

# NEWS & LETTERS

“Human power is its own end”—Karl Marx

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## No to Putin’s planned war in Ukraine

Saber-rattling rhetoric, troop movements, and threats of open warfare have accompanied rounds of diplomatic meetings between Russia, the U.S., NATO, and other European powers over the future of Ukraine.

**These threats must be opposed, and they must be seen for what they are—anti-working class counter-revolution on a world-historic scale. It is**

### EDITORIAL

**important to be clear that what is being “negotiated” over the heads of Ukrainians is the future of imperialist relations between competing blocs of capitalist powers.**

This is not the desire of Ukrainians, who since independence in 1991 have carried out two revolutions for self-determination. When local oligarchs and Russian imperialism undermined those and tore the country apart, Ukrainians tried electing current President Volodymyr Zelensky, a Trump-style “populist” with ties to both Russian and Ukrainian popular culture. He has only become more authoritarian, jailing opponents and closing opposition media, as he has become more subservient to U.S. imperialism.

#### THE WORKING CLASS IS THE TARGET

The struggle of the coal miners in Eastern Ukraine was one factor leading to the fall of the state-capitalist Soviet Union in 1991. This was a self-determined workers’ movement that allied with no state power. It continued following Ukrainian independence, until its power was crushed by Russia’s imperialist intervention in Eastern Ukraine in 2014.

**This Russian imperialist intervention cultivated ethnic separatism between Ukrainians, and also served the interests of Ukraine’s oligarchs. It is a**

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### VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

## No aid on the way out

by Robert Taliaferro

Back to the world. During the Vietnam War, military personnel who were stationed in country would often recite that expression much like a mantra. War protest songs at that time also espoused the concept of going back to the world in their lyrics.

As we fast forward, we are engaged in another war where the concept of going back to the world takes center stage. The war is defined by mass incarceration and the millions of men, women and children who find themselves engaged in a foreign cultural battlefield behind razor wire topped fences or insurmountable concrete walls.

#### WARRING AGAINST THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

The combatants are more often than not disenfranchised, underrepresented communities of color, and the criminal justice processes in all its variants and nuances. The various battlegrounds are defined by rules of engagement set by politicians, championed by police, refereed by lawyers and judges, then prosecuted by the prison industrial complex.

**The conflict always ends with decades of incarceration and billions of dollars spent. More importantly, there is no real direction of how to deal with the hundreds of men, women and children who return back to the world on a daily basis, with little but the clothes on their backs, few or no familial or social ties, and no familiarity with the cultural changes that have occurred while they were away.**

The travesty of any war is the lack of preparation on the part of the participant governments for what to do with the returning combatants once the war ends. For re-entering ex-prisoners, that travesty is multiplied by many

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## COP26: Rulers strive to stifle youth response to climate emergency

by Franklin Dmitryev

The climate emergency made itself felt like never before in 2021, giving us a taste of the future. The numerous disasters—droughts, famine and hunger, fires, heat domes, floods, storms—as well as hair-raising scientific and economic reports, had political leaders like President Joe Biden and UN Secretary-General António Guterres stepping over each other to shout the loudest that it is “code red for humanity.”

**The UN climate summit called COP26 in Glasgow, Scotland, Oct. 31-Nov. 13, 2021, was labeled the world’s “last best chance” to head off the most catastrophic prospects of climate chaos by Biden’s climate envoy John Kerry, among others. He followed this with his hope that “in Glasgow the private sector will be front and center.”**

That is, in a nutshell, the imperative for a capitalist class that is now generally convinced of the need to deal seriously with the climate crisis, and yet strives above all to keep control in the hands of the rulers and capital, even at the cost of immense suffering and death.

#### CLIMATE JUSTICE MOVEMENT SPEAKS

The opposite attitude showed itself in the vibrant protests and alternative meetings in Glasgow, at times [inside the summit building](#), and supporting events across the world, which began [before the conference](#) and continued afterwards. At times they [blocked roads](#), disrupted corporate events and sat-in outside energy corporation offices.

