

# NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

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## Massacre of Jews and rising racism

The Oct. 27 massacre of 11 Jewish congregants at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue is the single deadliest anti-Semitic attack in U.S. history. The motive, as stated by the terrorist himself, was a hatred of Jewish support for Middle Eastern and Latin American immigrants through the organization HIAS. That this vile act echoes what has become so mainstreamed in political rhetoric worldwide—the hatred of immigrants, and the promotion of ethnic chauvinism—is a measure of the inhumanity of that politics and of this moment of capitalist degradation.

This terrorist attack raises the specter of the massacres at Srebrenica, Utoya Island, East Ghouta, and so many other racist, counter-revolutionary crimes, just as those crimes can only be fully understood in relation to the Holocaust.

### TRUMP BEARS RESPONSIBILITY

Trump condemned this act. But he can't distance himself from his share of responsibility. His courting of the "alt right" during the 2016 presidential campaign mobilized the racist dregs of society and fired their imagination with visions of state power reminiscent of 1930s fascism.

Trump's ideologue Stephen Bannon was key to this. The enabling of the alt right led to the murder of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville by another neo-Nazi. Since then, Trump has distanced himself from Bannon formally, though Bannon's promotion of Trumpism continues to dredge up such hatred through the promotion of anti-immigrant forces in Europe, as well as through his online propaganda

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## VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

### Learning the meaning of parole

by Faruq

The phrase "Next Chapter" is one we often hear someone say as an indication of the closing of a particular phase of their life and the beginning of a different phase. It speaks to the process i'm currently going through. It is a process that has brought forth a host of emotions: apprehension, anxiousness, and joy. I have been working to keep these emotions in check as much as i can, which has not been easy. It is important for me to stay as level-headed as possible. That is because moving into the next phase of my life is not yet fully accomplished.

### NOT ABOUT ONE PRISONER

This process is one that i'm experiencing as an individual and, at the same time, it is not just about me. It is about representing a specific class of prisoners, one that held out no realistic chance of ever being in the position that i'm in today. When i make the claim of "no realistic chance," it is not an attempt to sound hyperbolic. To the contrary, it is a clear statement of fact.

Up until the 2013 Pelican Bay Hunger Strike, prisoners classified as so-called gang members or associates had no realistic chance of ever exiting the sterile environment of the Security Housing Units (SHU). The unprecedented prison hunger strike in California and its success has ushered in a new dynamic for SHU policy from which i'm benefiting.

As I move forward to the next phase of my life,

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## Election deepens illegitimacy of Trump's minority rule

by Ron Kelch and Bob McGuire

Voters in the midterm elections, led by Blacks, Latinxs, women and youth, roundly repudiated President Donald Trump, who had declared that his name was on the ballot for every office. Amid the largest midterm turnout in 50 years, his party lost the popular vote by millions in both House and Senate elections. Still, Trump remained in the White House, tightened his grip on the Republican Party and kept control of the Senate, cementing unfettered reactionary control of U.S. courts even if a future election ousts Republicans.

### CRISIS OF LEGITIMACY

The stark contrast between majority votes and minority control deepened the crisis of legitimacy set off by Trump's victory after losing in 2016 by three million votes. Blatant voter suppression, including Brian Kemp's theft of the election for Georgia's governor, raised the specter of an open right-wing grab for permanent minority rule. The outpouring of revolt—manifested in the massive women's marches, airport occupations, youths' March for Our Lives and mobilizations against the separation of immigrant families—provoked divisions in the ruling class. That is only a reflection of the fundamental division of two worlds: the rulers and the ruled. Fearing the revolutionary potential of the oppressed and exploited, Democratic Party leaders like Nancy Pelosi repeated their traditional calls for bipartisan unity.

Trump campaigned incessantly with an escalating barrage of racist lies and faked threats. He engineered a military buildup of 15,000 soldiers on the southern border to drum up hysteria about an "invasion" by a caravan of unarmed refugees—mostly women and children—desperately fleeing state violence, climate change and poverty in Central America. (See article below.) Tens of millions of voters fell in line behind his racist and sexist appeals.

The election results made crystal-clear that

Trump rules over a growing opposition. That opposition, and the size of Trump's crushing loss, were masked by the surgically precise gerrymandering in some Republican states. In North Carolina, Republicans got just 48% of the major-party vote for House seats, yet sent 10 of 13 Representatives to Congress.

The Republican loss came despite voter suppression measures in 24 states that were so multi-tentacled that it has been called neo-Jim Crow. The most flagrant were:

1) Georgia, where the Republican gubernatorial candidate and Secretary of State, Brian Kemp, purged over a million voter registrations in a scheme designed to disproportionately block Black, young and poor voters. Kemp's razor-thin margin means he

stole the election from Stacey Abrams, who would have been the first Black woman governor.

2) North Dakota, which passed a law requiring voter ID with a full street address in order to thwart voting by Native Americans, most of whom use P.O. boxes on reservations. A record turnout by outraged Native Americans propelled Ruth Buffalo to defeat the law's sponsor.

Many Republicans have been caught on tape explaining that preventing Blacks and students from voting was crucial for winning elections. Most recently, Senator Hyde-White of Mississippi publicly said that making it harder to vote was "a great idea."

The reason is clear from the race gap, age gap and gender gap. African Americans voted by 10 to 1 for Democrats, all nonwhite voters by more than 3 to 1, low-income voters by almost 2 to 1. The gender gap was 19 percentage points, that is, 59% of women voted for Democrats and 40% for Republicans, nearly double the gender gap of 2016; while voters under 30 more than doubled the 2016 youth gap to 35 points. "Recent extremist violence" was an important factor for 83% of voters.

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## Immigrant caravan born in the USA

**Mexico City**—On the same day that Trump issued his racist dictate against Central American immigrants fleeing violence and extreme economic hardship—saying they would be treated as criminals if they crossed into the U.S. at other than designated entry portals—we spoke to a few of the hundreds of Hondurans, Guatemalans, Salvadorans and Nicaraguans who had arrived in Mexico City to recuperate before continuing to the U.S. to request asylum.

To arrive here they had to overcome the attempts of the Federal Police to block their entry into Mexico. With hundreds streaming across the border, President Peña Nieto's repressors could do nothing. Furthermore, hundreds of Mexican citizens—the Other Mexico—and many civil organizations supported the caravan with clothes, food, and shelter along the route to Mexico City.

As against Trump and his supporters' slurs of Central Americans as thugs, criminals, diseased, druggies, etc., as well as his ordering thousands of armed troops to the border to cover it with razor wire, we heard the realities of the hardships in their home countries and their hopes for a different life:

**JOSE:** "I'm from Nicaragua. I decided to leave because we are at war since April. Daniel Ortega is killing many young people because they want him out and he does not want to let go of the presidency. One does not want to die, one wants to continue living for the family. If we stay we can be killed."

"The more people in the caravan, the more unity there is, the more strength. It has been difficult walking. I have blisters on my feet. Entering Mexico was not a problem; we came peacefully. In most towns along the way we were given food, clothes, water, places to sleep, lots of medicines. I want to go to the U.S. for a good life. If Ortega resigns, I would go back to my country in five minutes."

**NORMA:** "In Honduras there is no work, there is too much crime, we do not have a home and there is a lot of poverty. It is very dangerous. They can kill you for a phone, for anything, even because they do not like someone. People over 30 cannot get any work. I had to take a lot of tests, I passed them and they said: 'We will call.' They never call. We live near the terminal where the caravan left and decided to go too. The trip to Mexico has been quite difficult because we had to walk, to go at dawn, got caught in the rain, soaked."

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Several thousand protesters gathered at The Tree of Life synagogue on Oct. 30, 2018, to protest Donald Trump's visit. So thick was the crowd that his motorcade was forced to go in a different direction. Photo: [twitter.com/miguelmarquez/status/1057371618262089733](https://twitter.com/miguelmarquez/status/1057371618262089733)

## WOMAN AS REASON Solidarity with Trans

by Terry Moon

The Trump administration's latest outrage is its attempt to erase Transgender people. Trump's fascism picks and chooses. It chose immigrants who, with or without papers, no longer have control of their lives, are grabbed from the streets and thrown into jails, children taken from parents, and people deported before they have a chance to fight back. It targets Blacks, empowers neo-Nazi white nationalists, takes restraints off police, guts prison reforms, and promotes racism. It picks women, appointing anti-abortion fanatics to key positions, attacking birth control, spewing sexism and making a mockery of sexual harassment and rape.

### TRUMPISM SPEWS VIOLENCE

Now it chooses to dehumanize people whose whole lives have often been fraught with violence and discrimination, those who are Transgender.

**His tactic this time is to declare that Trans people do not exist by subverting the spirit of Title IX, enacted in 1972. It states: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."**

This administration is attempting to erase Trans people by declaring—against scientific knowledge and lived experience—that "Sex means a person's status as male or female based on immutable biological traits identifiable by or before birth," and that "The sex listed on a person's birth certificate, as originally issued, shall constitute definitive proof of a person's sex unless rebutted by reliable genetic evidence." *The New York Times* states that "The new definition would essentially eradicate federal recognition of the estimated 1.4 million Americans who... recognize themselves...as a gender other than the one they were born into."

What will such legislation mean for those who are born with genitalia that are ambiguous? Will their parents be ordered to operate on them? Will the state step in and decide what "sex" they should be? The order was formulated to deny that such children exist, but they do. Sex is not a question of one sex or the other but a continuum; nor does the order take into account the reality of people whose gender may be different from their genitalia.

### STEALTH ATTACK ON ABORTION RIGHTS?

And what about the ominous language that what "sex" a "child" is can be "identifiable by or before birth"! Will women be forced to have ultrasounds to determine what "sex" their fetus is? Will the police be present in delivery rooms to make sure the doctor writes down "male" or "female" on all birth certificates? Even the Olympic Committee cannot figure out whether an athlete is a man or a woman. Is "sex" decided by genitalia, chromosomes,

hormone levels, all those, or something totally different? Is this language one more way to claim that a fetus is a "person" because it has a "sex"?

**It is fascism when a government assumes the right to control people's bodies. Forced pregnancy is the other side of forced abortion. Trump's declaration of forced sexuality ignores facts; if it is based on religion it is illegal. It is a false declaration by the government about what male and female are. Fascism is also when you have the state declaring, under force of law, something is true when it is not.**

The only way to legally challenge an executive order is through the courts—now stacked with right-wing ideologues. This completely reactionary step against Trans people is also an effort to put everyone back in what the Right sees as their "correct" gender jail. They'd like to burn all people who are LGBTQI, and want all women gagged and in the kitchen. Fighting back cannot be separated from projecting the needed revolutionary change to establish a new society with totally new human relations.

Trumpism is counting on Trans people fighting this battle alone. The Left, especially feminism, has to prove them wrong. This attack must be stopped.

## Protesters slandered



Demonstration against Kavanaugh in Memphis, Tenn., on Oct. 7, 2018. Photo: Ama Ehrmann

Just before the final confirmation vote elevating Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, President Donald Trump and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell put out messages that slandered the act of protest itself. In comparing nomination supporters to opponents, Trump tweeted, "a beautiful thing to see—and they are not paid professional protesters who are handed expensive signs."

**When McConnell addressed the Senate on Oct. 5, he criticized a Senator who had opposed Kavanaugh mere hours after he was nominated in early July. "His audience: crowds of protesters still filling in the blanks on their picket signs." Not only did McConnell's comment contradict Trump's, but it neglects to mention that there was already a list of possible nominees ever since the 2016 campaign season, all of them at least as right-wing as Kavanaugh.**

After the vote count was assured, McConnell boastfully said of the protests, "they managed to deliver the only thing we hadn't figured out how to do, which is get our side fired up." Such a statement takes as a given the Trumpian logic that women rise up with narrow political goals. On the contrary, Tarana Burke started the "me too" movement in 2006, envisioning "empowerment through empathy." When the moment evolved into #MeToo, neither its time-span nor goals were narrow.

### CONFLATING PROTEST WITH VIOLENCE

Not content with maligning protesters as sell-outs, prejudicial, or ineffective, McConnell tried to conflate protests with violence when on Oct. 8 he again took advantage of his increased media profile by calling a press conference in which he complained, "we were literally under assault" [by protesters].

**A supposition that Left-leaning protesters are guilty of a propensity toward violence is a mainstay of Republican messaging strategy, one not often challenged by media. On Oct. 7, Maria Haberfeld, a professor of Police Science at John Jay College, was invited on the NPR program *All Things Considered* to talk about a recent FBI report which found a slight uptick in premeditated attacks on police. In the midst of making a point, she describes a hypothetical situation involving Kavanaugh protests:**

"Let's take yesterday's events...on the steps of the Supreme Court. You're seeing police officers pushing back the demonstrators. So somebody looking at police officers identifies them as part of the establishment, as part of the government that they are demonstrating against. So it doesn't take much to take your anger out on police officers because you cannot take your anger out on a given politician."

Haberfeld did not cite any incident like the one she describes, and NPR neglected to mention that no such incident occurred on that day. —Buddy Bell

## Review: Feminist Awakening in China

An account of #MeToo in China is documented in a new book by Leta Hong Fincher, *Betraying Big Brother: The Feminist Awakening in China* (2018).

