should come a time when we are able to unite for a common cause without the specter of tragedy being the impetus. The removal of the Confederate battle flag from the capitol grounds of South Carolina is a positive action that should be applauded, yet there are those who would decry that event as pandering to liberal political causes centered in Washington under the Obama administration.

Then there are those who feel that the flag represents their heritage and the pride that they have for those who died for the Southern cause in the Civil War, at the time a call for "state's rights" and the continuation of slavery.

FLAG IS DRENCHED IN RACISM

It is a sad state of affairs that 150 years after the end of the Civil War the U.S. still has a culture infected by a deep and moral dilemma that engenders vehement debates over a piece of cloth, a relic of history that represents a culture entrenched in violence, racism and brutal class discrimination.

The most curious aspect of this predicament is not so much the attitudes of some who were born and raised in the South, but rather the white kid from Wisconsin, Minnesota or Alaska who waves the "stars and bars" defining "their heritage" when neither they, nor their

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EDITORIAL Evolving Black Lives Matter

One year after the murder of Michael Brown by Ferguson, Mo., police officer Darren Wilson, the Black Lives Matter movement continues to challenge racist U.S. society. Ferguson and St. Louis County police showed how little they had changed by arresting over 100 peaceful demonstrators on the anniversary. The manifest racism was only highlighted by the authorities permitting white right-wing "Oathkeepers" militia members to walk around town carrying assault rifles, while young Blacks were beaten and arrested for the mere alleged "suspicion" of having weapons.

At the commemoration of Michael Brown's death, one activist commented that police have murdered over 700 people since the beginning of the year. (See killed-by-police.net.) This doesn't include deaths in custody, which number in the thousands. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 4,446 deaths occurred in local jails and state prisons in 2013, the latest available data. More than one-third (34% or around 1,512) were ruled to be suicides.

CHALLENGING BOURGEOIS POLITICS

Young Black activists are determined to confront and uproot the racism that has disfigured this country, not only from its formal founding in a dirty compromise allowing slavery, but in its true foundations: an economic system built on genocide and forced labor. This was demonstrated once again in the challenge to Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders' supporters at a number of campaign rallies.

While some were critical of the intervention at Sanders' Seattle rally by Marissa Johnson and Mara Willaford, who seized the microphone to make their

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Counter-revolution in Middle East shows crisis of humanity

by Gerry Emmett

The July 14 signing of a nuclear weapons agreement by the U.S. and the Iranian regime seemed like an event strangely out of time. This despite the efforts of Israel's far Right Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to rally reactionary opposition in Israel and in the U.S. Congress.

In the agreement, Iran accepted verifiable limits on its atomic energy program in exchange for the welcome lifting of sanctions that have mostly harmed the people, not the rulers. Even the end of sanctions, though, means something different now than it would have before the collapse of world oil prices.

In truth, the U.S. and Iran have long found common ground in their mutual opposition to revolutionary change—from Iran's 2009 Green Movement (which the U.S. did nothing to support) to the Arab Spring Revolutions. Syria is the test case—while the U.S. has done almost nothing to support the revolution there, Iran has used every available asset to help crush it.

Despite words to the contrary, Netanyahu and other reactionary rulers, near or far, benefit from it. What is needed now is precisely what we don't find at the moment—a revolutionary movement in Iran and Israel that would speak out against their own imperialisms.

THE REAL MOMENT AT HAND

Following the nuclear agreement, a humane logic would dictate that the same powers—the U.S., Iran, Russia, China, France, Germany and the UK—would encourage other peace initiatives. But imperialism is no humane logician.

The limits of Iranian imperialist flexibility were on display in mid-August. When their mercenary protégés, the Lebanese militia Hezbollah, met fierce resistance



Demonstrators in Tahrir Square, Baghdad, Iraq, Aug. 7.

in the Syrian town of Zabadani, Iranian officials took the unprecedented step of meeting directly with the Islamist Syrian rebel group Ahrar al-Sham under the auspices of Turkey.

There the Iranians presented a "peace" proposal for Zabadani that required the ethnic cleansing of all Sunni Muslims—the town's main population. This would be part of a policy to divide Syria and allow Iran to salvage its investment in Assad and its pipeline of weapons to Hezbollah. It was properly rejected. Talks then ended,

and the Assad regime, now largely controlled by Iran, began a particularly vicious bombing campaign (augmented by new Russian planes) against civilian targets. The massacre of over 100 civilians in the marketplace in Douma, Aug. 16, was just one of many recent regime atrocities.

The specter raised here, of the threatened sectarian division of Syria backed by a regional power and its militia proxies, while great powers stand by or collude, can't help but bring up memories of the Bosnian war of the 1990s. It is a terrible place for the world to find itself exactly 20 years after the Srebrenica massacre.

REGION IN UPHEAVAL: IRAQ

To see the revolutionary opposite to this reactionary moment, it's necessary to pull back and look at developments in a number of countries. For one, there are the stirrings of a new mass opposition in Iraq.

It was like a breath of fresh air in mid-August to see thousands of Iraqis pour into the streets around the country expressing an entirely different logic from that of reaction and sectarianism. Their slogans included "Daesh [IS, the Islamic State] and the Parliament, two sides of the same coin," referring to the influence of religious sectarianism on the Iraqi state; "Secularism! Secularism! Not Shia! Not Sunni!" and "Humanity doesn't live by religion, but by bread and dignity!"

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Greek crisis: austerity, revolt, illusions

Greek voters overwhelmingly rejected a new austerity package in a July 5 referendum called by the Syriza government. After campaigning for a No vote, Syriza quickly turned No into Yes by agreeing to conditions very similar to those the voters rejected.

What the vote showed above all was that the Greek masses reject the austerity program imposed on them by the European Union, the European Central Bank (ECB), and the IMF, in collusion with previous Greek governments, both conservative and social democratic. Over 60% voted no, even after a pro-austerity propaganda campaign by the mass media and heavy economic pressure placed on the people. By capping loans to Greek banks, the ECB forced capital controls and bank closings ahead of the vote, making life even more difficult for the working class and the middle class.

The country's forces of revolt have erupted again and again in recent years, as the economy melted down and austerity was imposed. Huge, militant demonstrations in Athens both before and after the No vote were only the latest manifestation. The 2011 strikes and occupations were among the most militant in the world. The occupation of Syntagma Square in Athens was one of the links between the Arab Spring revolutions and Occupy Wall Street.

SYRIZA IS NOT THE MASSES

Over the last five years, a confrontation has unfolded between the forces of revolt in Greece—workers, youth, immigrants, women—and the ruling classes of Europe through its continental institutions, backed up

by global institutions and investors.

Until this year, Greek governments stayed on the side of the institutions. But one of the results of the masses' opposition to austerity was that they broke down the two-party system and swept the previously marginalized Syriza, whose name literally includes the phrase "radical left," into power this year. Syriza,

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EDITORIAL Planned Parenthood siege

Dishonestly edited videos accusing Planned Parenthood of illegally selling aborted fetal organs for profit have now become fodder for mostly Republican politicians—including those running for president. They are outbidding each other, vowing to destroy Planned Parenthood and in doing so both mislead and grovel before their Right-wing anti-woman base. David Daleiden, head of the Center for Medical Progress—a pure Orwellian doublespeak name—probably broke several laws making, faking and releasing the videos.

Planned Parenthood only donates fetal tissue to researchers when women who have had abortions ask. A woman might actually feel that something good could come from her abortion, for example, the recovery that stem cell therapy has brought hockey legend Gordie Howe. But these zealots don't want women who abort

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Review of *Feminism Unfinished*

Feminism Unfinished: A Short, Surprising History of American Women's Movements, by Dorothy Sue Cobble, Linda Gordon, and Astrid Henry (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc.: New York, 2014).

This book is a brief overview of the history of the feminist movement in the U.S. from the period after women's right to vote was won in 1920 until the present. Written by three professors of women's history, it is intended for the general reader and for use in college and high school classrooms. Cobble wrote the chapter about social justice feminists' involvement in labor unions and the civil rights movement from 1920 until the 1960s. Gordon wrote

Health clinics attacked

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to ever feel anything but, as columnist Katha Pollitt writes, "silence, fear, shame, stigma."

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE HAS MANY ENEMIES

The videos are not the only attacks the reproductive justice movement is facing. Planned Parenthood and the National Network of Abortion Funds have been attacked by hackers who went after their server, May First/People Link, as part of a national denial of service attack that began on July 30 and is continuing as we go to press. Planned Parenthood also suffered data theft.

Data theft of private information about clinic doctors and workers is particularly alarming as names, home addresses, children's schools, etc., have been made public and then used by fanatics to stalk, harass, injure and kill abortion providers and clinic workers.

Republican Presidential candidates Ted Cruz, Marco Rubio and Rand Paul all vowed to destroy Planned Parenthood; Mike Huckabee said he would consider sending federal troops or the FBI to stop abortions; Rick Perry said Planned Parenthood "cuts apart and sells the body parts of dead babies"—every word of which is a lie, including "and" and "the."

Gov. Bobby Jindal is terminating Louisiana's Medicaid provider contract with Planned Parenthood, while he lies that its "employees...engage in illegal partial birth abortion procedures." He knows that Planned Parenthood doesn't even provide abortions in Louisiana! Jindal claims that denying women on Medicaid access to Planned Parenthood will "not jeopardize" reproductive health services for Louisiana women. But Planned Parenthood services 2.7 million patients there each year. A number of other states are also trying to break their contracts with the clinics.

Republican Texas Representative Jodie Laubenberg, author of the sweeping anti-abortion law that closed more than half the abortion clinics in Texas, spewed the absurd: "This is no different than what happened in Nazi Germany, no different than during the experiments." Since Republicans couldn't shut down Planned Parenthood based on lies, they are planning to attach a rider to must-pass legislation this September, threatening a government shutdown.

POLITICIANS' CONTEMPT FOR WOMEN

Women, especially poor women, have already been severely impacted by an avalanche of laws that effectively strip them of being able to obtain what is a legal medical procedure. The Republican vow to defund Planned Parenthood would mean \$500 million cut from two programs aimed at helping poor people: 75% from Medicaid; and the rest from Title X—the federal family planning program that serves poor Americans.

Now many women in Texas don't realize that abortion there is still legal! Phony pregnancy centers help spread this lie, telling women who come in for an abortion that they are illegal; but women also believe it because so many legitimate clinics have been closed.

Come Sept. 1, poor, uninsured women in Texas won't be able to get government-subsidized breast and cervical cancer screenings at Planned Parenthood as state legislators passed a law specifying that clinics affiliated with abortion providers cannot receive taxpayer funding for *exactly those* services, falsely promising that those services would be available elsewhere. Seventeen Planned Parenthood clinics in Texas provided such screenings and were already prohibited by state law from performing abortions if they accepted taxpayer dollars, even if not used for abortions. Texas women are so desperate, and are so far from a clinic, that many are going to Mexico to purchase drugs to self-induce. Back-alley butcher abortions are not far behind.

Demagogic politicians claim they are defending women's health when they are attacking it. For women to obtain reproductive justice, we must be in charge of our own healthcare and not depend on *any* politician to do it *for us*. That would mean a fundamental transformation of this society.

about the Women's Liberation feminists of the 1960s and 1970s, and Henry wrote about the Third Wave feminists of the 1980s to the present. The authors wanted to address the dearth of writing on the history of feminism as a movement for social change and to correct the many myths about it.

They consider the "wave" analogy inadequate and show how feminism does not revive only to die out on a regular basis, because it is a continuous movement. It is better understood as numerous movements because different kinds of women tackle a variety of issues. Also, as times change, more issues arise, and people may understand things in new ways. The fact that feminism is not monolithic is also seen when feminists disagree with each other. The authors discuss some of these disagreements as well as misunderstandings that older and younger generations of feminists can have about each other. In this way, the authors hope to foster an understanding among activists of their own history so that they may find it easier to address internal conflicts in the future.

THE NECESSITY OF MASS MOVEMENTS

Probably the biggest myth the authors debunk is that feminism is an elite movement for white, socially and economically privileged women. Some writers today tell individual women to climb to the top of the corporate career ladder and be assertive in demanding higher wages. These benefits do not really "trickle down" to the vast majority of women in lower paying jobs. Although feminism often includes personal growth, mass movements are necessary to improve living conditions for large numbers of people, to change laws, and to transform society.

Each of the authors describes many lesser known campaigns, projects, and leaders, especially focusing on how feminism has been intersectional (intertwined with fighting other oppressions, including race and class) during each historical period. Sometimes historians have ignored feminism because it blended into other progressive movements.

NO, FEMINISM IS NOT DEAD

The authors' description of feminism throughout recent history challenges the notion that it is "dead" or that it was never necessary. Some people believe that human rights come inevitably with modernization, but the authors show how struggle is necessary. They explain how feminism has "utterly" changed all aspects of society, including government, culture, entertainment, and "the very nature of knowledge," and that "one cannot understand today's world without an understanding of how feminism has influenced it." They question whether there is such a thing as a purely "women's issue" because feminism has improved life for all people, and has often explicitly included struggles for the rights of children, men, and people of other genders.

The authors explain how feminism is "unfinished," partly because some rights have not been won and attitudes not completely changed. Also, with the internet, feminism's global spread has escalated, and the main struggle will no longer be centered in the West.

This book is important in helping activists learn from previous generations and to reinvent feminism for their own circumstances.

—Adele

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In June, the mother of a 15-year-old rape survivor filed a case against Kenya's government for denying the girl access to an abortion. The girl developed an infection after resorting to an unsafe abortion and now needs a kidney transplant. The mother's petition states that, although abortions are legal for rape or to save the woman's life or health, women have difficulty getting them and the government prevented healthcare providers from receiving training in safe abortions.

* * *

In June, Inkosi Kachindamoto, a Malawian traditional leader, annulled the child marriages of 175 girls and 155 boys. She ordered the children to school and fired the village leaders who had performed the marriages. She is putting into practice Malawi's recent ban on marrying persons under 18 in a country where half the girls are wed before that age, and one in eight before age 15.