An estimated 25,000 people—mainly youth, including many local schoolchildren—participated in the [Fridays for Future strike](#) in Glasgow’s streets on Nov. 5, with Indigenous women and girls from Latin America at the [head of the march](#). They were addressed by Vanessa Nakate of Uganda, who asked, “How many more of these [UN summits] should they hold until they realize that their inactions are destroying the planet?” They also heard from Greta Thunberg and activists from South and Central America, Africa and Asia.

## Chile’s final break with Pinochet-ism?

by Eugene Walker

The decisive victory of the 35-year-old leftist presidential candidate Gabriel Boric in December’s election put one more nail in the coffin of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet’s fascist legacy. Pinochet’s 17-year military dictatorship (1973-1990) ruled with an iron fist, imprisoned thousands, executed hundreds, imposed a neoliberal economic regime, privatized vast segments of the economy and imposed an authoritarian constitution.

#### THE CHALLENGE COMES FROM BELOW

Even after Pinochet’s resignation in 1990 and death in 2006, Pinochet-ism has existed, particularly in the economic field, with neoliberalism’s stranglehold ensuring one of the world’s most unequal societies. Today, some 25% of the wealth produced in Chile is owned by 1% of the population. Low wages, high levels of debt and underfunded public health and education systems are Chilean reality. Center-right and center-left governments for more than a quarter of a century have done little to break from the Pinochet legacy. It has only been an ever-growing popular movement from below that has challenged that legacy, particularly in the last decade.

\* Ten years ago, massive student protests over education at the university and high-school level filled the streets of Chile’s capital, Santiago. President-elect Boric was a student leader in those protests.

\* In the most recent period, the Mapuche people intensified their demands for full autonomy. (See “Mapuche

Protesters called attention to systemic issues intertwined with the climate emergency, such as inequality, poverty, racism, sexism and exploitation of previously colonized nations. Alejandra Kopaitic of Chile said, “We need a whole system change. If we don’t change business as usual and

**how we are producing things, taking resources from the ground and over-consuming, it is going to be difficult.”**

[Grainne McGinn](#), 22, a Glaswegian who uses a wheelchair, held a sign reading, “sustainability requires accessibility,” and said, “Climate change is so important but youth voices, especially disabled youth voices, are not being heard. We’ve seen in the news how inaccessible COP has been for delegates. That’s the day-to-day experience for all dis-

abled people and it’s so important that our voices are heard in the conversation on climate change.”

The following day, [100,000 protesters came out in Glasgow](#), with [300 other events across the globe](#). The Scientist Rebellion group blocked the King George V bridge. One of them, Tim Hewlett, declared, “There have been 25 previous COPs with no measurable impact on GHG [greenhouse gas] emissions. In fact, about half of the GHG emissions have been released since COP1 in 1995.”

The following week, Nov. 9 saw a [rally for murdered and missing Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit people](#), with witnesses from the Amazon to Canada. Sii-am Hamilton of British Columbia asked of the crowd, “Remember my face. Remember because it’s not if, it’s when you will go missing, if you are involved in land rights.” In 2020, [Global Witness recorded](#) 227 lethal attacks on people defending their land, rivers and ecosystems such as forests.

#### FEMICIDE LINKED TO ECOCIDE

Delee Nikal, a Wet’suwet’en activist, added: “The femicide is directly linked to the ecocide.... There needs to be more awareness that these extractive industries, all that is affecting our climate and destroying our territories, is

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Greta Thunberg Twitter

Nov. 21, 2021, strike of high school and grade school children in Glasgow, Scotland, joined by adults as well, demanding climate justice action from and confronting COP26.

people fight for their land in Chile,” Nov.-Dec. 2021 N&L.)

\* A breaking point came with the massive Estallido Social (social outburst) of 2019-20, which began in Santiago as a coordinated fare evasion campaign by secondary school students. It led to spontaneous takeovers of the city’s main train stations and open confrontations with the Carabineros de Chile (the national police force) over a subway fare increase and then spread to cities throughout the country.

\* A “simple fare protest” quickly developed into a massive movement against inequality, privatization, corruption—the whole legacy of Pinochet-ism. President Sebastián Piñera proclaimed a state of emergency, sending the armed forces into the streets against the people.