Fincher begins with the Chinese authorities jailing five feminist activists—Li Maizi, Wei Tingting, Zheng Churan, Wu Rongrong, and Wang Man—for planning to commemorate International Women's Day, March 8, 2015, by handing out stickers against sexual harassment on subways and buses. They became the "Feminist Five." Strong international pressure resulted in the Chinese government releasing the five after 38 days in detention, but to this day they are subjected to criminal investigations, have lost their jobs, and are continuously threatened.



### CONTINUING ATTACKS ON FEMINISTS

In November 2017, in addition to forcing three of the "Feminist Five" to move out of their homes in retaliation for their plan to hand out anti-sexual harassment placards, censors deleted a #MeToo-like essay posted on WeChat from a woman in Shanghai who wrote about a serial molester in her neighborhood. Her post received more than a million views and ten thousand comments!

**In January 2018, thousands of students and alumni in China signed #MeToo petitions at dozens of universities—the largest coordinated student action since 1989. Censors deleted many of them soon after they were posted. Then on International Women's Day, March 8, 2018, Weibo banned the most influential feminist account, *Feminist Voices*.**

Lu Pin, founding editor of *Feminist Voices*, said: "The feminist movement is about women's everyday concerns and building a community... Chinese women feel very unequal every day of their lives, and the government cannot make women oblivious to the deep injustice they feel."

Fincher dates the current wave of feminism back to 2012, when 25-year-old Zheng Churan joined the Gender Equality Work Group. The feminists chose to focus on the shortage of public toilets for women, because they could not imagine it could be politically sensitive and opposed by the Communist Party (CP). They won widespread support which highlighted the systemic sexism and devaluation of women's lives.

### A LONG HISTORIC STRUGGLE

For Valentine's Day 2012 they worked on a "Bloody Brides" project. Li Maizi, Wei Tingting and Xiao Meili walked the street of Beijing in white wedding gowns spattered with fake blood, protesting the absence of a law against domestic abuse. Their slogans read, "Love is no excuse for violence." China enacted a law against domestic violence in 2016.

**Fincher reports arrests of feminists, their interrogations, bullying, and torture in custody. Their demands center on the everyday experiences of their lives, on the humiliations, unfreedom, and denial of humanity.**

Reading Fincher's summation of the history of feminism in China, one is struck with how much this has been true throughout history. In the 1920s Lu Xun wrote, "First, there must be a fair sharing out between men and women in the family; second, men and women must have equal rights in society." Note what is first: the everyday lives of women and men.

For International Women's Day 1942 Ding Ling wrote "Thoughts on March 8," in which she criticized the CP's gender politics: "It would be better if there were less empty theorizing and more talk about real problems, so that theory and practice are not divorced..." She was ordered to "re-educate herself," and in 1957 was sent for "re-education among the masses" for speaking about women's double burden.

Fincher begins and ends with the internationalism of the Women's Liberation Movement: from the international support for the Feminist Five starting in 2015, to solidarity with the Russian women in Pussy Riot, Mexican feminists murdered for their advocacy, Argentina's 2015 protests against femicides, as well as Brazil's, not to mention #MeToo and Black Lives Matter.

—Ursula Wislanka

## WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In Cork, Ireland, an accused rapist was acquitted with a unanimous verdict when his lawyer passed around the teenaged victim's thong underwear to the jury. Thousands of women across Ireland protested the persistence of rape myths in court cases with signs saying: "This is not consent" and "My little black dress does not mean yes." Protesters placed dozens of thongs on the steps of the Cork courthouse. Thousands posted photos of underwear on social media with hashtags like #IBelieveHer and #ThisIsNotConsent. Legislator Ruth Coppinger held up a thong in Parliament stating, "It might seem embarrassing to show a pair of thongs here ...How do you think a rape victim feels at the incongruous setting of her underwear being shown in the court?"

\* \* \*

Pinjratod or "Break the Cages" began in 2015 as a spontaneous movement of women students in nine universities in India. On Oct. 8 activists marched at the University of Delhi. Female students at Punjab University, Pantiala, had been on a hunger strike for 12 days with many hospitalized. They demanded ending rules infantilizing and endangering women students in the name of "safety" like a curfew, limiting their use of libraries and banning them from their dorms when late.

\* \* \*

Alisa Lombard, an Indigenous lawyer, is representing at least 60 Indigenous women who report being forced or manipulated into being sterilized during the past 25 years in Saskatchewan, Canada. Medical personnel approached them during childbirth or while going under anesthesia, sometimes claiming it was reversible. Each woman is claiming \$7 million in damages due to severe emotional trauma. Senator Yvonne Boyer, a Metiz lawyer and former nurse in Ontario, addressed the Senate, calling for an investigation, stating many women across Canada have asked her for help.



Do you have something to say about Women's Liberation, about feminism, about the fight for freedom? *News & Letters* has a principle that people in struggle speak for themselves. Get in touch with us. See how on page 10. We want to hear from you.

## ‘Striking to Survive’ in China

**Oakland, Calif.**—On Oct. 7 over 50 people came to hear worker-activists from China’s industrial heartland in Guangdong province tell of decades of workers’ resistance at a meeting co-sponsored by the Bay Area Local of News and Letters Committees. The main speaker Fan Shigang is author and editor of the just-published *Striking to Survive: Workers’ Resistance to Factory Relocations in China*.

The book gives us rare access to the accounts of workers themselves in factory after factory involved in labor strife, put in context with the history of two strikes provoked by owners’ attempts to move pro-

duction to locations with a more docile or cheaper workforce.

### STUDENTS AND WORKERS TOGETHER

Fan was part of a movement of university students who, motivated by embracing Marxism while the regime only paid lip service to Marx, expressed solidarity with factory workers after the Great Recession of 2008-09 by getting factory jobs themselves. These student-worker-activists focused on the industrial area of the Pearl River Delta, with 14 industrial cities employing 13 million workers, most of them part of the army of 300 million migrant Chinese workers.

**Fan identified three cycles of strikes since 2002, when China joined the World Trade Organization. To combat the many strikes that followed, by 2006 the regime accepted more workers at privately owned factories into the state union, the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), promising the bosses to oppose strikes.**

Fan marked the beginning of the second cycle of strikes in 2010, after widespread plant shutdowns in the wake of the 2008 economic crisis, with wildcat strikes over the obstruction of ACFTU officials. In March came the suicides of workers at Foxconn, and the Honda strike in May. Some strikes achieved a doubling of wages, and there was a rapid increase of the minimum wage in industrial areas.

**A third cycle of strikes began in 2012 with the plan to move 10,000 factories from the city of Shenzhen. Workers had to strike to collect the severance pay due them. They would hear the boss claim their plant was not closing, then find he was moving machines out. That kind of strike is familiar to U.S. workers, like the Republic Windows and Doors workers in Chicago who 10 years ago began a sit-down strike to keep the boss from moving machines to Iowa.**

Fan distinguished the majority of Marxist worker-activists from the avowed Maoists that had attracted media attention, but said regretfully that none of the students were familiar with Marxist youth rebellion against Mao’s rule such as the Hunan Proletarian Alliance that had used Marx’s own writings to attack the Party under Mao.

The increasingly repressive Xi Jinping regime arrested or disappeared activists at factories like Jasic this summer, and has escalated attacks on worker solidarity groups and Marxist study groups at Peking University and Nanjing University. The harshness of Xi’s repression betrays how threatening he regards both workers and students to his state-capitalist iron rule.

—Bob McGuire

## Iran strike solidarity

Workers at Haft Tappeh Sugar Cane in Iran have been on strike for most of November. This is the latest of their walkouts this year over unpaid wages. Haft Tappeh is in Khuzestan, the province where the theocratic regime has centered a campaign of arrests—and even executions—of trade union activists, and dozens of the strikers were arrested. But workers at Ahwaz Steel, also in Khuzestan, have also walked out on strike and together joined massive demonstrations that managed to free many of the strikers.

**Workers and students from across Iran have defied the mullahs by joining in acts of solidarity with Haft Tappeh workers. Heavy equipment workers, teachers, petrochemical workers and steel workers signed petitions and raised banners in support.**

Students at Tabatabai University in Tehran expressed support for Haft Tappeh strikers as well as for striking teachers. Their slogans included: “Free all imprisoned Haft Tappeh workers”; “Threats and imprisonment don’t work anymore” and “Bread, jobs, freedom, councils.”

Workers in Iran are not settling for the glib charge that all their troubles are from U.S. sanctions. Widespread protests have protected most strikers who otherwise would have been picked off one by one by the regime. The Haft Tappeh strikers deserve worldwide solidarity.

—McG.

### Letter from Mexico

## Rejecting fake choice in airport referendum

by J.G.F. Héctor

The elected government of Morena state organized a National Consultation on Mexico’s New Airport from Oct. 25-28. Of more than one million voters, 70% chose to “recondition the current airport... and build two landing tracks at the military air base of Santa Lucía.” However, the consultation only allowed the choice to be between this option and “to continue with the new airport in Texcoco,” which the government has wanted to impose since 2001. Although celebrated as a “democratic act,” the consultation was nothing but simulation.

**In the previous months, businessmen involved in the Texcoco project flooded the media with “warnings” about the economic risks of calling it off and presented “facts” to prove its viability. Even when these were not outright manipulations, their position totally separated “science” from humanity: One big shot asked, “Why submit to popular consultation something that has to be decided by experts?”**

Certainly, Morena’s decision to call off the project in Texcoco has caused some strain between the party and businessmen. However, when class interests coincide, reconciliation is easy. Morena will pay the remaining contracts from the national budget and will open a lot of opportunities for private investment, not just the new airport in Santa Lucía.

If we want to find a real way forward for a social uprooting, we have to look at the movements from below, whose actions and ideas contain the seeds of a new way of life.

### ‘FOR US, NOTHING TO CELEBRATE’

On Oct. 25, the Peoples’ Front for the Defense of the Land (FPDT)—resisting since 2001—demonstrated in Mexico City, calling for “all Mexicans to participate in the National Consultation...in order to reaffirm our rejection of Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), National Action Party (PAN), [and] the rotten part of Democratic Revolution Party (PRD).” But if the airport in Texcoco has been called off, it is not due to results of the consultation, but to the more than 17 years of resistance from below.

**After the Consultation, the FPDT demanded its results be put into practice and “to begin a program for the restoration of damages in the region.” At the same time, it stated that the rejection of this project “is not a green light to the one in Santa Lucía.” It expressed its solidarity with the peoples of the region, who have created an organization under the banner “Neither in Santa Lucía.”**

What is clear is the need for a deeper ground, beyond going forward “little by little,” resisting every new particular project. The Coordination of Peoples and Organizations from the East of the State of Mexico for the Defense of Land, Water and its Culture states: “For us, there is nothing to celebrate, for the business plan continues in the same Cuenca del Valle de México, just a few kilometers away from the Texcoco Lake... This was not a consultation, for it flew in the face of our habits and customs. As Native peoples, the real consultation should have been with us from the beginning...”

### INDIGENOUS REJECTION OF CAPITALISM

In an important communication published on Oct. 26, the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) and the Zapatista Army for National Liberation (EZLN) rejected not just specific projects, but the whole capitalist exploitation:

“[We] reiterate our unequivocal rejection of the construction of the New Airport of Mexico City whether it be built at Texcoco Lake or anywhere else...This project, like all the other mega-projects imposed in our geographies, is aimed at wresting from us what is ours, at the cost of the life of whoever resists.”

This shows the necessary anti-capitalistic, radical point of departure required for the creation of the new. This can only be done by the movements from below if they don’t separate practice from theory, or separate specific actions of resistance from an anti-capitalistic vision concretized as new human relationships.

## Nurses on strike



Bob McGuire for News & Letters

**Chicago**—Licensed practical nurses and supporters rallied at the University of Illinois Hospitals on Nov. 15, day one of their unfair labor practices strike, after UIH would not budge from a contract offer that left them in a second-class status on workplace conditions, wages and workforce job protections compared to all other hospital workers. Their conditions were so woeful that, even before the strike began, UIH had been unable to fill more than 200 LPN vacancies.

The strike continued with picket lines at outlying clinics and daily rallies until the following Monday, when the UIH CEO committed to attending the next bargaining session as one with the authority to negotiate if he chooses. The enthusiasm of the striking LPNs and the solidarity from other hospital and campus unions may have prodded the CEO into belated action.

## Gig road to poverty

**Los Angeles**—One sector of the economy that has been growing in recent years is the gig economy, which increased from 2% of GDP in 2013 to 5% in 2018. Half of these gig economy workers are in on-demand jobs such as Uber, Uber Eats, Postmates and Lyft. Contrary to the boosterism that we always hear from Trump, an MIT study revealed that on average a driver’s income declined last year from \$1,469 per month to \$783, a drop of 47%.

This never gets included in a Trump text claiming that the economy is the greatest in history. Neither does the fact that those workers have to provide for their own safety net: unemployment, pension, sick leave, and medical costs, which are under constant attack by the Administration and the Republican Party.

### SUB-MINIMUM WAGES

The MIT study, focused on 1,100 Lyft and Uber drivers, showed that taking into account their cost for fuel, insurance, maintenance and repair, their net income is \$3.37 per hour. The result is that, “74% of those drivers are earning less than the minimum wage in the state they operate.”