* * *

In previous years, Women on Waves, a Dutch non-profit organization, sailed to countries where abortion is illegal to perform safe, legal abortions on their boat. Currently, they provide the medical abortion pills Mifepristone and Misoprostol and reproductive health information through the website of their sister organization Women on Web. WoW has helped organizations open hotlines to give information on accessing abortion in Ecuador, Chile, Argentina, Indonesia, Pakistan, Venezuela, Peru, Kenya, Thailand and Morocco. In July, for the first time, Women on Waves sent abortion pills in a drone from Germany to women in Poland.

200 at Trans meeting

New York City—Over 200 Transgender people, their allies and a handful of elected officials came together at Hostos College in the Bronx in late July for a city-wide conference on the status and situation of Transgender people in New York City. Activist groups—such as the Sylvia Rivera and Audre Lorde organizations—were represented, as were individual Trans people and their allies.

The meeting addressed issues of police brutality against Trans people in the city and on Rikers Island. Recently a prisoner on Rikers Island testified that he was brutalized by both the police and guards and then raped with the guards' complicity. We also discussed the lack of housing and jobs, problems with medical care and lack of justice for Trans people in city courts. To cite one notorious case, a street thug who beat a Trans women to death was given a lesser charge than murder.

Several people spoke to the entire group, which then broke into smaller working groups to discuss the issues. Some of the organizers are hopeful that this is just the first meeting of this type, and that the meetings will put pressure on the City Council to improve the lot of Trans people, and that a more permanent and unified Trans organization will replace the fragmented and segmented character of the Trans community right now.

As one activist put it, "we need a Transgender liberation front just like Sylvia Rivera organized the first Gay Liberation Front."

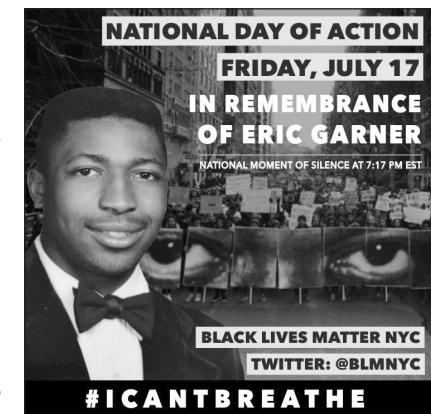
—Natalia

Black Lives Matter

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anti-racist statement, many more were driven to think. For one thing, at a rally focusing on protecting social programs, the young activists introduced a note of urgency reflecting the fact that countless lives are being destroyed through draconian cutbacks that reflect the inhuman logic of capital.

Behind Black Lives Matter is a demand for Black lives to be recognized as human lives. This is not reducible to the glib rhetorical statement "all lives matter," which can be said by any politician, warden, or bureaucrat.



The Black experience brings forth a universal idea of what it is about human life—freedom, dignity—that matters for everyone. This is a concrete confrontation with U.S. history, including its latest chapter of unending capitalist crisis and the cancerous growth of a genocidal prison system. This movement reveals a strong sense of history.

CHALLENGING OURSELVES TOO

Young Black revolutionaries have begun by changing themselves. The Black Lives Matter movement has had a major effect upon a generation's consciousness. This could be seen in the life of Sandra Bland, the young Black woman who died in custody in Waller, Texas, on July 13. She was pulled over by state trooper Brian Encinia, who accused her of not using her turn signal, although she was actually pulling over to get out of his way. Encinia escalated the incident to the point of brutalizing Bland, before illegitimately arresting her and placing her in the proven unsafe Waller County Jail.

The most powerful testimony against the lying trooper and the racist jailers has been Bland's deepening revolutionary consciousness (see page 8). That can't be confined in any cell.

The challenge voiced by the Black Lives Matter Movement recalls Martin Luther King's 1963 "Letter from Birmingham Jail": "I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizens Council or the Ku Klux Klan, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice."

HUMAN FREEDOM IS THE GOAL

We have seen that even the first Black President has too often been more devoted to "order" than to human freedom. Black youth now are challenging not only "moderates," but the system that demands of them moderation.

In doing so, they challenge their own movement to deepen its continuity with the history of freedom struggles that remain incomplete, and bring to completion this quest for a new society beyond racism, exploitation and oppression.

Huge explosions in Tianjin, China, heat up ongoing unrest

On Aug. 17, five days after explosions at a hazardous chemical warehouse killed and injured hundreds of firefighters, neighbors and factory workers, residents of Tianjin in China protested against government officials' complicity in the catastrophe. The warehouse was illegally close to three housing complexes, and stored a lethal cocktail of flammable chemicals and at least 700 tons of sodium cyanide 70 times their licensed limit.

Protesters demanded the government buy back the housing they dare not return to as the threat of airborne cyanide forced evacuation beyond a two-mile radius.

ONLY THE BEGINNING OF DEVASTATION

As we go to press, fires continue to burn from explosions compared to one five-hundredth the force of the atomic bomb that devastated Hiroshima during World War II. Like Hiroshima, the effects on people only begin with the blast. Devastation following cyanide in the air or water would dwarf the toll of dead and wounded that officials so far admit to.

Tianjin officials downplayed casualties, denied hazards and belatedly detained executives of the firm that owned the warehouse. This response echoes the reaction to the 1976 Tangshan earthquake. In the last

Letter from Mexico

CNTE teachers' goal: autonomous learning

by J.G.F. Héctor

Mexico, DF—Since its split from the official teachers' union in 1979, the National Coordination of Education Workers (CNTE) has been struggling for autonomy, new labor relationships and a non-capitalist educational model.

In September 2013, tens of thousands of people—teachers outside the CNTE, students, parents and activists—demonstrated throughout Mexico to show their rejection of the government's privatizing educational reforms. Since then, the CNTE has been working intensely on the design and realization of an alternative (autonomous) educational model.

One year later, September 2014, the state-instigated disappearance and murder of 47 students from the Ayotzinapa Normal school pushed dissident teachers to assume a new political role: They have been the main supporters of the parents' search for their missing children. By doing so, the teachers have made clear that their struggle is not isolated. They understand their struggle as a part of a nationwide battle against capital and its corrupt governments.

In Guerrero, Michoacán, Chiapas and Oaxaca—states with a major presence of rural teachers—and also in Mexico City, teachers' solidarity with the parents of the Ayotzinapa students was concretized by the call to boycott June elections, with significant success in some places. "We don't want to vote on criminals," they said, echoing the demand of the Ayotzinapa parents, and they organized to partially stop the "electoral circus."

At the same time, the government's drive to impose the so-called "educational reform" did not stop. Evaluations to determine whether teachers are "competent" workers or not—and, therefore, if they should be fired—have intensified, especially in this last year. In response, teachers from the CNTE have blocked buildings where such evaluations were supposed to take place, and exhorted teachers belonging to the official union not to submit to them. The demand of the dissident teachers is clear: the state should immediately cancel the "educational reform."

In July, the government attacked the teachers by firing all the members of the CNTE who worked at the Public Education State Institute of Oaxaca (IEPO). Since then CNTE issued a national call both to boycott the 2015-2016 school year beginning at the end of August, and to have a national workers' strike.

At first sight, the militant dissident teachers could be seen as a minority (compared to the teachers who belong to the official union). However, as Marx said about the 1844 Silesian workers' strike, their "small" struggle carries within itself the dignity of the universal.

This has been proved practically by other groups, including teachers not in CNTE, or with no experience as activists, who have become more sympathetic to CNTE demands. They, too, have experienced the punitive effects of the "educational reform." Similar teachers' struggles can now also be seen in Santiago, Chile, and in the U.S. in Chicago among other cities.

The success of these struggles depends, of course, on the revolutionary activity of the teachers, on how they are able to relate to other workers, students, parents, activists, etc. At the same time, success depends on how they follow up with the creation of an alternative educational model that would deepen their search for authentic autonomy. The success of the teachers' struggles depends on how they are able to face revolutionary tasks, in practice as well as in theory.

weeks of Mao Zedong's life, the Party treated the earthquake which killed over half of Tangshan's million people as a state secret and refused outside aid.



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The connivance of Chinese officials with private companies riding roughshod over safety issues is parallel to the 2013 explosion of the fertilizer plant in West, Texas, within sight of the neighborhood school.

Capitalists within China and abroad have expressed more

consternation about other explosions and implosions. For example, the stock market crash dropped the paper value of private corporations by 8.5% nationwide, and by one-third or more on the key Shanghai and Shenzhen exchanges. As exports first flattened and then began declining, China devalued the yuan by 4.4%, only whetting the thirst of international bankers expecting further declines to follow.

WAVES OF STRIKES SHOW WORKERS' REVOLT

Those capitalists and China's rulers have been unable to contain the working class, which has produced untold wealth for them. Strikes in China have tripled over the last two years. Thanks to the militancy of workers, and over the government union's obstruction, wages in "the world's workshop" have risen almost 12% a year from the below-subsistence wages that fueled its primitive accumulation of capital.

Chinese companies as massive as Foxconn with its million workers have continued internally migrating to lower wage areas such as Guiyang where the minimum wage is less than 40% of the wages in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

Warehouse owner Ruihai Logistics in Tianjin shows how profitable it can be to break regulations. Workers at Dongguan Baoxing Electronics, producing for multinationals like Nokia and Samsung and set to close, are striking to win the severance pay guaranteed by law that so many companies do not pay. The company will reopen in the same city, Dongguan, but with no right for workers to transfer.

More and more, Chinese capitalists are joining multinationals in establishing production in Vietnam, Cambodia and Burma. The global race to the bottom demands not only lower wages and low or no environmental and safety protections, but the use of the state and its police powers to enforce corporate demands. If politicians, as always in the pocket of corporations, con-

Disappearing miners

Detroit—Escalating bankruptcies in the nation's coal industry paint a grim future for the industry and for coal miners and their families. The bankruptcies, sweeping the coal fields everywhere, have affected the largest and smallest mines. As a result, thousands of coal miners have been laid off.

Alpha Natural Resources, the fourth largest coal company in the U.S., filed for bankruptcy in August. That followed Walter Energy, Patriot Coal and a number of smaller companies in the past few months, which already had thrown thousands of coal miners out of their jobs. There are now some 80,000 surface and underground miners, about 8,000 fewer than a year ago.

Coal prices have plummeted more than 70% in the past four years, dramatically reflected in today's market prices. The stock price of Peabody Energy, the country's largest coal producer, dropped from \$16 a share a year ago to about a dollar a share today. The thinking a few years ago was that China would be a lucrative coal market for the foreseeable future, but this has abruptly disappeared as China has cut back drastically. Coal consumption in the U.S. fell from 1.1 billion tons of coal in 2011 to 924 million tons last year, most of which went to coal-fired electricity generating plants.

These forces now converging on the coal industry and resulting in massive layoffs are reminiscent of the late 1940s, when the industry began automating. In less than a decade, introduction of the continuous miner cut the number of unionized miners from half a million to around a hundred thousand.

The economic conditions became so horrible that many miners' wives were forced into prostitution to keep their families alive. A report of these conditions in Welch, West Va., sparked food drives across the nation to feed the people there. Will we see a repeat of that horrific situation in the near future in the coal regions in the U.S.?

—Andy Phillips

tinue attacks on labor gains that now exist precariously state by state, the race to the bottom could go through the U.S. as well as China and Southeast Asia.

—Bob McGuire

Greece: crisis & revolt

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however, despite its heated confrontations with the institutions, is not the masses. Rather, it is between these two great forces, feeling pressure from both sides, which explains why Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras caved in to the creditors' most egregious demands.

That reverses most of what Syriza ran on. The moratorium on home foreclosures ends. Prices of food and transport rise, as do social insurance contributions and taxes on the poor. The minimum wage, pensions and state spending are to be cut. "Reforms" will reduce workers' protections and grant market advantages to European multinationals, which will decimate small and medium businesses. European institutions will oversee sweeping privatization of public assets.

Two previous "reform" packages reduced Greece's fiscal deficit, but led to a protracted depression. Unemployment is 27% and for youth is more than 50%. Real incomes and pensions are down by 40%. The GDP has fallen by a quarter. Public sector jobs have been slashed, and the average retirement age has soared.

OPENING THE DOOR TO FASCISM

The suffering of refugees on the island of Kos—many fleeing the genocidal Assad regime and Islamic State in Syria—may presage the future of the Greek working class. About 1,000 refugees were locked into a stadium overnight with little water and no food. Reinforced by 200 riot police from Athens, cops assaulted adults and children, while local authorities deliberately kept conditions difficult to discourage future migrants.

The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party is exploiting anti-immigrant fears in this land of high joblessness and pretending to be the real opponent of European overlords, now that Syriza has transformed into the enforcer of austerity rather than its enemy. In reality, Golden Dawn has infiltrated the police and attacked, even killed, immigrants, workers and leftists.

The past five years' bailouts, far from helping the Greek masses, mainly transferred the debt owed to international banks, hedge funds and private investors onto the shoulders of Greek and European taxpayer-funded institutions. Nearly 90% of the new bailout is for debts, interest and support for Greek banks.

Both the IMF and the European Commission now recognize that Greece needs debt reduction. Austerity has made matters worse for the Greek economy and the masses. Yet the latest deal intensifies austerity and includes no debt reduction.

This is not, as some pundits claim, a matter of dogma. It does reflect the drive to restore profitability to capitalists—mainly in northern Europe—which is helped by driving down Greek labor costs and destroying "excess" Greek capital.

As importantly, the rulers want to quash the rebellion in Greece and prevent it from spreading. The governments whose workers have suffered most from austerity—Portugal, Spain, Ireland—are among those vociferously opposed to concessions. They don't want to see revolt rekindled in their own countries.

SYRIZA'S ILLUSIONS

Thus Germany used the negotiations to either force Syriza out of office or make them the bearers of austerity. Now a split has begun. Some in its Left believe that Syriza has been used to legitimize austerity, and that its leadership under Tsipras even intentionally took "initiatives to deactivate the dynamic that was emerging with the referendum" (see July 14 *Jacobin* interview with Stathis Kouvelakis). The party's Right thirsts to purge those who voted against the new austerity package.

But Syriza's unstable unity is the result of the common outlook of its Left, Right and Center, who all see state power as their path, even if that means taking over the management of Greek capitalism to save it.

