

NEWS & LETTERS

“Human power is its own end”—Karl Marx

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Rulers say to the world: ‘Burn in hell!’

The Sept. 24 climate strike in 1,500 places around the world, called by Fridays for Future with the slogan #UprootTheSystem, was soon followed by many more actions. From the occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington, D.C., to a celebration on Madeline

EDITORIAL

Island in Wisconsin of water protector victories fighting Line 3, from activists shutting down Line 5 in Tuscola

County, Mich., to numerous protests in the lead-up to the UN’s COP26 Oct. 31-Nov. 12 climate conference, all expressed the gravity of the climate emergency. They manifested how increasingly radical young climate activists are becoming in the face of a flaring crisis combined with minimal and retrograde actions by the system’s political and business institutions. Capitalism’s legitimacy has crumbled, while pointing to the need for drastic and rapid social transformation has become the norm.

COP26: NO VOICE FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

A number of groups and activists who deal with environmental justice called for COP26 to be delayed because delegates and observers from many countries could not get COVID-19 vaccinations and could not afford the jacked-up lodging prices in Glasgow, Scotland, including mandatory quarantine. Therefore, the voices of most climate-vulnerable countries and especially movement activists are muted. The UK government, as host, refused to postpone, joined by John Kerry and the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF), an organization of 48 national governments from Africa, Asia, Latin America and island nations, who said the climate crisis is so urgent that the negotiations cannot wait.

Those calling for postponement include **Indigenous and environmental justice organizations** and **continued on p. 8**

THOUGHTS FROM THE OUTSIDE

Whitewashing history

by Faruq

The opposition to “critical race theory” is an old idea in new clothes, whitewashing U.S. history based on a mythical past. A Trumpist “great America” never existed. Every aspect of building America was done with immense human sacrifice. The Brooklyn Bridge is an engineering wonder. But building it cost untold numbers of lives, most of them new immigrants.

HISTORY MEANS SEEING SLAVERY’S HORRORS

Republicans in Virginia may have won the governor’s race by attacking the teaching of Toni Morrison’s book *Beloved* in schools. The parents of one of the white students claimed that its portrayal of the brutality of slavery gave him nightmares. Republican activists objected to the school teaching such texts. Their cry is “parents’ rights,” which includes a number of issues: from opposing vaccines and masks and bathroom usage by gender non-conforming students, to attacks on “critical race theory,” which is not even taught in Virginia’s public schools.

Why is it so hard for some people to admit that horrible wrongs were committed in the past? The boy’s parents think of themselves as decent people only trying to protect their son. Yet if *Beloved* is so horrifying for him, why is that? Some say that for a white man to admit a fault contradicts his identity, based on “white” is good.

Yet these “good” people engaged in a slaughter of hundreds of thousands in the U.S. Civil War over the issue of owning people of another color. They object to teaching *Beloved* because it forces them look at the horrors of slavery perpetrated by people who look like them and their son.

They are forfeiting their ability to think, to deal with **continued on p. 8**

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Workers, from union to gig, reject rules that bosses try to reimpose

by Bob McGuire and Buddy Bell

Workers in the U.S. have made 2021 a year that ought to panic giant corporations and small store owners alike. The wave of strikes and other job actions this fall have exploded and not just in numbers. They have broadened to include coal miners and heavy production workers at John Deere and workers in numerous industries drafted to serve on the front lines of the pandemic like truck drivers and packaging workers, including at Amazon, medical workers like those at Kaiser, and food workers including at Nabisco and Kellogg’s.

WORKERS SAY ‘NO!’ TO LOW WAGES, LONG HOURS

Unorganized retail clerks and restaurant workers who suffered either layoffs or longer hours while dealing with potential COVID-19 spreaders for nearly two years have been voting with their feet against the reimposition of pre-pandemic wages and job conditions. At Dollar General, workers have also resumed unionization efforts.

The breadth of this strike wave bears comparison to the sit-down strikes of the late 1930s, when workers in auto, meatpacking and dozens of other industries were joined by restaurant and dime store workers to form industrial unions. Their ability to hold their ground—occupying their workplaces in the face of corporate private armies, police and National Guard—created the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations).

The efforts of those strikers eventually moved union membership in non-government jobs from 13% in 1935 to 33% in 1953. But this month’s wave of strikes has spread despite current union membership having plummeted to just 6.3% of the private work force. Workers intent on recovering what companies stole from them during pandemic conditions are confronting bosses determined to extract even more value from their labor.

The pandemic depression amplified the tendency toward the decline in the rate of profit that has prompted capitalists to offshoring jobs and unionbusting to squeeze

from workers themselves the capital for expansion of capital and the survival of the system itself. Capitalism must expand to survive, even with massive corporate profits, reflected in record valuations on Wall Street.

‘LAZY WORKERS’

Corporations that take full advantage of supply and demand when unemployment is high cry foul when workers take advantage of labor shortages. We have heard from bosses for months that “Nobody wants to work anymore.” To begin with, they can’t persuade the 150,000 in the 18-64 working age population who have died of COVID-19 to return to their jobs.

Donald Trump last year demanded that meatpacking plants face no liability for the death of workers on the line, even if they had no protective equipment. The result: U.S. counties with a packing plant processing beef, pork, or chicken had a death rate

from COVID-19 as high as four times that of adjoining counties with no such death-dealing center, and both COVID-19 cases and deaths have just been revealed to be at least triple the figures the five large companies had reported. Joe Biden’s USDA Secretary Vilsack—who, in the same office under Barack Obama, never met a slaughter line speedup he didn’t like—has made no effort to rescind the Trump-era rule.

Emergency federal unemployment checks, which were issued more to stimulate the economy in a pandemic depression than to enable jobless workers to survive, were seen by bosses as discouraging workers from taking low-wage jobs that in the past the bosses had been able to fill. The obvious capitalist solution in states like Texas, Missouri and Tennessee was to end the flow of those emergency checks, even though they represented no cost to the state budgets, to force “lazy” workers back into harness.

Their clever plot to force unemployed workers back at bayonet point had been tried before. In one case, as long ago as the 14th Century, the Black Death had killed almost half the serfs and poor townspeople while the

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Kellogg’s picketers on Oct. 9, 2021, at Lancaster, Penn., Kellogg’s Plant. They are with BCTGM Local 374.

A call for solidarity from Sudan

Democratic United Front: A call for solidarity!

There is no alternative but to continue the struggle, bring the downfall of the coup, mobilize our masses and achieve the complete demands and aspirations of the December revolution.

“The coup of parasitic capitalism was instigated by the warlord, Hemeti, and Burhan, the Al-Bashir Security apparatus, and the rest of the warlords who traffic in the suffering of their people, and the political brokers who come in every colour and shape.”

We ask the working class worldwide to stand in solidarity with the people of Sudan.

Today in 2021, the great Sudanese people are waging their bright, hard and blood-stained struggle against a military coup. There is no alternative but to overthrow and uproot all the forces that oppose democratic transformation, and who, serving the interests of parasitic capitalism and its international and regional masters, must be held accountable for all their crimes, for their corruption, and their deep-rooted hostility to our people’s yearning for freedom, justice and peace.

We, the Sudanese Workers Alliance for the Restoration of Trade Unions, call upon our members, female and male workers, craftswomen/men, wage workers, producers and toilers in the countryside and cities to engage in a protracted struggle against this very evident, undeniable coup, we call upon them to engage in civil disobedience and a general strike until the downfall of the counterrevolution.

We must do so with the vigilance and caution that is necessary to resist all bargains or deals that run contrary to the demands of the revolution.

We must unreservedly avoid compromises, like the agreement signed on Aug. 17, 2019, which forced the December 2018 revolution into an impasse, and prevented all of its glorious goals from coming into fruition. We urge the people to build an independent democratic union bloc that derives its legitimacy from work and which will be committed to the adherence of its own espoused principles. We are also making it clear that the Sudanese Workers Alliance for the Restoration of Trade Unions is fully committed to doing its utmost best to coordinate, network and deliver all required information that needs to be disseminated for this democratic bloc on our social media pages.

The power of the coup is the power of parasitic capitalism. It is inherently hostile to the common interests of male and female workers and all of the classes of wage earners; it is necessarily hostile to our people and their right to a dignified life. Parasitic capitalism contradicts the just demand of the Sudanese people for sovereignty over our country’s wealth and resources. There is no alternative but the protracted struggle for the downfall of the coup, the liquidation of its compromised institutions and agencies and the repealing of all of its regional and international alliances.

Our message to the honourable non-
continued on p. 3

Violence against women on the rise

by Terry Moon

WOMAN AS REASON

♀ In London on Sept. 17, Sabina Nessa, a school teacher, was murdered as she was walking home, six months after Sarah Everard was kidnapped, raped and murdered by a London cop. Despite the huge outcry after

Everard's death, [80 women were killed](#) in the UK in the six months between Everard and Nessa's murders—[108 women killed so far this year](#).

♀ On Oct. 13, World Champion Kenyan long-distance runner [Agnes Jebet Tirop](#) was stabbed to death by her husband. She was 25. In a huge underestimation, [government data](#) shows that 45% of women in Kenya between the ages of 15 and 49 report having “experienced physical violence,” mostly from a man they lived with. Kenyan Columnist Abigail Arunga complained about media coverage which blames [women for their own deaths](#), saying: “We don't die because we walked in a dark alley. We die because a man killed us.”

♀ [The New York Times](#) tells us: “In Guatemala, the homicide rate for women is more than three times the global average. In El Salvador, it is nearly six times. In Honduras, it is one of the highest in the world—almost 12 times the global average.”

♀ Women in Mexico, who invented the word “femicide,” are experiencing ten murders a day while President Andrés Manuel López Obrador considers feminists' efforts to fight this slaughter a political attack against him.

♀ And in the U.S. [five women a day are murdered](#) by men who supposedly loved them, with Black women murdered at three times the rate of white.

WHY ARE MORE WOMEN BEING MURDERED?

How can it be after over 50 years of a Women's Liberation Movement that unthinkable numbers of women continue to be brutally raped and murdered worldwide—with the COVID-19 pandemic spiking that number even higher? It isn't as if women's struggles against violence haven't changed the world, even if they haven't stopped the violence. As Raya Dunayevskaya put it in writing of

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In September, a leak from Facebook revealed it had kept secret its findings that its Instagram app worsens body image issues for one in three teenage girls. Facebook downplayed the findings, which echo those of numerous other studies, that social media, especially Instagram, has negative impacts on young people's mental health. 5Rights Foundation campaigns for changes to digital media on behalf of children and youth, stating, “In pursuit of profit, these companies are stealing children's time, self-esteem and mental health, and sometimes tragically their lives.” A study by neurologists reports the app TikTok is implicated in a social contagion, especially affecting young women, of Tourette Syndrome with very real neurological damages.

* * *

After years of work by feminists, the Mexican Supreme Court unanimously ruled in September that criminalizing abortion is unconstitutional. This does not automatically legalize abortion, and pending cases must still be heard at the local level. Several states in Mexico still have laws restricting abortion, but the ruling should mean women imprisoned for it may be freed. Adopting Argentine feminists' symbol of the green bandana, they hope the “Green Wave” of women's rights success will continue to have a ripple effect throughout Latin America.

* * *

FiLiA, meaning “daughter”—an international, UK-based “women-led volunteer organization and part of the Women's Liberation Movement”—stated, “our vision is a world free from patriarchy where all women and girls are liberated.” In October, in Portsmouth, UK, FiLiA held its seventh FiLiA2021, “The largest annual grassroots in-person feminist conference in Europe” with 1,000 attendees. The 100 speakers were from many countries including India, Afghanistan, Rojava, Palestine, Zimbabwe, Australia and Ireland. Topics included violence against women, prostitution, women's sex-based rights, persecution of lesbians, reproductive justice, classism, environmentalism, and feminist activism, history, and art.

* * *

In October, women across Britain boycotted bars and clubs for a week, holding huge demonstrations in over 40 towns and cities. Female students led this Night In protest demanding better training for staff to protect women from rapists. In the past two months there have been 198 reports of predators spiking drinks with drugs and 56 reports of the newer epidemic of “needle spiking,” injecting someone with drugs. Sarah Buckle, a drugging survivor, stated, “We want to show solidarity with each other.”

“The New Voices” of today's movement:¹ “Our bodies have heads, and they, too, belong to us and us alone. And while we are reclaiming our bodies and our heads, we will also reclaim the night. No one except ourselves, as women, will get our freedom.”

With those heads, women did something new. We proclaimed that rape and violence aren't alone an individual experience. No! Women live within a “rape culture” that is worldwide and that is what must be destroyed. Furthermore, women are demanding that the world acknowledge what Abigail Arunga expressed: “We die because a man killed us.” The Chilean group Las Tesis put it most succinctly in 2019 with their song that went global, “A Rapist in Your Path”: “And it's not my fault, not where I was, not how I dressed. It's the cops, It's the judges, It's the system, It's the president. The rapist is you!”

What else women have established is what is *not* the solution: more laws against rape or more draconian jail sentences or even death sentences for rapists. There are a plethora of laws in many countries, including the U.S. and India, but they have not stopped the deaths and abuse because sexist culture permeates the police and the courts—just look at the scandal in the U.S. over thousands of unprocessed and discarded rape kits. All this new has been established over 50 years of women's struggles and yet not only has little changed, but women's lives are getting worse.

THE NEED TO BE COMPREHENDED AS HUMAN

Women are coming to the same conclusion that those fighting against racism and against the destruction of the planet from global warming have: The society we have now is unsustainable, rotten to the core, and must be transformed. What seems to be lacking is the confidence that we are capable of creating a new, different society.

What can help us gain that needed confidence is to understand the meaning of our own actions and thoughts which is the role of a philosophy of human liberation. When Black women demand that we: “Say her name,” they are not only acknowledging that another Black woman has been murdered by police, but as well that women must be comprehended as human. That is what we are fighting for: a totally different society based on new human relationships. It is way past time to begin.

1. See *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, by Raya Dunayevskaya, p. 100.

Women of color brought R. Kelly to justice

Last month superstar rapper R. Kelly was convicted of nine counts of racketeering in a New York federal court. Acknowledged as an artistic genius, a prime influencer of hip-hop for his three-decades-long career, Kelly had been acquitted in a 2008 trial for crimes of sexual abuse and exploitation of underage girls and boys. His support network for his “criminal enterprise” finally enabled the racketeering charges to stick. But ultimately Black women, most notably Dream Hampton, executive producer for the 2019 Lifetime TV series “Surviving R. Kelly,” the #MeToo movement and Black Lives Matter brought him down.