At the same time, Uber just raised \$2 billion on the bond market in October, on the basis of the surplus value created by the workers. These facts do not jibe with Trump bragging about job growth.

**By claiming that “the growth in on-demand work is driven in large part by people who use platforms like Uber on the side,” Uber presents whatever their drivers net as pure gain, not to be compared to a full-time worker’s need to support a family.**

The MIT study explains that “a more appropriate metric is to focus on would-be average hourly earnings which have remained steady over time.” According to an Uber driver, “70-80 hours per week is necessary to make Uber as the first job.” Another said, speaking about the effect on the worker’s health, “I cannot walk after working 10-12 hours per day, including weekends.”

The “part-time” workers usually work until midnight during the week and through the night on the weekend to provide for their families. With the minimum trip earning \$2.62 per ride, sometimes working 10 hours per day is not sufficient.

### RISE FROM POVERTY INTO POVERTY

Growth of this kind of employment is not easing poverty in the U.S. According to a new study, in cities such as Charlotte, N.C., and Atlanta, the mostly African-American residents who had been born into poverty are being bypassed in any job growth since 1990.

Karl Marx stated that capitalist advocates of his day, like Trump today, cannot solve the inherent contradiction in capital which is reaching its limit of exploitation of humanity and nature: “Private property does not know how to change crude need into human need. Its idealism is fantasy, caprice and whim...”

Trump and Uber type corporations are another twist in the history of capitalism—something for the workers to grapple with in fighting for a new human society.

—Mannel

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New book published for the 200th anniversary of Marx's birth

# Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence for Our Day

## Selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya

What is Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence, and why is it urgent for today?

This new Marxist-Humanist book takes up

- Marx's transformation of the Hegelian dialectic
  - The inseparability of Marx's economics, humanism, and dialectic
    - The battle of ideas with post-Marx Marxism
      - Marxist-Humanism, Black liberation, internationalism, and women's liberation
        - The relationship between spontaneity, organization, and philosophy
          - The emergence of counter-revolution from within the revolution
            - The problem of what happens after the revolution

*Dunayevskaya reads the revolts of everyday people around the world, which she constantly watched with a close eye*

*throughout her life, as both an oppositional force to, and a philosophical questioning of, the capitalist reality....only Dunayevskaya regularly insisted upon seeing revolt as a philosophical event....Dunayevskaya articulates a distinct position that connects mass rebellion to "philosophic cognition."*

—Richard Gilman-Opalsky

*Dunayevskaya's work...is an explication of the fullness of Marx's thought as she came to live it, in living through the liberation movements of her own era....What is finally so beautiful and compelling about the Marx she shows us is his resistance to all static, stagnant ways of being, the deep apprehension of motion and transformation as principles of thought and of human process, the mind-weaving dialectical shuttle aflight in the loom of human activity. Raya Dunayevskaya caught fire from Marx, met it with her own fire, brought to the events of her lifetime a revitalized, refocused Marxism.*

—Adrienne Rich

*First, last, and always, Raya Dunayevskaya was a revolutionary. Revolution in permanence, transforming the world to create a truly free society on new human foundations, is what her life was about. That is central to the affinity she felt with Karl Marx....Dunayevskaya's writing pulsates with the living history of freedom struggles and the ideas growing out of those struggles. That very commitment to revolution, in the face of all its contradictions, inexorably led her into an ever-deeper relationship with philosophy....Thought to her was not limited to the great philosophers. Revolution, she insisted, is in the thinking as well as doing of those struggling for freedom, workers, women, youth, Blacks, Latinos, LGBTQ people, oppressed nations. All this led to her own original contribution with the creation of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism. At its core is a new concept of the relationships of theory and practice, philosophy and revolution.*

—From the Introduction

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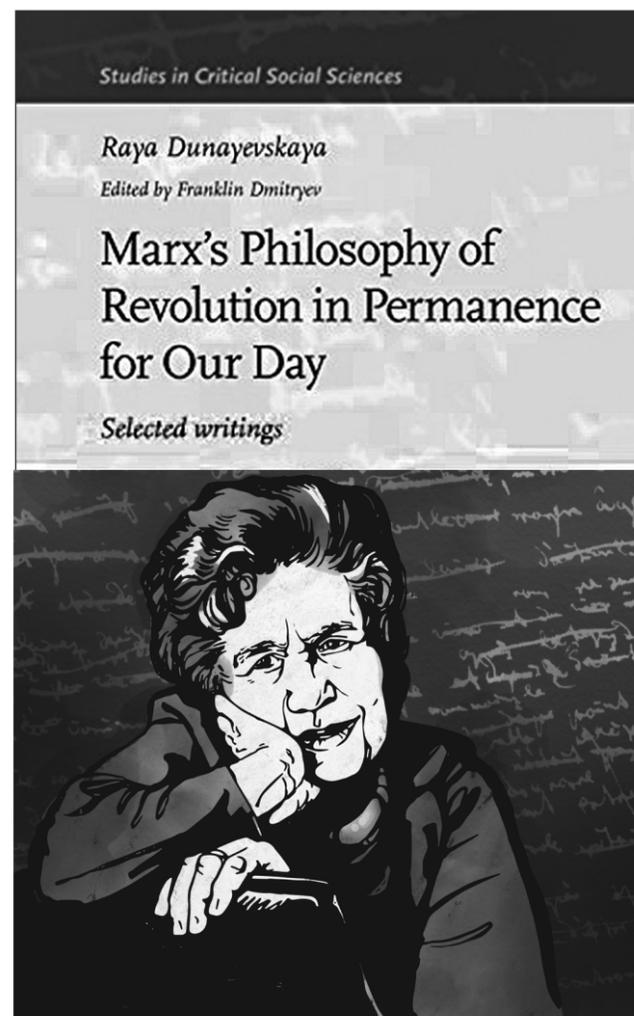
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Ask your library to buy it!

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's note: Marking the publication of writings by Dunayevskaya on Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence, we present parts of a Dec. 13, 1981, lecture in which she gave an overview of this concept in relationship to her just-completed book, Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution.*

...Marx was seeing in Hegel's Absolute a new beginning. What he was breaking with was that, in Hegel, Absolute meant some sort of God. What he was accepting was *self-development, self-determination, self-transcendence*, in the sense that it all comes from *inside*. The revolutionary nature—whether it's in you as an individual, or whether it's in the nations that will fight for freedom—is there....

Look at what Marx was writing at the end of his life, *after* he had finished *Capital*. Think of it—he spends 25 years working out *Capital*, his greatest theoretical work; and its greatest part is “The Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation.” (The idea he developed there was that capitalism develops to this point and then finally collapses; and that since the capitalist lands are the technologically advanced world, they will show the backward world its path.) Now he says that was true only of West Europe. It is *not* a universal. The Russians could escape that horror of capitalism *if* they had a revolution and saw to it that it was related to the other revolutions.

**THE QUESTION ALWAYS WAS:** What is the relationship of revolution in your own life, in the life of your country, in your international life, and in the world revolution? And what is the relationship of your activity to a particular thought—whether that be against capitalism, or against feudalism, whether it be against the old relationship, or the new relationship, of Man to Woman?

What he had laid as a trail for us, therefore, was that the question of permanent revolution was not something that happened only in 1848 or 1850, or even in 1871 with the greatest revolution of his lifetime, the Paris Commune; it was also in the 1880s, when there was nothing like that happening. What

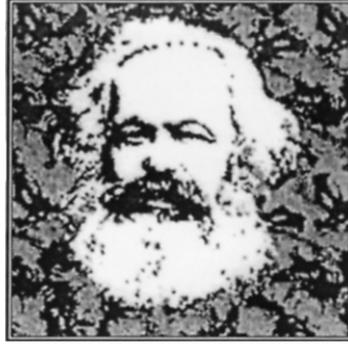
# Karl Marx's continuous development of the philosophy of revolution in permanence

he was saying was that there might be something happening if the Russians really had a revolution. The so-called backward countries, instead of being the ones that would be “shown the light” by the advanced, would themselves show the light to the world.

**POST-MARX MARXISTS** have not only kept hidden the various writings of Marx so that each generation has had to discover a new work that hadn't been known before, whether that be the 1844 Humanist Essays, or the 1857 *Grundrisse*, or the full 1872 French edition of *Capital* that all reveal Marx's return to Hegel. But what do we find Marx doing in 1882-83? He is returning to what he had done from the very beginning—when he said that even if you forget the class struggle you still would have to see what a miserable society we have when man can treat woman, the one he loves, so miserably. Something is so wrong we have to get rid of it not only by overthrowing it but by transforming it into totally new human relations.

It is that new moment—that return to the questions he raised in 1844, that return also to what is the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation—where we pick up *Marx's* Marxism and show that it wasn't only the betrayers who deviated. That's easy to expose. But it was also those who *weren't* betraying, but who were separating the philosophy of revolution from the actual revolution.

Let's conclude today, therefore, with where the book [*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and*



*Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*] ends—with “A 1980s View.” And that has to start with where I started today—with Poland. It is actually East Europe in the 1950s where a new movement from practice was born that was itself a form of theory and therefore demanded very different answers—not only for how to attain a new unity of theory and practice, but a new *relationship* in that unity. The East Europeans in the 1950s were asking about what Marx meant by a “new Humanism.” They said that can't be an abstraction; it has to be very concrete. And the concrete is that the Communism which claims to be Marxism is the exact oppressor; and you have to fight against that which exists. That's the very first thing Marx began with when he called for the “ruthless critique” of that which is....

**THE ABSOLUTE CHALLENGE TO OUR AGE** is precisely the 1880s trail Marx left for us to realize. But we have to work very hard to realize it. What we have developed out of what we saw in the 1950s with new forms of workers' revolts, and in the 1970s with the new types of revolutions, is what we have documented in the Marxist-Humanist Archives. By now, 1981, the Archives of Marxist-Humanism in the United States number 7,000 pages<sup>1</sup> alongside the basic theoretical works of *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today; Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*; and the new work on *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*.

The challenge is to catch the continuous link to Marx's revolution in permanence. As I put it in the new book: “Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for ‘revolution in permanence.’ This is the absolute challenge to our age.”

1. These archives in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, now over 17,000 pages, can be found online at [www.rayadunayevskaya.org](http://www.rayadunayevskaya.org). —Editor

## ESSAY

# Marx's concept of permanent revolution as philosophy: Exploring it today with Dunayevskaya

by Franklin Dmitryev

If Karl Marx is to mean anything for today, then it must be in helping us confront the problem of how to make revolutionary new beginnings even at a time when counterrevolution is ascendant. World capitalism's crisis brings wars, fascism, and the bankruptcy of thought. From staggering economic inequality to the flight of refugees, from genocide in Syria and Burma to the rise of the far Right in country after country, from President Donald Trump's virtual endorsement of murderous racism to the sycophantic chorus rationalizing each of his lies, the world situation screams of capitalism's inability to avert its self-destruction, whether through climate chaos or nuclear war. Furthermore, the far Right is working overtime to divert and exploit mass discontent.

At the same time, interest in Marx has resurged after the 2008 crash and the Arab Spring led to a worldwide wave that returned revolution to center stage. The complications that quickly ensued underscored the unfinished nature of the revolutions and movements, and the need for what Marx called revolution in permanence.

**And yet revolution is not central to the theory and practice of much of the Left. Many of those who call themselves revolutionary failed to practice solidarity with the actual revolution that broke out in Syria. Meanwhile, scientists have just told the world that nothing short of a revolution in the economic system is required to aim for less than catastrophic global warming—but the scientists don't use the feared word “revolution.”**

Marx's concept of permanent revolution elucidated the need for freedom struggles not to stop at the first stage but to continue, until human relations were fundamentally transformed, including—but not limited to—relations in production that define the economic structure. Today, this can only be meaningfully interpreted as encompassing many facets of human relations. To flesh these ideas out, I will draw on the newly published book *Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence for Our Day: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya*.

Permanent revolution for Marx was not alone strategy or “action.” It was key to his development of a philosophy of revolution.

### I. Origin in Hegelian Negation of the Negation

Marx's 1843 essay “On the Jewish Question” argued that political emancipation was “a great step

forward” but insufficient. Calling attention to “the relation between political emancipation and human emancipation,” he contrasted political revolution with permanent revolution:

“In moments of special concern for itself political life seeks to repress its presupposition, civil society and its elements, and to constitute itself the actual, harmonious species-life of man. But it can do this only in *violent* contradiction with its own conditions of existence by declaring the revolution to be *permanent*....

“The *political revolution* dissolves civil life into its constituent elements without *revolutionizing* these elements themselves and subjecting them to criticism.”

From the beginning, Marx's concept of permanent revolution involved a vision of totally new human relations. Permanent revolution represents a second negation, negating political revolution as the first negation of oppression, in order to achieve full human emancipation.

Marx developed that viewpoint on a profound philosophical level in his 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, without using the word “permanent.” There he worked out his break with classical political economy, with vulgar communism, and with the dehumanization of the dialectic by Hegel. This triple break was at the same time the foundation of a new kind of humanism.