Tsipras embodies the contradiction between simultaneously fighting austerity and saving capitalism, putting his faith in "Europe" rather than the masses. He subordinated all else to negotiations dominated by Germans asserting their hegemony in Europe. His illusions that Greece could split the "democratic" states in the EU and create a bloc to confront Germany only led to a dead end.

While a small country like Greece cannot win alone without support from the peoples of Europe, Tsipras only asked the masses in other countries to pressure their own governments. He did not seek to stimulate the independent self-organization of those masses any more than of the Greeks.

Thus international Left accusations of a "coup" carried out against Syriza evade its own self-defeating path of exalting the pursuit of state power over listening to the movement from practice and encouraging workers' control of production and self-activity.

—Franklin Dmitryev

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: To highlight the new online availability of the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection at www.rayadunayevskaya.org, we present excerpts of her Report on Marxist-Humanist Perspectives given Aug. 31, 1985 (#10348 in the Collection). Here she takes up the development of the Marxist-Humanist concept of Archives out of the category made of the totality of Marx's Archives as a new beginning for today.

[Sleeping Marx's works as a totality, especially the "new moments" in the works of his last decade, set a new task for future generations to work these out for their age. For Marxist-Humanists, that also illuminated the Marxist-Humanist Archives, because it set, in a totally new context, what is meant by catching the link of continuity with Marx's Marxism, as well as revealing that the discontinuity of an age, a century later, is no barrier to catching the continuity. Marxist-Humanism's Archives demonstrate that. It continues to motivate all our writings and activities.

KEY IS THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Let's now turn to the process of development of Marxist-Humanism in its three major philosophic works. The movement from practice that is itself a form of theory so predominated News and Letters Committees' first period of development, culminating in the publication of my first book, *Marxism and Freedom*, that that work extended the expression "movement from practice" (if going back into history can be called an extension) and disclosed that it characterized human development before Marx.

It is true that Marx alone rooted his entire discovery of a new continent of thought and of revolution in that movement from below. It is also true that the maturity of our age led us to make a category of that movement from practice. Nevertheless, strange as it may seem to talk of "unconsciousness" when speaking of Hegel, it is a fact that the movement from practice—in his period, the French Revolution—inspired Hegel to break with all previous philosophies. It demonstrates that the revolutionary nature of the dialectic methodology was by no means limited to where Kant "stopped dead" in his modalities. On the contrary, dialectic methodology was the way philosophy would reflect and "transcend" reality.

It was true of the Abolitionist activities, which included John Brown and Bloody Kansas, culminating in John Brown's attack on Harpers Ferry. This, Marx concluded, signaled the start of the Civil War in the U.S. It was Marx who had held, in his Preface to *Capital*:

"Just as in the 18th century, the American War of Independence sounded the tocsin for the European middle class, so in the 19th century the Civil War did the same for the European working class." (He was referring, of course, to the French Revolution in the first case and the First International Workingmen's Association in the second.)

THE MOVEMENT FROM PRACTICE...

We discovered the movement from practice in 1953 when we first broke through the mystical shroud Hegel had thrown over Absolute Idea in his mystically expressed "unity of theory and practice." Out of that movement, which demonstrated itself as a form of theory, the historic-dialectic structure of *Marxism and Freedom* was created.

It also dictated the context in which we presented Lenin's break from his previous concept of the dialectic. His 1914 concept of the revolutionary nature of the dialectic separated the methodology of his attack on the betrayal of the Second International from that of all other revolutionaries, and governed his call for turning "the imperialist war into civil war." His practice of the dialectic of thought as well as of revolution underlined his call for a Third International.

...IS ITSELF A FORM OF THEORY

There was an attempt by many of the non-Stalinist Left to make our new category of the "movement from practice" merely an "update" they did not need. It took very nearly a whole decade in which we let all the new voices from below be heard—from *Workers Battle Automation* and *Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves* to *The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution*, the "Weekly Political Letters from West Africa" as well as *Notes on Women's Liberation: We Speak in*

A revolutionary attitude to Archives

Many Voices. It took witnessing the aborted revolutions of 1968, which had operated with [then radical activist] Daniel Cohn-Bendit's concept of the sufficiency of catching theory "en route," to finally force the wholly new and original development of "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning." This was finally recognized as very far from a mere "update."

RELATION OF OBJECTIVE TO SUBJECTIVE (OR) A NEW BEGINNING FROM MARXISM

I had, way back in 1960, written to Herbert Marcuse on the Absolute Idea and liberation movements in the emergence of a Third World. I called these "random thoughts" a corollary to *Marxism and Freedom*. What I kept developing in these "random thoughts," not by any means all addressed to Herbert Marcuse, was the relationship of objective to subjective, notion to reality. I insisted that even that had not exhausted the tasks of revolutionaries, who must interpret Marxism for their own age—that it is they who must chisel out from totality itself a new beginning. It was 1973 before this was fully worked out as *Philosophy and Revolution, from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*.

ABSOLUTE NEGATIVITY AS NEW BEGINNING

That work began with "Why Hegel? Why Now?" presenting Absolute Negativity as New Beginning and thus, in the very first chapter, hewing out also a "new Hegel"—that is, this age's reinterpretation of Hegel that no others had done, and at the same time, detailing seriously Marx's roots, as well as Lenin's "Shock of Recognition."

Part II of *Philosophy and Revolution* then faced "Alternatives"—other revolutionaries such as Trotsky, and Mao as well as "Sartre, the Outsider Looking In." Only after the new on the Hegelian Dia-

lectics of our age and only after Marx and Lenin, did I turn to the rise of a "new Humanism" in East Europe and in Africa, especially in the writings of Frantz Fanon, in Part III, against the background of the objective world of state-capitalism in their lands. Only then did we turn, in the final Chapter 9, to the "New Passions and New Forces" of the 1960s. Whether as in the first chapter of *Philosophy and Revolution*, or in the academic form in which I presented it to the Hegel Society of America, the point was that "Absolute Idea as New Beginning" could not be left in a "general" state, but had to be made concrete for one's own age.

The events of the 1970s were by no means limited to President Richard Nixon's *Pax Americana* and the then still-continuing Vietnam War, which shook the world. At one and the same time, Mao initiated two absolute opposite events in his last period—the chaotic activities of his Red Guards on the one hand, and rolling out the red carpet for Nixon-Kissinger, on the other. Nixon's political horrors no sooner ended than the world was confronted by so deep and so new a stage of global economic crisis that it brought about structural changes in the so-called private capitalist orbit. Instead of that succeeding in finally shaking up post-Marx Marxists, they continued their non-comprehension of Marx's greatest work, *Capital*. It is this that led to a new pamphlet by us on *Today's Global Crisis, Marx's Capital, and the Marxist Epigones Who Try to Truncate It*.

NEW MOMENTS IN MARX'S LAST DECADE

Far, however, from only counter-revolution continuing its dominance, great new revolutionary awakenings were emerging, including the revolutionary force of Women's Liberation becoming a Movement, as well as new revolutionary upsurges in what was fascist Portugal, initiated from Africa, and in the Shah's Iran. They coincided with the transcription at long last of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks*. These opened for us the "new moments" Marx experienced in his last decade, which disclosed a new trail from his 1880s to our 1980s. Marx's Archives, the view of his work as a totality, revealed a new concept Marx had of objectivity, which included the development of the masses in motion. It created a new way to look at our Marxist-Humanist Archives.

In summation: the 1970s called for a balance sheet of all post-Marx Marxists, beginning with Engels and continuing to our age. Though Engels' first book after the death of Marx—his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*—dis-

closed how far apart were Marx's and Engels' views on the "Woman Question," this was by no means the only dialectical difference between them. The most critical and all-sided divergence was Marx's multilinear view of human development vs. Engels' unilinear view.

It is true that Lenin opened a Great Divide in post-Marx Marxism. His actual practice of the dialectics of revolution succeeded in achieving the only successful proletarian revolution in history. Anyone who attempts to skip over that Great Divide does it at his peril. It remains the ground, but ground is not the whole. It is neither a sum total nor totality as new beginning for our age.

FORM OF ORGANIZATION NOT THE ANSWER

The revolutionary theoretician, Rosa Luxemburg, was right in pointing to the question of the needed new relationship of spontaneity to the Party, and insisting on the uniqueness of revolutionary democracy continuing the "day after" and not only the "day before" and "day of" revolution. It is this question that became a focal point of Marxist-Humanism's new work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. At the same time, it became clear that the question of the dialectics of the Party was not approached in full either by Lenin or by Luxemburg. Marxist-Humanists were right when, from the beginning, they broke with Lenin's concept of "vanguard party." Luxemburg, too, however, offered no truly fundamental answer with her concept of spontaneity, once she nevertheless remained in the Party. Furthermore, she continued to be totally wrong on the National Question in her concrete opposition to Self-Determination of oppressed nations, placing them as "nationalistic" and bourgeois. In a word, the answer could not be found by remaining on the level only of form of organization.

Instead, the imperative need, at the very end of both a learning experience and engaging in a new battle of ideas with such great revolutionaries as Lenin and Luxemburg, was to grapple, all over again, with that missing link of philosophy, the dialectic—the dialectic of revolution, the dialectic of thought, and The Dialectic of the Party (the subject of our new new-book-to-be).

That missing link had plagued post-Marx Marxism ever since the death of Marx in 1883 until Lenin's rediscovery, at the outbreak of World War I, of Marx's roots in the Hegelian dialectic, which produced the Great Divide in post-Marx Marxism. Lenin, however, did not show the process of arriving at those great revolutionary conclusions, did not make public his *Philosophic Notebooks*.

REVOLUTION IN PERMANENCE

After *Marxism and Freedom*, which first disclosed the Great Divide, and after *Philosophy and Revolution*, which spelled out Absolute Idea as New Beginning, came the latest grappling with the dialectic in Chapter 11 of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, "The Philosopher of Permanent Revolution Creates New Ground for Organization," which ended with a sum-up of Marx's theory of permanent revolution, 1843-1883, in the context of this age, on the relationship of organization to philosophy. It disclosed that there was still need of the dialectic as Second Negativity, as the total uprooting. It is that which determined the creation of the final Chapter 12 in that work, on the Trail to the 1980s, which climaxed in a final section, "A 1980s View."

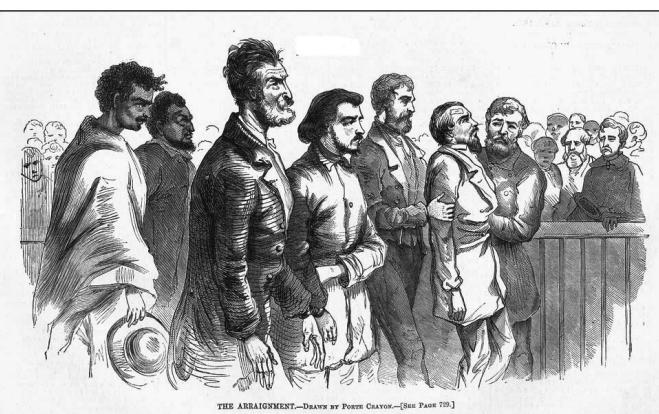
It is necessary to re-emphasize this. It was only as we were coming to the conclusion of this work and called Marx's "new moments" the trail to the 1980s that we finally summarized Marx's Marxism and not only Hegel's Absolute

Idea both as totality and as a new beginning for our age, as organization and philosophy, as dialectics of revolution and of thought, the whole of the dialectic. It spelled out, at one and the same time, that the catching of the continuity with Marx's Marxism and seeing that the hundred-years' discontinuity between the ages was Marxist-Humanist continuity or the working out of Marx's Humanism for our age.

THE NEED FOR THE TOTALITY OF MARX

It is that look at the totality of Marx's Marxism as new beginning, that new look at Marx's Archives, that also led us to see the Marxist-Humanist Archives in a new way. It is this discernment which produced the uniqueness of the final, fourth section of Chapter 12—"A 1980s View"....

Thus we express the urgent need to uproot the counterrevolution, whether in the form of Pieter Botha in South Africa or Ronald Reagan in the U.S., so that, roughly, theoretically and practically, that it will create the humus for actual revolution, toward which the American Revolution is most crucial.



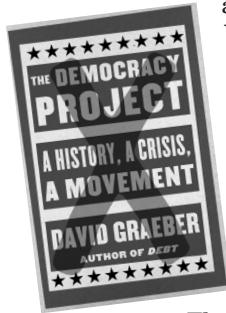
John Brown and collaborators in a portrait by David Hunter Strother, AKA Porte Crayon, drawn at the time titled "The Arraignment."



Rosa Luxemburg

Occupy: Democracy, revolution and philosophy

David Graeber, the author of *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement* (Spiegel & Grau, 2013), is a well-known anarchist anthropologist and activist, an insider in starting Occupy Wall Street (OWS).



The book presents a close-up view of the activity and the thinking of OWS, and a contemporary treatise on revolutionary organization. Graeber explains that it "is not just a book about Occupy, but about the possibility of democracy in America. Even more, it's about the opening up of the radical imagination that Occupy allowed."

The book contends that "Democracy is as old as history" and tries to equate real democracy with anarchism. A section on the American Revolution and its aftermath discusses how democratic tendencies flowed from it.* As against that, suppressing what John Adams called "the horrors of democracy" was a major part of the Constitution's design.

Refreshingly, this book is revolutionary and anti-capitalist—unlike allegedly radical books like Naomi Klein's *This Changes Everything*. Graeber devotes several pages to explaining why OWS was "an explicitly revolutionary movement."

This movement "rejected the existing political order entirely" and issued "an explicit appeal to class politics, a complete reconstruction of the existing political system, a call (for many at least) not just to reform capitalism but to begin dismantling it entirely."

Graeber bluntly describes "the police as an institutional structure" representing "the overall structure of power"—a lesson many occupiers were slow to learn, repeating that cops (and prison guards) are "part of the 99%" even after police brutality.

Unfortunately, Graeber raises organizational form above everything else. "How Change Happens," one of only five chapters, devotes 60 pages to "a series of practical ideas and suggestions" from consensus to camping.