**But the movement could not be stopped. Well over a million took to the streets of Santiago on Oct. 25, 2019. The next month, the National Congress was forced to agree to a referendum on rewriting the Constitution. In 2020 almost 80% voted for rewriting the Constitution, and to do so not via Congress and politicians, but with representatives from below elected in 2021. Comprised of 155 delegates, divided evenly between men and women—and including 17 seats for Indigenous representatives—the group is drafting a new constitution for Chile, which will then be ratified by citizens through a national plebiscite in 2022.**

This is the rebellious background to Gabriel Boric’s

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## WOMAN AS REASON

# The abortion pill is not magic

by Terry Moon

When women learned of the abortion pill, “That’s when we knew we had a solution. We didn’t need doctors any more....If

that’s the only way that people will become conscious that what the government is doing is a major violation of human rights, then yes.... We aren’t afraid. We are willing to face criminalization, because women’s lives matter more than their law.”—[Verónica Cruz, feminist activist, founder of Las Libres](#) (The Free Ones)

A cheap, effective, safe drug that causes an abortion is “revolutionary.... But it wouldn’t have been so effective in saving women’s lives without the feminist networks of accompaniment and health professionals willing to engage in civil disobedience.”—Giselle Carino, Chief Executive of Fós Feminista, an international alliance of health groups.

When the U.S. Supreme Court confirms that it is no longer a check on

Republican overreach but a gung ho member of their club and it either guts or overturns Roe v. Wade, women in 12 states will be kicked to the curb and forced to carry



Women marching in Chicago to show opposition to any Supreme Court decision that would overturn or gut Roe v. Wade. These marches were nationwide on Oct. 2, 2021.

Terry Moon for News & Letters

a pregnancy to term and have children they do not want or know they cannot take care of. The misery this will cause—including women’s deaths—will be enormous. We know, because we’ve been there before and because we know what is happening to women in other countries where abortion is outlawed.

### WILL MISOPROSTOL MAKE THE DIFFERENCE?

Many are looking at the “abortion drug,” misoprostol, as a solution. It is very safe, effective, should be cheap, and the Food and Drug Administration recently overturned an outrageous right-wing ban on delivering it by mail. But those who think this drug will be the solution to women’s abortion needs are mistaken. First, abortion fanatics are already plotting to make it illegal, threatening doctors, etc. Second, and most serious, is that getting the pill to the tens of thousands who need it will be extremely difficult. Even getting the knowledge about its existence to women who need to know about it, much less how to get it and use it, will be a mighty task.

**It will take a movement. That is why this column begins with the quotes from two activists in Mexico who are part of such a movement there. There is no question that there is a movement in the U.S. too. We see it in the Women’s Marches; the abortion funds that have made such a difference in poor women’s lives; and in many of the abortion providers themselves who struggle to stay in a business that doesn’t make them rich, but gives them the satisfaction of being able to help women when they need it most.**

It’s there in the fact that the Women’s Movement in Mexico [has already had meetings with women in Texas](#) to work out how to help U.S. women self-manage their abortions. No doubt some of this work has already begun.

### THE GOAL IS FREEDOM!

But misoprostol is not magic. For every woman who wants or needs an abortion to actually be able to get one, abortions need to be free, safe, and easily available. As it is now, and how it may become when Roe v. Wade is history, abortion—via pill or not—will be out of reach for far too many.

**Thus the Movement we are talking about can’t only have as its goal making abortion free, safe and easily accessible, the goal should be much broader: women’s freedom. Abortion is not only a right women must have, it is also code for women’s freedom because if we do not have the right to control our own bodies we clearly are not free.**

This is one key reason why the anti-abortion movement is so popular and so outrageously fanatical—e.g., being against birth control, banning abortions even if the pregnancy was caused by rape or incest, or if the fetus is dead in the womb or will die when born or be born with horrendous physical problems for which anti-abortion states give no aid. Most anti-abortion activists who are on the streets, yelling “murderer” into the faces of women walking into clinics, or staffing so-called “crisis pregnancy centers” that have no medical professionals on staff and tell pregnant women lies, are part of a movement too. Their movement is very up front about being opposed to women’s freedom.