WOMEN IGNORED, RAPES CONTINUED

Attempts to prosecute R. Kelly began in 1991 when the Chicago Police Department ignored rape charges brought by a Black teenager, Tiffany Hawkins. A 2002 viral video resulted in the 2008 trial.

In a recent interview on Detroit Public Radio, Hampton pointed out “He actually had a more sophisticated operation after being acquitted. He never decided to seek help for himself, as an abuser and a victim of abuse. He was hyper aware of what he was doing...He paid off the 14-year-old's parents and kept her close to him.”

Hampton made her documentary in 2019 “because the community did not hold him accountable. Those girls and fans who gave him money at his live performances were contributing to a criminal enterprise... His currency was not just money. The Black community supported him financially and gave him love. If you love R. Kelly, point him to healing. Himself and others. None of those girls have had a day of therapy, because therapy takes resources.”

Hampton's documentary, unlike other documentaries about Kelly and similar abusers Woody Allen and Harvey Weinstein, bore witness to the “life sentences” of his victims. Hampton insists on the complexities and broader context beyond the individual abuser and abused. “This is a cultural conversation. I'm never going to apologize for standing up for Black girls in my community. Grooming girls to be your slave is global—I learned it from Genesis. It's about control. This is not unique to our community. But I made this about my community.”

—Susan Van Gelder

Review: *Reproductive Rights as Human Rights*

by Adele

In *Reproductive Rights as Human Rights: Women of Color and the Fight for Reproductive Justice*, Zakiya Luna discusses how SisterSong, the reproductive justice organization, was based and operates on the concept of human rights. Founded in 1997 from a coalition of 16 organizations, it is led by women of color, focusing on their reproductive rights. These include the need for safe and legal abortion and contraception but many other rights as well.

A few are the right to and education about health-care, freedom from violence and environmental toxins and the right of incarcerated women to not be shackled while giving birth. SisterSong coined the term “reproductive justice” to mean the right to have a child, to not have one, and to parent children in safe, healthy environments (see [“Trust Black Women in Solidarity with Black Lives Matter”](#), *N&L*, March-April 2016).

RIGHTS AND THE OPPRESSIVE STATE

Reproductive justice combines the terms “reproductive rights” and “social justice.” SisterSong also uses the term “civil rights,” and Luna explains how “human rights” contains all of these. She states the UN was formed and developed the concept of human rights in response to the Holocaust. Hoping to prevent future atrocities by governments on people, both citizens and noncitizens, the UN stated all people have certain rights just by virtue of being human. These include the rights to thrive and express one's full humanity, having it respected and celebrated.

SisterSong opposes what Luna calls the “restrictive domestication” of human rights by the U.S. government. The U.S. claims “exceptionalism” in being a country that recognizes human rights. It justifies economic exploitation and military intrusion into other countries in the name of liberating them from invaders or their own supposed backwardness by teaching them about human rights. At the same time, it justifies denial of human rights to its own citizens by claiming they already have them. While activists must call upon the state to change laws and policies, the state is also the oppressor.

SisterSong engages in “revolutionary domestication” of human rights, “demanding that the United States be held accountable to the same human rights standards that are recognized around the world.” It also points out that the U.S. has refused to sign international women's rights treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women because, unlike other countries, it objects to reproductive rights language. SisterSong also recognizes human rights as “a relational practice” among people. Part of its mission is to educate U.S. citizens about their own human rights, as they often are only aware of the concept as it relates to other countries. SisterSong's human rights focus has brought more activist groups, such as the NAACP, into supporting reproductive rights by explaining how rights are interrelated.

OUR LIBERATIONS ARE BOUND UP TOGETHER

Reproductive justice includes discussion of how a denial of rights affects communities, countries and the world as well as individual women. An article by SisterSong states, “There is a dialectical relationship between what happens to women of color in other countries and what is visited upon women of color in the United States: all of our human rights are restricted by a white supremacist structure that de-prioritizes our needs while exploiting our bodies for the reproduction and maintenance of the economic system.”

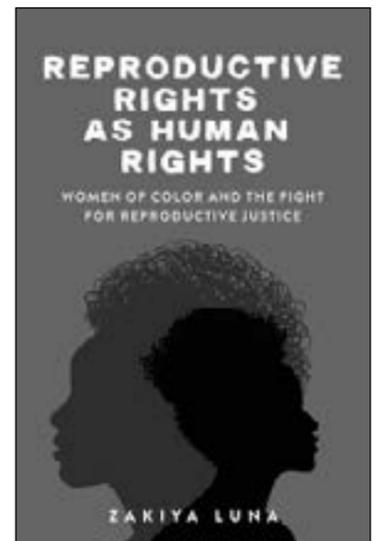
Luna quotes Australian Aboriginal activist Lilla Watson, “If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time. But, if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

Luna discusses increasing globalization, not as the globalization of capital, but as the interaction of people. This book is a valuable beginning of a conversation about the role of the concept of human rights in activist organizations and in creating a more just and humane world.

Share your experiences of struggle and learn about others' in *News & Letters*. See page 7 for how to subscribe, or go to [newsandletters.org](#)



Terry Moon for News & Letters
Demonstrating against rape at Chicago Slut Walk in 2012.



Squid Game: capitalism's essence

Brutal. Mindless. Merciless. These are some of the words I would use to describe the popular Netflix series *Squid Game*. Writer and director Hwang Dong-hyuk created a magnificent metaphor for the consequences of capitalism. This director's in-your-face horror captures what so many marginalized people experience. Interestingly, movie studios rejected this series 10 years earlier, claiming it wouldn't be popular. The thought that it would be too violent was considered enough reason to reject it.

INEQUALITY IS THE PREMISE

Although set in South Korea, the proliferation of marginalized people around the world means this series should resonate in any country with a wide degree of inequality. Because most of us are mired in debt, we can identify with the choice of the protagonist, Seong Gi-jun, to play these deadly games.

Gi-jun, played by Lee Jung-jae, is preyed upon by one of the many scouts who easily identify those who are down and out. Gi-jun is a gambling addict, as well as a divorced father with limited job prospects, who enters the contest to win millions.

At first he turns down the games, but when he faces thugs who are after him for gambling debts, unfortunately he reenters the game. Gi-jun faces a bleak future, and symbolizes the plight of the poor under modern capitalism. We get to know several main characters, all under duress, and sympathize with the plight of the players who have to face this ugly side of themselves.

One of the first games played is "Red Light, Green Light," a game many of us know and associate with innocence. Using this game is in stark contrast to what actually happens, since the game is played gladiator style. Perhaps the game was chosen as a backdrop for this horror, to highlight how we accept the ugliness in our lives as if it's the only way to live. This is the ultimate irony, using childhood games in this horrific sense.

Foul tap water in Benton Harbor

Benton Harbor, Mich.—Benton Harbor is a city of approximately 10,000 people, 85% of whom are African-American, near the southwest corner of Michigan on the shore of Lake Michigan. In 2018, tap water samples showed lead levels of 22 parts per billion. The federal lead action level is 15 parts per billion.

The water in Flint, Mich., had lead levels of 20 parts per billion at the height of the water crisis there. Samples from Benton Harbor have had lead levels as high as 889 parts per billion! Rev. Edward Pinkney, who leads the Benton Harbor Community Water Council, said that, before the testing in 2018, residents had complained of yellow and foul water from their taps.

On Sept. 9, 2021, a coalition of 20 environmental and advocacy organizations filed a petition with the federal Environmental Protection Agency urging federal intervention. Benton Harbor has obtained a \$5.9 million EPA grant for lead line replacement and a corrosion control study. Governor Whitmer is proposing spending \$20 million to replace lead pipes in Benton Harbor. —Dan B.

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

The Human Rights Campaign and LGBTQ+ advocacy group La Sombrilla Cuir agree that Trans people in Puerto Rico are ignored in the U.S. territory. Even though LGBTQ+ people are covered by the same laws that protect Queer people in all 50 states, six Trans people of color were murdered in 2020. Puerto Rican society and police harass, misgender and assault Trans people. Police command acknowledges that they are not concerned about officers who assault Trans people. Government entities do not keep statistics on violence against Trans people. Few murders of Trans people have led to indictments, others do not get investigated or drag on indefinitely.

* * *

Rainbow Coalition, a protector of Trans children in Canada's unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory, organized a counter-protest against anti-Trans activist Chris Elston outside two public schools in Ottawa, Ontario. Elston is travelling across Canada denying that Trans children exist, saying that healthcare for Trans children should be banned, and that gender identity should not be taught in schools. Counter-protesters carried signs saying, "Trans Youth Matter," "Trans Healthcare is a Human Right," and "Protect Trans Kids."

* * *

Students and teachers at Chicago's Benet Academy protested the firing of soccer coach Amanda Kammes because she is married to a woman. Many students walked out of class wearing Rainbow Pride facemasks, about 3,000 alumni and other supporters of Kammes signed a letter of protest, and many parents threatened to move their children to other schools. Benet Academy then decided to hire Kammes as a lacrosse coach. The abbot overseeing the parochial school then raged against the school's decision.



Squid Game-themed protest at COP26 in Glasgow, Nov. 3, 2021.

The popularity of *Squid Game* is a sign that people are realizing the starkness of their situation under our current economic system. *Psychology Today* pointed out that *Squid Game* "is on course to be Netflix's biggest show ever," even though "it had virtually no serious promotion or ad campaign." I came to the conclusion that *Squid Game* struck a nerve with the 99%.

One of the reasons for this popularity surely has to do with the fact this is a superb work of art. I was blown away by how well Hwang captures the bleak and ugly aspects of violence and the complete and utter desolation that so many face under this economic system. They would rather risk death than live lives of such desperation.

LIVING UNDER ECONOMIC PRECARIETY

This gladiator-style game where winner takes all points to the real-life desperation of farmers in India, America's horrifically high number of suicides, and extremely high levels of drug overdoses termed "deaths of despair." I could cite horrific fact after fact and not do justice to how much the world suffers. Isn't it time to say: There must be a better way to live?

Although there are many reasons for the popularity of *Squid Game*, including its genius at dialogue, setting, filming, and acting, it may also represent a turning point in confronting our current system. When so many viewers are able to withstand the blood, gore, violence, and hopelessness and stay with a nine-episode series, it has to say something about what we think about the world.

To make a stark comparison to real life as this director has done is brilliant. My hope is that this series gets us talking about the actual ugly system we live under that sees the second highest cause of death for U.S. teenagers is suicide; that our world is so ugly, young people choose to kill themselves rather than live in it. This series' popularity is driven by our realization that we live in a modified version of this game. —Diana Sabina

Solidarity with Sudan!

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commissioned officers, the rank and file of the armed forces, the officers in the armed forces, the police, and the armed movements, is that they abide by their duty to protect their people and align themselves with the cause of the democratic transition. They should not point their guns at the bare chests of the daughters and sons of Sudan, who stand proud with determination and the yearning for freedom, justice and peace.



Sign held by girls at one of the many demonstrations in Sudan reads: "The people are stronger. Retreat is impossible."

We must be clear. This disastrous coup will only serve the same social classes, and the regional and international interests that the Bashir regime always sought to protect, and who in turn stayed quiet in the face of their corruption, actions and crimes throughout dictatorial rule.

We will succeed.

Our people are stronger than murderers and saboteurs, we have accumulated legacies of resistance responsible for bringing down many dictatorships who thought they had succeeded in breaking the Sudanese people's resolve. The victory of our revolution is certain, regardless of the brutality of the counter-revolutionaries and the thirst for blood among vampiric putschists.

* *Glory to the people of Sudan and to the martyrs of the Sudanese revolution of all eras.*

* *Long live the struggle of the Sudanese working class, of all Sudanese workers.*

* *Glory to the bloc of the hungry.*

—The Sudanese Workers Alliance for the Restoration of Trade Unions

U.S.-Mexico collusion against immigrants

by Eugene Walker

Mexico—Once again a migrant caravan—primarily Central Americans and Haitians—is proceeding from southern Mexico towards Mexico City, with hopes of reaching the U.S. Their chance of success rests on their size (several thousand strong) and determination to walk hundreds of miles in the face of Mexican government hostility, including National Guard soldiers who have attacked caravans near Mexico's southern border. While Mexico has historically been a safe haven for exiles, that has recently changed dramatically.

COLLUSION TO STOP IMMIGRANTS

Today there is collusion between Mexico and the U.S. to severely limit the rights of immigrants to seek asylum either in Mexico or the U.S. Mexico has acquiesced to the U.S.'s "stay in Mexico" policy whereby asylum seekers arriving at the U.S. border are forced to stay in Mexico for months while awaiting hearings in the U.S.

The conditions in Tijuana and other border areas are dangerous, with inhospitable living conditions and little possibility of work. Everything is designed to discourage the immigrants from continuing their stay.

The U.S. has been deporting immigrants by flying them to southern Mexico, where the Mexican National Guard forcibly expels them across the Guatemalan border without any arrangements for safety or survival. The National Guard, originally formed to fight narco-traffickers in Mexico, has primarily been put on the southern border in Chiapas to prevent refugees from Central and South America from crossing into Mexico on the way towards the U.S. The Guard is doing the bidding of the U.S. in its war against asylum seekers.

INJUSTICE FOR HAITIANS

Thousands of Haitians left Haiti after the 2010 massive earthquake to find a place to live and work in Brazil and Chile. Now economic hard times plus the pandemic have meant a loss of jobs and discrimination, forcing them to migrate thousands of miles, including across the difficult jungle of the Darién Gap, to reach Mexico and the U.S. Mexico is making it extremely difficult for Haitians to obtain visas to remain in Mexico.

The head of the Mexican Refugee Aid Commission reported recently that 6,000 Haitians made up 85% of migrants seeking asylum in the first two weeks of October. Amnesty International called on Mexico to stop deportations of Haitian migrants at the southern border, noting that Mexico accepted less than half of asylum applications by Haitians in 2020 and 2021, compared to more than 95% for Venezuelans and around 85% for Hondurans.

Are Mexico and the U.S. going to continue the racist practices that Haitians have faced ever since their great slave rebellion at the end of the 18th Century?

DROUGHT, HURRICANES, REPRESSION

There is a full-blown emergency in Latin America stemming from the dual crises of climate chaos and the COVID-19 pandemic. A moving report in *The Guardian* documents the devastation that thousands of Guatemalans are living through following years of drought and destructive hurricanes Eta and Iota, which decimated Indigenous communities.