SUBSTITUTING PROCESS FOR PHILOSOPHY

Why all this detail? Because to him the "anarchist" process is more important than philosophy, and he has faith that the process will lead to the new society. Yet only one page of the "strategies" mentions workers' self-organization, self-activity, self-management.

Graeber's stress on the "spirit" of the form of organization misses the point that process and form of organization can't substitute for the actual spirit of the movement, whose disastrous transformation we witnessed firsthand at Occupy Chicago while the form of organization remained the same. From what I have read (though not in this book), the same transformation occurred elsewhere, such as in New York.

In recapitulating some of the thinking about form preceding OWS, Graeber writes:

"Back in the days of the Global Justice Movement we thought that if we exposed enough people, around the world, to these new forms of direct democracy, and traditions of direct action, that a new, global, democratic culture would begin to emerge. But as noted above, we never really broke out of the activist ghetto...."

Until OWS, that is. By then "horizontalist" activists had chosen to focus on "developing forms of egalitarian political process that actually work; forms of direct democracy...."

Through sleight of hand, the book absorbs what is desirable in the author's eyes into anarchism. The attempt to define it is so overly broad that many who are not anarchists would be included: a "movement that aims to bring about a genuinely free society....In this sense there have always been anarchists...." Then Graeber narrows it again in order to draw a distinction from Marxism, which, in his typical anarchist view, is falsely defined by an insistence to "seize state power... and use its mechanisms to transform society."

Despite his partisanship in the field of philosophical schools, a certain glibness obscures just how intense the author's dismissal of philosophy is. In reality, his faith in form of organization (which includes process) excludes any role for philosophy of revolution. He comes close by posing the need to transform common sense, but that doesn't go anywhere. "What might a revolution in common sense actually look like? I don't know...." Whereupon he proceeds to list some pieces of "conventional wisdom" to challenge.

One might have hope when he raises among them "the nature of work" and "What is labor?" But it becomes another opportunity to tar socialists with the old accusation of productivism, and hold up anarchists as those who rejected it, as if there never had been a Marxist-Humanist critique of automation and the planners (state-capitalist rulers and bureaucrats, union bureaucrats, intellectual planners) who fell for its siren song! And "What is labor?" poses nothing like Marx's and Marxist-Humanism's concept of what it would mean to

* The discussion is fatally flawed by omitting any discussion of slavery or the Black dimension. For a deeper view, see the News & Letters pamphlet *America's First Unfinished Revolution: The untold story of the true creators of independence—the workers, yeomanry, Blacks and women together with Part I of American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*.

establish the kind of society where labor is life's first necessity rather than a mere alienated means to life.

In total separation from any discussion of labor as creative self-activity, he states the "obvious": "Labor is virtuous if it helps others." By way of indicating "a mother, a teacher, or caregiver" as models for what labor should be, he arrives at the grand conclusion that "the perfect revolutionary demand" is "a planetary debt cancellation."

In his view, debt forces people to work in jobs they don't want to do—what Marx called labor as "a means of life." In general, debt is the dominant economic category for Graeber. His superficial analysis of class and capitalism, whose contemporary crisis he blames on "financialization of capitalism," fits easily with his focus on debt. Politically he spells it out this way:

"The 1% were the ones creating the rules for how the political system works, and had turned it into one based on legalized bribery." So "challenging the role of money in politics is by definition a revolutionary act."

The Democracy Project never confronts the nature of capitalism as more than an extension of the ages-old phenomenon of debt. It does not grasp capitalism as being based in a historically specific manner on the separation of the worker from the means of production; as

being characterized by the dialectical inversion of dead labor dominating living labor; as being driven by the self-movement of value, whose nature must be grasped to understand the movement of debt and money. The value form is the source of what Marx called the fetishism of commodities, which must be dispelled as an integral part of establishing a totally new form of society.

From this truncated concept of how deep and total the uprooting needs to be, he concludes that "All societies are communistic at base, and capitalism is best viewed as a bad way of organizing communism."

In reality he is putting philosophy off to later, while everything is left up to practice:

"Myself, I am less interested in deciding what sort of economic system we should have in a free society than in creating the means by which people can make such decisions for themselves. This is why I spent so much of this book talking about democratic decision-making...."

"Even what now seem like major screaming ideological divides are likely to sort themselves easily enough in practice."

Graeber thus falls victim to his cult of anarchism—both as a school of thought and as a habit of subordinating thought to practice.

—Franklin Dmitryev

Philip Zimbardo and Marx's Humanism

Oakland, Calif.—On July 24, a remarkable discussion with Philip Zimbardo followed the San Francisco premiere of *The Stanford Prison Experiment*, a movie based on his notorious 1971 experiment. In the two-week experiment, well-balanced students were randomly assigned the roles of prison guards or prisoners. The movie recreates the unfolding of the actual experiment, which had to be stopped early when "guards" became sadistic while "prisoners" displayed extreme stress.

The first person to speak in the discussion exclaimed that Zimbardo should have been fired and she walked out. The second person, former Black Panther Elaine Brown, thanked Zimbardo profusely for showing graphically how the prison power relationship engendered the behavior of these individuals. Brown said his study has been invaluable to the prisoners' movement against the brutal conditions in California prisons.

Indeed, those in Zimbardo's research circle became expert witnesses against the arbitrary guard-run system of gang validation that has kept so many in perpetual solitary confinement in California prisons.

Zimbardo went on to write a best seller, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, in 2007 after he testified about why U.S. soldiers inflicted torture at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq.

The Lucifer Effect condemns not just social situations that produce evil but also the whole system that produces those situations. What is the connection between the system and this misery into which everyday relations can so easily collapse? The book concludes that what can make a difference is highlighting the banality of evil and encouraging the pervasive unrecognized good in everyday heroic acts that resist situational influences.

Zimbardo rightly calls "dehumanization," or "the perception that other people are less than human," central to transforming "ordinary people into...perpetrators of evil."

The meaning of that little word "human" was Marx's focus when he first criticized psychology, and science in general, for being a lie insofar as it has a different basis than life. Being human turned for Marx on needing human beings as human beings, namely needing them according to their species character as free beings whose self-determining, free, conscious activity is not a mere means but the first necessity of life.

Though Marx contrasted being human with alienated labor that turned the worker's life activity into a mere means to life, being human is a more total concept. What throws post-Marx Marxists for a loop is that Marx singled out the man/woman relationship as the most fundamental in measuring whether we need a human being as a human being. Marx's principle of freedom as human essence never changed yet was multi-dimensional from the start and was open to the new. This principle shaped Marx's whole life of revolutionary theory and practice, including in the end (1875) his concept of an explicitly Marxist organization.

This humanism was implicit in the objection from one student assigned the role of prisoner, that he was not being treated like a human being. He was met with brutal punishment for saying so. Another telling moment

was when Zimbardo came in to call off the experiment after only six days and the first question from the student assigned the role of guard, dubbed "John Wayne" because he took the lead in new imaginative ways to humiliate the prisoners, was whether they were going to get paid for the full two weeks. This concern with pay reveals the pervasive "situational variable" that infects "pure" science, namely the cash nexus between humans that degrades human activity into a mere means.

When Marx declared that any science that is separate from life is "a priori a lie," it meant that science can never be reduced to identifying how social situations change people. In other words, the remedy for the "Lucifer effect" is not merely encouraging heroic ethical individuals. Take, for example, Marx's statement that "social being determines consciousness."

For many post-Marx Marxists, Marx's concept of science stopped with this observation. To them, behaving ethically is an afterthought. Marx's more total concept of being "active scientifically" included individual responsibility that began from his own "theoretical existence as social being." Theoretical existence as a social being is itself the activity of a "general consciousness" that confronts the hostility between actual social being and being truly human,

that is, free "species-life." The goal is to overcome the hostility between individual life and species life in a way that never again counterposes society as an abstraction against the individual.

Nothing reveals the multi-dimensional struggle to achieve Marx's real "species-life" better than the ongoing struggle against perpetual solitary confinement, or torture, in California's prisons. (See *Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers: "We want to be validated as human"* and its 2014 update "Prisoners in solitary, in the new Bastille aim to break today's mind-forged manacles.")

Faruq, a California prisoner (see page 8), wrote that the prison movement for new human relations is one with the "efforts in various countries today trying to lift the curse of capital social relations." Both, he added, are a "quest to unify subjectivity and objectivity—in other words, for an individual's thinking/feelings to be reflected in their given reality. With such a full expression of humanism society can be reconstructed on human foundations."

Since the Stanford prison experiment, Philip Zimbardo has done much to question psychology as a science beyond the "ethical time capsule" in which that experiment occurred and which he said could never be repeated today. Yet the totality of the present crisis means we are not only being ethically tested anew whether on pervasive prison brutality or when Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi called Europe's calculated neglect—resulting in 900 deaths of fleeing immigrants—our day's "Srebrenica" (see "Refugees risk death fleeing war, terror and climate chaos" July-Aug. N&L).

Our day, in Europe as elsewhere, again has an undertow of genocidal fascist nationalism out to reduce the other to less than human and is actively derailing any ethical treatment of today's millions of refugees. Facing that reality demands a full return to Marx's original humanist philosophy of freedom as the absolute opposite to alienated labor.

—Ron Kelch



A U.S. soldier threatens an Iraqi detainee in the Abu Ghraib prison.

SREBRENICA, BOSNIA, 1995; EUROPE AND THE WORLD, 2015

Bosnian Americans gathered in front of the Bosnian Consulate in Chicago on July 11 for a vigil on the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre. More than a hundred people were there to remember the 8,500 men and boys in Srebrenica slaughtered by Serb chauvinist forces under NATO "protection" in 1995, but also to let the world know. Participants displayed banners and signs like "Genocidal 'Serb Republic' is a shame for Europe," while other Bosnians handed out leaflets for the July 27 Srebrenica commemoration by Chicago News and Letters. They treated *N&L*, publisher of *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western Civilization*, warmly as participants in the vigil and march.

**Bob McGuire
Chicago**

"Twenty years after Srebrenica: A Women's Court demands justice" (July-Aug. *N&L*) takes up an extraordinary event, the Women's Court, that took 20 years to bring into being and whose very process showed that the fascists failed to destroy the unity of a multiethnic society. In that war of annihilation against a civilian population, what happened to women and girls was unprecedented. Women and girls were not only considered "spoils of war"; the rape of women and girls in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a deliberate tactic. Men were ordered to rape and murder women brutally and publicly. The purpose was to destroy each individual family and an entire culture and way of life. It is necessary to make a category of both the oppression and the revolt of women—in activity and in thought—if we are to uproot this sexist, racist, militaristic, capitalist society.

**Women's Liberationist
Chicago**



In my view, "Refugees risk death fleeing war, terror and climate chaos" (July-Aug. *N&L*) lacks stressing the concept of immigrants and refugees as revolutionary subjects. There are some elements there, like the demonstrations and hunger strikes of Africans at the Italy/France border and how this challenges capitalism. However, the concept needs to be more stressed and developed since the focus of the article make us think of the refugees more as "victims" than as subjects. This would pose the self-development of an important revolutionary subjectivity, just as *N&L* does every issue, letting us hear the voices of prisoners as a form in itself of theory.

**J.G.F. Héctor
Mexico City, Mexico**

"Refugees risk death fleeing war, terror and climate chaos" takes up the growing fascistic undertow of narrow nationalism in the face of the continuing crisis under the regime of global capital. The Italian Prime Minister's invocation of Srebrenica showed how that moment has been etched into European consciousness. New facts are coming out about how all sides knew exactly what was going to happen and did nothing, including the Dutch peacekeepers charged by the UN with protecting Srebrenica as a safe haven.

**Marxist-Humanist
S.F. Bay Area**

STRUGGLES AGAINST RACISM

I was surprised and encouraged by what family members in Chattanooga, Tenn., told me about the reaction

DEBATES ON GAY MARRIAGE AND QUEER LIBERATION

I was overwhelmed by how many of my friends posted messages celebrating the Supreme Court ruling on gay marriage. Many posted pix of themselves or relatives in same-sex relationships. It's about equal rights but also about recognizing the dignity of people of all sexual orientations. The legal structure was pushed into recognizing equal rights, grudgingly, by a movement long in the making that has grown swiftly in recent years, winning the hearts and minds of the majority of the U.S. in an astoundingly short time.

Activist

Southern California

On the day the Supreme Court legalized gay marriage, several hundred Transgender activists rallied and marched in Greenwich Village. Young Trans people took the lead down the streets. When the NYPD couldn't force us back onto the curb, people went beyond the designated march zone. Our march, independent of the official Pride March, was critical of the Supreme Court decision and all other false reformist solutions to the glaring problems affecting the Trans community: poverty, incarceration, homelessness, lack of educational opportunities and lack of decent housing.

**Natalia
New York City**

I strongly disagree with "What is Transgender solidarity?" by Jaz (July-Aug. *N&L*). Bad politics or not, Caitlyn Jenner is still a heroine to me.

**Trans in New York
New York**

All of us who are for freedom, for true human liberation, stand in opposition to Caitlyn Jenner's politics and philosophy. As an unapologetic Republican, she stands with a party carrying on many wars: against women, against the middle-class and the poor, against the disabled, against racial minorities, against workers, against immigrants; and against the Queer community. I say to you, Ms. Jenner, I stand in support of those who, without equivoca-

tion, seek and work for a society built upon truly human foundations.

**Elise
Chicago**

Jaz seems to put oppression on a scale. Where you are on that scale determines whether your actions merit support. Capitalism hurts everyone, even those who benefit from it. They, too, are denied becoming fully human. Caitlyn Jenner's suffering as a Transgender person should not be put on a scale against others' suffering. Her coming out about her experience is to be celebrated as a moment of liberation. At the very least she deserves credit for bringing a conversation about Transgender to the mainstream.

**Feminist
Oakland**

Jaz was not afraid to voice an unpopular stance against Caitlyn Jenner. If we're really committed to treating human beings as human beings, then a person's politics should not be set aside for those who are LGBTI, disabled, of color, etc. To do so sells short the movement for human liberation. It is that movement that Jaz makes clear she is so passionately for.