**The U.S. right wing and wannabe fascists have usurped the word freedom and have cheapened it to mean freedom to hurt others: not wear masks or get vaccinated, open carry guns to intimidate protesters, discriminate against people of color and LGBTQ+ people, etc. When women talk of freedom, it means the right to control our bodies, the freedom to walk in the streets unmolested, even when those “streets” are online, and, most importantly, to be recognized as human.**

That’s what the abortion rights movement has implicitly been fighting for—for decades. Now is the time to make that luminously clear.

## Review of: Feminism for women

by Adele

In *Feminism for Women: The Real Route to Liberation*, the author—Julie Bindel, a radical feminist writer and activist fighting violence against women since the 1970s—noticed young feminists becoming disillusioned with more recent movements posing as feminism. Drawing upon her experiences in activism and interviews with numerous feminists and anti-feminists, she exposes these as patriarchal movements designed to oppose feminism, showing they are responsible for the loss of women’s rights and freedoms.

She defines true feminism as it was originally understood in the 1970s as a radical movement formulated by many women from their own experiences. Saying feminism is whatever any one woman says it is can be compared to saying the labor movement is whatever any one worker says it is.

### FEMINISM: A QUEST FOR WOMEN’S LIBERATION

Bindel explains feminism is “a quest for women’s liberation from patriarchy” involving changing the power structure. It is more than asking for equality, measured by the progress of successful women in the workplace and politics. “Equality” or “liberal” feminism tells women to just work harder for more income or a higher position, replacing both feminist solidarity and class consciousness with a shortsighted focus on the individual. On the Left, men preach to women how to define feminism, and abusive men have become “feminist” leaders.

Bindel emphasizes men are important as allies but must listen to and take direction from women, and women must lead feminist organizations. Women need our own spaces to discuss feminist theory and our thoughts and feelings about our own experiences and traumas. This concept has become misused at universities to create “trigger warnings” and “safe spaces,” found to be ineffective in “protecting” students from coping with subjects they may find disturbing. Feminist speakers with controversial views are de-platformed while their right-wing opponents are allowed to speak.

### THE SHAM OF ‘MEN’S RIGHTS’

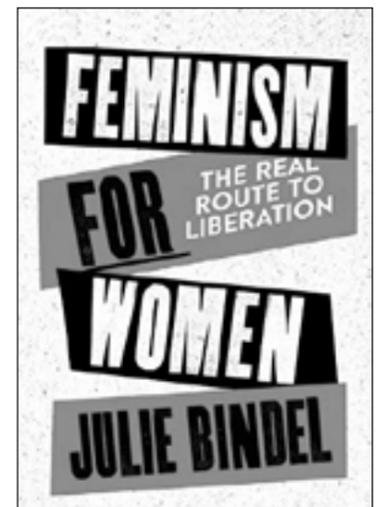
In spite of much evidence, so-called “men’s rights activists” claim women are just as violent as men and have “too much equality.” Women in denial about the extreme level of male violence and discrimination against women claim those who fight it are “victim feminists.” Sexual violence and humiliation are normalized by movements claiming BDSM (bondage-discipline, dominance-submission and sadism-masochism), fetish, and kink as part of sexual liberation, but true feminism is against every form of dominance and submission. Women describe attempting to heal sexual trauma with ritualized, sexually violent “play,” only to find it intensifies the trauma.

**That women now have some self-determination is supposed to make any choice a feminist one. The “sex workers rights” movement claims prostitution is freely chosen as a career. Bindel and other feminists exposed that this propaganda was created by pimps who groom or force girls and young women into degrading and physically and emotionally damaging service to men.**

Bindel is very optimistic because young feminists worldwide are returning to real-life organizing and activism. Even when demonstrations don’t achieve their goals, they spread hope to others, letting them know a movement is active. They are reading older feminist theorists and forming real-life groups for study and discussion.

**Bindel states, “feminism, like any vibrant political movement, has always thrived on debate,” and women find the internet can stifle this. She urges them to amplify the voices of working-class women, often dismissed by false feminism, and to “join forces across the generations.” She says to emphasize the common oppressions of women, not our differences, and constantly ask: “Who benefits from this?”**

Bindel calls feminism a “utopian” movement, imagining a better world where women are free from oppression and realizing our potential. False versions of feminism are part of the enormous patriarchal backlash. This is “a sign of the potential and success of feminism, because it indicates the anger with which those who are threatened by feminism will seek to defeat it.”



## WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In November, hundreds demonstrated at Boise State University in Idaho after a misogynist “pro-family” speech by political science professor Scott Yenor at the National Conservatism Conference. Decades of research proves the importance of women’s participation in society and equality within the family. Yet sexist men still discourage and drive women from professions and trades where they frequently excel, often stealing credit for their work. In spite of this, Yenor advocated discouraging women from education in engineering, law, medicine and all trades, claiming they didn’t really like these professions. Idaho state representative Brooke Green stated, “Women shouldn’t have to spend time today defending our value in society or rights as human beings. However, women wanted to gather to send a message saying we will continue to occupy professional spaces, whether it’s a boardroom, courtroom, or leadership role within the community.”

\* \* \*

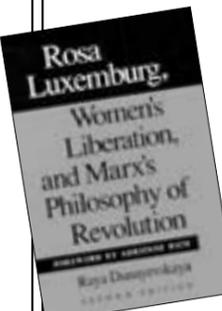
In October, in a #MeToo moment for the French porn industry, four male performers were charged with rape after 53 women performers came forward during a police investigation. They described abuse during filming, including being drugged, forced, and manipulated into humiliating acts. Anti-prostitution organization Movement du Nid stated the investigation “laid bare how the criminal porn industry is organized: a vast network of pimping and human trafficking, subjecting women to prostitution, rape, and acts of torture.” A spokeswoman stated, “This is a very important case because it shows that impunity can be challenged, it’s not a foregone conclusion.” Last year, after a previous investigation, two producers of a violent porn website received prison sentences for aggravated pimping and human trafficking.

\* \* \*

In December, hundreds of women demonstrated in Khartoum and two other cities in Sudan against security forces’ gang rapes of at least 13 women and girls at an earlier demonstration against the military coup. They delivered a memorandum signed by over 40 human rights groups and neighborhood pro-democracy “resistance committees,” demanding an investigation by the UN’s High Commissioner for Human Rights. In a joint statement, the U.S., UK, Canada, the European Union, Norway, and Switzerland condemned the use of sexual violence “as a weapon to drive women away from demonstrations and silence their voices.” Sudanese women are prominent in pro-democracy demonstrations but face pressure from male relatives not to attend.

\* \* \*

In January in India, two men and a woman were arrested for creating a website pretending to “auction” over 100 Muslim women as slaves. The photos of real women, including journalists, academics, activists, scholars, and artists, were used without their consent. Many are vocal critics of the government of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. One victim, radio DJ Sayema Rahman, stated, “This has been happening relentlessly to women for quite some time now, especially with this communal angle. It’s Islamophobia coupled with misogyny. I was targeted, and a whole lot of other women were targeted, because we are the vocal voices, we are the liberated voices, and they want to silence us by commodifying us, humiliating us and trying to scare us.”



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# Kellogg workers stood firm in strike

**Battle Creek, Mich.**—On Oct. 5, 1,400 Kellogg workers in Battle Creek, Mich.; Lancaster, Pa.; Memphis, Tenn.; and Omaha, Neb., began a strike over the company's two-tier wage system. Currently, as much as 30% of the Kellogg workforce receives lower tier wages, creating a wedge within the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM) workers.

## TWO-TIER SYSTEM

Trevor Bidelman, president of BCTGM local 3-G in Battle Creek representing 325 workers, said, "At the end of the day, we tried avoiding this for a decade, but the company, as far as concessions, wanted a two-tier benefit system going forward and will not get off it."

"I'm a fourth-generation worker here, so I fully understand what we do: we work seven days a week, that's what we do. In exchange for that, we live the American dream. At the end of the day, that's what they want to take from all of us." In September Kellogg informed the union that it would cut some 212 jobs in Battle Creek by the end of 2023.