No wonder Guatemalans, together with Hondurans, El Salvadorans and other Central Americans, seek survival by leaving their home countries. Human rights organizations denounced the National Migration Institute and the National Guard for "violently" repressing the migrant caravans that travel through Mexico to the U.S. and for arbitrarily separating, detaining and deporting families, mainly Central Americans.

The organizations pointed out that violence against migrants intensified in the last three years with the massive departure of people from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Haiti to the U.S. They specified that there are migrants who have been in Tapachula, Chiapas, for more than a year "without job opportunities, or access to healthcare or education."

Special offer for
Crossroads of History: Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East
by Raya Dunayevskaya



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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: Today's militant labor insurgency demands solidarity in both activity and thought. (See "Workers, from union to gig, reject rules that bosses try to reimpose," p. 1.) Questions raised by the actions and words of the workers themselves demanded a philosophical response. Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. began with taking seriously what workers have raised since the onset of automation in the coal mines: What kind of labor should a human being do? Today's Amazon warehouses and gig economy show how much automation has developed since then, with extremes of speedup, surveillance and control over human beings. To address this, we present here about one-fourth of Chapter 16, "Automation and the New Humanism," from the book *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today*, lightly edited.

1) Different Attitudes to Automation

1950 opened a new era in production....The fact of Automation...brought about the longest strike in the mine workers' history since the creation of the CIO....The miners were determined that no one would do their thinking for them. They kept their thoughts to themselves, but they showed their concern was not with the union treasury nor solely with the threat of unemployment. They were concerned with something new: something they called "a man-killer"—the continuous miner. The automatic miner was frightening in an entirely new way. The miners were concerned not just with the old grievances and hazards. This Automation was recognized as a "man-killer" in a total way....

One miner told this writer: "There is a time for praying. We do that on Sundays. There is a time for acting. We took matters in our hands during the Depression, building up our union and seeing that our families did not starve. There is a time for thinking. The time is now. What I want to know is: how and when will the working man and woman—all working people—have such confidence in their own abilities to make a better world that they will not let others do their thinking for them."

That miner felt that the union wasn't much better than the company nowadays. The reason for this is that the rank and file had let "others"—the leadership—do their thinking and write their contracts for them. What was the point of talking about "progress" when the new machine was making a havoc of your life both on the job and off of it? This miner pointed out that the change the worker had brought through his activity, had somehow turned into its opposite. The miners would elect someone to represent them in negotiations with management. Then the first thing anyone knew was that their representative became a labor bureaucrat who turned up in the District Office, not to fight with the workers against the company but to order the workers to produce more. This miner wanted to know: what made the miners stick together in 1943 and tell the Senators that if they were so interested in production, they could dig the coal themselves, yet no one tells the same thing to the labor leadership today. "The working person has a mind of their own," concluded the miner, "so why let others do their thinking for them? If only there was no division between thinking and doing"....

2) Workers Think Their Own Thoughts

What is new in Automation is the maturity of our age in which the totality of the crisis compels philosophy, compels a total outlook.

The struggle for the minds of humanity, when the tendency toward complete mechanization has reached its most acute point in Automation, cannot be won in any other way. The new impulse comes, and can come, only from the workers.

Contrast to the chimera of the scientist who writes of "Man Viewed as Machine," the sanity of the production worker who writes that work will have to be "something totally different":

"When the women at work talked about how some day they were going to do wiring automatically, I didn't really understand the word 'Automation.' I responded to what my friend said, 'What would happen to us?' She said they would probably have to give us jobs on the machines. It was all very hazy though. Now, the word is all over the place. And it holds both fascination and fear. I saw on TV an 'automated' auto engine factory, they made one engine in fifteen minutes where it used to take nine hours. The magazine, *Saturday Review*, had a special issue on Automation. It had seven or eight different writers, some from business and one from the UAW-CIO. What gets me is how the clearest one was the industrialist. The others seemed scared to say much about what it will do to people. He doesn't care. He just says exactly what he thinks.

"There is one little paragraph of his I can't get out of my mind, '... another highly desirable feature of Automation in relation to labor, is the fact that machines are easier to control than people (and this is a blessing in our democratic society).' I can't tell exactly what I get from it. It's like this is it, the point of no return. He doesn't give a darn what happens to these people he talks about. And maybe I don't really understand but I think he would like to do away with one thing in this society and that is 'democracy.'

Automation and the New Humanism

"There is something else, more time. You know, that scares me more than anything else. If I get more leisure time under this society I think I would go crazy. This is very silly because I have always wanted the shorter work day. They don't bother much about what happens to people, not just people, but the unskilled worker. They are a little scared. Not scared of what happens to the workers, but I think scared of what the workers will do to them. I can't help thinking over and over that this is it. They have thrown so many workers into the streets with their old production methods, and now Automation. Even if the union gets the shorter week and annual wage, what happens to all the workers all over the country that are not working now? There are some things about Automation that are terrific but the capitalists and the unions can't do any good with them. We say men and women are able to work, to produce, to work with, alongside, other workers. This is life to us. Now what happens under Automation? I don't see us working. Do the energies go toward something else? But what? This and the leisure time is connected somewhere, though I don't exactly know where.

"People like to work, to build something, but today work is so separate from everything else in your life. Each day is divided: you work, then you have some time in which to rest, forget about work, escape from it. What will it be with Automation? There is less work for us (as I think of work today) but there is more time. I am scared of more time the way things are now because more time for the worker might be seven days a week with no paycheck at the end of the week.

"I used to be told that the fight for more leisure time was so that the individual could have more time for art, music, literature, for study in general. That doesn't satisfy me any longer.

"Under a new society work will have to be something completely new, not just work to get money to buy food and things. It will have to be completely tied up with life."

Just as, from the first Industrial Revolution, the workers in the factory gained the impulse for the struggles for the shortening of the working day, and thus created a new philosophy, so from the workers' experience with Automation comes a new Humanism.

OPPOSITION TO AUTOMATION OPENS NEW DOORS

The beginning of the end of state capitalism has, of necessity, begun behind the Iron Curtain. Men and women everywhere breathed freer when those under Russian totalitarian domination answered affirmatively the question that seems to preoccupy the contemporary world: Can humanity wrest freedom from the stranglehold of the One-Party State?

The fundamental problem of true freedom, however, remains: What type of labor can end the division between "thinkers" and "doers"? This is the innermost core of Marxism. The transformation of totalitarian society, on totally new beginnings, can have no other foundation than a new material life, a new kind of labor for the producer, the worker.

This basic question was posed first, not behind the Iron Curtain, but on this side of it. It arose out of the new stage of production called Automation. It was posed first by the miners, who, with the introduction of the continuous miner, began to question not only the fruits of labor—wages—but the kind of labor. As one young worker put it when he was told that the union would now fight for a shorter work week, "The four-day week wouldn't make much difference. We are liable to wind up working the same hours as now and get overtime pay for all work over thirty-five hours. What has to be different is the way we have to work. Coming in every day and working under company discipline, afraid to stay out, is no way. Russia can't be much different. If you think about it the only reason this way of life seems to make sense is that this is the way people are used to living."

"Work that would be completely tied up with life," and "doing that would not be separated from thinking," "a new unity of theory and practice, unified in the worker himself," are in the full tradition of Marx's concept of work as human activity that develops all of humanities' natural and acquired talents. Thus, the workers, the American workers, made concrete and thereby extended Marx's most abstract theories of alienated labor and the quest for universality.

Marx was right when he said the workers were the true inheritors of Hegelian philosophy. In truth, while the intellectual void today is so great that the movement from theory to practice has nearly come to a standstill,

the movement from practice to theory, and with it, a new unity of manual and mental labor in the worker, are in evidence everywhere.

3) Toward a New Unity of Theory and Practice in the Abolitionist and Marxist Tradition

...Where the workers begin with the questions—What happens after the conquest of power? Are we always to be confronted with a new labor bureaucracy which is to end in the One-Party State?—the "vanguard" has nothing to say but, "First do this and follow me." The capitalist ideologist is as good at giving commands: "Look at the new wonders of Automation, and follow me." Everyone is ready to lead; no one to listen.

Intellectual sloth just accumulates and accumulates to the point where the self-complacent "scientific individual" is permitted to write, with impunity and unthinkingly, of "Man Viewed as Machine." Evidently no human passion nowadays is beyond a mathematical formula that can forthwith be made practicable in "a buildable machine."

What they all forget is that a new society is THE human endeavor, or it is nothing. It cannot be brought in behind the backs of the people, neither by the "vanguard" nor by the "scientific individuals." The working people will build it, or it will not be built. There is a crying need for a new unity of theory and practice which begins with where the working people are—their thoughts, their struggles, their aspirations.

This is not intellectual abdication. Intellectual abdication took place during the long Depression because intellectuals had no philosophy or method of thought, and just drifted into the camp of the fellow travelers or outright followers of "the

Party line." Intellectual abdication reappeared when McCarthyism so panicked them that they willingly, and without the duress of Moscow Trials, participated in public confessionals. Intellectual abdication reigns supreme when "scientific men" are allowed to take command of the field of thought as if that too were a "buildable machine."

Intellectual growth will first begin when new ground is broken. The elements of the new society present in the old are everywhere in evidence in the thoughts and lives of the working class. Where the workers think their own thoughts, there must be the intellectual to absorb the new impulses. Outside of that there can be no serious theory.

Philosophy springs from the empirical sciences and actual life, but incorporation of these laws and generalizations into philosophy, Hegel showed, "implies a compulsion of thought itself to proceed to these concrete truths." Hegel knew whereof he spoke when he told the intellectuals of his day that "the sense of bondage springs from inability to surmount the antithesis, and from looking at what is and what happens as contradictory to what ought to be and happen."

The modern intellectuals will lose their sense of guilt and bondage when they will react to "the compulsion of thought to proceed to these concrete truths"—the actions of the Black school children in Little Rock, Ark., to break down segregation, the wildcats in Detroit for a different kind of labor than that under present-day Automation, the struggles the world over for freedom. The alignment precisely with such struggles in the days of the Abolitionists and of Marx is what gave these intellectuals that extra dimension as theoreticians and as human beings which enabled them to become part of the new society. It will do so again. Once the intellectual accepts the challenge of the times, then the ideal and the real are seen to be not far apart. The worker is right when she demands that work be "completely different, and not separated from life itself," and that "thinking and doing be united." Once the theoretician has caught this, just this, impulse from the worker, their work does not end. It first then begins. A new unity of theory and practice can evolve only when the movement from theory to practice meets the movement from practice to theory. The totality of the world crisis has a new form....The American rush "to catch up" with the *Sputnik*, like the Russian determination to be the first to launch the satellite, is not in the interest of "pure science" but for the purpose of total war. Launching satellites into outer space cannot solve the problems of this earth. The challenge of our times is not to machines, but to humanity. Intercontinental missiles can destroy humankind, they cannot solve its human relations. The creation of a new society remains the human endeavor. The totality of the crisis demands, and will create, a total solution. It can be nothing short of a New Humanism.



The continuous miner, above, brought automation into the mines and was a major reason that miners went on general strike in 1949-50. They called this machine a "man-killer."

Review: Adrienne Rich's Expanding Solitudes

by Alec Marsh

Outward: Adrienne Rich's Expanding Solitudes by Ed Pavlič (University of Minnesota Press, 2021).

Ed Pavlič's *Outward: Adrienne Rich's Expanding Solitudes* is the first critical book to take the poet's Marxism seriously. It is also the first to appear after Rich's *Collected Poems* (2016), thus covering all of Rich's poetry. Hitherto, Rich's radical feminism has served to define her politics, but Pavlič goes further, recognizing Rich's turn to Marxism in the latter half of her career, much of it (though Pavlič doesn't say so directly) due to Rich's reading of *News & Letters* and her collaboration with Raya Dunayevskaya.

RICH TURNS TO MARXISM

Rich's poetry through the 1970s and her "second wave feminist" period is well-known and has been read acutely by feminist scholars. But after her trip to revolutionary Nicaragua in 1983, when Rich's politics became openly and unfashionably Marxist, academic scholars who once saw her as the voice of their own experience failed to follow her. Pavlič is the first critic to follow Rich all the way as she probed into the mysteries of selves (not always her own, and not only of women) immersed in, suffused by, and even drowning in the great flood called Capitalism.

Of course, the "60s" is part of it. I had not realized that "Spring Thunder" in *Necessities of Life* (1966) was a response to "Operation Rolling Thunder," the 1965 bombing campaign that massively escalated the war in Vietnam. Pavlič shows how Rich connects the "private life to warfare and to the image of the United States as a global empire." She "identifies with the drafted soldier in 'Spring Thunder': 'No criminal, no hero; merely a shadow/cast by the conflagration.'" Pavlič concludes that "Spring Thunder" is "the first of Rich's poems to turn its lyric lens toward overtly political subject matter" (Pavlič 26-7).

Pavlič takes up a specifically Marxist approach to Rich from the 1990s on, as Rich herself embarks on a full Marx-inspired critique of social relations under capitalism, especially the commodification of language, imagination and selves. "Capital vulgarizes and reduces complex relations to a banal iconography...In the interests of marketing, distinctions fade and subtleties vanish" she complained in "Arts of the Possible" (1997), the title piece of her important book of essays, its title a nod to Gramsci, from which Pavlič quotes (154).

The key term of Pavlič's analysis is "solitude." Through solitude and its dialectical opposite, "relation," Pavlič aims to focus "an adequate vision of how the structures in Rich's poems shifted over the final three decades of her career" (Pavlič 9). "Solitude" seems counter-intuitive at first, for Pavlič invents a paradoxical plurality of "solitudes" to account for Rich's many changes. In his account, Rich moves outward from lyrical introspection to social responsibility, to an evasive, even "fugitive" position as she attempts to occupy interstitial free spaces in an increasingly totalizing, globalizing hegemonic capitalism.

Rich is said to begin with a Romantic lyrical position of "transcendental solitude" that lasts until 1970. Her best known feminist period (c. 1970-1981) is characterized by "relational solitude," which doesn't seem very solitary at all. The next ten years—through *An Atlas of the Difficult World*—is informed by "social solitude," which is "fully realized" in the title poem: "As Rich moved beyond her strict focus on women's experience from the 1970s, her vision of social solitude culminated in the broadly diverse and particularized American vistas of 'An Atlas of the Difficult World,'" Pavlič concludes (Pavlič 153).