**Terry Moon
Chicago**

The upcoming national U.S. Trans Survey conducted by the National Center for Transgender Equality will be the largest and most comprehensive survey of Transgender America in history. SAGE, a senior center for the LGBTQ community, will be opening their doors on a Saturday to facilitate people using their computers to fill out the survey. The LGBTQ Center on 13th Street has also been encouraging Trans people to participate, as has the Sylvia Rivera Law Project. People are excited by the possibility that finally the U.S. will come to realize the depth, breadth, richness and diversity of the Trans community. We will no longer be an invisible minority suffering through a transphobic culture.

**Trans activist
New York City**

READERS' VIEWS

TEACHERS AND CHILDREN

"Chicago teachers prepare to strike" (July-Aug. *N&L*) correctly, and unfortunately, identifies Illinois Gov. Rauner as "holding the poor and workers hostage to extort passage of his union-busting bills." Rauner has made stricter eligibility rules for the Childcare Assistance Program (CAP) for working mothers. About 90% of new applicants will not qualify. This is separate from the budget struggle. Rauner is the exact opposite of those who seek a world built on truly human relations: he doesn't care about helping poor mothers to get and stay on their feet, to support their families and get off welfare, he doesn't care about children. He is not the "warrior for our children" his wife Diana said he would be. Rauner is a warrior against our children.

**Very upset
Illinois**

Hooray for the Chicago Teachers' Union, whose ongoing battles against state and corporate school privatization and their own working conditions is unseparated from "the schools our children deserve!" Unfortunately the Detroit Federation of Teachers (DFT) has learned nothing from Chicago. Its newly elected president, Steve Conn, has been recalled and is fighting for reinstatement instead of "the schools Detroit children deserve." Conn's election reflected the desperate hunger for change within the union. The Detroit Public Schools are battered by a hemorrhaging student population and a massive increase in charter schools. Conn refuses to listen to anyone else, including his own members. Meanwhile, Detroit children are cheated—like the fifth-grader who needs his fingers to add 3+4 and is nevertheless passed to the sixth grade.

**Retired DFT member
Detroit**

Since 2002, the Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative for Social and Economic Justice, a collective of women leaders across Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, has worked to end racist, gender, class, cultural, economic, medical and religious barriers facing Black women and families in rural, impoverished areas. Their recently released report, "Unequal Lives; the State of Black Women and Families in the Rural South," shows that on nearly every social indicator of well-being, Black women, girls and children in the rural South rank low or last. The report's recommendations include addressing the extreme lack of funding for rural nonprofits and institutions, creating targeted programs, comprehensive sex education, and "alternative economic models" of worker-owned businesses. Let's do that!

**Feminist
Memphis**

It is scary how many news commentators are laughing at Donald Trump's plan to deport U.S. citizens born of Mexican immigrants and to end birthright citizenship, because that would violate the 14th Amendment. Other Republican candidates immediately brought those unconstitutional, racist, fringe schemes into the mainstream, saying "Me too." If the next demagogue claims a popular mandate to deport toddlers with citizenship, it is no stretch to find a need to deport all descendants of ex-slaves who became citizens with the 14th Amendment. Look at the Muslim Rohingya: in Burma for generations, they are now denied citizenship, dispossessed and attacked by troops and mobs. Take seriously and push back against Trump's threats.

**Observer
Kansas City**

WORKERS, CUSTOMERS PAY

Recently I was unable to get through by phone to my local Walgreens. I went to pick up a prescription at 6:45 PM on a Friday, to find one pharmacist and one assistant working. The assistant explained that when three nearby Walgreens had closed, all the customers were sent to their store, and consequently call volumes were extremely heavy. The assistant has to run back and forth from the drive-up window to the counter. They had received my prescription an hour before I came in but I had to wait another 25 minutes for it to be prepared. Everyone I told about this had similar experiences at their pharmacies. Walgreens is making more money with less people but both their customers and workers have to pay.

**Susan
Detroit**

There have been takeovers of little drug stores by CVS, Walgreens and Rite-Aid since the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements in Chicago were corrupted by chain drugstores. The "agreement" was that TIF money would be used to support local businesses, but lo and behold, local drugstores found they could not compete with the chains, who mysteriously had an infusion of cash from the city. The jobs promised are disappearing and the big drugstores are pocketing the difference.

**January
Chicago**

AFTER CECIL, PEOPLE ARE NEXT

I am glad to see the public outrage regarding trophy hunting after the actions of a U.S. hunter who killed a well-known and loved lion in Zimbabwe. Casual violence to animals, and trophy hunting is an extreme form of it, often leads to casual violence to humans. I am surprised that more people don't get this and trivialize what happened to Cecil the Lion. The underlying issue is a disregard for life in general, and the outrage over cruelty to animals is a gateway to confronting the disregard for human life including especially violence to children and minorities.

**Animal and people lover
S.F. Bay Area**

DIALECTICS OF PHILOSOPHY AND OF FORCES OF REVOLUTION

We had a very lively discussion on Dunayevskaya's book *Marxism and Freedom*. When we talked about the idea of Black Masses as Vanguard, a Black person gave her opinion that the use of the word "Black" to denote all Black people, objectified them; she preferred the term "Black people." Another participant who was brought up in a racist household related how racism permeated his family but that reading Malcolm X's *Autobiography* made him realize the absurdity of racism. Two other participants asked about the 1968 Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia and Marxist-Humanism in Eastern Europe, and about McCarthyite repression of News and Letters Committees. The conversation continued after the meeting, and everyone said they would return next week. Our goal is to cover the whole of *Marxism and Freedom*.



**N&L activist
Queens, N.Y.**

"No discontinuity can really achieve [a] new epochal 'moment' unless it has established continuity with the historic course of human development." This quote (see "The meaning of revolutionary archives," July-Aug. *N&L*) summarizes the essence of dialectics and helps us understand specifically the continuity within the discontinuity of the two parts in which the Marxist-Humanist archives are divided: 1) Marxist-Humanism in its origin as the theory of state-capitalism, and 2) its development as organization and as philosophy.

In the 1940s, when Dunayevskaya was studying the Russian Five-Year Plans, she was at the same time deeply involved with philosophy, which she saw "as inherent in new revolutionary forces: labor, Black, women, youth." Like Marx, Dunayevskaya did not stop at the economic analysis or critique of capitalism, but saw within it the self-development of the masses who will destroy it. In other words: just like Hegel in his *Science of Logic*, Dunayevskaya let the subjectivity emerge dialectically from the objectivity, without separating both, or seeing them

as absolute opposites. She went on to formulate a complete philosophy of human emancipation based on the actions and thoughts of the masses giving birth to a new world.

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

FREE MUMIA!
Medical tests, done only after the relentless demands of Mumia Abu-Jamal's supporters, show that he has Hepatitis C, causing open wounds, skin rashes and the swelling of his lower extremities. Prison personnel knew that Hepatitis C was afflicting Abu-Jamal for over five years! The prison is refusing to treat him, so his legal team is going to court to seek proper medical care. To join in the fight to save Abu-Jamal's life and get him the care he needs, go to www.free-mumia.org.

**Kaitlin
Chicago**

FEDERICO ARCOS, 1920-2015

I remember Federico Arcos as a friend, a compañero, a philosopher, a fellow anarchist, poet, social activist, and a multi-dimensional autodidact. Federico grew up in the old CNT districts of Barcelona in the 1920s and 1930s. He was a member of Los Quijotes del Ideal in the Barrio de Gracia in revolutionary Barcelona in 1937. Unlike many of the Iberian anarchists who survived the Spanish Civil War and the total fascist oppression which followed, Federico did not spend all of his time grieving the horror of the Spanish tragedy. He understood that the struggle for freedom is permanent. He did not hesitate to involve himself with the New Left anarchists of the generation of the 1960s and 1970s, my own generation. Forced out of Spain, Federico worked much of his life in a Ford factory in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. He was a respected rank-and-file union comrade, participating in the

historic 110-day Canadian Auto Workers strike in Windsor in 1955. He was also a behind-the-scenes theoretician and supporter of the anarchosyndicalist-involved MEI strike in Duluth, Minn., and a point-of-production sympathy strike, in Mezzomerico and Novara, Italy, in 1999-2000. Federico never failed to give us aid, answer our questions, calm and balance our jitters, give us thoughtful advice. He understood the true meaning of the word solidarity. Federico could quote large amounts of poetry by heart. Indeed, he believed in the power of the word, just as he believed in the power of freedom. As a poet myself, I was thrilled by his meditations on the human condition and his life, a life of meaningful dedication.

**Séamas Cain
Duluth**

VOICES FROM BEHIND THE BARS

N&L relates to our prisoners' human rights movement because at the core of each article is a concrete example of collective work/responsibility and cooperative economics (socialism).



**Prisoner
Tehachapi, Calif.**

I learned from my friends at News and Letters Committees that Marx's philosophy of revolution, the Marxian dialectic, is the essence of world history from primitive societies to present-day capitalism and in the constant battle of ideas. *News & Letters* is the only leftist newspaper that can play a key role in the future political and social transformation that remains on the working masses' agenda. We must explore and find ways and means for *News & Letters* to become the newspaper of the working masses.

**Prisoner
Terre Haute, Ind.**

I ran across an article in the *San Francisco Bay View* by Urszula Wislanka a few years ago. It spoke differently, in a way I had not heard before. Some time later, I got a copy of *News & Letters* that was passed around. Here again was the voice I had not heard. I read it cover-to-cover. And though I didn't understand a lot of things, I knew I needed to understand it.

What was different about it from the other "progressive" or even "radical" voices was that it seemed to focus not just on how bad things are but what would make a difference, how to go about making that difference. So I stuck with it. When I began reading it, I was barely literate. Now I read all the time. I am a different person, ready to prove it "outside."

**Prisoner
California**

I have been in an isolation cell since April 15: no running water 24/7, lights on 24/7, on camera 24/7, a generator runs 24/7 so loud the lights are rattling out of the ceiling. The lights, no sleep and water are the worst. I have been on a hunger strike on and off for 90 days. I've lost 64 pounds so far. I was on a hunger strike in 1981-82 for nearly 70 days, and almost died. This state of New Jersey is a slave state.

**Prisoner
New Jersey**

Your paper is informative and up to date. We all learn from what is printed in this paper. Please keep me informed.

**Prisoner
Amarillo, Texas**

TO OUR READERS: Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to *N&L*? It will be shared with many others. Prisoners are eligible to continue their free subscriptions when they first get released, at a time when the system tries to make them forget the struggle.

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by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Calif. prisons' punitive 'wellness checks'

Crescent City, Calif.—Four years ago Pelican Bay Security Housing Units (SHU) prisoners staged their first hunger strike, awakening a nationwide movement against the pervasive use of long-term solitary confinement. Today there are legal challenges to what is internationally recognized as state-sanctioned torture: from several lawsuits in California courts to Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy inviting a challenge to solitary confinement as "cruel and unusual punishment."

During a visit in early August, Pelican Bay SHU prisoners made clear to us that while they are hopeful about possible changes through a new court settlement, the inhuman and torturous SHU conditions have gotten much worse. The guards staged a job action over court-ordered "wellness checks." The intention of the checks is to prevent suicides. But the checks every half hour are making it impossible for anyone to get any sleep as guards move through each SHU pod for 10-20 minutes in a clamorous rampage. "With no sleep," said one SHU prisoner, "this place is like a time bomb...Everybody in here is like a zombie and not talking...I use my 45-minute yard time to take a rest."

Every aspect of life in the SHU has deteriorated because of the guards' action: breakfast that used to come at 6:30 AM now starts at 8:00 AM, late and cold; showers are late and shower areas aren't properly cleaned; time in the yard has been drastically cut as well as access to the canteen; mail and packages arrive late if at all; guards have brought the transport of

prisoners for legal or medical appointments to a snail's pace. The guards did, however, find time for a dramatic increase in confiscating prisoner property not properly stickered. They are supposed to be stickered by the guards themselves.

Here is one prisoner's take on the guards' transforming what was intended as a humane legal requirement totally into its opposite: *"If you're in a place where they have to check on you 48 times a day, that in itself shows that the SHU is no place to be. This place is a torture dungeon that needs to be shut down...Checks are supposed to be about caring for us but real care is not happening. This is retribution."*

The guards may be counting on stopping the "wellness checks" by causing a total breakdown of order. Prisoners, though afraid some will break under the pressure, now have a lot of hope. They also have a lot of discipline thanks to the impact of their unprecedented show of solidarity through the peaceful hunger strikes. As another SHU prisoner put it: *"The hunger strike humanized prisoners. My family and others got a whole new outlook on the criminal justice system. Many young people make bad choices and California throws them away. People aren't born with the tools to be good parents and make good decisions. Does that mean you don't value those people and put them in SHU for 30 years? We got time to think. The Agreement to End Hostilities gave us power. When prisoners come together as people, we are much stronger."*

—Ron Kelch

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Racism and the nine murders in S. Carolina

by Faruq

When Barack Obama made his debut at the Democratic convention in 2004, he gave the keynote address. Everyone in attendance and those watching on TV witnessed the emergence of a gifted orator on the bourgeois political stage. Over the years President Obama has been in office, the issue of race relations has risen to the fore and he has spoken clearly, with a balanced viewpoint to provide an avenue for a deeper understanding of the issue (see, for example, the speech he gave in the wake of the Reverend Jeremiah Wright controversy).

We knew Obama would seize the moment in his eulogy for Reverend Clementa Pinckney, who was gunned down with eight others on June 26 in Charleston, S.C. Obama did two things: 1) give the needed voice to oppose the persistent, virulent racism in this country, and 2) say something about gun control.

True to form, Obama spoke well in addressing both points. He delivered a fine tribute to Reverend Pinckney, a young man who, in spite of certain racial barriers, made significant strides in his short life. It made those of us unaware of the young state senator of South Carolina able to see the contributions he could have made to the progress of human equality. This, in a state whose first act was to preserve the peculiar institution—the brutal mental and physical subjugation of New Afrikan people—via its secession from the union, and subsequent bombardment of Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861.