**"This company makes hundreds of millions of dollars in profit every year. We worked through this pandemic last year and were heroes one year ago, and a month ago they said they were cutting 174 jobs," said Bidelman.**

The company attempted to out-manuever the union with an offer on Oct. 1. Bidelman explained: "The two-tier system had to be corrected. The company, unwilling to address that, tried all sorts of different ways to illegally bargain with our employees. They chose to put those



offers illegally in front of our members instead of the negotiating committee."

## UNION RALLY

Three weeks into the strike, on Oct. 27, the union held a rally across the street from Kellogg Headquarters. As Bidelman observed, "Kellogg unfortunately has done enough bad stuff to people in the city to where their big name doesn't really mean as much as they think it does. You really can't throw a rock in the city without hitting a house with somebody that's been negatively impacted."

On Nov. 3, union negotiators rejected Kellogg's "last best final offer," saying: "That offer did not achieve what we were asking, a pathway to fully vetted workers without takeaways."

Worker Travis Huffman from Battle Creek said, "I agreed to work here for certain things that they promised they would do with benefits and wages. You work weekends and occasionally get forced [to work] over 16 hours a day, and now they want to take those [benefits and wages] away from me."

## KELLOGG SUES OMAHA WORKERS

The strike became increasingly bitter when Kellogg filed a lawsuit against strikers in Omaha, accusing them of blocking entrances to its plant and intimidating replacement workers (scabs). Ten days later they threatened to hire permanent replacements. But the workers refused to give in to the threats and rejected another company offer on Dec. 5.

A week later, President Biden admonished Kellogg for its plans to permanently replace strikers, calling it an "existential attack" on the union. This palaver was followed a week later by millionaire socialist Bernie Sanders.

## 'TROJAN HORSE'

Sanders arrived a few days after a tentative agreement between the company and union negotiators was reached. During his ten-minute speech, Sanders railed against wealth inequality and corporate greed, but not a word about the desperate need for a proletarian revolution to abolish the outmoded capitalist system.

Also at the rally Bidelman perceptively called the latest tentative agreement a "Trojan horse...that's been given to us, that's going to allow us to basically harm ourselves down the road."

**Finally, on Dec. 21, Kellogg strikers ratified a five-year contract, with no concessions, according to BCTGM International Union president. The two-tier system was retained, but not permanently, as a clear path to regular full-time employment for lower tier workers was established. Also included was a plant closing moratorium through October 2026.**

The last nationwide Kellogg strike was in 1972. It lasted 21 days. The strike this time, while workers rejected two tentative contracts, lasted 78 days.

# Teachers fight for health

**Chicago**—Chicago teachers voted overwhelmingly on Jan. 4 to protect students and teachers by returning to remote learning city-wide until Jan. 18 while COVID-19 infections, with the arrival of the Omicron variant, are surging. But then Mayor Lori Lightfoot immediately retaliated by blocking access to teachers' online portals. Teachers and students agreed to hold classes—"freedom schools"—without her permission or control.

Mayor Lightfoot and her hand-picked Superintendent of Schools Pedro Martinez canceled classes, eventually through Jan. 11, while threatening not to pay teachers in the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU). The administration had set up "random" weekly testing of only those students whose parents had given permission for the test. After CTU officials outlined demands for random testing of more students before returning to in-person learning, the Mayor said, "The CTU isn't listening."

## LIGHTFOOT OBSTRUCTS UNION

She then channeled right-wing anti-vaxxer talking points, sounding a lot like Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, claiming students were safer in schools because the effect of the Omicron variant on kids was like the flu!

Lightfoot has been calling demands by the teachers an "illegal work stoppage," thanks to a state law she supports, just as she supports the law that keeps Chicago the only school district in Illinois that is not allowed to elect its school board.

## 2019 STRIKE

The last CTU "illegal work stoppage," the 11-day strike in October 2019, punctured Lightfoot's claims to be a progressive, and forced her to agree to re-staffing nurses and social workers into the schools. Yet she has botched the agreed-upon testing and contact tracing protocols by relying on teams outside the schools controlled at the District level.

**The Mayor finally reached agreement with the CTU to return on Jan. 12 for in-person instruction by committing to increasing random testing immediately to 10% of the entire student population each week, on a path toward 100% of students with parental permission to be tested.**

Those concessions were not enough for nearly 40% of the union delegates, or 45% of the members, who voted against that deal, or students who marched to City Hall in protest.