Writing "Atlas" helped Rich see more deeply into the apparently inescapable problematic of capitalism, especially as it impinges on the supposedly autonomous self, from which Pavlič's "solitude" apparently derives, even as the specifically Marxist term, "alienation," might seem more apt. However, Pavlič justifies his choice by arguing that "fugitives in the early poems of *An Atlas of the Difficult World*," like "Marghanita," the friend in "For a Friend in Travail" and, very surprisingly, "Olivia"—a poem about the notorious double agent Olivia Forsyth, who worked for the South African security services as well as the African National Congress in the 1980s—"are not alienated from people. Instead they are often in flight from people's alienation." Freedom is "measured in connections"; it's all about freedom to be *with* others, not freedom from social interactions and responsibilities (Pavlič 137).

After *Atlas*, Rich embarks on "fugitive solitude." Quoting from the end of "Contradictions: Tracking Poems" (1983-5), Pavlič says, "Rather than the 'edges that blur' in social solitude, in fugitive solitude Rich locates the source by feeling for the edges that *burn*"; Pavlič observes that Rich links "the burning pain in industrial labor with that of her debilitating arthritis" (Pavlič's emphasis 164); Rich's body's personal pain and the world of pain that is

global capitalism can, in fact, be linked without egoism; the all too frequent scenes of torture and grim accounts of her own struggle with her arthritis are in dialectical relation.

At bottom, solitude means the writer alone at a desk with a pen and paper, like Rich "at this table in Vermont" watching the spider make connections in "Atlas," communing with myriad voices, "hearing conversations that can't be happening." In *What Is Found There* (1993), Rich contrasts her solitary work to that of the muralist, "whose monumental works, planned out and executed with many others" are found throughout the world: "I, whose words come into permanence in slow solitude, whose poems begin on scraps of paper but whose images, like hers, are mined from dreams, snatches of conversation, street music, headlines, history, love, collective action" (WIFT 44).

FROM NEOLIBERALISM TO UNRESOLVED CONTRADICTION

Rich's poetry evolves in response to changes in her personal and historical situation.

Thus, "fugitive solitude" becomes, by *Midnight Salvage* (1998), "dissident solitude" as Rich tries to come to terms with a "changed system of utterly broken and fraudulent social contracts with which no faith could be kept" under the 1990s regime of neoliberalism (Pavlič 177). Later, Rich overtly aligned herself with dissident poetry in her 2006 talk "Poetry and Commitment" (now retitled "Poetry and the Forgotten Future" in *A Human Eye*). Finally, Rich moved on to the truly paradoxical "radical solitude" of her stark, fitfully rhymed, otherwise all but atonal, very late poems, which seem preoccupied with anxiety about losing her audience. Was anybody listening?

Rich's last work is very much in the discordant mode affected by age and ill-health that Edward Said called "late style"; that is, "artistic lateness not as harmony and resolution but as intransigence, difficulty and unresolved contradiction" (Said 7). Certainly, Rich's last poetry is intransigent and unresolved, which puts the critic, even one as skillful and well-informed as Pavlič, into a difficult position, because he naturally wants to tell an uplifting, "outward" story.

Rich drew a "serial structure of morphing solitudes," he claims, "out of individuated lyrical *ownership* and into outward-radiating frames of social and historical human and natural *relation*. As a result, people drawn into conflict with cultural and political forces aiming to prevail over their lives have a massive and intricate scaffold of alternatives to suffuse themselves with on their ways outward" (Pavlič 195). The mixed images of "suffusion" and "scaffolding," gesture to Rich's essay on her own poetic imagination, "Permeable Membrane" (2006).

There, Rich speaks of the "interpenetration of subjectivity and social being," how "poems become suffused, as the existence, the inner life of the maker must, with what's going on, the breaks in the assumed fabric" that ideologically smooths over the "objective conditions" determining our actual lives. That "inner life" must be the solitude on which Pavlič relies. The objective conditions are the neoliberalism that has dominated American politics and policy for the last 50 years, with the attendant chronic social and political illness; ceaseless warfare abroad, shameless class warfare at home, and a relentless assault on nature itself, making our planet sick unto death, as in "From Sickbed Shores": "From the shores of sickness you lie out on listless/ waters with no boundaries...this dull floodplain/ this body sheathed in indifference sweat no longer letting the fever out/ but coating it in oil..." (2008). Or, in lines from "Contradictions: Tracking Poems," Rich sees her "problem" as a writer is trying to understand her personal/historical situation, "to connect, without hysteria, the pain/ of anyone's body with the pain of the body's world / For it is the body's world / they are trying to destroy forever" (1983-1985).

The "radical imagination is suffused with its materials"—sensations, pain, perceptions, the ceaseless battering of bad news, flashes of beauty. "Suffused," Pavlič says: "a condition antithetical to what the modern lyric (and modern subject) is all about" (Pavlič 190). The acquisitive modern self is a problem that both Rich and Marx hoped

to overcome: "Marx's perception that economic relationships—the *relationships* of production—will, unchecked, infiltrate all other social relationships at the public and the most private levels." Marx was outraged by the reduction of "the entire web of existence to commodity...*In place of all the physical and spiritual senses*, [Marx] tells us, *there is the sense of possession, which is the alienation of all these senses*" (Rich's stress, AP 156).

In the "Usonian Journals 2000" Rich comments, possibly with this same passage in mind: "Marx: capitalism deranges all the senses save the sense of property" (2000-2). Under capitalism the "I have" overwhelms the complacent "I am" of modern philosophy. Overcoming the 'I have' is what Pavlič's "radical solitude" seems to be about. Radical means "root-tangled in the grit of human arrangements and relationships: *how we are with each other*" (Rich's emphasis qtd. Pavlič 190, HE 96)—not what you or I have. "Ownership itself is part—maybe the foundation?—of the system of division" (Pavlič 140).

A STRUGGLE AT THE ROOTS OF THE MIND

In "Waiting for Rain, for Music" (2007) Rich quotes "A struggle at the roots of the mind" from Raymond Williams. Pavlič tells us that "During our conversations and in our correspondence from 2000 to 2012, Rich revisited Raymond Williams's *Marxism and Literature* many times, especially the last chapter, titled 'Creative Practice.'" (Pavlič 98). Especially the penultimate paragraph of Williams's book:

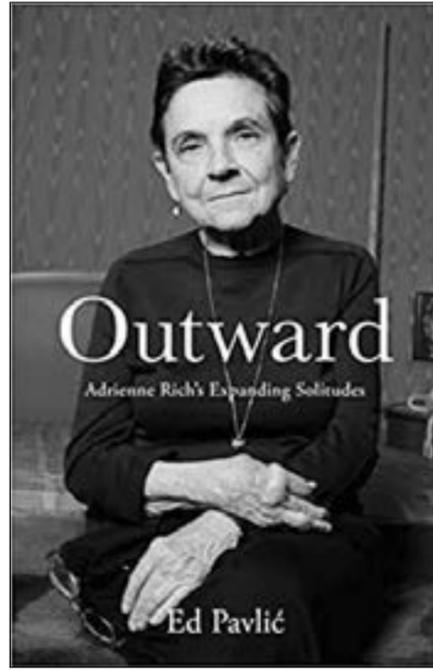
Creative practice is thus of many kinds. It is already, and actively, our practical consciousness. When it becomes struggle—the active struggle for new consciousness through new relationships that is the ineradicable emphasis of the Marxist sense of self-creation—it can take many forms. It can be the long and difficult remaking of an inherited (determined) practical consciousness: a process often described as development but in practice a struggle at the roots of the mind—not casting off an ideology, or learning phrases about it, but confronting a hegemony in the fibres of the self and in the hard practical substance of effective and continuing relationships (qtd. Pavlič 98, Williams 212).

This fascinating passage appears to be near the core of Rich's late poetry: phrases from it appear again and again in Pavlič's readings.

An accomplished, well-published poet, critic of African-American literature and Professor at University of Georgia, Pavlič also had the good fortune to correspond with Rich during the last 12 years of her life; in fact, one of her late poems "If/ As Though" (2006) is dedicated to him. Pavlič knows a lot, and he knows a lot the rest of us don't, which gives his lively, closely argued book a peculiar authority. *Outward* is a very important step forward for Rich scholarship. It is addressed to the "kind of mind/ That would address/ Duress/ Outward in larger terms"—lines from "Fragments of an Opera" (2012) that Pavlič has chosen as an epigraph. The University of Minnesota Press is to be commended for producing this book at an affordable price. Let's hope it finds many readers interested in Rich's voyage out.

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Adrienne Rich in the Marxist-Humanist Archives

* "Living the Revolution." <http://rayadunayevskaya.org/ArchivePDFs/11293.pdf>. A review-essay on four books by Raya Dunayevskaya, written by Adrienne Rich, and published in *The Women's Review of Books* (Amherst, Mass.), Sept., 1986. Rich's essay topic encompassed Dunayevskaya's newly published *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*, as well as her three earlier books — *Marxism and Freedom, Philosophy and Revolution*, and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Also included are Dunayevskaya's letters to Rich of Sept. 18, 1986, and Jan. 24 and Feb. 4, 1987, and Rich's Feb. 1987 reply.

* Notes by Dunayevskaya on Rich's "Anti-Feminists" ("a very profound review of a very shallow book"), *New York Review of Books*, Nov. 30, 1972. <http://rayadunayevskaya.org/ArchivePDFs/14412.pdf>.

* See also *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* by Raya Dunayevskaya, Foreword by Adrienne Rich.

DRAFT FOR MARXIST-HUMANIST PERSPECTIVES

Throughout the [Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives](#) (Sept.-Oct. 2021 *N&L*) are protests against injustices as people are reaching for freedom. Syrians and Cubans want cruel “leaders” to go away, workers want decent working conditions, including not being replaced by automation. The pandemic in the USA in particular—the only developed nation without universal healthcare—shows the dangerous flaws in our healthcare system. The intersections of race, gender and class are apparent in our age of climate damage: if you are a person of color who is also female and impoverished or living in a developing nation, your chances of being ravaged because of the damage humans have done and still do to our environment are heightened considerably. Women and girls in Afghanistan want to return to school and work while women and girls in Texas are terrified for their reproductive lives, wanting autonomy over their own bodies. (See [“Afghan women pay price for U.S. hubris,”](#) Sept.-Oct. 2021 *N&L*.) Capitalism is struggling to survive, it is going down. What will it be replaced by? Barbarism or a world where each can develop to her or his full potential?

**Sagamihara
Chicago**



The young climate activists protesting at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow are inspiring. Their vision

for the future is so much more expansive, human and downright revolutionary than all the pompous expressions from various country leaders and their spokespersons. The transformation needed is stark. The Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives in the last issue spoke profoundly to this needed change: “A human way of adapting to and mitigating climate change is possible, a way of transforming society so that most people’s lives become better, not worse; but it requires throwing off the chains of capital, not just state intervention, not just democracy, but revolutionary liberation. The administrative mentality of our age, which would make climate plans for the masses, is a barrier to liberation.” The young climate activists in Glasgow and worldwide are one of the crucial human dimensions needed to bring forth such revolutionary liberation.

**Observer
Mexico**

SOLIDARITY WITH SOHEIL ARABI AND HIS MOTHER

Over 200 organizations and individuals have called for the release of Iranian blogger Soheil Arabi, imprisoned for “blasphemy.” The initiative aims to free Arabi, an atheist imprisoned in Iran since 2013. Since Oct. 19, Arabi has been on hunger strike and his mother, Farangis Mazloum, has been summoned to serve an 18-month prison sentence for demanding justice for her son. Mazloum says she is extremely concerned about her son’s situation and has not heard from him. Please support them by sending a souvenir postcard from your city to Arabi and his mother expressing solidarity to: BM Box 1919, London WC1N 3XX. Sign a petition: <https://www.change.org/p/human-rights-campaign-free-soheil-arabi-political-prisoner-detained-in-iran-s-prison-and-now-is-in-hunger-strike>; use the hashtags #FreeSoheil #SoheilDay #SoheilArabi and #FarangisMazloum. And find out more: <https://www.secularism.org.uk/news/2021/10/campaigners-call-for-release-of-iranian-blogger-who-insulted-islam>

**Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain
London, UK**

READERS’ VIEWS

LABOR SHORTAGE?

Employers are squalling because they cannot get workers. Let’s see what requirements the picky employers have. Who is excluded as an employee? 1) 77 million adults who have criminal records. 2) All those millions above 65 years old. Employers only want the young, easily trained. 3) Anyone who smokes marijuana, even in states that have legal medical or personal use. Drug tests for employment qualification. 4) All those 2-3 million prisoners who could be sent out on work release. Of course, they would have to check the box on the employment application. So see #1 above. I guess the only people who are left who could possibly get hired are foreign nationals who have no record in this country, or the few people who have not yet been grabbed by the injustice system. A shrinking number each passing day. In summary, perhaps the worker shortage is not a shortage of persons willing to work but, in fact, a “problem” created by the employers themselves. Poor babies.

**Prisoner
Cañon City, Colo.**

WORKERS AS REASON

In the 1940s, 30-40% of U.S. workers labored in U.S. factories producing commodities. Today, only 9% work in production. The portion of workers in labor unions today in the U.S. is only 6.3% in the private sector, a huge decline from the 1940s-1950s. Low-wage union workers today, many of them migrant workers, are still fighting for a \$15 minimum wage. There was a strong mass labor movement during the Great Depression, which included large contingents of Black workers. The book *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker’s Journal* by Charles Denby is about an Alabama sharecropper who migrated to Detroit to work in the auto industry. It is about Black and white workers uniting against the capitalist corporations.

**Basho
Los Angeles**

The Idea of freely determining one’s life activity repeatedly asserts itself in relations to the environment, sexuality, oppressed minorities’ call that their “lives matter,” or everyday work life. Workers are challenging the ruling algorithms and competition with robots. The wave of strikes and a silent but massive revolt are wreaking havoc in the labor market. It’s called the Great Resignation, the rejection of workplace lives of disrespect and abuse laid bare during the pandemic. In short, there is no lack of Reason in the mass opposition to the alienating organization of life activity under capitalism.

**Labor supporter
Oakland, Calif.**

SUPPORT EL MILAGRO WORKERS!



El Milagro tortilla company in Chicago pays such low wages and forces workers to work under such harsh working conditions that they can’t find more workers willing to work for them. El Milagro is advertising jobs for \$16.00 an hour, just one dollar above minimum wage. Even though this is not a just wage, it is higher than wages of workers who have been at the company for years or even decades. In response to the shortage of workers, El Milagro management is increasing the speed of the machines to dangerous levels; not authorizing sick leave; threatening to fire workers if they

are late or miss one day; and, at one location, forcing some workers to work seven days a week. That is why workers have staged walkouts and protests in the last several weeks demanding higher pay, safe conditions and an end to sexual harassment of women workers. Sign a petition to support us: <https://www.arisechicago.org/elmilagro>.