**The focus shifts from things to the human being as revolutionary subject: from private property to labor as the heart of the contradiction of capitalism, from labor as source of value to laborer as subject, from the alienation of the product of labor to the alienation of the activity of labor, and from history as the movement of consciousness to the self-production of humanity through its own self-activity, with labor as self-development.**

Marx was responding to the rise of proletarian revolt in the 1840s. He did not discard the Hegelian dialectic and its negation of the negation, but recreated it on the revolt's basis as a “thoroughgoing Naturalism, or Humanism [which] distinguishes itself from both Idealism and Materialism, and is, at the same time, the truth uniting both.”<sup>1</sup>

**A key way that Marx directly expresses second negation is as the need to go beyond communism, to assure not stopping at first**

1. Quoted from Dunayevskaya's translation, back in print in *Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence*, p. 347.

**negation—the toppling of the exploitative society and its private property—but to develop the transcendence of alienation through the appropriation of the wealth of human capacities and needs, so that there arises “positive humanism, beginning from itself.”**

He held absolute negativity to be Hegel's “moving and creating principle,” which the old materialism did not match. In concretizing that dialectic of negativity as alienation and its transcendence through class struggles and the relationship between the sexes, Marx in 1844 created a philosophy of revolution in permanence.

### II. Summing up the 1848 Revolutions

After the experience of the 1848-49 revolutions, Marx and Engels concretized that philosophy as theoretical preparation for the next revolution in their March 1850 *Address to the Communist League*. They singled out the highest point reached by revolution: a proletarian movement independent of other classes, and the need not to stop with the first phase of revolution but constantly to radicalize it, pushing for a second revolution. This entailed world revolution for one country's revolution to succeed.

Dunayevskaya shows in the *Address* a quest for bringing out new revolutionary forces, beginning with the rural proletariat. Within a few years Marx would refer to the need for “supporting the *proletarian* revolution with a sort of second edition of the *peasant* war.” Later still he would turn to the question of the Russian peasant commune.

What cannot be separated from the refusal to stop at the first phase of revolution is the bold vision of a new classless society laid out in the *Address*:

“[I]t is our interest and our task to make the revolution permanent....For us the issue cannot be the alteration of private property but only its annihilation, not the smoothing over of class antagonisms but the abolition of classes, not the improvement of the existing society but the foundation of a new one.”

Just as Marx had projected in 1844 both the overthrow of the old and the need to totally change human relationships, this *Address* projected the interrelation between international extension of revolution and the deepening of the concrete revolution.

### III. The Multilinearity of World Revolution

While developing *Capital*, Marx extended his concept of permanent revolution, relating resistance by non-capitalist countries suffering capitalism's

continued on p. 7

## CAPITALISM VS. THE PLANET

No sooner did your paper come out with “Masses vs. capitalism: Climate chaos hangs in the balance” on the front page (Sept.-Oct. 2018 *N&L*), than the UN’s panel of climate scientists produced a report calling for “systemic change,” in which “required rates of change in the energy, land, urban, infrastructure and industrial systems would need to take place...have no documented historic precedent.” Meanwhile, key countries are moving backward. Without using the words “revolution” or “capitalism,” these scientists are saying that humanity needs revolution in the economic system.

**Environmentalist  
Southern California**

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What havoc will be wrought by the lame duck Congress? I worry about wildlife and the environment, Social Security and Medicare. So many in power are striving against workers, including the Supreme Court. But they may underestimate workers’ creativity; hotel workers and LPNs from Chicago, teachers from Oklahoma and Arizona, hotel workers rising up in San Francisco. Never underestimate people’s hope and creativity.

**Woman worker  
Chicago**

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This 40th anniversary of the Jonestown massacre in Guyana must become the wake-up call that prevents the whole of humanity from continuing to prepare for the “global Jonestown” that we are fast approaching with each new day. We human beings must put a stop to preparing for our own graves by moving off the path of global warming and away from the mad drift toward a nuclear holocaust. This new spate of wildfires that is devastating California is only a preview of what is in store for our imperiled planet unless we, as a world community of nations, radically change.

**Rama Kumar  
Fairfax, Calif.**

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## ANTI-SEMITISM’S INHUMANITY

Dunayevskaya’s 1960 article on “The Roots of Anti-Semitism” (Sept.-Oct. 2018 *N&L*) has a contemporary ring: “What the recent anti-Semitic outbreaks show is that it is impossible to destroy Nazism, the most bestial expression of capitalism, where its root, capitalism itself, flourishes.” Trump’s wild racist remarks and his winks to the alt-Right have certainly empowered those extreme elements to enter openly into U.S. society. There may not be a direct line between Trump’s rhetoric and the murder of Jewish parishioners in Pittsburgh, but he is helping produce a vile climate of hate. Trump may seem to be the opposite of “liberal” capitalism, but he is in fact rooted in capitalism’s long history of racism and anti-Semitism.

**Eugene Walker  
Mexico**

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Concerning “Massacre of Jews measures the inhumanity of capitalism” (Oct. 29 statement on *N&L* website), the situation is so awful, especially because deep divisions among the exploited undermine our powers to effectively fight back. Why hasn’t the mainstream news made sure everyone knows that Muslim organizations nationwide are in solidarity with the Jewish communities? Or remind us that Black Lives Matter fights but another form of hate—the daily prejudice and hate against Black Americans? Or called out the 45th president when he says “Democrats want to liquidate our borders” that “liquidate” was the term used by Nazis to mean murdering the Jews during World War II? Let’s insist on the whole picture!

**Susan Van Gelder  
Detroit**

# READERS’ VIEWS

## KAVANAUGH TRAVESTY

The nomination of Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court (“Masses for freedom fight Trump-Kavanaugh’s reactionary grab for power,” Oct. 10 statement on *N&L* website) was a foregone conclusion, although many hoped that the testimony of Dr. Ford, who credibly accused him of attempted rape, would derail it. Republicans marched in lockstep, joined by wishy-washy Democrats who were afraid they would not be re-elected in states that had voted for Trump. Any reasonable person watching his testimony could see a person consumed by extreme anger, an uneven, dangerous temperament unsuited for the Supreme Court. I’m not surprised he succeeded. In the words of the old Socialist Labor Party: the members of the Supreme Court are the watchdogs of capitalism. Our corrupt, obsolete, capitalist system couldn’t care less if its watchdogs are rabid. It prefers them that way.

**Curtis  
Battle Creek, Mich.**

●

## YOUTH ROCK!

Survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School spoke here on Oct. 26. They were full of hope in our ability to create a just and human world, and shared their insights on how to get there. They spoke at a high school, where we walked through a metal detector with security guards. That’s what the kids do every day. The speakers and movement worked hard to make the struggle be about gun violence and the violence/injustice in general in our society. They stretched themselves and our consciousness by collaborating with Black youth and organizations who have been fighting gun violence for decades.

**Feminist activist  
Chicago**

●

## FREEDOM MOVEMENTS VS. FASCISM ACROSS THE GLOBE

The election of the fascist Bolsonaro in Brazil is terrifying. Many had illusions in an economic bloc of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa as an alternative to U.S. imperialism. But from Russia’s genocidal bombing of Syria, to China’s concentration camps for Muslims, to South Africa’s massacre of the Marikana miners, that myth of a “good capitalism” was never anything less than a death trap. Real proletarian solidarity was extended to the Brazilian landless movement by the South African shackdwellers’ movement Abahlali baseMjondolo. They wrote, “This is a disaster for democracy. Jair Bolsonaro...has described organizations like the Landless Workers’ Movement and the Homeless Workers’ Movement as ‘terrorists’ and land occupations and road blockades as ‘terrorist activities.’ It is clear that the Right will militarize the state and attack the popular movements of the Left, and rule the poor with even more violence....We commit ourselves to standing firm in solidarity with our comrades in Brazil and call on all our comrades in South Africa and around the world to do the same.”

**Gerry Emmett  
Chicago**

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In Zimbabwe, the cost of basic commodities has risen drastically and there are shortages. Our new government is taking no action to stop the profiteering business fat cats while the workers and the poor peasantry are being forced to starve. How can, for example, two liters of cooking oil skyrocket from \$3.60 to \$10 within several days? It’s clear that the wheels of global imperialism continue being senselessly oiled to benefit the minority in a country with everything,

including good soils, best weather conditions, vast minerals not yet mined. Who then should save the local starving masses? I am touched by the current actions and wishes to build up a socialist/labor party. Our government is unconcerned for its citizens, and workers have been totally neglected.

**B. Musemwa, msemwabm@yahoo.com  
The Marxian Solidarity, PO Box A306  
Avondale, Harare, Zimbabwe**

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I was pleased to learn of the re-election of Mikiko Shiroma as mayor of Nago, Okinawa, and the election of Denny Tamaki as mayor of Okinawa Prefecture. Both are opposed to the relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station in Futenma in Ginowan. Seventy years after the end of World War II, no U.S. military bases should be on Okinawa.

**Happy for Okinawa  
Chicago**

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The folks at News and Letters Committees are the only socialist organization I know of that never compromised with the rotten influence of the Assadists in the Chicago anti-war Left. They have consistently shown that they understand that principles are to be fought for, even when the fight looks lost. From their support for the people of Bosnia against fascism to their support for the Syrian democratic revolution, they have never flinched, building international solidarity even when doing so required considerable courage. While much of the “Left” has made “anti-interventionism” a dogma, and reduced opposition to genocide to a matter of tactics and convenience, the comrades at *N&L* have shown they prefer the risky struggle for principles over the false comfort of compromised values. These are the kind of people to be talking to if one is interested in a discussion about socialism.

**David T.  
Northwest Indiana**

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*N&L* not only is a rare medium that reports on this (“Israel’s reactionary nation-state law,” Sept.-Oct. 2018 *N&L*) but it shows U.S. complicity in the attempt by the right wing in Israel to impose total apartheid on the country. Equally important, (1) women are in the forefront of the protests; (2) massive protests come from both Arab and Jewish Israelis.

**Revolutionary Jewish woman  
Detroit**

●

## CATHOLIC CHURCH CRISIS

Your editorial “Catholic Church laid bare” (Sept.-Oct. 2018 *N&L*) reminded me of Hegel from *The Philosophy of History*: “That corruption [of the Church] was not an accidental phenomenon; it was not the mere abuse of power... A corrupt state of things is very frequently represented as an ‘abuse’; it is taken for granted that the foundation was good...the institution itself faultless—but that the...arbitrary volition of men has made use of that which in itself was good to further its own selfish ends, and that all that is required to be done is to remove these adventitious elements. On this showing the institute in question... and the evil that disfigures it appears something foreign to it. But when accidental abuse of a good thing really occurs, it is limited to particularity. A great and general corruption affecting a body of such large and comprehensive scope as a Church, is quite another thing.—The corruption of the Church was a native growth....” So it remains today.

**Losing my religion  
St. Louis**

\*\*\*

I am deeply concerned with the title, “Catholic Church laid bare,” and the last paragraph. The revelations of abuse in the Catholic Church are a world-historic moment, and are just the beginning. These revelations come

in large part as a result of the work of people within the church, many of them devout believers. The editorial will cut us off from the people who made this awareness possible. Pope Francis may not be as good as he appears, but he is responding to deep discontent within the church. Often revolutionary impulses come in religious expression. We should not forget liberation theology and those who gave their lives for it. In Québec, anti-war priests helped protect many during the Vietnam war, and one of them prevented the Provincial Police from storming the Séminaire, where I was a student, during the 1968 student occupations. Many church people struggled for a secular Québec society, and, ironically, this secularism is one of the things that the people of Québec are under attack for.

**D. Chêneville  
Oakland, Calif.**

\*\*\*

Ireland shows the meaning of “the beginning of the end of the Catholic Church.” Repeated scandals like the enslavement of young women in the Magdalene Laundries, pedophilia, and needless deaths of pregnant women led to an ever-declining minority of congregants and isolation when voters rejected its anti-abortion edicts. The Church still exists, of course, but not the Church with the devotion of the populace and a veto power on national policy.

**Bob McGuire  
Chicago**

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## VOICES FROM BEHIND BARS

Being in Lowell Correctional Institute, I am faced with the realization of no family support. There is not a system in place to help the children left behind. My oldest has custody of her two siblings until I am home. We have been hard pressed to locate any agency to help them with housing, food, clothes, car repairs, now that my savings have run out. If Florida is only going to offer prison as an option for every crime, something must be put in place. The other issue here is the lack of rehabilitation and the mental health system. It does seem to have, however, a method of mentally breaking down women in their most vulnerable state.

**Woman Prisoner  
Ocala, Fla.**

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This nation’s first inhabitants can relate to racism and any other unjust treatment experienced by all colonized/immigrants brought to this continent. I still advocate for my fellow felons and our Native Nations of ONE group. I would suggest that your reporting include the Indigenous Nations in a broad context, for we are overlooked, sort of like the Bear in the room.

**Indigenous Prisoner  
New Mexico**

\*\*\*

I got the Sept.-Oct. issue. I’m a political prisoner and participated in the Aug. 21-Sept. 9 U.S. prison nationwide strike. The prison authorities transferred me and labeled me a gang member and a security threat.

**Prisoner  
Cross City, Fla.**

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Thank you for allowing me to enjoy the *N&L* subscription for free as I am still incarcerated. At 35¢/hour, there’s not much at the end of the month. I’m housed at a private facility which is for-profit and we are forced to buy everything to get by. Please discontinue my subscription so that another prisoner can have a chance to receive your newspaper.