South Carolina has made some degree of progress in race relations since the Civil War. But the killing of nine church members came from the same seeds of thought that ignited the Civil War.

Given the rash of recent killings of New Afrikan men and women by the so-called enforcement officials and the hideous tragedy in Charleston, it is no longer practical to allow the apologists of Amerikan culture to claim these were simply acts of aberrant enforcement officials or wayward persons who lost touch with reality. Such claims preclude critical examination of the deep-seated roots of Amerikan culture and the need to radically address the core issues which give rise to the racism in the country.

WHICH WAY FORWARD?

During the eulogy Obama touched on several themes from the Civil Rights era and the present: the continuous struggle for quality public education, greater access to higher education, an end to discrimination in hiring, unbiased policing, and a fair justice system. Of course, he was greatly limited by his position as president. To go beyond the rules of bourgeois order, to call for a more radical solution to address the many social ills plaguing the country would have been an act of political suicide.

Nonetheless, we, who relentlessly yearn for freedom, cannot show reluctance to articulate a philosophical direction that is not only capable of transcending the racial divide but remedies other social ills.

There is potential in the multi-dimensional voices from below searching for a common but singular ideal. Human emancipation as the primal want is totally inseparable from its essential component, i.e., free, conscious activity.

This is the direction humanity needs to take. The pathways to reach such a level of human social interaction will be as diverse as the voices from below. There is no road map for humanity to follow.



Racism and the flag

continued from p. 1

family, have ever set foot south of the Mason-Dixon line.

No one is born a racist. If one is taught to look at a group of people in a particular manner (regardless of whether that person is white, Black, Jewish, Muslim, Native American or Christian) then there is a good chance that they will assimilate the nuances of that cultural environment if for no other reason than to "fit in."

The building blocks of the hatred that led to the killing of nine Black men and women in a South Carolina church were not forged in a vacuum; rather, they are as conspicuous as the symbols of hatred and ignorance that those actions often encompass.

In a country whose whole existence was borne on the backs of slaves and floated on the sweat, blood and tears of those same slaves, we still have nothing better to do—it seems—than debate a cultural relic that represents one of this nation's most offensive moral sins.

We are a nation of contrasts and contradictions on the personal, state, national and international level, and this conflagrant confluence of opinions and ideas is one of the definitive characteristics of the U.S. mentality, and this is not dependent on a particular political party.

One wonders if the Republicans of today—particularly Tea Party Republicans—would have felt inclined to aggressively put an end to slavery, especially since they support "states' rights" and "smaller federal governmental influence" as staunchly as the Southern Democrats and anti-Abolitionists were at the start of the Civil War.

The consignment of the Confederate battle flag to a museum where it can be displayed in a fashion that represents both Southern heritage and U.S. history, is a positive step in the fight for the end of discrimination whether it is based on race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or culture. We must remember that it is only a battle won in an ongoing war.

NEEDED PASSION FOR REVOLUTION

Over the last several months we have witnessed a sort of cultural revolution in many areas that are now a part of the U.S., world and human experience, but we must continue to apply pressure to ensure that the gains achieved today are tinder for more evolved and permanent changes.

"Nothing great in the world," Hegel wrote, "has been accomplished without passion." It is for us to ensure that this passion is focused not on the historical embers of the past, but in the seeded new growth of change that is embodied in an equitable future that does not distinguish between race, class, gender, sexual orientation or religion.

Nate Wilks' life matters



David M'Otto for News & Letters

Oakland, Calif.—A hundred protesters shut down the intersection of 27 Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Way at an Aug. 14 vigil. This is the site where, for the fourth time this year, Oakland cops snuffed out a Black life. Two days earlier, 24-year-old Nathaniel Wilks, suspected of carjacking, was shot dead by police. His girlfriend's sister told the group that she and Black Lives Matter activists are conducting their own investigation. So far every eyewitness interviewed said Wilks was running away from cops when he was killed. Organizers are raising funds for an independent autopsy.

—Participant

Sandra Bland speaks

Editor's note: Sandra Bland, who died in police custody in historically racist Waller County, Texas (see Editorial page 1), recorded a series of videos in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. Below we print brief excerpts. Having watched her speak in her own words, seeing her innate generosity, humor, her passion for justice, one can only echo the words of Marsha Warfield: "I wish I had known of her while she was alive."

Jan. 14, 2015: Through "Sandy Speaks" we are going to open up a gateway for the kids. To start educating them about interacting with police. I don't think it's ever too early, in all honesty, because our kids are so smart. They can only know how to feel about cops based off of how they see cops acting.

Laugh all you want to, say what you want, but I'm here to change history and I'm ready to do what I need to do for this next generation. It's time for me to do God's work.

We can stop sitting around and saying, "Oh well, maybe next time." Or "Oh well, we knew that was gonna happen." It's time to stop knowing that that was gonna happen, and it's time to start doing something.

Feb. 5, on *American Sniper* and *Selma*: My question is, why is such a violent movie still at #1? We are promoting violence. *Selma*, a movie about a real war, got pushed by the wayside.

Civil rights? That was a war right here at home. This fight for civil rights still goes on right now. We are still in that fight today. So please don't think it's over because it's not.

Feb. 15, after visiting the DuSable Museum: Chicago played a big role in post-slavery times. The tour today shed light on how deep Black history is in America.

As a Chicagoan there were some things I found out I never even knew. Chicago was founded by a man of color, DuSable. The first open heart surgery, performed by Daniel Hale Williams, that was right here on the South Side at Provident Hospital. Some of our greatest entertainers, Redd Foxx, Nat King Cole, they attended high school right on the South Side.

Our history is so rich and deep, but it is up to us to find it and share it. Without Black people there would be no America. Let's make it plain. Without us there is no you.

March 30, after being harassed by security guards at Naperville Mall: To the people who say, "Oh, you were breaking the law, wrong is wrong, the law doesn't see color," excuse my French, but bullshit! You can't tell me the law doesn't see color when we have situations like the gentleman in Virginia getting his face stomped in the ground.

So for those who can say, the law doesn't see color? It doesn't see color because you ain't got no color in your skin.

My white friends, don't get upset, but I'm going to call out racism wherever I see it. You don't know racism, because you don't live it, you don't feel it. You're going to learn that what you see as just somebody doing their job, we see the undertones of that. We've been trained to see them because we live them every day. I wonder, if I had been walking through town with my poster from last week—"All white people are not against us"—would that have gotten me kicked out of the mall?

LGBT gains in Africa

Mozambique, in July, saw same-sex relationships decriminalized in accordance with the revised penal code former President Armando Guebuza signed more than a year earlier. Previously, such relationships were coded under the law as "vices against nature," a sentiment introduced by Mozambique's colonizer, Portugal.

Elsewhere in Africa, some nations, even while maintaining European colonial-era anti-sodomy laws, are taking important steps for Queer rights:

Kenya—In April, the Kenyan National Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission was granted the right to be registered with Kenya's government. Kenya's High Court said that human rights cannot be limited because of moral and religious beliefs. They noted that the country's Penal Code criminalizes certain sexual acts as being "against nature," but does not criminalize homosexuality, the state of being homosexual nor the right of people to freely associate based on their sexual orientation. It is a matter of human dignity.

Botswana—In late 2014, Queer rights organization Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals of Botswana (LEGABIBO) was granted the right to be registered with their government. Botswana's High Court said that Botswana's 2012 refusal to register LEGABIBO violated the group's right to equal protection and their freedom of expression, association and assembly. The Court further stated that Botswana's laws prohibiting same-sex sexual acts do not criminalize homosexuality and do not criminalize advocacy for the reform of laws. The court said that LGB people have the same rights as anyone else, no matter the laws that criminalize consensual same-sex conduct.

Zambia—In May, human rights activist Paul Kasonkomono's right to advocate for human rights was upheld by both the Zambian Magistrate's Court and the High Court. Kasonkomono was arrested for "soliciting for immoral purposes" in a public place when he, on a program of a privately owned television channel, advocated for human rights for both sexual minorities and sex workers. Both courts upheld Kasonkomono's right to advocate for people's rights and distinguished that from a violation of Zambia's criminal act of soliciting anyone to engage in same-sex sexual acts.

All of these gains in the right of public expression are welcome and will allow more freedom to advocate for the equal treatment of LGBT fellow citizens as human beings. Many people, in nation after nation across Africa, are watching, waiting and working for that.

—Elise Barclay

Pricey water in Flint

Flint, Mich.—This city formerly received its water through a pipeline from Lake Huron that was built by the Detroit Water Department (DWD) to provide water to communities between Lake Huron and Flint in the 1960s. As of April 2014, Flint stopped buying water from the DWD and reverted to using water from the Flint River, as Flint had done before the pipeline from Lake Huron was built. However, problems developed.

The intake from the Flint River is well upstream from any industrial or former industrial area, but the City of Flint found it necessary to use a lot of chlorine, which reacted with organic material in the water to form trihalomethanes. The EPA limits four trihalomethanes—chloroform, bromoform, bromodichloromethane, and dibromochloromethane—to .080 mg per liter. The level of total trihalomethanes has been as high as .99 mg per liter, which can lead to cancer and other medical problems in susceptible people. A new pipeline to Lake Huron that will be independent of the DWD is expected to be completed in 2016.

Even before Flint reverted to Flint River water, there was a big rate hike in 2011. We pay an average of \$140 per month for water. In early August, Judge Archie Hayman ordered the City of Flint to cut water rates by 35% and stop water disconnections and liens for past due water bills immediately. He said that the City had illegally transferred \$15.7 million in water and sewer funds in 2007 to the general fund.

The high water rates also result from Flint repaying water and sewer loans to Michigan. The current population of under 100,000 is paying for an infrastructure built for a city of 200,000 residents.

—Thirsty in Flint

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Hugo "Yogi" Pinell (1945-2015)

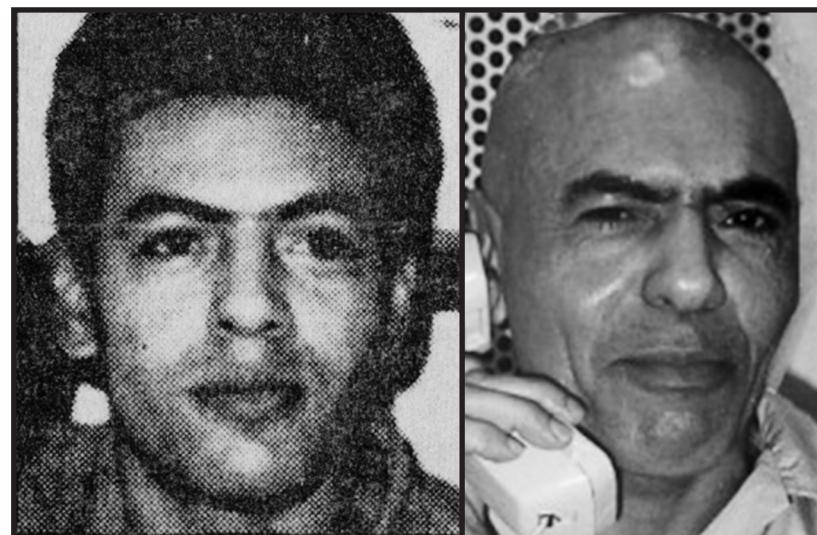
On Aug. 12, Hugo "Yogi" Pinell (1945-2015) was killed in the California State Prison-Sacramento. Pinell was a comrade of George Jackson, W.L. Nolen, James Carr, and other founders of the modern prison movement. He was released from solitary confinement in 2014 after 45 years, the longest any state prisoner has spent in solitary.

At the time of the attack Pinell was the last one in a canteen line. He knew to watch his back and chose to be last. A guard allowed another prisoner to join the line after it was closed, and one more dashed

in; these men were the killers. It was only after Pinell's murder caused outrage among the prisoners that the so-called "riot," reported by the mainstream press, happened in which others were injured.

RACIST DEADLY PRISON GUARDS

After the attack some guards posted racist, hate-filled messages on social media. It has been reported that some held a party to celebrate the murder. California Department of Corrections (CDC) must bear most of the responsibility for Pinell's death. The potential for an assassination was clear. Pinell had received death threats, yet the CDC insisted on placing him in



Hugo Pinell in 1976 during his trial as one of the San Quentin 6 and in 2011, while still in solitary confinement.

jeopardy.

A statement by Luis Bato Talamantez, David General Giap Johnson and Willie Sundiata Tate read:

"We mourn the loss of our comrade brother, Yogi...The prisoners who did it acted as agents of the state. It comes at a time when prisoners are collectively trying to end decades of internal strife. Those who took his life have done a disservice to our movement; their actions served the cause of the same oppressor we fought

against!"

The timing may not have been coincidental either. August is celebrated as Black August for the founding of the prison wing of Black liberation. It is an anniversary of the 2011 and 2013 hunger strikes, as well as the 2012 Agreement to End Hostilities.

Yogi Pinell reflected recently on his life: "For me, it begins with the new W.L. Nolen in San Quentin in March in 1967, because I remember the old W.L. in Soledad, in 1963-64, when he was consistently messing up, as were most of us youngsters. Therefore, when the new W.L. greeted me in San Quentin, and he was handing me some literature and telling me about the Black Consciousness studies, the Self Reliant Principles of living, the Black Liberation Movement and the building of the New Man, he became my principal example because I noticed the positive and significant changes in him. He used Malcolm as our primary example of self-transformation and he felt that all of us brothers could make that same transformation...Most of us were very young, doing short sentences (supposedly), had been through the gladiator stations, Tracy and Soledad, and the time and place was right for self-change. We had the teachers, examples, the literature, the means and the opportunities, so it was up to us, how seriously devoted we would be toward real self-change...to join the liberation movement we had to understand the meaning of liberate and, to embark on a commitment to freedom, we had to do away with old ways, old habits, f—d up mentality, the club, homeboy set mentality and attitude."

This discovery of revolutionary thought was part of a worldwide movement that was transforming the consciousness of oppressed people—workers, peasants, women, LGBTQ people, the disabled, the youth, the outcast. In turn, what these men created was an astonishing collective act that picked up on the developing racist backlash against the 1960s revolutionary movements and saw that the counter-revolution was going to strike its blows against the Black and Latino working class through mass criminalization.