**El Milagro workers
Chicago**

DETROIT WOMEN’S MARCH

The Women’s March in downtown Detroit Oct. 2 was a very diverse crowd of 600-plus. (See “Nationwide marches for reproductive justice,” p. 10.) We were glad to see so many young men and women along with elders reflecting Black, Brown, LGBTQ+, rural and urban. Powerful speakers touched on a diversity of reproductive and social issues prior to the two-and-a-half-mile march, which concluded with an open mike. Although the speakers and signs addressed issues like fighting for women’s freedom to bear and raise healthy, happy children and the disparity between Black and Brown women’s experience with abortion and white women’s, the march organizers did not seem to make a category of reproductive justice. We were also disappointed that we saw no mention of solidarity with the women of Afghanistan taking to the streets under the Taliban.

**PTB and SVS
Detroit**

CHAPELLE’S SEXISM

It isn’t just that Dave Chapelle is Transphobic, he’s also sexist and his “humor” hurts women. These things are connected. Just as white supremacists most often hate and harm women as well as hating and harming people of color and Jews, so those who are anti-LGBTQI+ hate women as well, since to be a woman to those people we would have to fit into some truncated version of what it means to be a woman or “feminine.” But where’s the uproar over that? The lack of outrage over the sexism that accompanies racism and anti-LGBTQI+ expression is a measure of how deeply sexism permeates our world.

**Maggie Soleil
Hawaii**



AFGHANS DEAD AND BURIED

Joe Biden must be a public relations genius with impeccable timing, or maybe it’s his Secretary of State, Winkens-Blinken & Nod. Just a few weeks ago, we were watching the doomed Afghans on TV, thousands of them sprinting after USAF planes that were taking off, grabbing the wheels or other parts of the fuselage, falling to their deaths as the plane gained altitude; seeing thousands and tens of thousands of Afghans baking in the 100+ degree heat as they tried to get into Kabul’s airport, passing their babies over the wall to U.S. Marines; seeing almost 200 Afghans and 13 Marines blown to bits by an ISIS suicide bomber. (See “Afghans resist Taliban and the world,” p. 9.) All of this was in Kabul—we have no idea of what happened in the rest of the country.

Now, it seems that the Afghans have been conveniently forgotten, replaced by the narrative of the 20th anniversary of 9/11, which stresses how badly the U.S. was hurt and how much we are still hurting, and how we must honor the memory of those who died here in the good old USA. The Afghans are effectively dead and buried.

Biden, like Trump, is a master manipulator, and it is newspapers like *News & Letters*, which Vladimir Lenin described as “giant bellows that will blow the sparks of outrage into a conflagration that will consume capitalism,” that must call him, and the rest of his craven ilk, to account.

**Ex-postal worker
Battle Creek, Mich.**

BETRAYAL OF HAITIANS

We Americans must point out the U.S. government’s heartless betrayal of the Haitian people. The U.S. government spent trillions of dollars since World War II building nuclear weapons and waging endless wars. This enormous output of money and human energy has all been made in the name of defending freedom, democracy and human rights against more authoritarian nations. How is it possible that the U.S. has now refused to defend the freedom and human rights of just several thousand Haitians—instead forcing them to return to life-threatening conditions in their country? Clearly, a nation that is sincerely fighting for human justice and freedom all over the world would hardly object to making such a small effort defending the human rights of these endangered Haitian people.

**Subscriber
Fairfax, Calif.**

One of the ways the reigning system is adapting to climate chaos is the turn to fascism, exploiting xenophobia with the specter of hundreds of millions of climate migrants in coming decades. The treatment of Haitians at Del Rio, Texas, gave a stark example of how the powers that be are prepared to deal with those hundreds of millions. The images of white border cops on horseback terrorizing Black Haitians recalled a horrific past that must not be allowed to become our future. It cannot be separated from the fact that Haitians have been trying to exert self-determination in their own country and thwarted time and again with the complicity of the U.S. government and even aid organizations.

**Franklin Dmitryev
Chicago**

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

In the category of “Which side are you on?”—many of the MAGA crowd have been feeling deprived that there could be a coup in Sudan, yet the U.S. military had not toppled Biden and installed Trump. I believe that in March Michael Flynn was calling for a Myanmar-style coup in the U.S.

**Former truck driver
Chicago**

I am very grateful for *News & Letters*, this is my go-to paper. I love it. It keeps me grounded in TRUE reality. Also, I leave with three fingers up in support of the people of Myanmar.

**Prisoner
Iowa Park, Texas**

To our incarcerated readers

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

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

**PHILOSOPHER-
REVOLUTIONARIES**

“A Post-World War II View of Marx’s Humanism, 1843-1883; Marxist Humanism, 1950s-1980s” (Sept.-Oct. *N&L*) shows us Raya Dunayevskaya not only as a revolutionary philosopher in her reading of Marx, but as a philosopher-revolutionary in insisting on Marx’s significance for her day and time. I am not trying to make a play on words. Rather, when she wrote on Marx—be it his Humanist 1844 writings, *Capital*, the *Grundrisse*, or a multilinear view of his last decade—she not only gave scholarly, provocative readings of Marx but brought it forward to the post-World War II world she lived in—the Hungarian Revolution and the Montgomery Bus Boycott as revolutionary new beginnings. Perhaps this fusion of revolutionary philosopher with philosopher-revolutionary was as well what she saw as the greatness of Marx, as she showed him as revolutionary activist—Paris Commune, First International, etc.—in unity with being a revolutionary thinker. **Eugene Walker Mexico**

**YOUTH, CLIMATE AND
THE FREEDOM IDEA**

Youth enliven all of today’s revolts. In the unfolding apocalypse from human-caused climate change, theirs is a human cry for a future for everyone. Their appeal has gone beyond politics, to a new social humanity. As Greta Thunberg put it, “All political and economic systems have failed but humanity has not yet failed.” The absolute opposite of the ruling capitalist ideology that perpetuates self-alienation is the Idea of freely determining one’s life activity whether with respect to the environment or everyday work life. **Ron Kelch Oakland, Calif.**

CLIMATE CRISIS

The article “Native Americans challenge Line 3” (July-Aug. 2021 *N&L*) is right on. It mentions President Biden pushing new fossil fuel development. He could have halted the Enbridge Line 3 tar sands pipeline from Canada to the Lake Superior area, but allowed it to continue after he campaigned as an anti-



Trump fossil fuel candidate. Climate disaster is fast heading toward the point of no return with the recent Hurricane Ida in Louisiana and more destructive wildfires in the Pacific states. **Participant Los Angeles**

If the climate crisis could be stopped by blizzards of paper and dramatic declarations of a “code red emergency” by political and corporate eminences, then the world could breathe a sigh of relief. **Environmentalist Southern California**

CALIFORNIA FIRES

The massive wildfires now wreaking havoc upon thousands of acres of forests in California are just the beginning of a global climate change catastrophe that will be reaching nightmarish proportions and causing the deaths of many thousands of Californians, and perhaps millions of people worldwide. By that point it will be clear that we wasted precious time and energy in fighting other religious groups and political ideologies instead of working together with all these other groups and nations to reduce and eliminate the global warming that has now gone out of control. We are losing the only real chance of saving our planet and lives by fighting amongst ourselves instead of uniting as one indivisible humanity to solve the immense and quickly escalating peril of global warming. We must act decisively to create genuine global unity before the chance to prevent this worldwide catastrophe passes us by—and we can only curse ourselves and gnash our teeth for being so foolish and missing the opportunity to create a beautiful home on this unique but fragile planet when it was still possible to do so. **Rama Kumar Fairfax, Calif.**

Wildfires are part of nature but under climate change they are extreme. Many are followed by mudslides that affect communities. Some wildfires cause power outages. Wildfires in California this year have burned almost 2.5 million

acres. They destroy trees, nature’s way of absorbing carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen. The logging industry is a part of capitalist production that has consumed huge numbers of trees. Drought, worsened by climate change and deforestation, also affects farming. In Northern California the wild salmon are in danger of extinction due to depletion of water and competition of agribusiness. The immediate end of fossil fuel production is essential to stop global warming. **Subscriber Los Angeles**

FDA FAILS WOMEN

The FDA FINALLY—after DECADES—just proposed that breast implant manufacturers tell women the complications caused by their product. These “complications” they’ve been hiding for years—aided until now by the FDA—include cancer, additional surgeries, complications increasing over time, lymphoma, fatigue, pain, scarring, leakage, and the list goes on. But even now the proposal is not legally binding, only “guidelines.” What crap! Over 70,000 women had to petition the FDA to require a checklist because doctors can’t be trusted to actually tell women the truth. Too much money is involved to allow women to make educated decisions regarding our own bodies. The criminal time it took to impose this watered-down proposal makes it crystal clear just how little the medical establishment values women’s lives. **Disgusted but not surprised Chicago**

VOICES FROM BEHIND BARS

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to receive *N&L* over the course of the last several years. It has helped define Karl Marx’s unadulterated ideas, vs. U.S. propaganda based upon the Stalinist institution of Fascism. **Prisoner Imperial, Calif.**

Once I’m on my feet and have an income coming in, I’ll send y’all a money order. I enjoy reading *N&L*. We can’t close all prisons unless we have a government takeover. I am doing time in Pennsylvania and it’s a commonwealth state, the laws here are terrible. They don’t have a self-defense law here. One of my friends is

doing 27 to 60 years for protecting himself and his girlfriend. I am from Ohio, and I know murderers that also killed their attacker and they are out. Then we all get overcharged with medical visits \$5 and \$5 every prescription. Don’t catch a bad cold or get real sick, you can’t get no cold tablets—only nasal spray. All the food they bring us is very cold, nothing hot. At this



institution the officers don’t care about you. They brought COVID-19 into this place and we get punished for it. Don’t get me wrong: Sometimes the warden tries to do right, but his people below him don’t care! **Prisoner Sharon, Penn.**

It helps to understand what true freedom is and what people can do to keep it. As a Federal prison inmate, we have really no freedom here at FCI Manchester KY. I’m dropping to a camp in 11 months. So my struggle will be a little easier. There was no commissary for months, they beat people up, take our TVs, phones and personal property, for any reason. They chain people to beds in the SHU/hole, let you piss and shit yourself. They talk to us like we’re dogs daily. Your newsletter inspires us on this side of the fence/bars. Thank you for the gift. **Prisoner Manchester, Ky.**

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

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

We live in a country which has the ability to ensure that people don't need to go hungry or homeless if a bit of effort were paid towards solving those problems. Ironically some solutions can be found in the most unlikely places.

CRIMINAL WASTING OF RESOURCES

Recently, in a Midwestern prison, hundreds of pounds of organically grown vegetables and fruits were allowed to simply rot within the facility's kitchen, ending up on the compost pile rather than served to the prisoners or donated to community food shelves. This seems to

Rulers tank climate

continued from p. 1



Fridays for Future protest at U.S. Capitol, Washington D.C., Oct. 27, 2021.

a coalition of 600 feminist groups and activists, while the CVF represents states, not movements.

EDITORIAL Tasneem Essop of the Energy Democracy Initiative in South Africa said, "The climate talks are important, but against the current context of 'vaccine apartheid,' they simply cannot proceed by locking out the voices of those who especially need to be heard at this time."

The main impact of social movements has been in protests, while the whole UN framework is structured around nation-states, with tremendous influence accorded to corporations—as seen most disgustingly at COP24 in Katowice, Poland, in 2018, which became a showcase for the coal industry.

THE FOXES ARE RUNNING THE HENHOUSE

All the international climate projects are projects of capitalist states and private capital, leaving social movements to beg for inclusion or to try to pressure them from the outside. States and capital block any kind of real self-determination from below to take the reins.

As long as that remains the case—reinforced by huge subsidies for fossil fuels and continued build-up of infrastructure to lock in fossil fuel use—false solutions, greenwashing and half-measures will continue to predominate and obstruct the radical social transformation that even the conservative UN scientific organization, the IPCC, has repeatedly called for, and which young people around the world increasingly point to as what we need. In other words, a revolutionary transformation is needed to avert catastrophe.

Indigenous resistance to environmentally destructive projects in North America has stopped or delayed what "adds up to...roughly 28% the size of 2019 U.S. and Canadian pollution," reported the Indigenous Environmental Network and Oil Change International. But states are doubling down on criminalization of climate protesters, treating some as terrorists and actually using "terrorist enhancements" to demand lengthy prison sentences for nonviolent resisters while the real terrorists of Jan. 6 are receiving very short prison terms, if any.

RULERS FIDDLE WHILE WE BURN

Political and corporate leaders declaring a "code red emergency" know that oil, gas and coal production needs to start falling immediately, but the reality is that they preside over planned fossil fuel production that, according to the UN Environment Program, "vastly exceeds" their agreed limit.

Governments talked about a "green recovery" from the pandemic, but delivered the opposite: greenhouse gas emissions keep climbing, and even accelerating. Just three weeks before COP26, China ordered increased coal production and burning in the face of an electricity shortage.

In the U.S., the Republican Party plus key Democratic politicians like Senator Joe Manchin carried out the veto ordered by the oil and coal industries. Even before Manchin gutted President Biden's climate program, alarms were raised about the infrastructure bill and the Build Back Better Acts, subsidizing oil and gas and extending social dependence on them with fake solutions like carbon capture and storage (which is mainly used to extract more oil), liquid natural gas and hydrogen fuel produced with natural gas.

What the rulers are proving once again is that their time has passed. They represent a society that does not believe in its own future. Time is running out. It is up to us to make sure it is running out for capitalism and not for humanity.

Criminal priorities

be a universal practice within prisons that have prisoner-worked farms and gardens.

Often those prison gardens and farms are antiquated, and even more labor-intensive than a community farm. Why use modern equipment and practices when you have a ready labor force that is not allowed to unionize and who no one truly cares about if they get hurt? Many of those entities may barely meet the minimal state or federal regulations for safety and cleanliness.

Despite all of that, the prisoners who work those gardens or farms take a distinct pride in the product they produce and to see it wasted and allowed to rot, due to mismanagement by kitchen staff and lack of oversight by the administration, is thought by many to be criminal, especially since these same facilities are constantly lobbying state legislatures to relegate more and more taxpayer dollars to fund their enterprises.