**Prisoner  
Chaparral, N.M.**

**TO OUR READERS:** Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to *N&L*? Prisoners are eligible to continue their free subscriptions when they first get released.

# Exploring Marx's concept with Dunayevskaya

continued from p. 5

exploitation to his concept of an “era of social revolution”; incorporating new revolutionary forces, the Black liberation struggle in the U.S. Civil War and women in the Paris Commune; and restructuring *Capital* on the basis of the dialectic of revolt from below and breaking with the old concept of theory.<sup>2</sup>

The historical tendency of capitalist accumulation that Marx identified in *Capital* was a universal—but only for countries where the capitalist mode of production already predominated, as Marx took pains to point out in his final years, when he fully developed the multilinear nature of his concept of permanent revolution. Marx honed in on Russia and the revolutionary potential of its peasant communes.

**In the last decade of Marx's life, his search for new paths to revolution, including in technologically “underdeveloped” societies, turned to anthropological and historical studies of noncapitalist lands and precapitalist times. To Dunayevskaya, Marx's late *Ethnological Notebooks* disclosed “new moments” in Marx's ideas, ranging from the Man/Woman relationship to societies where other modes of production prevailed, and from ancient communal social forms to revolutionary organization.**

A central aspect of permanent revolution, the movement of negation of the negation, is seen in the way the *Critique of the Gotha Program* outlines how any initial stage of a postrevolutionary society bears the birthmarks of capitalist society. It is necessary to project a vision of full emancipation, with abolition of the antithesis between mental and manual labor and of the subordination of the individual to the division of labor; with labor itself becoming not only means to life but the kind of self-activity that is life's prime need. The movement of second negation is spelled out not only as moving from the first phase of revolution to a second revolution, but moving from the first postrevolutionary order to a new one that develops on its own basis—a “positive humanism beginning from itself.” This emerges from a critique of an organizational program, suggesting that he sees the projection of this vision as not only a distant goal but a moving force even before the revolution.

#### IV. The Marxist-Humanist Interpretation

Unfortunately, interpretations of Marx's writings on permanent revolution almost always reduce it to the question of moving quickly from the first, bourgeois-democratic phase of revolution to a second, proletarian-socialist one.

In contrast, Dunayevskaya analyzed the writ-

2. Dunayevskaya's pioneering analysis of Marx's break with the concept of theory and his restructuring of *Capital* is one of her key contributions, and is clarified in several chapters of the new book.

ings of Marx's last decade as “new moments of the revolutionary philosophic-historic concepts” of Marx as a continuation of his 1844 humanism and *Capital*. The dialectical discoveries of his last decade, she wrote, extended his concept of permanent revolution because they made clear how deep must be the uprooting of class society and how broad the view of the forces of revolution.

**Dunayevskaya alone revealed these theoretical developments as philosophical, as integral to the working out of Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence, which recreated Hegel's negation of the negation.**

This concept meant that revolution must continue after the conquest of power to a profound transformation of human relations, a total uprooting, “be it in work, or culture, or leisure, or self...to continue after the overthrow of the old, at which point the task becomes most difficult, as it involves nothing short of such full self-development that the division between mental and manual is finally abolished.”<sup>3</sup>

From this work arose her view of what she called post-Marx Marxism: a truncated Marxism that failed to draw on the totality of his philosophy. Dunayevskaya's view of a duality between Marx and Marxism illuminated what kind of philosophy could address the problem we still face: unfinished revolutions, including transformation into opposite as in the case of the Russian Revolution turning into state-capitalist totalitarianism, as well as revolutions that stop short, as with Egypt's 2011 revolution.

Dunayevskaya extended the concept of permanent revolution to address women's liberation, seeing it as a dimension of Marx's concept as early as his 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*. There he brought up the Man/Woman relationship as measure of the inadequacy of vulgar communism, and of how deep and total the social uprooting needs to be. Soon afterward, the *Communist Manifesto* called for the abolition of the family and “class culture” as well as of private property and the state. It also meant giving space in a developing postrevolutionary society for what would replace the family as we know it: “...experimentation, with people having the right to choose....[T]he expression ‘revolution in permanence’ as Marx used it...was not just a political expression, the overthrow of the old regime...”

3. *Marx's Critique of the Gotha Program* is the final part of *Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence*, p. 281.

est critique....[T]he point is the recognition of what Marx meant by revolution in permanence, that it has to continue afterwards, that it encompasses the criticism that's necessary, the self-criticism that's necessary, and the fact that you have to be very conscious that until we end the division between mental and manual labor...we will not really have a new man, a new woman, a new child, a new society.... You must never forget that the revolution in permanence refers to you too, not just to the enemy, and that it has to be continuous after the day of the revolution and the conquest of power, as much as the day before.”

#### V. The Significance for Our Day

What is so needed now is an overarching vision, a pole of attraction that a revolutionary philosophy can be. How can Marx's ideas help us with the problem of how to make new revolutionary beginnings in a time when the counterrevolution is ascendant, without losing sight of the need to prepare for the equally crucial question of what happens after the revolution? Capitalism's latest suicidal stage is seen glaringly in the steady march toward climate chaos and also in the explosive growth of fascism. This stage has been shaped by capitalism's endemic crisis since the mid-1970s, generated by its falling rate of profit. Throughout these stages, the humanism, dialectic, and permanent revolution of Marx remain prime determinants of allowing Marxist responses not to

stop at economic analyses but to release, rather than inhibit, new revolutionary subjects and directions.

This decade has seen no shortage of discontent, resistance, revolt, even revolution. What is needed is not another vanguard party, not another mind-numbing lecture to social movements of the need for a political agenda, strategy, and tactics, nor a belief that capitalism will collapse on its own. We must reckon with the character of this moment, when not only centrist bourgeois politics but fascism on the right and apologetics for Bashar al-Assad's genocide on the “left” are pulling to disorient the masses of people dissatisfied with the ongoing social disintegration. What must be stressed today is the role of a unifying philosophy that points to the need for revolution in permanence, and its potential to act as a polarizing force for universal human emancipation, to make real negation of the negation as the dual rhythm of revolutionary transformation: the destruction of the old and the construction of the new.



THE FRENCH CIVIL WAR—PROCESSION OF CITIZENESS OF “VEGEZEVUS” AT PARIS. Procession of women in the Paris Commune.

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# The many forms of racism in the U.S.

by Robert Taliaferro

The Trump administration, and many of Trump's far-right supporters around the country, have found a way to weaponize both racism and xenophobia in a manner that makes the two concepts seem—almost—socially acceptable in some enclaves of America.

**Racism comes in many forms. There is the blatant racism that is prevalent in movements like the Alt-Reich and other white nationalist organizations who do not hide their politics. Then there are those subtle brands of racism that we see nearly every day but don't seem to notice, until it is brought to our attention by way of some tragedy or video on the internet or the nightly news.**

A nine-year-old child, for instance, is traumatized by a white woman who calls the police and accuses him of sexually assaulting her after his backpack accidentally brushed across her butt; another young Black child is challenged with a call to the police because she was selling water without a license to raise money for a worthy cause.

## THE PERILS OF LIVING WHILE BLACK

The recent killing of a Black security guard who was just doing his job but who was seen by the police as simply another Black man with a gun; or the murder of a Black man in his own apartment by a white cop who alleges that she thought he was breaking into her apartment.

The challenge to a Black man trying to enter his own apartment and being harassed by a white woman with demands for his ID, and elsewhere, a

## Fanon warns Shariati

Among Iranian Marxist-Humanist colleagues, I didn't hear the kind of enthusiasm for Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) found in Raya Dunayevskaya's writings and from American Black revolutionary thinkers like John Alan, who wrote many *News & Letters* columns on Fanon and co-authored *Frantz Fanon, Soweto and American Black Thought*. This was perhaps because of the influence on many other Iranian revolutionaries of a leftist Islamist, Ali Shariati (1933-1977), who was a leading anti-colonial theorist in Iran and translated Fanon's writings into Farsi. Shariati, who became associated with Fanon, tied his philosophy to the Shia branch of Islam.

**A new huge volume, *Frantz Fanon: Alienation and Freedom*, edited and compiled by Jean Khalifa and Robert J.C. Young (Bloomsbury, 2018), includes many previously unpublished letters and writings from Fanon. One 1961 letter, the year of Fanon's death, included a prescient warning to Shariati.**

Fanon acknowledges that Islam "harbours... an anticolonialist capacity and anti-western character..." and he hopes that helps intellectuals "with the aim of emancipation and the founding of another humanity and another civilization..." Fanon warns, however, that failure to "breathe this spirit into the weary body of the Muslim orient" risks "reviving sectarian and religious mindsets" that could "divert... a 'nation in becoming' from its ideal future, bringing it instead closer to its past." Fanon cited the sorry result of African nationalisms that took this path of a "withdrawal into itself," away from "emancipating humanity threatened by alienation and depersonalization."

**Fanon saw those fighting for their humanity in the colonial relationship as reaching for an absolute new beginning, that he profoundly articulated in the conclusion to *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). He was certain that the demand that his humanity as a free being be recognized by the other is shared "without even knowing it" by Black sugar plantation workers in their "battle against exploitation, misery, and hunger."**

He recognized that the reach of the colonized masses for their humanity took a wholly different form than the hifalutin rhetoric coming from many intellectuals who drew their view of the future from some idyllic past. Thus Fanon's conclusion borrowed from Marx's take on workers after the 1848 revolutions, whose movement had a content that far exceeded its overt expression. In contrast, the nationalists, who drew their poetry from some ideal mythic past, had high sounding rhetorical expressions that far exceeded their content with respect to advancing human freedom out of one's lived experience.

—Ron Kelch

Black woman being challenged in the same manner by a white woman who questioned the Black woman's residency at a college she attended.

**We could go on and on listing such events, especially of young Black men and women being murdered by police and civilians with impunity, it seems, all because they are living while Black or brown.**

There are some far-right critics and Tea Party supporters who say that too much is made regarding the trials that Black people face. But those critics were never followed around a store by a security guard, or given an escort through a town by the local police, based on the color of their skin; they have never been looked at with disdain when they ask to use a bathroom in a Starbucks, or go to cash a coupon in a pharmacy and have that coupon challenged, based on their skin color.

## RACISM DWELLS IN PRISONS TOO

Let's not forget—or ignore—that microcosm of society that often is hidden from the mainstream—prisons. Sometimes it's very subtle: "It's too dark in this cell hall," one white inmate said, using that as a reason to request a change to a different cellblock. He wasn't talking about the lights; he was talking about the number of Black and brown prisoners.

Then there are more aggressive forms from the use of the N word to blatant and outright comments and actions of obvious prejudices openly displayed.

**This racism is not limited to prisoners; it is institutionalized by the prison staff in how they handle disputes between Black and white prisoners, siding with the white prisoners regardless of the evidence. Premium prison jobs are often assigned due to race, with more desirable jobs going to whites.**

We cannot attribute all these problems to Trump, but he is like a magnifying glass over a piece of paper on a sunny day. The more sun focused through the glass, the more certain the paper will be consumed by flames.

We just completed a contentious midterm election where Trump's nationalistic and xenophobic rhetoric was as much on the ballots of many states as a particular candidate. Despite Trump's loss of the House of Representatives, the fundamental aspects of racism, xenophobia and intolerance exist at a grassroots level, and until that is weeded out of the American consciousness, those aspects will always be a weapon that some will use to attack the right to be treated equitably in all aspects of life.

If freedom is the right to do and perform what does not harm others, then it does not give one the right to instigate acts of intolerance based upon half-truths and lies, nor does it give one the right to use bully tactics to promote one's agenda, especially when that agenda is capricious in nature.

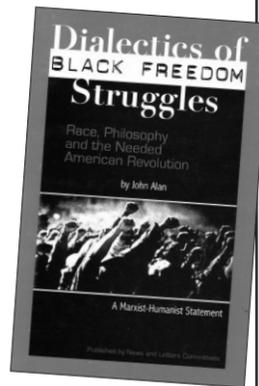
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"...Together with the voices of those like Robert Taliaferro's on both sides of the prison walls new movements and voices have emerged that oppose the totalitarian form of social control that has become so much a part of the U.S. criminal justice system. This includes prisoners and their families, victims of police beatings and shootings, activists in the Black and Latinx communities, and youth subject to constant racial profiling and harassment on the streets of this country..."

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# Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles DA, must go!

**Los Angeles**—Jackie Lacey is the District Attorney (DA) for all of Los Angeles County, including the cities of Los Angeles, Inglewood, Compton, Long Beach, Pasadena, Santa Monica as well as numerous other cities and communities. As an elected official, she is responsible for the prosecution of crimes committed in Los Angeles County. She has been in office since December 2012, nearly six years, during which time she has never prosecuted any police officer or sheriff. Some of them committed murder of citizens of Los Angeles County in what is called an Officer Involved Shooting (OIS). The number of OISs exceeds 500, including those who died in custody, jail or detention.

**Although Lacey is the first woman and the first African-American DA, she does not stand up for people of color, houseless people, poor people, or people with mental health issues who are overwhelmingly the individuals murdered by law enforcement. Most of these murders occurred when the individuals were unarmed or running away and not threatening the life of an officer.**

In September 2017, Black Lives Matter-LA (BLM-LA) delivered a petition with over 10,000 signatures to Lacey demanding that she prosecute the police who murder, beginning with the five officers dismissed by the Inglewood Police Department, after murdering Kisha Michael and Marquintan Sandlin while they were sleeping in their car. Lacey ignored the petition and refused to have a community meeting to explain her lack of prosecution. She has ignored all efforts to communicate with her to explain her failure to hold law enforcement accountable.