The future of the historic Agreement to End Hostilities hangs in the balance. In the past, guards have been successful in setting prisoners against each other after the prisoners themselves started to cooperate. Will the guards' divide and conquer strategy fail this time? One thing is clear: the young prisoners, who hadn't been political before coming into prison, are getting radicalized by this.

—Urszula Wislanka, Gerry Emmett

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The Court of Arbitration for Sport ruled that hyperandrogenic woman athlete Dutee Chand of India can compete in women's track and field, overturning the International Association of Athletics Federation's (IAAF) exclusion of her over elevated levels of natural testosterone. The IAAF has two years to present scientific information that "enhanced testosterone levels" are linked to "improved athletic performance."

Middle East counter-revolution shows the crisis of humanity

continued from p. 1

Among the most telling, though, was the mass chant of "Baghdad is revolutionary!" While these demonstrations addressed the people's immediate concerns with deteriorating services, power outages, and governmental and business corruption, they went beyond these particulars to address what kind of Iraq people want to create. They recognized the current society's dead end by saying to the rulers, "Daesh is born out of your corruption." (As we go to press, similar anti-corruption protests have broken out in Beirut, Lebanon.)

These demonstrations are in line with a history of mass opposition to religious sectarianism dating back to the period of the U.S. occupation, when thousands marched across the length and breadth of Iraq opposing the terrorism of al-Qaeda and Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Those demonstrations included unions, women's organizations, and Leftist groups. Even then, Zarqawi's attacks on the Shia—mass murders of civilians—went too far for some in al-Qaeda's leadership. IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi has only pushed that further, to an open break.

The 2011 protests in the wake of the Arab Spring addressed many of the same issues and criticized the Shia regime of Nouri al-Maliki put in place by the U.S.

The U.S. insistence on reorganizing Saddam Hussein's tortured country along religious and ethnic lines had consequences beyond bad governance. IS can be viewed as a joint creation of the two reactionary rivals that faced off after Sept. 11, 2001—al-Qaeda and U.S. imperialism. It was their interaction in the sectarianized cauldron of the Iraq War that, combined with elements of Saddam's Baath Party, gave birth to such a hybrid monstrosity.

MONSTERS BRED IN THE SLEEP OF REASON

From the first, Assad claimed that all opposition to him was from fundamentalist terrorists, and eventually these appeared. The world powers' "No!" to the Syrian people's freedom struggle gave new life to the reactionaries, like al-Qaeda, sidelined by the Arab Spring. Reaction feeds on reaction. IS, born in Iraq, has become the club the world's rulers use to bash the Syrian Revolution.

But IS's innovation has been its actual attempt to create a state power. To this end it has practiced and justified the most brutal forms of what Marx termed "the so-called 'primitive' accumulation," including open robbery, slavery, and genocide. Of course, these practices are given cover by tendentious readings of religious texts. It is perhaps most enlightening to look at the IS theology of rape.

The kidnap of thousands of Yazidi girls and young women from Mount Sinjar, Iraq, has given rise to a classic slave trade in IS-controlled territory. Victims are advertised, paraded for inspection and sale. Fleets of special buses, with blacked-out windows, transfer them between holding pens. They are also used as a recruitment tool for young men for IS to use to build their army and state. This is an exacerbation of the genocidal rape campaigns conducted by Serb militias in Bosnia.

The Yazidi boys and men were separated from the women and killed en masse, another horrific echo of Srebrenica. IS boasts of its crimes in their magazine, *Dabiq*, including the rape of young girls. *Dabiq* attacks Muslims in general for not committing the same crimes: "Here we are today, and after centuries, reviving a prophetic Sunnah, which both the Arab and non-Arab enemies of Allah had buried."

KURDISH WOMEN VS. IS, ERDOGAN

One of the most inspiring scenes in recent history was the sight of thousands of armed Kurdish women of the Women's Defense Units (YPJ) who helped defeat the fascist IS in Kobane, Rojava, on the border between Syria and Turkey. Since then they have helped to push IS back farther, toward Raqa.

Kobane marked an important moment in many ways—first, as one of the rare times when Kurds have become central to world history, and this should have

a similar result as that achieved by the Kurdish uprising in Iraq in 1991 in regards to increased autonomy. Second, as the moment when the Kurdish forces came together with elements of the Free Syrian Army—an opening for a potential deepening of the revolution on both parts.

As well, the heroic defense of Kobane stripped whatever veneer still stuck to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan—who did what he could to undermine the Kurds. He holds the leftist Kurdistan Workers' Party to be a "terrorist" group, as does the U.S. But this is a convenient cover to his old school anti-Kurd ethnic politics, and it has blown back on him in the last election.

Erdogan's Justice and Development Party lost much of its electoral support, including among conservative Kurds. The leftist and pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party, which worked to field women and minority candidates, including Turkey's first openly Gay parliamentary candidate, became a new force in national politics.

This built upon the inclusiveness and non-sectarianism of the 2013 Gezi Park demonstrations. It will be little noted, but should be shouted from the rooftops, that this is where the Syrian and Turkish struggles cross paths. Efforts will be made to obscure this new development, and it will be the role of conscious revolutionaries to make it plain.

While Erdogan has often posed as a supporter of the Syrian Revolution, he

took months before separating his government from Assad's. Even now, what he is doing is using his support for some Sunni rebels as cover for his anti-Kurdish ethnic politics. (This is ironic since most Kurds are Sunni.) The Turkish plan for a "safe zone" in Northern Syria—a fundamentally good idea—stumbles badly over this hypocrisy. Were it not for recent Kurdish victories, would he even be proposing such a plan? After four years of Assad's genocide?

The U.S. played a significant role in the air defense of Kobane and subsequent fighting in Rojava, but it also ignores the Assad planes and helicopters it shares the sky with that massacre thousands of civilians, and which—in the words of another revolutionary from Kafanbel—is "something neither logic nor wisdom can accept. It is something that will only increase our hatred for the head of this coalition and all of its allies, and it will solidify the image of America as the 'Great Satan.'" Recent U.S. attacks have killed both civilians and rebels fighting IS.

The U.S. also remains silent when ally Erdogan begins bombing the Kurds once again.

REGION IN UPHEAVAL: SYRIA

Turkey's Erdogan, Iran's Khamenei, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Assad, conceal their own narrow power politics behind an alleged determination to protect various sects. Thus Assad's "protection" of minorities can extend to the torture or murder of any one of their number, when they oppose him, as well as to the genocide of the majority.

It was clear as early as Assad's first civilian massacres that he was taking a cue from what President Slobodan Milosevic had done in Serbia. In massacring the majority Sunni, Assad wanted to implicate the other minorities (especially his own Alawite group) in such crimes so as to guarantee that these groups would never again be able to live together. It was a scheme that

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could only retain Syria's national unity at the price of genocide. He pursued it. This has now resulted in over 250,000 dead and 10 million refugees.

Now, practically each day that passes sees Assad's forces losing ground, in Idlib, in Daraa, despite being bolstered by Iranian troops, by Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi Shia militias, Afghans, and Russian and European fascists. And despite revolutionaries having to fight IS's fascism at the same time.

Assad's will was to destroy the social fabric. But the Revolution began by countering his will: "One, one, one! The Syrian people are one!" This spirit was described by poet Mohja Kahf: "If anyone in the free Syria that is coming ever tries to target the Alawite community, I will bar them with my body and soul. That goes for Christians, Kurds, and any other ethnic or religious minority in Syria" (*The Guardian*, May 28, 2011).

Now, in opposing both Assad and IS, this revolutionary idea is the issue to be fought for.

A NEW GROUND NEEDED

The urgent determination that has carried the Syrian Revolution this far, even in the face of the world's opposition, was expressed well by one revolutionary from Aleppo: "If the world's rulers reach a settlement in Syria at the expense of the people, it will be harmful for everyone who was involved in or supported the Revolution. They will stitch up your mouths for cheering against the system. They will turn the squares into Roman circus arenas where rebels are killed. They will send delegations to the U.S. to learn to prevent other revolutions in the future. This opportunity we have now may not be repeated for a hundred years!"

Syrians have searched desperately for some returning echo from humanity. Much of the world's Left has marginalized itself, or worse, concerning Syria. As IS became a second counter-revolutionary force, the U.S. and al-Qaeda were reduced to marginal players as treacherous "allies" of various revolutionary factions. So al-Qaeda's affiliate, Jabhat al-Nusra, joins in fighting Assad but, whenever possible, imposes its own reactionary rule (as in Yarmouk Camp).

U.S. imperialism's wretched failure in Iraq and Syria wipes out many levels of illusion.

Imperialism, whether local or regional, can't supply the energizing principle that will be required to bring Syria together as a multiethnic, non-sectarian society on a higher level than before. It must bring together the tortured Sunni majority with the Alawites, the Druze who are currently self-arming in opposition to both IS and Assad, the historic national questions of both Kurds and Palestinians, and the ancient Christian community—among others. It must take up again the questions of economic and environmental justice that drove the initial revolutionary uprising, and reappropriate the public space for women, who have been central to the transformation of consciousness.

REVOLUTION IN PERMANENCE

As the Cold War ended in the 1990s, it was the struggle in defense of Bosnia's multiethnic society against genocide that both revealed the total bankruptcy of much of the Left, and presented a principle that could be held up as a universal and fought for.

It is not a question of simply judging events by their multiethnic character, important as that is, but of the relation of subjects of revolt to a philosophy needed to overcome the terrible retrogression we see today. Though that retrogression took the form of outright genocide in Bosnia, and in Syria today, what is demanded isn't merely a defense of the Bosnians or Syrians as victims, but finding with whom we can ally as subjects who can help uproot today's degenerate society.

The experience of the Arab Spring and the Syrian Revolution has helped to deepen that insight and reveal anew its relation to Marx's body of ideas. Marx asked in 1843, in his essay "On the Jewish Question," What would it mean to be free? What does it mean to be human? His philosophic critique of a racist bourgeois society, together with his recognition of the unfinished character of the bourgeois revolution, forged a new concept of revolution in permanence.

In Marx's Marxism and in Marxist-Humanism, the self-determination of this idea led to the development of new philosophic categories adequate to encompass spontaneity, different cultures and forms of development, and non-state forms of collectivity.

While there are no easy prescriptions or formulae for today, knowing that Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence—the basis of his entire life's work—began by taking up similar questions should help us to unchain our own thinking.

We fight with that confidence. When a new generation of revolutionaries, forged in this crucible of revolution and counter-revolution, comes to recognize itself in the philosophy of revolution in permanence, the door to a new society will be opened.

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

Horrors of Hiroshima linger 70 years later

Editor's note: Darrell Miho spoke at the Koyasan Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles on Aug. 2, to commemorate the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Below are excerpts of his talk.

Los Angeles—We are here to remember two horrible days in history. On Aug. 6 and 9, 1945, two atomic bombs were detonated, one over Hiroshima and one over Nagasaki. On those two days, thousands of innocent men, women and children were vaporized, hundreds of thousands more died by the end of the year, and countless more lives were changed forever.

Over the past five years, I have met over 400 hibakusha (atomic survivors). A survivor in Hawai'i was 18 years old when the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Most of the buildings were destroyed, including the crematoriums. Bodies were all over the place and rotting in the heat. His job was to pile up wood and cremate the bodies. He doesn't remember how many bodies he cremated or how many days he did it. But he said he still remembers vividly the unbearable stench of the rotting and burning flesh.

Junji Sarashina, an American citizen who now lives in Orange County, spoke about wandering through the city as a teenager, seeing dead bodies everywhere. Bodies lying in the road. Bodies floating down the river. He stopped to try and help someone, but was left with only their skin in his hand.

Mikio Iwasa was 16 years old and three-fourths of a mile from the epicenter in Hiroshima. He wrote, "I found my mother trapped under the collapsed house and I tried to pull her out, but it was impossible for a young boy. So I fled the fire, turning my back to my mother who was saying prayers, sensing that she was going to die. She was burnt alive." She was killed mercilessly, like an object, not like a human being.

These are just a few of the stories that I have heard while documenting the hibakusha stories. There are many more like this equally heartbreaking. Many talk about the dead bodies lying in the street or floating in the river. Many talk about people asking for water, and then dying after they drank it. But the one thing they all talk about is their hope for peace. Their hope for a world free of nuclear weapons. Their hope that no one will ever have to experience the living hell that they witnessed.

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Natalia Spiegel

Students at Tufts University in Medford, Mass., launched a hunger strike at the conclusion of the school year to demand that proposed cutbacks in the janitorial staff be rescinded. The students saw the university plan to eliminate 35 janitorial positions as an attack on the entire university. They followed the hunger strike with a march of 200 around the campus, and a silent protest at graduation.

* * *

Students at Rio Grande High School in Albuquerque, N. M., walked out of class in early March and marched five miles to a nearby high school to protest the use of standardized testing to determine student progress. The students left campus even though the school administration threatened everyone with suspension or expulsion.

* * *

Mass student protests rocked Puerto Rico in May when the government proposed cutting the education budget by 20%, which would drive tens of thousands of poor students out of the schools. There were street marches, clashes with the police and strikes at three campuses of the University of Puerto Rico. SWAT teams were called in to suppress the student movement.

* * *

The Pine Bush Central School district in White Plains, N. Y., was ordered to pay \$4.5 million to a group of Jewish students who had been systematically subjected to anti-Semitic slurs, swastikas, taunts and bullying. Those actions, the court ruled, had been tolerated and condoned by the school district.

* * *

In late June tens of thousands of young people took to the streets of Yerevan, Armenia, to protest the government decision to raise electricity prices. They occupied the main avenue, creating a free public space akin to that of Occupy Wall Street. Riot police met the 5,000 who marched on the presidential palace with water cannon to try to disperse the crowds. There were 240 arrests, and many marchers were beaten.

* * *

In Baltimore, youth blockaded Interstate 395 to demand that a proposed \$30 million dollar youth jail be cancelled, and that the funds be invested in education. The students were particularly upset because the same government body that voted to build the new jail voted to not spend \$11 million allocated for education.