The U.S. can build prisons in a record amount of time, or create immigration detention centers without much thought, yet it cannot find ways to house or feed its homeless population. In fact, if it weren't for the generosity of nonprofit organizations many more people would starve, or die, because of the lack of empathy from the majority of corporate America and federal, state and local governments.

In several states and local communities, legislation and ordinances are being pursued which, if approved, would criminalize being poor and homeless with penalties that range from incarceration to substantial fines. The laws are defined by terms, often equated with public safety, but each has a familiar purpose—to find ways to remove the homeless population out of sight, out of mind—especially from business districts.

INEQUALITY EXACERBATES HOMELESSNESS

The global COVID pandemic exacerbated the problem by highlighting the economic and social disparities existing in this country. As the News and Letters 2020-2021 Perspectives noted, "The staggering inequality, with billionaires not just jet-setting but rocketing to space, while even before the pandemic 40% of U.S. households had expenses bigger than income" (N&L, Sept.-Oct. 2021).

At the height of the pandemic the U.S. saw record numbers of not only poor and people of color, but middle-class Americans of all colors having to use food banks which were seeking donations and products to meet the demand. As noted in the Perspectives one out of five Black families face food insecurity," and yet despite these shortages, many state governments not only support, but seem to thrive on the amount of food that they waste in their prisons and other state-run agencies.

The problem is the lack of accountability in all levels of the prison industrial complex. States require layers of accountability from their prisoners, but not from themselves. That is a travesty.

Millions of dollars could be spent in that same Midwestern state to add onto a prison health services unit so that geriatric patients can have a "minimum custody experience," and the only solution that can be found for dealing with the homeless is to lock them up or fine them, and extort from them money they don't have, or extort money from taxpayers to lock up individuals whose only crime is that they are poor and homeless in the U.S.

Here's a novel idea: rather than house geriatric prisoners in a new multimillion-dollar prison unit, or the homeless in county jails, let's lock up the idiot politicians who come up with these proposals. Maybe then we'll see real reforms take place.

Whitewashing history based on a mythical past

continued from p. 1

harsh truths. Is it so hard to say that it's wrong for a human to be thought of as less than you because of the color of their skin? Or the God they believe in? In trying to "protect" their son, they are depriving all children of an environment where they can learn their real history and develop as human beings.

THOUGHTS FROM THE OUTSIDE

We can't find a way out of this until we face the horrors of reality, not just in history, or as history is depicted in novels, but in life.

Today the misery this system visits on humans is really ugly. So many people live without hope. San Francisco's Tenderloin, where I work on the streets every day, is in large part just containment—containment of problems without addressing anything.

THE IMMEDIATE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

The people I see have so few relationships in their lives. And what few they had, were toxic. I see youth, especially, who just want to be heard, looking for someone to listen to them. I've heard of atrocities they went through in their homes. It leaves scars that go deeper than most people suspect. I see young teens who have run away from the abuse at home.

Lately, I hear shootings in San Francisco every night. There are too many street corners for the police to cover effectively. Drug culture is thriving. During the day mostly whites drive up to "pill alley" spending hundreds of dol-

Chicago climate strike

Chicago—A small but determined group marched near Millennium Park (the cops would not let us into the park itself) as part of the international climate strike on Sept. 24. We were demanding climate justice, not separated from rapid, comprehensive action to stem climate change.



Franklin Dmitryev for News & Letters

Many chants called for stopping the Line 3 pipeline that activists led by Indigenous people are resisting in Minnesota. (See "[Native Americans challenge Line 3](#)," July-Aug. 2021 N&L.) Chants also demanded climate justice and an end to the extraction and burning of fossil fuels, as well as: "One solution: no pollution! One solution: revolution!"

#UPROOTTHESYSTEM

The strike was called by Fridays for Future under the rubric of #UprootTheSystem. Participants came out in more than 1,500 locations around the world—for example, young people marched in Freetown, Liberia; thousands gathered in Buenos Aires, Argentina; 100,000 in Berlin, Germany.

This was the first non-virtual global climate strike since the pandemic started and social restrictions hindered protest actions. Those restrictions still prevail in many parts of the world—especially in countries discriminated against in vaccine apartheid, like most or all of Africa—so that we have not yet returned to the level of September 2019, when 4 million people participated.

However, the urgency of the situation has only intensified, from the rapid succession of weather disasters to the mounting scientific warnings, and the radicalism of the movement has intensified as well. The message of the call by Fridays for Future for the Sept. 24 climate strike stressed the need for drastic emissions cuts by the Global North, combined with reparations from the colonizers to the oppressed countries, areas and people, together with an equitable "genuinely global recovery from COVID-19" as well as:

"Stop the violence and criminalization against indigenous peoples, small farmers, small fisherfolk, and other environmental and land defenders. Support the work they do. Respect and listen to our defenders."

Politicians are trying to deceive the world with fake promises and half-measures full of loopholes, but the young people in this movement are not falling for it.

"We must remember that our liberations are tied together," they declare. They will be satisfied by nothing less than the radical social transformation whose necessity has been demonstrated by both science and history.

—Franklin Dmitryev

lars at a time for whatever drugs they want. But at night it's a different story. There is a complete breakdown of society. Every morning there are more memorials, erected to victims of those shootings.

The struggle for existence here is immediate. It's a predatory life. People are vying for basic necessities. Elderly people come to the Civic Center because they have to sell whatever they can for a dollar or two.

This is not unique to San Francisco. This is the way the world is now. The Third World is right here, in the U.S., and has been here for generations. People are fighting to exist. Not live, just exist!

You have to have more than a superficial interpretation of life. When you read Marx's *Capital* with his description of so-called primitive accumulation, you read about lives sacrificed everywhere, whether in wars or workplaces, like building a bridge. That's what you see here every day. What we see now is capitalism's redundant, thrown away surplus population that has no value. What can you do? Sell them fentanyl? Capitalism has reduced a huge segment of society to this level.

If life is to have any meaning, it has to be more than mere existence. Marx was right when he said wealth is not about some mythical past, but contrasted wealth—in its present state as money or value accumulated in things—to actual human development and creativity freely shared within a community.

Afghans resist Taliban and the world

It should shock no one that the Taliban takeover has resulted in “mounting human rights violations against the women and girls of Afghanistan,” according to the [UN Secretary-General](#). As Taliban forces swept through the provinces, they went to the jails and released thousands of male prisoners convicted of domestic abuse who are now free to enact retribution on the women who sought justice and the judges who sentenced them, many of them also women.

Taliban rule has completely overturned the Afghan judicial system. According to [Al Jazeera](#), property is being confiscated from one family and given to another, on the whims of shuras

(local councils). Ethnic minority Hazaras are targeted by Taliban officers, beaten and robbed of their assets. Whole families are evicted onto the street as a deepening drought and flailing economy cause food insecurity. Girls’ secondary schools have been closed, and adult women are told not to leave home without a male relative, although, for now, the Taliban make an exception for women doctors and nurses working in the essential healthcare sector.

COMPLICITY OF WORLD POWERS

It was acceptable to just about the whole world that this was going to happen.

In 20 years of war and occupation and over four U.S. presidents, the U.S. betrayed all erstwhile promises of an Afghanistan “Marshall Plan” and surged troops and money into what can only be described as a terror campaign where more than 47,000 civilians were killed in night raids, or by 13,000 air strikes, or by massive ordnance air blasts. Five million people had already lost their homes even before the August regime change caused a frantic exodus.

On Sept. 30, as would-be evacuees lined up at consular offices, U.S. Senator Tom Cotton introduced a budget amendment to cut off all assis-



After the Taliban take over, women and children line up for food aid as food supplies dwindle. United Nations

tance to Afghan refugees. It failed by a single vote. Elsewhere, Iran continues their policy of shooting Afghan migrants in the legs, while 1,400 miles away Turkey has increased the number of border agents on their southeast border.

It is not as though any world government lifted a finger to support independent Afghan women and men who wanted to create a new society in the shell of the old. Instead, the U.S. government empowered individuals who would then be in their debt and would enact policies to enrich global capitalists. Iranian, Chinese, and Russian state-capitalists are poised to do the same as they are expected to bestow on the Taliban the legitimacy of official recognition.

On the legitimacy front, Afghan women’s rights activists converged at the UN in New York on Oct. 21 to ask the General Assembly to vote against admitting a Taliban representative to that body. Former Afghan politician Fawzia Koofi stated that women “are talked a lot about, but we are not listened to. Aid, money, recognition—they are all leverage that the world should use for inclusion, for respect to the rights of women, for respect to the rights of everybody.”

OPPRESSORS NOT ‘FREEDOM FIGHTERS’

So far, the U.S. Left has not managed wide popular support for such an agenda. Worse, it has seemingly been unable to even agree that the rise of the Taliban is a bad thing, and the ones who can’t agree are predictably silent on women.

A Left radio host on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour said he used to lament what the Taliban were doing to the Afghan people before being educated that the Taliban are the Afghan people. They are not. The majority of Afghan people are shut up in their homes hiding from a repeat of the history they know but which is never mentioned by the Left tendencies who call the Taliban freedom fighters or anti-capitalist, which also they are not.

Taliban soldiers are pounding on Afghans’ doors and forcing the men to go back to work. The Taliban are not fighting against alienated labor and are fine with the law of value operating in their regime. Like Mao Zedong, who in 1949 ordered Chinese factory workers: “Don’t stop working,” the Taliban expects Afghan people to produce value for their regime, one that doesn’t make much pretense of preserving their human rights and interests.

The Taliban are forcing women to disappear from public life and accept abuse. Afghanistan’s people, agents of history, are not known for capitulating long to injustice.

—Fighter for freedom

Mapuche people fight for their land in Chile

by Eugene Walker

In October, right-wing Chilean President Sebastián Piñera twice decreed a 15-day state of emergency for several provinces in the south—areas where the Mapuche people, in conflict with the Chilean State, are seeking to recover their ancestral lands and obtain full autonomy. The decree directs the armed forces to provide support for policing and surveillance of the Mapuche people.

The Mapuches, who number more than two million people, are more than 10% percent of Chile’s population. Despite this, they are not recognized as an original (Indigenous) people, but rather as an ethnic group subject to racism and exclusion.

In the first months of 2021, five times more farms were occupied by the Mapuche than the previous year, and their mobilization is intensifying. The state of emergency aims to stop them from recovering their land.

A HISTORY OF STRUGGLE

This is hardly the first time that the government has used force against the Mapuche. Their territories were first invaded in the mid-19th century by military troops who slaughtered them and seized their lands.

Their lands were then handed over at the beginning of the 20th century to European settlers, who formed large estates. After the Pinochet military coup of 1973, these estates became the property of forest conglomerates that have exploited them piecemeal.

In response to this “state of emergency,” Mapuche communities have been meeting and issuing their own declarations:

Autonomous Mapuche Community of the Territory of Temucucui:

“Today will be a historic day of the racist and terrorist actions of the Chilean State and the government of the criminal Sebastián Piñera. It is precisely the day that they have created a continuity and renewal of the genocide and destruction of the environment that the racist culture labeled ‘discovery of America.’ They declared an offensive against the Mapuche people through declaring a ‘state of emergency’ that seeks the use of the armed forces for a period of 15 days to increase and strengthen the militarization, repression and containment of the Mapuche resistance. . . .

“We are in the presence of a colonial State with all its racist structure. It acquiesces to the pressures of large landowners and businessmen who maintain their economic power over our ancestral territory, and who have destroyed our *Wallmapu* [the Mapuche territory] and brought the intervention of the armed forces. Today all procedural and constitutional guarantees are available to the police criminals, the same ones who fabricated evidence in Operation Hurricane [a 2017 police operation branding the Mapuche as terrorist, which was discredited by the Public Ministry], institutions that together with their generals have stolen public resources, and who enjoy all freedoms. On the other hand, we Mapuche are subject to their criminal law, that is, we are guilty for the mere fact of being Mapuche. . . .

“We will continue denouncing and resisting to bring life back to our *Wallmapu*, we will protect the *itxofi mogen* as entrusted to us by our ancestors and we call on all territories in struggle and resistance to remain standing and never on their knees. Our people have fought since the arrival of the Spanish thieves. Today will be no exception. All that may result from this, as well as the victims that may fall, will be the sole responsibility of the Chilean state. For this reason, we will maintain our territorial control and we will continue recovery of our territory, even if it costs our lives.

“We are all the Mapuche people. Denounce militarization! Military out of Mapuche territory!”

<https://www.mapuexpress.org/2021/10/12/comunidad-autonoma-de-temucucui-se-refiere-a-declaracion-de-estado-de-emergencia-en-el-wallmapu-territorio-mapuche/>



by Tim Finnigan

Twelve UK disability rights organizations are opposing an inhuman “assisted suicide” bill currently being debated in the House of Lords. They are calling instead for the right to live independently, as well as correcting the distorted ideas too many have of the quality and potential of disabled people’s lives. Activist Ernest Bow of Not Dead Yet UK said, “It is a very dangerous bill that does not respect disabled people and their lives.” Activist Simone Aspis said, “The focus needs to be on supporting disabled people’s right to live independently and have assistance with living right up to the day that somebody dies.” Anna Pridmore, of the British Council for Disabled People, stated the bottom line concern about all such inhuman laws is that they can “rule us out because we cost too much.”

Low pay, long hours (sometimes 60-80 per week), and a tight job market have created staffing problems for many agencies that provide care for people with disabilities and the elderly. One Maine caregiver told a state government panel, “Despite having 25 years’ experience, I am paid less than an entry level worker at a fast food restaurant. The message sent to us is clear: The work we do and the people we serve are not of value.”

A report by Ireland’s National Advocacy Services for People with Disabilities has shown the toll the COVID-19 pandemic has taken on the mental health and well-being of those served by government-funded caregiver agencies. Many agencies closed down completely, while others cut back on services, in order to meet social distancing guidelines. This has led to growing feelings of isolation among people who need these agencies, as well as forcing many to depend on often already overworked family members for full-time care and transportation to medical appointments.

Afghan disability rights activists have testified to the danger of the Taliban’s rise to power. Blind activist Benafsha Yaqoobi, who was airlifted to the UK, told *The Guardian*, “There are many people with disabilities there without support, without food, clothes, education, or basic human rights. We must raise their voices.” Nilafar Bayat, now in Bilbao, Spain, said, “I was the captain of the national women’s wheelchair basketball team. I had a job helping people with disabilities. I studied law. I worked hard for all that, and then the Taliban took all of it away in a moment.”