**Since October 2017, BLM-LA, White People for Black Lives, Central CSO, LACAN, American Indian Movement, March and Rally, SDA, Ground Game, SCLC, California for Progress, Youth Justice Coalition, and many others including families of those murdered by law enforcement have rallied outside her office at the Hall of Justice in downtown L.A., every Wednesday from 4-6 PM.**

The call is for her to "Prosecute Killer Cops" or step down. We invited everyone to the "one year anniversary" of this action on Oct. 24. There were activists, artists, poets, singers, musicians as well as families of those murdered standing up to get rid of Jackie Lacey. Jackie Lacey must GO! —Paula M.

## VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

### Meaning of parole

continued from p. 1

i feel indebted to the intrepid men whose sacrifice—59 days without eating—forced the California Department of Corrections and rehabilitation to alter the length of time prisoners could be confined in the SHU. For all the prisoners who were permanently entombed in the SHUs and thereby erroneously termed "the worst of the worst," there is an obligation on their part—on our part—and even more on society's part, to demonstrate the character that refutes such a ridiculous designation.

## THE PROCESS OF NEGATION

The motivation to refute the erroneous designation, "the worst of the worst," didn't take place overnight. The refutation grew due to the intensification of the dehumanization of us prisoners, specifically the creation of the short-corridor—the methodology of maximum isolation entailing a host of draconian regulations meant to reinforce its existence in the minds of us prisoners.

**Subjecting us to the coercive nature of the short-corridor, designed to totally dehumanize us and thereby to make us feel helpless, created the need for us to reclaim our humanity.**

That can be seen in the creation of the "Agreement to End Hostilities" and the resulting social practice. The "Agreement" itself is, in no uncertain terms, a reach by prisoners for a different level of social interaction; nothing less than a true display of humanism that does not dismiss racial differences and is capable of embracing them as a necessity to move to a more humanistic society of tomorrow.

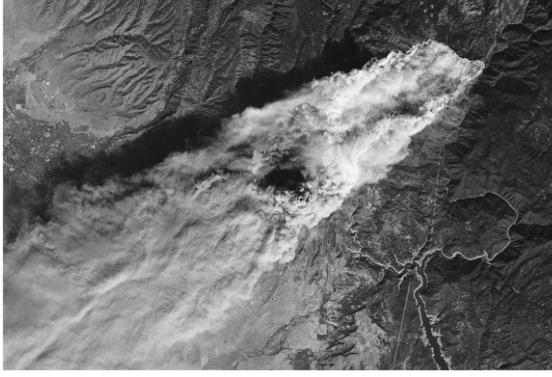
## A DIFFERENT DAY

The change in the SHU policy has wrought a new day for us prisoners. The change is major because it actually turns the once improbable thought of gaining a grant of parole into the probable.

The different day for me arrived when i was found suitable for parole. It cast a new light on my life. I certainly will leave prison a totally different person than when I entered in 1972. The journey has been an experience that has greatly helped shape the person that I am today. I'm ready to meet the challenges that will come my way.

# Calif. fires not ‘natural’ disasters

**Los Angeles**—As of press time, the most destructive wildfire in California history is still burning near Chico, Calif., north of Sacramento. Eighty-five people have died and 249 more are missing in what has been named the Camp Fire after the creek near where it is believed to have started. More than 18,000 homes and buildings have burned down, meaning this single fire so far has caused more property destruction than all 2017 wildfires combined, which in turn was more than the whole previous nine years.



Camp Fire from space. Photo: NASA

## DESPITE FIRES, CLIMATE DENIER SQUEAKS

The smaller but still widespread Woolsey Fire in northwest Los Angeles County has killed three, and 500 buildings were destroyed by quickly moving flames fueled by strong southerly winds. In this region where insurance underwriters of secluded mansions have been known to employ private fire-fighting personnel to prevent losses in expensive real estate, the coastal suburb of Malibu featured a town hall where some criticized public fire officials for not doing enough to save structures. A deputy fire chief explained that the unprecedented speed of this particular fire necessitated that all resources go to lifesaving: “Our firefighters were out there putting their life on the line to protect you and the communities” (KTLA).

Touring the wreckage of the fires, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke barely squeaked out an admission that climate change played a role: “the seasons have gotten longer, the temps are hotter” (*San Francisco Chronicle*). Indeed, the summer of 2018 was the warmest on record in California, and a Chico firefighter interviewed by the BBC said it used to be unheard of that firefighters would be working through Christmas, and yet, for the last two years, they have. As climate change brings higher average temperatures, there is potential for more and larger fires in the future.

The Interior Secretary claimed that to mitigate fires, forests should be thinned out, presumably by logging, a conjecture that was also put forward during the George W. Bush administration. Putting aside a major climate impact inherent in logging—trees consume CO<sub>2</sub> from the air in the process of photosynthesis—Zinke is on shaky ground. Matthew Hurteau, a scholar of forests at the University of New

## James Cone (1938-2018)

James H. Cone, the founder of Black liberation theology, passed away in April. A modest and scholarly man, Cone leaves a tremendous legacy of thought and action.

African feminist theorist Musa Dube hailed Cone’s “intellectual rigor and passion in the service of justice, especially against racism of all sorts. He embodied the struggle against racism and white supremacy without faltering for five decades of his socially engaged scholarship.”

Having studied modern theologians like Karl Barth and Paul Tillich, Cone tested their insights against his own experience as a Black man in the America of Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and the Black freedom struggle. In turn, his influence on Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa was profound.

In his 2011 work, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, Cone wrote: “The cross can heal and hurt; it can be empowering and liberating but also enslaving and oppressive. There is no one way in which the cross can be interpreted...I believe that the cross placed alongside the lynching tree can help us to see Jesus in America in a new light, and thereby empower people who claim to follow him to take a stand against white supremacy and every kind of injustice.”

Regarding theology, Cone placed the U.S., and the modern world it ushered in by way of slavery and genocide, in a new light. His work bears an affinity to that of German anti-Nazi theologian and activist Dietrich Bonhoeffer—who was influenced by his own experience of the Black church in 1930s Harlem.

By facing these extremes of oppression—which are, in fact, the foundations of bourgeois society—Cone’s and Bonhoeffer’s thought can be seen to embody the movement by which the spiritual Absolute of Hegel, the crucifixion that is history comprehended, becomes transformed into the absolute humanism of Karl Marx. The many dialogues opened up by James Cone’s work will live on.

—Gerry Emmett

Mexico, told Vox that underbrush buildup from overzealous fire suppression in developed areas might be the bigger culprit: “We have suppressed fires for decades actively. That’s caused larger fires.”

## CITIZENS PAY FOR PG&E’s NEGLIGENCE

However, the tree-thinning theory was echoed by Trump, who tweeted that federal dollars might be withheld from the state if “gross mismanagement” of the forests continued. It was later pointed out to him that almost all primitive wilderness in the U.S. is federally administered.

(On Nov. 16, the House of Representatives took Trump’s doublespeak and ran with it, passing another Bush-era agenda item and calling it the “Gray Wolf Management Act,” which removes gray wolves from the Endangered Species list, freeing up corporations to encroach on their habitat.)

**The majority of Californians are dependent on a private monopoly electricity provider, PG&E. In a required routine data filing on Nov. 13, the company revealed an outage reported in the Camp Creek area just before the Camp Fire ignited, fueling speculation that the energy behemoth may be responsible. In 2017, state officials had determined that failing equipment owned by PG&E caused 17 wildfires. This was one of the worst findings for PG&E since an improperly installed natural gas pipeline under a San Francisco suburb exploded in 2010.**

The prospect of liability for the Camp Fire sent PG&E stock plunging until the president of the California Public Utility Commission announced that the state would offer the company access to bonds to cover their liabilities, which could then be repaid via future surcharges on consumers: “It’s not good policy to have utilities unable to finance the services and infrastructure the state of California needs” (CNN).

He neglected to explain why the state wouldn’t be better off building the infrastructure directly, or why PG&E shareholders’ demands for ever-increasing profits prevented the company from making more investments in safer equipment and staffing levels that might have prevented such massive death and destruction.

—Buddy Bell

## Feeling watched

*The Feeling of Being Watched* (2018) opens as filmmaker Assia Boundaoui recalls waking one night when she was 16 years old to see two men up on a utility pole outside her window working on the wires. In fear, she woke her mother, who said, “Oh, go back to sleep, dear. It’s probably the FBI.”

Over five years Boundaoui was determined to make a film to “dispel the paranoia with the truth” she felt and witnessed in the Arab-American community of Bridgeview, Ill. Ultimately she uncovered the scope and extent of the FBI’s “Operation Vulgar Betrayal,” which tracked Muslim organizations like the Mosque Foundation. The FBI believed they were laundering funds for Middle East terrorists. The FBI probe had actually begun in 1985, ramped up in the late 1990s, and continues to this day. In all this time, no one was indicted for the alleged crimes.

Boundaoui interviewed hundreds of her neighbors, often meeting with a refusal to talk. She filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for FBI documents and was told it would take five years to process it. She sued the FBI for faster release and—amazingly—won her case. She continues to receive 3,500 documents per month.

However, 70% of the documents are redacted (information is whited out), so her team is using algorithms to help interpret them. They also gathered 400 privacy waivers from individuals seeking their own files, but not one has yet been received.

Making the film empowered Boundaoui and the community: personal experiences of fear and paranoia became collective and empowering. Also empowering was learning the history of “investigations” of communities of color. A series of graphic timelines describes the 1917 investigations of Black Americans, the internment of Japanese Americans in World War II and COINTELPRO targeting the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Panthers in the 1960s. Why? Not to prevent terrorism or crimes, but to control and destroy activist communities of color.

Boundaoui’s family and their neighbors had immigrated to the U.S. to live in freedom. “In America, there are laws. You have the right to know when they are violating your rights,” she said.

The film will be shown in Arab-American communities nationwide and on public television.

—Susan Van Gelder



by Tim Finnigan

Disability rights group ADAPT recently criticized the Federal Emergency Management Agency for not including people with disabilities in its plans for responding to natural disasters. It had included them in past plans. During recent hurricane emergencies, shelters lacked accessible restrooms. People with disabilities have been shunted off to nursing homes when shelters closed.

\* \* \*

A new U.S. federal law would create a bill of rights for airline passengers with disabilities. It aims to provide travelers timely assistance, seating, and accessible announcements; the right to file complaints; and the right to travel with necessary assistive devices and medications. It would increase penalties if a passenger is physically harmed or their wheelchair or mobility devices are damaged. Paraplegic Justin Levene illustrated the difficulties at an airport in the UK when he had to drag himself for hundreds of feet across the floor after his wheelchair was left behind by the airline.

\* \* \*

AnnCatherine Heigl, who has Down syndrome, was rejected by all eight sororities at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. She is a member of the university’s LIFE program for people with disabilities and a cheerleader. Her sister Lillie wrote a letter widely circulated on the internet: “Accepting a woman with a disability isn’t an act of charity, it brings diversity and promotes inclusion. AnnCatherine is an athlete, she is a friend, she works hard in the classroom, she is funny, and she is accomplished.”

\* \* \*

The State of Texas will be penalized \$33.3 million for underfunding special education programs—about 3% of its annual federal grant. The state has previously been cited for illegally setting a cap on the number of special education students. Steven Aleman, of Disability Rights Texas, commented: “All states must ensure a minimum level of state aid for special education services and Texas is faced with multiple school years in which it fell short. Texas has to get its priorities straight, fix the broken grant allocation system, and put more resources into special education services.”

## QUEERNOTES

by Elise



Photo by Elise for News & Letters

“The Orlando Traveling Memorial, to Remember the 49 and Those Left Behind” by artist Colleen Ardman has begun touring the U.S., beginning in Chicago. Over 1,000 people helped build the mural, which is composed of hundreds of handprints of first responders, medical personnel, local citizens, officials and groups who aided the victims. Portraits of the 49 killed in the Orlando Pulse 2016 shooting were created by each victim’s family and are mounted on the mural.

\* \* \*

After working for almost 30 years handling funerals for R.G.&G.R. Funeral Homes, Transgender woman Aimee Stephens was fired because of who she is, a few weeks after Stephens outed herself to her boss. Stephens and the American Civil Liberties Union successfully sued R.G.&G.R. The federal appeals court agreed that she was illegally fired. Her case now heads to the U.S. Supreme Court.

\* \* \*

Transgender people and their supporters across the U.S. protested a Trump-supported proposal by the Health and Human Services Department that defines gender as fixed and determined by a person’s genitalia at birth. Hundreds of biologists, geneticists and four Nobel Prize winners signed a letter calling the proposal pseudoscience. The proposal would make Transgender and Gender Nonconforming people invisible, nullifying their human rights. The consequences for Intersex persons are undetermined. The #WeWontBeErased movement is well underway.

\* \* \*

Romanians either voted against or boycotted the vote on a government-backed referendum that would have constitutionally defined a family as based on marriage of one man and one woman. Millions of dollars were spent on the failed referendum, created by the Orthodox Romanian church as an attempt to ban same-sex marriage from ever becoming legal in Romania.