'If you ship it we will block it'

Richmond, Calif.—On July 11 more than 13 unions and other organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area demonstrated against environmental exploitation and degradation of the "refinery corridor," a 10-town strip of land—from Richmond at its south through Pittsburg to Antioch at its north—whose air quality is the worst in California, if not the U.S.

We were protesting bomb trains bringing Bakken crude oil through quake-prone communities, some of whose railroad tracks are built on unstable landfill.

At the kick-off rally in Atchison Park, Occupella entertained the crowd. The vice-mayor of Richmond, Jael Myrick, stated, "Atchison Village (a co-operative area) is in the Kinder-Morgan blast zone. We are not going to let K-M quietly bring these dangerous trains through our neighborhoods."

Roger Lin, a lawyer with Communities for a Better Environment, said that for financial reasons there have been no shipments of Bakken oil by rail since November. He gave credit to protests, saying actions like this create risk for investors, and developers are temporarily stopped in their tracks. Then he led us in a chant: "If you build it, we will stop it; if you ship it, we will block it!!"

At noon, more than 200 people stepped off from Atchison Park for the 1.3-mile walk. The spirit and beat of the march was enhanced by a really good rhythm section, who never let up for the 45 minutes it took to walk to Washington Park.

We chanted: "Bomb trains, bomb trains, got to go! We the People, just say no!" "Our lives are on the line! Stop the oil trains, now's the time!" and my personal favorite, "Enough with the pollution, we've got the real solution, down with corporations, up with revolution!"

Stop charter schools!

New York City—More than two million students attend charter schools in the U.S. Los Angeles and Detroit have at least 70,000 students each in charters. Washington, D.C.'s charters account for 58% of its public school students. The Louisiana Legislature used the Hurricane Katrina disaster to take over New Orleans public schools and de-unionize them. Now 61% of the city's students are in charters.

During the Clinton administration, Congress approved big tax credits for banks and investment funds to invest in charter schools. The Bush and Obama administrations have allocated billions more. *New York Daily News* reporter Juan Gonzalez wrote that with tax credits, investors will "virtually double their money in seven years...No one knows who are the people making these huge windfall profits."

After New York Mayor Bill de Blasio announced his plan to limit new charters and require them to pay rent for space in public school buildings, tens of millions of dollars were spent in opposition, on TV ads and to send busloads of students and parents to Albany. The Legislature and Gov. Cuomo just passed legislation requiring de Blasio to approve unlimited expansion of charters and rent-free co-location.

The claim is that charters offer a better education to children in problematic inner city schools. Statistics do not bear this out.

Charters do not adequately serve those who need the most help—very few have even minimal programs for students with special needs, including students whose first language is not English. Furthermore, they can get rid of problem and underperforming students. Despite this, the National Center for Educational Statistics reported in 2006 that charter school students performed worse than public school students in math and reading.

According to a 2009 Stanford University study, students in more than 83% of charters surveyed in 15 states performed no better than those in traditional public schools. In 2014, *The New York Times* reported that the overall graduation rate in New York City was 64% but only 47% for charters.

Why have some teachers' unions not completely opposed charters? They are a grave threat to teacher contracts, yet the United Federation of Teachers actually ran two charters. They say they are inevitable. Teachers' unions should come out clearly against charters; or are they too connected with the Democratic Party whose leadership supports them? Only the Green Party is resolute in opposing charters.

As public expenditures are cut, public education and the rest of the public sector is being turned over to the private sector. In Europe this is called austerity. In the U.S., it's called "reform."

—Tom Siracuse, retired teacher
Secretary, Manhattan Green Party



<http://happening-here.blogspot.com>

At Washington Park a Native American ceremonial with sage smoke and prayers continued the observance. Gayle McLaughlin's speech was one of the highlights. She made history as Richmond's mayor when she and a coalition of political and private groups threatened eminent domain for the Richmond homes that were financially underwater. She said, "Never get separated from the progressive movement in your community. Those people on the city council who call themselves progressive have to do the right thing!" Brian Willis, a railroad man for 35 years, spoke against single employee trains and "limbo time," i.e., making railroad workers take four hours off between 12-hour shifts.

The fear of future bomb trains was accompanied by present knowledge. We all got a palm card showing a youngster using an inhaler with the slogan "COAL SUCKS!" Coal Free Oakland is organizing against a California Capital and Investment Group project to export six million tons per year of Utah-mined coal.

Each time a coal-hopper rail car moves to Oakland, Calif., from Utah, it loses 600 pounds of coal dust. That translates into 60,000 pounds of toxic fine particulate matter entering our air and water for every 100-car trip. The climate-change implications of all that coal being burned, the number of asthma cases and other illnesses it will cause, the secrecy and broken promises, despite the fact that almost no coal is burned in California, make the coal-export project through the port of Oakland intensely repulsive.

—January



by Suzanne Rose

On July 22, Disability Rights International released a report on the torture, trafficking and segregation of children in Mexico, many with disabilities, growing up in state institutions. The disabled children are routinely put in restraints and locked cages. Government funding makes it possible for these institutions to continue their inhuman treatment while the institutions' directors state that the children have a good quality of life. In response to the report the Mexico City government banned the use of restraints and cages.

* * *

Cumberland County Prison in Carlisle, Penn., isolated a mentally ill man in the prison's segregation wing for over two months, saying that he was too "unstable" to be with the prison population. Mike Carey, the prison's deputy warden, agreed that he does not belong there, but the state's psychiatric hospitals are so full they could not admit new patients. The man is in a cell 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He gets no psychiatric care and is getting worse. Unable to be moved from the prison and unable to appear in court until he is treated at a state hospital, his future is grim.

* * *

The shackling of two students with disabilities in Covington, Ky., has drawn outrage from organizations that deal with disabilities. One student is a nine-year-old who has ADHD, and the other is eight and suffers from post-traumatic stress syndrome. The eight-year-old was handcuffed on his biceps because the cuffs were too big for his wrists. A federal lawsuit was filed on Aug. 6 by the American Civil Liberties Union and Children's Law Center saying that the children's civil rights have been violated.

* * *

Russian supermodel Natalia Vodianova's sister, who has autism and cerebral palsy, was made to leave a café in the city of Nizhny Novgorod this month for "scaring off clients" because of her disabilities. The café owner told them to "go get treatment and get your kid treated too—and only then show up at a public place." When their mother came to the café and complained to the owner, she was detained by the police for disorderly conduct. The incident is being investigated as a violation of her daughter's rights.

* * *

The approximately four million disabled people in Iraq face neglect and isolation, and are forced to work in inadequate occupations or beg to make ends meet. People such as Saad al-Dabis, 55, from Babil, whose left foot was lost when he stepped on a mine during the Iran-Iraq war, face a life of desperation and poverty. His \$150 a month pension is not enough to support his wife and three children. He travels in a worn-out wheelchair 1.2 miles a day to sell cigarettes. The disabled are often targeted by terrorists in bombings, and the Islamic State exploits the mentally ill for terrorist operations.

WORLD IN VIEW

by Eugene Walker

Though Latin America's "Left" governments undeniably face threats from various neoliberal right-wing forces, often backed by the U.S., they have, at the same time, undertaken a developmentalist, statist economic strategy that runs roughshod over grassroots social movements—Indigenous, *campesino*, environmentalist, and others.

These governments could never have come to power without the social movements' mobilizations, yet in power, these state bureaucracies—all forms of state-capitalism—are using vague expressions of anti-capitalism, socialism, resource nationalism, anti-imperialism, etc., to impose developmentalism on their populations, often in collaboration with neoliberalism.

'SOCIALISM' FROM ABOVE

In **Bolivia**, Evo Morales, claiming extractivism as an anti-poverty strategy, has signed decrees that open up Bolivia's national parks—supposedly protected un-



Quito, Ecuador: Indigenous peoples' march "For life and dignity!"

Egypt's new pharaoh

With the pomp and circumstance of a Hollywood Pharaoh, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi presided over the Aug. 6 opening of the expanded Suez Canal. Aboard the luxury yacht *Mahrousa*—the first ship to pass through the Canal in 1869, and used by King Farouk before his overthrow by Colonel Nasser in 1952—were Sisi and guests. They watched as navy warships, helicopters, fighter jets and military transport aircraft passed in review. To top off the day there was a performance of Verdi's opera *Aida*.

This stage setting can't hide the facts of Sisi's murderous, dictatorial rule. Since overthrowing the Muslim Brotherhood government of Mohamed Morsi in 2013, he has surpassed former dictator Hosni Mubarak.

There are an estimated 41,000 political prisoners, far more than the number under Mubarak. These include activists Mahienour el-Masry, Yara Sallam, Ahmed Maher, and blogger Alaa Abdel Fattah. Women's rights activist Hend al-Nafea and 229 others were sentenced to life in prison for protesting. The Interior Ministry announced in July that hundreds of high school students would take their final exams in prison this year.

Under the guise of attacking the Muslim Brotherhood—which he has done with rabid cruelty, massacring hundreds of unarmed protestors on Aug. 14, 2013—Sisi attacks all who challenge him, including most of the revolutionaries of Tahrir Square. He has expressed his support for Syria's Assad. The military has seized even firmer control of the economy. Protests and reporting that contradicts the government line have been outlawed. Despite this, the U.S. has resumed military aid and the European Union has pledged their "continuous support."

—Eugene Walker, Gerry Emmett

Latin America 'statism' challenged

der the Constitution as ecological reserves—to oil and gas drilling. This was followed by a decision to complete a highway through the TIPNIS national park and Indigenous territory in the Amazon.

Land area conceded to gas and oil companies has vastly expanded under Morales, up from 7.2 million acres in 2007 to 59.3 million in 2012. Morales and the Movement Towards Socialism government argue that this is needed to obtain finances to overcome Bolivia's extreme poverty.

But decisions are made from above, with no genuine consultation with the people most affected by environmental and human destruction.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLE VS. PETRO-STATE

In **Ecuador**, Rafael Correa's developmentalist economic program seems intent on transforming the country into a petro-state, as well as additional resource ex-

traction through mining. Protesting Indigenous Shuar activists have been murdered.

This August witnessed important Left protests against Correa's policies. The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador began a march from the southeastern Amazonian province of Zamora Chinchipe to the capital city of Quito. There they joined a general strike called by the Workers United Front in opposition to the government's labor policies. Tens of thousands of union, environmental and Indigenous activists blocked roads in a number of cities.

DEMANDING ALTERNATIVES

Venezuelan statism united with Chinese statism as President Nicolas Maduro issued a decree that grants China's state-owned Sinohydro, the largest hydroelectric construction firm in the world, a 30-year lease to exploit the immense coal reserves of the Perija mountain range in Zulia state. Activists protesting at the Ministry of Energy and Mining in Caracas demand repeal.

"The mining will harm the ecosystem, the water, the crops, it's all related," noted Monica Saltarin of the Popular Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Union. "What are our children and grandchildren going to eat, and their grandchildren? What water will we drink?" In place of coal, social movements are demanding that the government invest in solar and wind power.

Puerto Rico: U.S. exploitation and austerity

Puerto Rico's gargantuan \$72 billion public debt is now technically in default, as the most recent interest payment could not be made in full. However, Puerto Rico can't declare bankruptcy, and the Federal government has no intention of providing a bailout. While the debt has become unsustainable, the roots of the financial crisis lay within the human crisis stemming from the island's 117-year history as a U.S. colony.

CAPITALISM DELIVERS MISERY

Since being taken from Spain's colonial rule in 1898, Puerto Rico has been subject to the U.S.'s "benign" imperialism, which molded the colony for its own exploitative uses. In the early 20th century a third of the land came under the control of U.S. absentee landlords. Diverse agriculture (coffee, tobacco, sugar, fruit) was transformed into a one-crop export economy—sugar, controlled by a few syndicates. Small farmers, and others who lived off the land, were forced to migrate to the cities.

When it suited U.S. capitalism, Puerto Rico became a producer of cheap goods, particularly when a minimum wage law wasn't enforced. But when it became cheaper to produce goods elsewhere in the Third World, those jobs disappeared. Because of a special law tailored to the maritime industry, goods must arrive in Puerto Rico in U.S. ships or pay huge import fees. The cost of imports is far higher than in the U.S. Economic development has stagnated, and the government is now the largest employer.

Bonds were issued to keep Puerto Rico afloat. Creditors and bond rating agencies began demanding austerity. The legislature fell into line. The government has laid off workers; raised prices on water, gasoline, and electricity; increased property, sales, and small business taxes; cut public pensions and health benefits; raised the retirement age and closed schools. Hundreds of thousands have moved to the U.S. because of lack of

work and the high cost of living.

Average individual income is less than it is in Mississippi, the poorest state in the U.S. Most recently, the hedge fund manipulators who hold significant parts of the debt have demanded further cuts in education.

SELF-DETERMINATION DENIED

It is true that, as citizens of the U.S., Puerto Ricans receive Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. However, thousands of doctors have been leaving the island and a Medicare crisis is developing. But is there authentic self-determination for the island and its people? No! Puerto Rico is still under the thumb of the U.S.

N. Korea executions

North Korea's fast-maturing dictator, Kim Jong-un, 32, has eliminated another member of the ruling party elite, vice-premier Choe Yong-gon. This marks somewhere around 70 high level executions Kim has ordered since taking power from his late father in 2011.

It is alleged that Choe had expressed disagreement over forestry policies and shown poor work performance. These are the usual vague charges that accompany the elimination of such high level figures. It is more likely that Choe was eliminated for his connection to the North's joint business ventures with South Korea, including the Kaesong Industrial Complex.

In December 2013 Kim had executed his uncle Jang Sung-thaek, architect of the Rason Special Economic Zone which allowed business investments by Russia and China, as well as being a center of the illegal meth trade. As in that case, Kim has likely acted to assure his own control over scarce economic resources.

Despite the *Game of Thrones* grisliness of some of his alleged crimes, like blasting a former defense minister to shards with an anti-aircraft gun, Kim is following out North Korea's own version of state-capitalist logic.

—Gerry Emmett

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists. It has always stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and in its state property form calling itself Communist, which appeared as the Russian Revolution was transformed into its opposite. That regression 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 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 re-creation 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.