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

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



“A Missing Page from American Labor History,” by Andy Phillips

“The Emergence of a New Movement from Practice that Is Itself a Form of Theory,” by Raya Dunayevskaya

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Workers reject bosses' rules

continued from p. 1

nobility traveled to safer zones. The surviving serfs refused to return to the feudal lords' estates without conditions of greater freedom and much higher pay. Parliament then enacted a law forcing "lazy" serfs back to the fields on pain of imprisonment.

But Parliament couldn't stop the serfs' demands back then any more than reactionary state



Mine workers on strike in Brookwood, Alabama, against Warrior Met mine continue picketing, as they have done since April 2021.

legislatures have succeeded in forcing workers back under the old rules and low pay. Workers in great numbers have walked off non-union jobs with below subsistence wages and intolerable conditions.

The movement among low-wage workers in fast food and nursing homes, #FightFor15, has long exposed the cruelty of the national minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, \$2.13 for any called tipped workers. But 12 years after that movement for a living wage began, 2021 has proved that even \$15 an hour, which so many workers in "good-paying union jobs" barely make, is now a poverty wage.

NEW UNIONS BEING CREATED

Unorganized workers are creating new unions—literally from California at the Port of Los Angeles to the New York Staten Island monster facility of Amazon. Port truckers who voted for a union were illegally fired, but reinstated by court order. Some of the drivers were steered into leasing contracts that lock them into working for one employer who makes them work for free while waiting in long lines to pick up shipments. Truck driver Walter Martinez gave an impromptu interview to CBS: "I've got friends right now that were in line from nine o'clock in the morning and they can't pull the load yet. The people inside, they get paid by the hour, but not the drivers."

Warehouse workers at the Staten Island Amazon crossed a threshold of signature cards on Oct. 25, so that they will trigger a union election. "This is monumental for the workers. This is proof you can stand up, fight back and organize your workplace," said former Amazon employee Chris Smalls, whom Amazon fired in March 2020, immediately after he led a walkout over the lack of COVID-19 protections in their workplace.

The current organizing drive at Dollar General, undaunted by the company's history of closing stores that voted union, proves how forcefully workers are confronting the unilateral power of their bosses.

In the gig economy, Uber and Lyft drivers have not given up their three-year fight to form a union. Professional grocery shoppers who work for the app Instacart logged off of the app all day on Oct. 16 to call attention to their plight. One worker in Massachusetts told *The Guardian*: "It's like a sweat factory. They'll put 100 in, fire 10, and put 100 more back in. It's just not OK. We're human beings and we deserve to be treated like such."

STRIKERS' DEMANDS

Most of these strikers across multiple industries are demanding a return to more favorable conditions from before the pandemic, or even earlier. Coal miners have remained on strike against Warrior Met in Alabama since April to retrieve over \$6.00/hour in concessions they had agreed to when the company was in bankruptcy in 2015.

While the Alabama Highway Patrol has been acting as corporate security guards to usher scabs through picket lines, the joint forces of company and state found a county judge to disregard the law further by banning picket lines altogether. That is what the judge's exclusion of pickets from within 300 yards (the length of three football fields) of any Warrior facility would mean, if upheld.

John Deere workers have stayed on strike after overwhelmingly rejecting on Oct. 14, by a 90% to 10% margin, the first offer that Deere negotiated with the UAW Bargaining Committee. Deere retains elements of the old piece-rate system, which capitalists always hope will force workers to increase production. Workers say it's an exaggeration for Deere to claim that with piece-rate bonuses the

average wage is \$60,000, meager as that would be for an icon of heavy manufacturing.

On Nov. 2 workers rejected Deere's second offer despite the company doubling its promised raise at contract signing to 10% and withdrawing its scheme to engineer the eventual demise of the company pension system by excluding future workers from it. Deere then called that rejected offer their "last and best offer"—an ominous announcement often heard during the Reagan retrogression as a threat to hire scabs called "permanent replacements." The UAW negotiating committee's decision to present the first company offer with a raise half as large as its second offer just added to workers' distrust of their union representatives.

Kellogg's made an effort to undermine public support for strikers on the picket lines by stating that the average worker at Kellogg's made \$120,000. But that was less a claim than a confession: A worker clearing \$120,000 would have to be clocking in for close to 16 hours a day, all seven days of the week. Strikers confirmed that shifts like that were what they had all experienced as cereal production leaped to meet increased demand. Strikers are demanding wages and hours that will allow them to reintroduce themselves to family members.

BOSSSES DEMAND GIVEBACKS

Even with workers on strike across the nation and in industry after industry for improved benefits and to restore what they had lost, they still confront corporate demands for gutting healthcare and pensions and even for lowering wages. This after workers had been forced into high-risk situations threatening their health.

Nabisco workers struck against attempts to extend the emergency practice of deploying workers at all hours of the week as demand for Oreos ballooned, but to now pay those shifts at straight time. Despite the energy of strikers at all U.S. locations, they felt forced to settle for a contract with those straight time weekend shifts imposed, but on future hires only.

On the front lines of the war against COVID-19, New York hospital workers at the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes signed a new contract. In saving the pension system, they had to accept the requirement of a year or longer service to qualify for a full pension. In California, nurses and other healthcare workers at Kaiser Permanente hospitals have voted to authorize a strike and stood firm against the even more grasping demands of the healthcare giant. Kaiser has chosen this moment, when the need for nurses vastly exceeds their availability, to attempt to institute a two-tier system which would force sharply lower wages and conditions on nurses yet to be hired.

Observers who damned this strike wave with faint praise as "Striketober" will need to come up with a clever new name because in November steelworkers at Arcelor-Mittal in Shelby, Ohio, join the ranks of strikers at dozens of fronts of open battle between labor and capital. One suggestion for a new label: "The Fall of Capitalism." The extraordinary efforts of capitalists to get workers back to the job on company terms, aided by private armies and public resources, show in their desperation that the capitalist system is no more invincible than the 14th-Century feudal system that crumbled quickly when even beheadings could not compel the serfs to obey the old rules.

The very act of striking proves the centrality of labor. Workers observe that no value is added without their working activity. In the midst of pandemic, workers have heard capitalism speak loud and clear: We are fine with working you to death or putting you in the way of a deadly disease. And that is how workers have always been treated.

No matter how often Wall Street sets records for the mass of profits, capitalism is always a broken system because of its fetishism of commodities, where things are treated as people and people are treated as things. Striking workers don't regard this condition as an inherent fact of life. Strikes declare that it is changeable. In so doing they are proving that capitalism must be abolished and humanity saved by reestablishing society with the workers themselves in charge of the labor process.

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Nationwide marches for reproductive justice



One of the thousands of abortion rights marchers in Chicago making the point that the Texas law has no exceptions for victims of rape or incest.

Chicago—The Women's Marches, held in over 650 places across the country on Oct. 2, made it clear that women in the U.S. are continuing to fight back against the inhuman anti-abortion legislation that has been surging across Republican-dominated statehouses for years. The last straw was Texas' fanatical law empowering anyone—including a woman's rapist, abuser, stalker, or a stranger—to sue any person who helps a woman get an abortion in Texas if she is over six weeks pregnant and collect a \$10,000 bounty for their cruelty.

In Chicago, 4,000-5,000 and marched downtown, a crowd so large that it could not be contained in Daley Plaza—this, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. The crowd was diverse with those who lived through the time when abortion was illegal and know first-hand the deadly consequences for women, together with those whose entire lives so far have been lived when abortion was technically legal—although progressively becoming impossible for women to access, especially poor women.

MULTIPLE MARCHES IN MANY STATES

Illinois women marched in other cities too, including the capital, Springfield, where hundreds rallied at the Old State Capitol square. The rally and march in Washington, D.C., was probably the largest. There, protesters amassed in Freedom Plaza and then marched to the Supreme Court building to rally and drive home the alarm and anger that what has become a reactionary majority court allowed a clearly unconstitutional law to be enforced.

Los Angeles saw thousands marching and chanting through downtown to rally at City Hall, where one chant was: "Only revolution can make women free!" In San Francisco, thousands marched down Market Street. New York's demonstration also drew thousands, who marched to Foley Square across the Brooklyn Bridge. Protesters in Tallahassee and Fort Pierce, Fla., worried about the Texas copycat bill filed in the Republican-controlled legislature. They marched with signs saying, "Don't Texas my Florida!"

While the feeling at the demonstration in Chicago was upbeat because it just felt so good to be coming together and letting the world know the anger, passion and determination women have about having control over our own bodies and lives, few of us were under any illusions that this alone will convince the misogynist right-wing Supreme Court justices to actually follow their own precedent of 50 years of legal abortion in the U.S. The Los Angeles demonstrators were right: "Only revolution can make women free!" Let's hope the Women's Marches are part of creating that new reality.

—Terry Moon

Free Maâti Monjib

Maâti Monjib, the Moroccan journalist, historian and human rights activist, has begun another hunger strike to demand the return of his French and Moroccan passports so he can travel to France, where he is invited by the University of Tours, and has an appointment with his heart specialist. The situation is urgent. His supporters ask you to write to the Moroccan Consulate and demand his freedom and right to travel.

He was convicted of "fraud" and "undermining state security" by a court in Rabat, Morocco—charges linked to the Moroccan Association for Investigative Journalism, which Monjib co-founded in 2011. His lawyers denounce his "conviction in absentia" after five years of procedure and his "arbitrary detention" since the end of December 2020. Please contact:

Consulate General of Kingdom of Morocco, 10 E 40th St, New York, NY 10016, United States

Consulate General of Kingdom of Morocco, Diamond House, 97-99 Praed St, Tyburnia, London W2 1NT, United Kingdom

Monjib is the publisher of the [Arabic edition](#) of *Marxism and Freedom* by Raya Dunayevskaya ([free download](#)). He also edited it and supervised its translation into Arabic. See ["Support Maâti Monjib, who is on hunger strike!"](#) for background.

See <https://maatimonjib.net/> for more information.

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Buddy Bell

Undocumented youth volunteers made the difference between Arizona's Sen. Kyrsten Sinema winning or losing her electoral race in November 2018. Since then, she became one of the Democrats to cash in big with corporate donors by blocking removal of the Senate filibuster in whole or part. That leaves no conceivable way that Congress can enact a legislative path to citizenship for undocumented people anytime soon.

Since constituents are unable to set a meeting with Sinema and are disallowed from even entering her Senate offices, young immigration activists have to confront her at her many political fundraisers, in airports, on flights, in the classrooms of Arizona State University where she is a visiting professor, or inside bathrooms there.

Flight passenger and DACA recipient [Karina Ruiz](#) told her: "Senator, hello, how are you? I don't want to disturb you, but at the same time, I want to see if I can get a commitment from you, Senator. This is my life and the life of millions on the line."

ASU student [Blanca](#) said: "I was brought here to the U.S. when I was three years old. In 2010, both of my grandparents got deported. I'm here because I definitely believe that we need a pathway to citizenship. My grandfather passed away two weeks ago and I was not able to go to Mexico to visit him because there is no pathway to citizenship. We need to hold you accountable for what you promised us that you were going to pass when we knocked on doors for you."

* * *

On Oct. 27, high school students in Richardson, Texas held a protest against the inconsistent enforcement of the dress code between white students and students of color. In nearby Lake Highlands, Texas, students signaled they experienced the same discrimination by protesting on a windy Oct. 29. High school sophomore Dylan Barber told [Dallas Morning News](#), "I hope they see how much kids care about this, that they are leaving school and standing in the cold." Barber also recorded a teacher who used a racial slur several times in front of students. That teacher has been put on administrative leave.

* * *

More than 10,000 youth marched in Santiago, Chile, on Oct. 18, the two-year anniversary of a major uprising of over one million people led by students which led to the election of a commission to rewrite the Chilean constitution. The rewrite is currently being drafted. Among the protesters' demands were universal healthcare, free and improved schooling and higher pensions.

Haven't you always wanted to know...

What is Socialism?

as it relates to philosophy,
labor and the Black dimension,
women's liberation and ecology

To order see page 7

Youth hold Climate Strike in San Francisco

San Francisco—As part of the ongoing Climate Strike, Fridays For Future, on Aug. 27 several hundred, mostly youth, gathered in front of a federal building to call attention to a number of issues. The top one was a proposed pipeline, Line 3, that would carry 915,000 barrels of tar sands oil, one of the dirtiest fuels on earth, from Canada through wetlands and the treaty territory of Anishinaabe peoples, through Minnesota, the Mississippi River and the shores of Lake Superior to Wisconsin.

The Enbridge company, which wants to build this pipeline, is already responsible for the largest inland oil spill in the U.S. In addition to the damage caused to the environment by inevitable spills, it would carry enough oil to produce carbon dioxide equivalent to emissions from 50 coal power plants, or 38 million vehicles, per year.

Youth Vs Apocalypse also wanted to draw attention to the fact that CalSTRS—California public teachers' pension fund, the largest teachers' pension fund in the country—invests \$6 billion in fossil fuels, including millions in Enbridge. They say it's ironic that teachers, who prepare students for the future, have their retirement invested in denying a future to all. (To take action go to [youthvsapocalypse.org](#).)

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM FOUGHT

Environmental racism happens right in San Francisco, too. Youth call for holding Lennar/FivePoint company responsible for building homes in a heavily contaminated area, Bayview Hunters Point, a low-income community of color, whose residents suffer from high rates of asthma and cancer. Despite alleged fraud on the completely inadequate clean-up, the company wants to build thousands more homes there.

This is a public health emergency! Youth Vs Apocalypse calls for a moratorium on development and unsafe soil excavation, and for a full, safe clean-up and removal of all radioactive and toxic waste from Bayview and Treasure Island.

At the same time and place, caregivers are calling

Reading Altizer's apocalyptic theology

by Lew Finzel and Ron Kelch

"Is apocalypse finally understandable by all of us, and even if we cannot imagine or understand an absolute apocalypse, can we know it as the most ultimate gift, even if thereby it actually terrifies us? Although many can respond to the promise of apocalypse with an ecstatic joy, others and perhaps the wisest among us can only respond with genuine dread, and historically apocalyptic enactments are commonly destructive, even if they have been ultimately creative in our greatest revolutions. And this is the supreme challenge of apocalypse, those ultimate revolutions, which apocalypse alone make possible, revolutions seemingly impossible today, but so, too, did they appear to be impossible when they first occurred."