# Election deepens illegitimacy of Trump's minority rule

continued from p. 1

The portions of the Constitution that were rotten compromises with slaveholders, like the Electoral College, allowed Trump to invade the White House. Those compromises with slaveholders minimized the scale of the beating that voters administered to Trump in this election and kept the Senate in his hands. Half the states, with a population equal to California, send 50 Senators to Washington alongside the two from California. That helped Republicans add to their Senate majority even as their Senate vote nationally was 45%.

## OVERCOMING URBAN-RURAL DIVIDE

The urban-rural political split that averted even worse electoral disaster for Trump has been bridged in the past during rural revolts. Black and white Populists in the late nineteenth century, Filipino and Mexican harvest workers half a century before the United Farm Workers, the Black-led Civil Rights Movement mobilizing sharecroppers and farmers in the South, reveal the promise of future revolt.

Mechanized agriculture left fewer field workers, but the fear by local powers of seasonal and dairy workers and the new immigrant packing-house workers is seen in the voter suppression in Dodge City, Ks., a packing house town with a 62% Latino majority: first allotting the town just one polling place, then moving it miles out of town. Yet the Republicans' rural vote margin shrank.

Voters, overcoming these obstructions, rejected the shocking fallout from Trump's racist rhetoric. In the week before the election

► a rabid Trump supporter sent pipe bombs to the top Democratic leadership, CNN news outlets, and other Trump critics like the "open society" advocate George Soros, a favorite foil for anti-Semitic propaganda;

► a white supremacist gunned down two African-American shoppers at a supermarket in Kentucky after failing to get into a Black church to copy Dylann Roof's 2015 mass murder of Black churchgoers in Charleston, S.C.;

► a neo-Nazi killed 11 Jewish worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history (see editorial, p. 1);

► on Nov. 3 a racist woman-hater shot up a yoga studio in Tallahassee, killing two women.

## WOMEN VOTED THEIR ANGER AND REASON

Women's massive #MeToo movement, following previous gigantic marches against Trump, was reflected in the flipping of many suburban districts to give Democrats control of the House. Nor did voters, women especially, forget how Trump and the Senate majority ramed the hated misogynistic perjurer Brett Kavanaugh down the nation's throats and onto the Supreme Court. (See "Masses for freedom fight Trump-Kavanaugh's reactionary grab for power," <https://newsandletters.org/masses-freedom-fight-trump-kavanaughs-reactionary-grab-power/>.)

The new House is more representative of that other America with respect to both diversity and opposition to sexism and ethnic hatred. Up from 65, there will now be at least 100 women in the House,

including two Muslim women and two Native American women, one of whom is a Lesbian.

The new set of self-described "socialist" candidates are already co-opted by the capitalist Democratic Party, one of whose biggest funders is finance capital like Wall Street. Nevertheless, their ability to run, and in several cases win, under the socialist banner reflects widespread rejection of capitalism, especially among youth. A survey this year found that a majority of 18- to 29-year-olds in the U.S. view socialism positively—and capitalism negatively.

**Several referendums hit back at gerrymandering and voter suppression, most strikingly the landslide passage of Florida's constitutional amendment to restore voting rights to 1.4 million people who completed sentences for felonies. This partially meets one of the main demands of this year's nationwide prisoner strike. For over a century, the racist criminal injustice system has been one of the primary tools for denying political power to African Americans.**

Capitalists, who got a huge tax cut under Trump, are desperate to hold onto power. They try to turn attention away from their status as a tiny ruling minority and limit political participation by people of color, youth and others who are solidly against them. Most working people, including whites, are not doing well in this economy either with respect to job security, a living wage, health care, housing or hope that their children will have better lives. Minimum-wage ballot initiatives passed even in Republican strongholds like Missouri and Arkansas.

## HEALTHCARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT!

A winning issue for Democrats was Republican duplicity on healthcare: their repeated attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act without creating an alternative and then to undermine the very foundation of meaningful health insurance, covering pre-existing conditions. Voters passed initiatives in Republican states of Nebraska, Idaho and Utah to extend coverage to hundreds of thousands more through Medicaid expansion. Anxiety about the future is pervasive in this precarious gig economy with its inability to provide steady jobs and full-time employment and healthcare for all.

Trump, who told Bob Woodward that "real power is fear," has convinced many capitalists that Trumpism is their path to preserve power. Certain industries are especially lopsided donors to his allies: guns, oil, gas, coal, mining, logging, agribusiness, construction, waste management, trucking, steel and auto.

**Most have a stake in gutting environmental regulations. Yet climate change was barely a part of most major campaigns—aside from referendums in Washington for carbon fees and Colorado to restrict fracking, both defeated by mountains of Big Oil money and propaganda threatening job losses. Thus this existential question for humanity is held hostage by corporate powers with vested interests and largely evaded by the opposition party.**

With few exceptions, the Republican never-Trumpers, many of whom were humiliated by Trump's belittling smears, became forever-Trumpers—both fearing him and embracing the pathological liar who plays to the basest fears and prejudices for his own self-aggrandizement.

## TRUMP RUNS A PLATFORM OF HATE

Since his elevation to the Presidency, Trump's rhetoric has emboldened homegrown terrorists—white nationalists, neo-Nazis, and misogynists—to attack minorities, women and foreigners. Hate crimes have spiked, including against Jews, Muslims, Trans people and the homeless. Racial hatred and fear spewed out of the 2016 campaign when Trump tagged Mexicans who come here as "rapists" and "criminals" and saturated media with ads picturing hollowed-out factories in the Midwest interspersed with photos of Jews like Soros and Janet Yellen, former head of the Federal Reserve Bank.

For one moment Trump grudgingly condemned anti-Semitism after the Pittsburgh pogrom, but continues to cite the neo-Nazi conspiracy theory that Soros financed the refugees trudging through Mexico and the mass demonstrations against Trump's

Supreme Court pick, Brett Kavanaugh.

**The credence given to a conspiratorial, anti-Semitic view of "globalism" run by Jews, justifying the Holocaust, keeps open Trump's line to what he called the "fine people" among the neo-Nazis who marched in Charlottesville and chanted "Jews will not replace us."**

This feverish opposition to "globalism" is really an attack on anyone other than white Christians and on international human rights law, like the right of refugees to asylum from persecution. Hatred is diverted from global capitalism, which engendered the inhuman circumstances that created refugees everywhere, and is aimed at desperate Central American families, or Syrians and Africans headed to Europe, and anyone who would help them. Fleeing wars, extreme violence, genocide, economic deprivation, climate change, etc., refugees are the hated "other," expendable and dehumanized.

## TRUMP ENABLES FASCIST WORLD ORDER

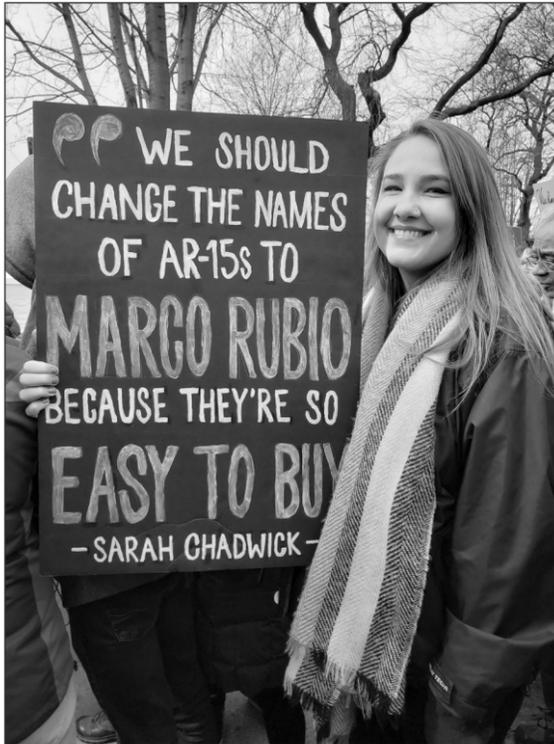
Trumpism has joined misogynistic, racist, xenophobic and narrow nationalist movements and regimes across Europe and around the world to push toward a fascist world order projecting hatred of the other and reactionary views of women, the family, religion and the nation. This new axis is making inroads on "democracies" everywhere. It is a symptom of capitalism's unsustainability in this period of capitalist crisis and of fear by the rulers of social revolution.

Trump's alternative globalism, permeating the Republican Party more and more, finds affinity with the most brutal authoritarian rulers, whether Russia's Vladimir Putin; the Saudis, whom Trump helps perpetuate the genocidal war and unprecedented human catastrophe in Yemen; the newly elected Trump admirer Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil (see article, p. 12); Kim Jong-Un in North Korea; the murderous Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines; Poland's Law and Justice Party, whose leaders just marched together with the far right in marking Poland's Independence Day; and Viktor Orban's Soros-and-refugee-hating, authoritarian regime in Hungary.

**What capitalists are happy about is the way Trump's racist, misogynist agenda helps them peddle their agenda. When President Barack Obama dealt with the collapse of the financial system and impending Great Depression, Republicans put up every barrier, including shutting down the government, to thwart deficit spending. By the 2016 election the deficit was on a downward trend. Trump's huge tax cut for the ultra-wealthy 1% shot the fiscal 2018 deficit up to \$779 billion, the biggest since 2012, when stimulus spending was still in effect.**

Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell's immediate response was to say funding for Medicare, Social Security and Medicaid will now have to be cut. Any deficit is OK if ever more revenue goes to the capitalists. It is clear that, as Marx put it, the national debt is the only part of national wealth owned by the people. No amount of largesse to capitalists will solve the problem of the collapse in the rate of growth in the world economy, because value only comes from living labor, which capital is forever driving to eliminate.

No election outcome could have papered over capitalism's prolonged crisis. The upsurge from below, though partially shackled for now by the Democratic Party, is pushing against those limits and reaching for new beginnings to reconstruct society on a truly human foundation.



Sign held at youth-sponsored massive anti-violence March For Life in Chicago, March 24, 2018. Anger expressed at these marches made itself felt in the midterm elections.

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## YOUTH IN ACTION

by Buddy Bell



Half of the student body at Yale Law School held a sit-down strike in university hallways and refused to go to class on Sept. 24. They were protesting the Republican Party's expedited confirmation of Supreme Court nominee and Yale alumnus Brett Kavanaugh. The strike was called as a Sept. 20 organizing meeting about Kavanaugh evolved into a discussion of the law school's overall culture of silence and its possible complicity in referring students to become clerks for predatory federal appeals court judges. One such judge resigned last year after a dozen women spoke out against him. As for Kavanaugh himself, female students quoted in *The Guardian* spoke of discreet remarks by two Yale professors—one of whom has since been suspended—that you needed to have a “certain look” to work for the judge, and “it's no accident his female clerks look like models.”

\* \* \*

In Australia, where six new solar panels are installed every minute, fossil fuels lobbyists have insisted that “excessively generous” subsidies for individuals be scrapped. Better to go forward with plans to open a new coal mine on indigenous land which overlooks the Great Barrier Reef. Three eighth-graders have refused to go to school over the mine. In a statement explaining their strike, the girls showed concern for those younger than themselves: “We feel sorry for the future generations who don't even get a say in the world that we're creating, who will have to deal with even more extreme weather, who will never get to see the Great Barrier Reef and other threatened icons and species. Why are our politicians allowed to take this away from any child? What's the point of learning facts at school if people in power ignore them? We have to know that we will have a livable planet before we can get excited about our future careers.”

\* \* \*

High schoolers in a school district that encompasses Alhambra, Monterey Park, and San Gabriel, Calif. have joined together to form a campaign called Vote at 16-San Gabriel Valley. They met while developing a school program, with help from the Asian Pacific Islander Forward Movement, to monitor air pollution on their campuses which lie along Interstate 10. Lukewarm, sluggish support from school administrators and the current school board drove the students to propose local legislation authorizing youth aged 16-18 to vote in school board elections. After attending school board meetings en masse, they summoned 2018 board candidates to a student-moderated public community town hall, which was followed by a mock election on Oct. 1. Seeking engagement with voters, the students also canvassed at nearby farmers' markets.

## Immigrant caravan: born in the USA

continued from p. 1

*Everything has happened to us, but thank God we are here. I am with my family, with my two babies and my husband.”*

**VIVIANA:** *“I am from Guatemala, I left because of lack of employment. There is employment, but those of us who only have basic or primary education, we do not have opportunities. There was a hurricane that ruined our house. My family has no home. Because I am the oldest, I decided to emigrate, to work to stabilize my family economically.”*

*“As the caravan passed through Guatemala, I decided to follow them, my family stayed. This trip was difficult because I'm alone, you walk too much. My feet are sore. The people of Mexico have shown solidarity with us. My intention is to travel north, enter, work and then return.”*

### THE MEANING OF THE MIGRATION

Those hundreds of thousands of Central Americans who self-organized to flee extreme conditions of life and labor in their countries are not simply victims of difficult lives. They are in the process of becoming subjects of social transformation, and exposing the grave contradictions of capitalism in the less technologically developed lands of Central America.

**To comprehend the massive exodus from Central America, occurring over decades, we must consider the imperialist role of the U.S.**

## EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

film for the U.S. midterm elections, “Trump at War.”