The above is the conclusion of *Satan and Apocalypse* (SUNY, 2017) by the renowned "Death of God" theologian Thomas J.J. Altizer. As we were discussing his latest work, which appeared after he was 90 years of age, Altizer (1927-2018) died on Nov. 27. He made quite a splash when *Time* magazine explored his work in 1966 with the question "Is God Dead?" on the cover. Lew discovered *The Gospel of Christian Atheism* in a used book store and bought it due to his interest in the works of Blake and Nietzsche, both of whom are featured in all of Altizer's work. A third thinker, Hegel, was someone Lew hadn't looked into at all. Altizer became a first conscious exposure to Hegel's dialectic.

***Satan and Apocalypse* reveals the intersection between the death of God in Blake and Hegel, between Blake's revolutionary vision and Hegel's dialectic of Manifest Religion. In that section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the religious community is a two-fold, self-contradictory spirit. The social individual in Manifest Religion is still bound to picture-thinking-God taking human form, reconciling with "evil" by taking on humanity's sins.**

Picture thinking, in which Spirit is resurrected through God's corporeal existence and death, cannot face the necessity of evil. It is totally selfless and "good." The resulting "Holy Spirit" is as well an absolute Being with no "other," a self-consciousness of pure thinking, which recognizes the divine as a thought manifested in the community. It is self-centered and "evil." Good and evil are different but at the same time identical as moments of the same spirit. Their identity and difference can only be transcended through spirit as the movement of the concept, which is incomprehensible to picture-thinking.

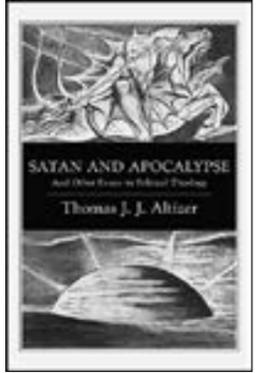
Altizer doesn't engage Hegel's critique of picture-thinking in distinction from the self-moving concept which concludes the *Phenomenology*, but presents an apocalyptic view of how the play of opposites resolves itself in Manifest Religion: "the absolute self-alienation of God...Absolute Being becomes its own 'other,' thereby it withdraws into itself and becomes self-centered or 'evil,' yet this is that self-alienation culminating in death, a death that is the death of the alienation of the alienation or evil of the divine Being" (48).

JESUS ALSO AN APOCALYPTIC THINKER

Thus, for Altizer, Jesus was an apocalyptic thinker. "The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." This vision was

quickly driven underground but continually reappears in the Christian epic tradition (Dante, Milton, Blake...) and in theology and philosophy (St. Paul, St. Augustine, Hegel, Marx, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche...) Altizer singles out Milton as the most self-conscious poet who was, at the same time, totally absorbed in the 17th century English Revolution.

Altizer sees the English Revolution as possibly "the most radical of all revolutions" reflected in radical sects like Quakers, Levellers and Ranters, with their "Lenin," Cromwell. Altizer doesn't want us to forget this Revolution, which provided initial impulse for the transformation of science, art and philosophy (21-2).



Altizer, noting that counterrevolution soon solidified after the civil wars, is keenly aware of a tendency towards "transformation-into-opposite," though he doesn't use that term. Yet reading only Altizer all the time is unsettling for lack of fully confronting dualities in actual history. Look at the same 1640s-50s period in England as seen by historians, rather than theologians. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker see a great divide between Cromwell with "his propertied allies" and the "radical voices of the many-headed hydra—the Levellers and the Diggers, the soldiers and sailors, the urban rioters and rural commoners" (*The Many-Headed Hydra*, Beacon, 2000, p. 72). Though suppressed by Cromwell, the commoners' ideas such as exactly who owned England, kept re-emerging.

How does Altizer's "absolute apocalypse" address the ideas and aspirations of the deepest layers of the population in a revolution? How can those openings for new human possibilities overcome the dread resulting from so many soured revolutions that have turned into their opposite—barbarous, totalitarian monstrosities?

CREATIVE ASPECTS OF REVOLUTION

After World War One—restarted in WWII, capped off by the Bomb—our age has really upped the ante on the need for clarity about Altizer's "ultimately creative" aspect of revolution. Hegel aimed for such clarity, not alone with respect to the contradiction within Manifest Religion, but the concept that ever moves through contradiction—pure thought's dialectic of freedom. Witnessing thought's power of the negative in the French Revolution, sweeping away a European institutional framework that in some ways went back to the fall of Rome, Hegel meant for his dialectic of the self-moving concept itself to make a difference. To make a difference after the purely negative fury of the French Revolution produced a factional "absolute freedom and terror." The positive result, Napoleon, was merely the winning faction, with no comprehension as to how new mediating positive social institutions emerge out of thought's power of the negative.

LIVING IN AN 'AGE OF ABSOLUTES'

One thing for sure: humanity can no longer mechanically rely on war and revolution to shake up the stultifying, finite national social framework. Hegel, in his time, may have entertained such a view, but ours, as Raya Dunayevskaya put it, is "an age of absolutes," demanding going into Hegel's dialectic in-and-for-itself to confront the question now of "what happens after the revolution?"

Lenin, who did return to Hegel's dialectic, marveled that Hegel's absolute in the *Logic* is greater than the vulgar materialism of post-Marx-Marxists and, rather than concerning itself with the "divine," is almost wholly on method. However, even Lenin was primarily concerned with the power of the idea to make revolution and not the dialectic's import after the revolution, when new dualities confront a given reality that demands further development of the idea of freedom on a new foundation.

What makes Hegel so contemporary is that his absolute Idea as new beginning never bows to any given reality but holds fast to the positive in the ongoing creative power of the negative. Many discard Hegel's *Logic* on the dialectic itself in favor of exploring the depth of critique in *Phenomenology* of one or another moment of human development, in the manner of Altizer with respect to Manifest Religion. However, the *Phenomenology*, the conclusion of which turns to the self-moving dialectic, was merely meant as an introduction to the *Logic*.

The great Hegel scholar, H.S. Harris, whose *Hegel's Ladder* (HL) is the unmatched monumental study of the *Phenomenology*, warned those who failed to follow Hegel beyond the realm of "experience" to "pure thinking." At stake is the difference, in Altizer's terms, between "absolute apocalypse" and Armageddon. As Harris put it against the post-Hegelians' tendency to dismiss the *Logic*: "It has no answer to the active missionary forms of self-styled 'science' or of 'faith,' which will take us to Armageddon in their zeal; and no means of humanely comprehending the empirical sciences that will make Armageddon feasible for the rival zealots" (HL vol. 2, 742).

The urgency of Harris' perspective couldn't be more timely, when so many are feeling the dread of humanity's impending collapse into fascist nationalism, war, and total destruction of the life sustaining capacity of the planet.



Ursula Wislanka for News & Letters

on Nancy Pelosi to ensure Biden's infrastructure bill will contain the \$400 billion for homecare jobs and homecare access. Caregivers formed a grassroots coalition with older adults, people with disabilities and family caregivers to advocate for dignity for all people who need or provide care. They proudly held signs that proclaimed: "We, home and care workers, are essential!" —Ursula Wislanka

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Following the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan, the front-line of imperialist confrontation has been redrawn in the Pacific Ocean. The question of Taiwan's independence from China has once again become a hot button issue.

The last few months have seen competing military exercises in the region by the Chinese navy along with its Russian ally, and also the U.S. Navy and its regional allies. Gen. Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declared that the U.S. would defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese attack.

In reality, short of a nuclear response, the U.S. doesn't have that capacity, nor could Taiwan defend itself.

RULERS VS. SELF-DETERMINATION

The situation in the Pacific mirrors other inter-imperialist conflicts. These would include eastern Ukraine, where fire has been exchanged between Ukrainian troops and breakaway forces supported by Russia.

These conflicts aren't reducible to great power rivalry. Ukraine has seen two revolutionary uprisings in this century, 2004 and 2014. Though both were betrayed by a corrupt oligarchy, they testify to the desire for genuine

Nihilistic 'science'

The ever-growing surveillance state is as much a part of contemporary capitalism as the digital marketplace, on-demand supply chain, and gig economy—in fact, it is becoming intimately connected to these phenomena.

Despite all the technological innovations, this surveillance regime was prefigured in Karl Marx's discussion of capitalist centralization in *Capital*, Vol. 1. Marx points out that this process of centralization doesn't depend upon the growth in magnitude of capital, and so it can take place at a moment of crisis like our own.

In attempts to control people, counter-revolutionary methods—from facial recognition technology to the growth of "smart cities"—have become common tools of government.

ANTIHUMAN BRAIN GAMES

This has been reflected in dystopian science fiction. But French popular science writer Sebastien Bohler's non-fiction book *The Human Bug* (2020) has one foot over dystopia's borderline.

In it, Bohler, who has written fiction about reprogramming brains with neuronano technology, claims that society's current problems are traceable to a "primitive" layer of the brain called the striatum. It is this body that allegedly rewards activities like eating, sex, competition, and learning with a dopamine rush.

Bohler suggests behavioral modification as a way of reprogramming these needs, but the implication is clear. Since these "needs" can easily be translated as history, and freedom, this is a "scientific" expression of the worst kind of nihilism and anti-humanity.

A sign of the times, this work won an award for best book of the year in neuroscience.

China's and U.S.'s imperial maneuvers

self-determination.

Likewise, politics in Taiwan have gone beyond the old nationalist Chinese rulers to include recognition of the aspirations of Indigenous Taiwanese.



Demonstration in Taiwan on Sept. 29, 2019, in support of Hong Kong protests.

developed as their ruling classes jointly exploited their working classes, should also be considered. The Pentagon farming out bio-warfare research to China exemplified

THREAT OF A NEW WORLD WAR

As the leading imperialist powers, a war between the U.S. and China would already constitute a world war, even before the involvement of their allies. It would be disastrous for humanity.

Further, a new arms race is threatening as China is expanding its nuclear arsenal and has recently tested a new low orbit missile. This must be taken seriously.

But the deep ties between the U.S. and China, developed as their ruling classes jointly exploited their working classes, should also be considered. The Pentagon farming out bio-warfare research to China exemplified

these ties, as did Gen. Milley calling up his Chinese counterpart at a moment of crisis in U.S. government.

Significantly, Chinese officials have indicated that their only concern in the Pacific is with Taiwan—and that otherwise they are willing to recognize the U.S.'s sphere of influence.

Both imperialist powers are currently experiencing economic difficulties. As imperialism begins with exploitation at the point of production, the rulers will be forced to direct attention toward controlling their own working classes.

CAPITALISM'S 'SAMSON OPTION'

Thus one aspect of this conflict is a message sent to all humanity, that our very survival depends upon the continual rule of these state-capitalist gangsters. Like the "mutually assured destruction" of the Cold War, this shows capital's willingness to bring down the temple if it is seriously threatened.

These imperialist threats demand a peace movement that links the U.S. and Chinese working classes to those struggling for self-determination under local oppressors as well as global capital.

Such a movement would be in fact a new humanism, and challenge the dismal national socialist tendencies that aim to bury every last vestige of solidarity, culture, and hope.

For a Sudanese Revolution in permanence

The concrete difficulties of the Sudanese Revolution, which since Oct. 25 has been facing a coup by the state-capitalist militarists who control much of the economy, can be seen in the blockade of Port Sudan. This blockade of the country's main port, in eastern Sudan, which began in September, has caused shortages and affected prices.

Eastern Sudan's people have been exploited and have legitimate grievances. The coup plotters have tried to play on these grievances. As they have in Darfur and other regions, the generals proposed alliances with local warlords and chieftains to lend legitimacy to their rule. In Port Sudan this meant a sinister UN-brokered agreement calling for a government of "technocrats."

REALITY OF CLASS CONTRADICTIONS

But the class contradictions in Port Sudan are also real. While local rulers officially called off the blockade, workers and tribal protestors continued it. They also expressed solidarity with all Sudanese resisting the coup, and support for the Revolution.

Local organizations released a statement: "We appeal to our people in the East and throughout the country to engage in civil disobedience and demonstrate by all legitimate means until the surrender of the putschists. We call on all actors from the sons and daughters of eastern Sudan to form committees to lead the movement from residential neighborhoods to government institutions and in every location."

"We condemn the attempts of some of the members of the former regime to hijack the name of eastern Sudan and its social components to support 'the attempt to commit national suicide,' led by Gen. Abdelfattah El Burhan.

"We ask everyone to be vigilant and wary of any attempts that may be led by the revolutionaries and the remnants of the former regime to drag the mass movement into the trap of conflicts and hate speech."

DEFENDING THE REVOLUTION

The concern for national revolutionary unity shows the maturity of the Sudanese masses.

It is a reflection of the staunch resistance of millions of Sudanese who have mobilized to oppose the coup and call for the continuance of the revolution.

In facing these maneuvers by the military, the Sudanese people are also facing off against predatory world capitalism. The coup must be defeated, but the revolution will still face deep contradictions.

Global capital, always rapacious, will want any government to wring concessions from the Sudanese workers and tribes.

Aramesh Dustdar

Iranian philosopher Aramesh Dustdar (1931-2021) died Oct. 27 in Germany. He was an important critic of the retrogression of the Iranian Revolution as it was turned away from a vision of human freedom by a counter-revolutionary religious fundamentalism.

He described the dilemma of Iranian intellectuals as "[We] are both Marxists and anti-Marxists, we love Kafka and [poet] Attar and [philosopher] Suhrawardi, and our heroic anti-industrial and anti-colonial ideas once crystallized in the revolt of Frantz Fanon. We met and, two or three decades later, we fell in love with the 'religious father of the Iranian revolution' [Khomeini]."

A world-historic freedom struggle was diverted into today's genocidal regime, which tortures dissidents with almost as much ferocity as it massacres Syrians.

THE POWER OF FREE MIND

Dustdar opposed the intellectual fetters of this regime with the power of free mind: "[T]hinking that is philosophical and whose power pervades and permeates everything cannot be taught conditionally. Philosophy... is free and unconditioned in its institution and foundation and knows no reference or standard except the power of question."

This power—which also lives on factory floors, in prison cells, and under bombardment—terrifies Iran's ruling class. In it, they see their own ruin.

Beyond this rises a revolutionary, international culture, as in Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* where Rumi's vision, Spinoza's philosophy, and Hegel's dialectic open onto the transformation of substance into free, self-determining subject; a project pursued concretely by Marx as the philosophy of revolution in permanence.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism. In light of the crises of our nuclear-armed world, climate change, and failed revolutions, it becomes imperative not only

to reject what is, but to further work out the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The recreation of Marx's philosophy as Marxist-Humanism is recorded in Dunayevskaya's archives, *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*, deposited at Wayne State University in Detroit and available to all.

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

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

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

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