Some neo-Nazis, like the terrorist murderer in Pittsburgh, have become disillusioned as Bannon's activity shifted from the center of U.S. power to the margins—and it is notable that Bannon's own recent rallies in New York State have only drawn a few dozen. The massacre in Pittsburgh reflects the terrorist's fading dream of a new Holocaust.

**Trump's belated condemnation of anti-Semitism will, at best, serve only to drive these demons back partly underground. As Woody Guthrie, in the 1950s, wrote of Trump's own father, “I suppose Old Man Trump knows just how much racial hate he stirred up in the bloodpot of human hearts when he drew that color line here at his eighteen hundred family [housing] project.”**

The capitalist ruling class remains unable to solve any fundamental social problem, either in peace or in war, and so keeps its bloodpots simmering in the racist underworld of history. Every hint of this, every whisper, every pointed silence of Trump and any other ruling class politician or ideologue must be utterly condemned.

### ANTI-SEMITISM A HISTORIC PROBLEM

This question is bigger than Trump and his personal responsibility, however. Karl Marx's critique of bourgeois society, and his vision of social revolution, first took form in a grappling with the question of European anti-Semitism. It is inseparable from his vision of humanism as the “solution to the riddle of history.”

The issue of anti-Semitism in Europe, with its culmination in Nazism and genocide, was as significant a test for “Marxists,” for the revolutionary movement, as is the Black Dimension in the U.S. through Abolitionism, the Civil War, and until today. As Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., wrote in “The Roots of Anti-Semitism”:

*“Under the open sore of the persecution of a minority is hidden the greater truth of exploitation—that the exploiters, not the exploited, are the minority. Within this greater truth will be found the answer as to why a specific scapegoat is chosen at a particular time at each separate stage of capitalism's development.”*

Too often nominal revolutionaries have failed this test, from the Second International in the 1890s declaring that anti-Semitism and “philo-Semitism” were equal problems (as though Europe suffered from “philo-Semitism”) to the counter-revolutionary Stalinist whispering campaigns against Trotsky in the 1920s, the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939 that gave Hitler the green light for the invasion of Poland, the post-World War II fabrication of the “doctors' plot” and the night of the murdered poets in Russia, and the Rudolf Slansky trial in occupied Czechoslovakia.

**Anti-Semitism was a measure of the transformation of social revolution into the worst form of counter-revolution. Any “Marxism” that decenters the issue of anti-Semitism declares itself theoretically and practically dead and without a future.**

The massacre at the Tree of Life synagogue was a modern pogrom, with assault weapons, social media presence, and poisoned roots in the current stage of world counter-revolution represented by Trump, Putin, and their ilk. History has shown that only an absolute opposition, a revolution in permanence, can hope to uproot this inhuman horror.

That history began with the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, with the U.S. declaring that no European power could play a dominant role in the Americas. It did not protect the Americas from Yankee domination, particularly in Central America and the Caribbean. The twentieth century witnessed so many U.S. military invasions of Central American countries that we cannot take the space to even list them here.

When, in the 1950s through the 1980s, various Latin American peoples demanded self-determination, the U.S. could not always directly invade—though we must not forget the military actions at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Grenada. Instead they massively supported Contras (counter-revolutionaries) in Nicaragua, the counter-revolutionary military in El Salvador, and used Honduras as a main base of operations for U.S. military support. In the Ronald Reagan years the U.S. gave military support to the murderous Guatemalan regime of Ríos Montt. This, after the U.S.-sponsored military coup against a democratically elected government in 1954.

**More recently, the 2009 military coup against the populist Honduran president Manuel Zelaya during President Barack Obama's administration is revealing. The U.S. looked the other way, and has continued “security assistance” to this devastated country where hundreds have been murdered, including the activist-environmentalist Berta Cáceres.**

Trump's current attack on Central American immigrants is not only narrow electoral politics. His worldview is one of racism, misogyny, and cruelty as seen in his policy of separating families at the border. His sending the army to the border and his dictate changing the rules of asylum are part and parcel of this antihuman world view.

The caravans in Honduras, and perhaps in El Salvador and Guatemala, were organized by those opposing the various corrupt governments of Central America. The greater truth is that hundreds and then thousands of Hondurans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans spontaneously—after the fear of violence and pain of years of deprivation and poverty—decided, “We must go!” Go in order to escape this impossible reality, and seek a new beginning. Perhaps such a new beginning cannot be found in the U.S. as it is, but only in social transformation in their countries as well as the U.S. But their journeys reveal the truth of present-day reality for millions, and must be supported in every way.

—Eugene Walker

## Iranians remember

**Santa Monica, Calif.**—On Sept. 23, in remembrance of the victims of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's regime that ran from 1979-1989, over 60 Iranians gathered at the Santa Monica Library. The killing of civilians started in 1981 after the Iranian revolution of 1979. If a prisoner answered “no” to the question did he or she say Islamic prayers, and they had previously been in a political party, they would be executed. If the prisoner did not belong to a political party, they were sentenced to the draconian Evin prison. This is as true now as it was when Khomeini and his followers ruled. Many men and women, old, young, and even teenagers, were executed and their bodies never found.

During the Iran-Iraq war, in which U.S. intelligence-gathering supported Iraq, Khomeini imprisoned many Iranian leftists, especially from the Mujahidin and Tudeh party. The Communist Tudeh party worked closely with Moscow during the reign of the Shah. They were young, highly educated Iranians who established a base in Iraq.

**After the Iran-Iraq war, Khomeini's regime was forced to declare an amnesty for political prisoners. Under the pretext of a general amnesty, Khomeini created a “Death Committee” to oversee the release of prisoners. The state released very few, but used bombastic propaganda to paint itself as forgiving and religious. In reality, the four leaders of the Death Committee had the majority of the prisoners murdered. One of the Death Committee leaders, Mostafa Pourmohammadi, is now one of President Hassan Rouhani's cabinet members.**

The cowardly acts of Khomeini's regime are rightfully called national genocide by the Iranian Left. Khomeini gave the Left no other choice than taking up arms against the government. That was the only way to reach freedom. Confronted by critics for their barbaric acts, the regime claimed that if others were in power they would do the same. That reasoning is used by many leaders today. But they cannot ever kill the idea of freedom that lives in the masses' consciousness.

—Mannel

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# WORLD IN VIEW Counter-revolution redefines EU, OPEC

by Gerry Emmett

Seven years ago, the Arab Spring and the U.S. Georgia prison strike began a world historic movement that shook bourgeois society to its foundations. As the rulers now deceive themselves that they have effectively drowned human freedom in blood, we see the next stage of bourgeois politics taking shape.

This is becoming clear in relation to the economic and political alliances of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and the European Union (EU).



We are devastated to learn of the assassination of Raed Fares along with his comrade Hamoud Juneid in Kafranbel, Syria, on Nov. 23. It was my privilege to meet Raed twice in the U.S. He knew that he risked his life by returning to Syria, but his commitment to freedom was absolute. He had survived attacks, detentions, and slanders, and his inspiration and creative example will live to tread the dust of all today's arrogant oppressors. His genius was to make a category of communicating the thought of the revolution to the world. I will not be so presumptuous as to call him my brother—in truth, I place him far above me. Raed was and is a world-historic figure. But our brothers were brothers, and from their difficult lives a great new vision of freedom was born, and we promise you, Raed and Hamoud, that we will remain true to that vision. —G.E.

Pressured to respond to the horrific state murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi, Donald Trump, against his own will, spoke the truth of the current relationship between the U.S. and the Saudi monarchy:

“They have worked closely with us and have been very responsive to my requests to keeping oil prices at reasonable levels.”

The commodity, oil, is once again seen as the ultimate ruler over humanity. This has already

been carried to the point of outright genocide in the counter-revolutionary wars waged by Saudi Arabia and Iran in Yemen and Syria.

What has changed now is also implicit in Trump's statement. The recent creation of OPEC+ is an opening for the oil market to be manipulated by the three biggest producers, the Saudis, Russia, and the U.S. As Trump (like Obama before him) enables the Saudi role in Yemen, Prince Salman agrees to ignore Vladimir Putin's genocidal war in Syria—which the Prince had claimed to oppose—and this new cartel comes into the world dripping with blood, filth, and ruling class hypocrisy.

In Europe, the rise of Far Right parties and governments fed by anti-immigration sentiment has continued. These Rightists have capitalized on the exploitation and counter-revolutionary massacres that fuel immigration from Africa and the Middle East, as well as European racism.

## RACISM RISES IN EU

Hillary Clinton, against her own will, also spoke her ruling class truth when she told *The Guardian*: “I think Europe needs to get a handle on migration because that is what lit the flame... Europe has done its part, and must send a very clear message—we are not going to be able to continue to provide refuge

## Vietnam is in turmoil

On Oct. 23, Communist Party General Secretary and ideologue Nguyen Phu Trong was named (by a 99.8% National Assembly vote) as Vietnam's new president. He thus becomes the newest of the world's strongman rulers.

Trong's ascension comes in response to massive protests that shook Vietnam earlier this year in response to a government proposal to create “special economic zones” widely seen as likely to be dominated by Chinese capital. Many termed this proposal “the law to sell the country.”

Demonstrations spread from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to towns around the country. Thousands also protested a new cybersecurity law that would facilitate government spying on dissidents and internet censorship.

## Bolsonaro's fascism threatens Brazilians

On Jan. 1, Jair Bolsonaro will assume the office of President of Brazil. He is widely recognized as a racist, misogynist and homophobe and is an admirer of Brazil's 1964-1985 military dictatorship. He calls for the police to murder suspected criminals in the *favelas*—the barrios of Rio, whose majority populations are Afro-Brazilian; for abolishing protected Indigenous lands; and for eliminating “communists,” meaning any Leftists including the former ruling Workers Party (PT).

### STATE-CAPITALISM VERSUS FREEDOM

The origins of this disaster stretch back decades. Brazilian capitalism has struggled to join the major capitalist powers. In the process the country has experienced military dictatorship, the development of imperialist relations with its neighbors, and become one of the most unequal societies in the world. Significant parts of the Amazon have been destroyed for “development purposes,” and mega urban centers have become difficult places to live.

When Inacio “Lula” da Silva, the union leader who headed the PT, was elected president in 2002,

millions hoped for significant change. Lula sought to alleviate extreme poverty. But he did not seek to change the social-economic structure of Brazilian capitalism. The state entered into capitalist enterprise, strengthening Brazil's place in the world market, but increased its dependency on the market's uncertainties.

When export prices crashed in the 2010s, so did the economy. Added to this was out-of-control corruption between the government and various private and state enterprises. A deep recession turned a large section of the population against the PT government (aided by a right-wing coup with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff, who succeeded Lula).

When Lula was convicted and jailed on manufactured charges, and barred from running for president, the path was opened for Bolsonaro's fake populism, with his calls for “order” threatening fascism. The coming months will tell whether that will come to pass or whether the masses will mount a crucial resistance. —Eugene Walker

and support.”

With the declining political fortunes of German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron, the EU establishment in Brussels has begun to reach out to the Far Right.

The European People's Party has named Manfred Weber (of Bavaria's right-wing Christian Social Union) as its candidate to replace Jean-Claude Juncker as President of the European Commission. Weber's name was entered only after consultation with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, a key leader of the Far Right.

### THE BOSS OF ALL BOSSES

It is a strategic choice. If the Far Right makes the kind of gains it expects in next year's European Parliament elections, Brussels will be able to find accommodation with it.

None of these bourgeois politicians and rulers are their own bosses. They are compelled to follow the objective pull of capitalism's laws of development.

In Syria, in Yemen, we see the future of humanity if the logic of capitalism is followed to its conclusion.

## Yemen peace talks

New peace talks are planned in Sweden in December in an effort to end the genocidal war waged by the Saudi-led coalition and the Iran-allied Houthis that has devastated Yemen. Yemeni civil society organizations have released a statement that should become the basis for negotiations. It calls for:

**An end to impunity for violations against civilians.**

**All governments to cease arms sales and military support to combatants.**

**Open all ports and end the siege of cities. Respect humanitarian law and human rights.**

**Halt the country's economic collapse.**

**Release all detainees, including journalists, religious minorities, and politicians.**

**Halt the use of land mines.**

**Provide needed food, fuel and medicines.**

As the statement so clearly illustrates: “Yemenis have paid a heavy price for this war. The war has made life a more difficult choice than death.”

## Murder in Venezuela

Just days after the Saudi regime murdered Jamal Khashoggi, the Venezuelan regime of Nicolas Maduro murdered its own critic, Fernando Alban Salazar, in equally horrific fashion.

Alban, who lived in New York with his family, was seized by the regime's Bolivarian National Intelligence Service at the airport in Caracas and thrown from a tenth story window of secret police headquarters on Oct. 8. As the Saudis did with Khashoggi, the authorities lied, in this case claiming Alban committed suicide while in custody.

Hundreds of protesters marched in Caracas with signs saying “We will not give up!” Opposition and foreign politicians have demanded an investigation and justice for Alban.

Prosecutor General Tarek William Saab, who was once a poet, appeared on television to accuse his regime's victim of “necrophilia” and “irreligion.” Thus does oppression degrade its practitioners.

## NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

# Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Send for a free copy of the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees or see it on our website: [www.newsandletters.org](http://www.newsandletters.org).