—Teamster supporter



by Tim Finnigan

Disability rights activists have registered outrage at the disgusting comments of Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, that it is "really encouraging" most COVID-19 deaths have been of people with other underlying health problems. This bureaucrat is voicing the inhumanity that killed tens of thousands of nursing home residents when COVID-19 patients were inappropriately shunted into these institutions. (This continues in a number of states.) New York State's recent decision not to pursue charges against former Governor Cuomo, one of the worst perpetrators of this massacre, shows that once again the ruling class will not hold itself accountable for its crimes.

\* \* \*

In Caerphilly County Borough, Wales, Mike Allen, a formerly homeless British veteran who suffers with post-traumatic stress disorder from the war in Afghanistan, has opened a center for people who struggle with mental health and other issues. It is a scenic castle on a rural hillside built with the aid of local farmers, workmen and veterans. Allen told the BBC, "Building the castle has been a good coping mechanism. It's been really beneficial to help others. We've had special needs children, special needs adults, pupil referral unit (alternative education) children, the local community. I still have good days and bad days and I try to push forward as best I can."

\* \* \*

The COVID-19 pandemic has spurred the growth of Disabled Student Unions on many U.S. university campuses, including American University in Washington, D.C.; Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore; Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind.; St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, and the University of California at Los Angeles. They aim to improve campus accessibility, raise awareness of issues faced by disabled students, and foster community. UCLA activist Quinn O'Connor pointed out: "When the pandemic started, the whole world was able to switch to remote and online learning, whereas disabled students have been asking for these accommodations for years, and the university has said, 'That's impossible.' But now, it's obviously possible." The university is now threatening to revoke that access.

\* \* \*

The Society for Philosophy and Disability (SPD) is a "non-profit organization open to anyone who is interested in philosophical engagement with disability and to philosophy students, researchers and teachers who are disabled." Since 2020 it has published *The Journal of Philosophy of Disability*, with one print issue so far and many online articles. The SPD can be found online at: [societyforphilosophyanddisability.org](http://societyforphilosophyanddisability.org).

# Jeep pollutes Detroit

**Detroit**—The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy said it intends to assess a fine and implement a "compliance plan" for Stellantis Jeep, which manufactures the Jeep Grand Cherokee at its Mack assembly plant. Residents have reported symptoms including "burning eyes, nausea, persistent coughing, tightening of the chest, difficulty breathing, headaches, migraines and skin conditions." Since July, 54 environmental violations have been issued.

Stellantis, formerly Fiat Chrysler before merging with Peugeot, practices environmental racism by offsetting increased emissions at the Mack plant in a Black Detroit neighborhood with lower emissions at its Warren Truck Assembly plant in suburban Macomb County.

The company admits that the new plant "emits more emissions than the former Mack engine plant" but that: "Under state law, such an increase in emissions at our new assembly plant...is required—not 'allowed'—to be offset by reductions at a different location in southeast Michigan."

Offsetting industrial emissions has no effect on combating climate change; it only trades the health of one neighborhood for another.

—Environmentalist

**Raya Dunayevskaya now available in Turkish!**

**Rosa Luxemburg, Kadınların Kurtuluşu ve Marx'ın Devrim Felsefesi Tanıtım Bülteni**

Now available in Turkish! *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* by Raya Dunayevskaya. Translated by Melda Yaman, published by Köstebek Kolektif.

From the publisher:

"Rosa Luxemburg" is much more than a philosophical biography. It is a sympathetic and critical portrayal of Luxemburg as a woman, thinker, organizer, and revolutionary. Dunayevskaya depicts Luxemburg as a passionate internationalist, anti-war, bright, brave and independent woman who believes in the spontaneity of the people. She depicts a woman who sees herself as the philosophical heir to Marx, rejecting her lover's and other men's efforts to discourage her from fully participating in "making history" simply because she is a woman, a woman "who joyfully throws her whole life on the scales of destiny."

Part 2, "The Women's Liberation Movement," is one of the most exciting and uplifting writings since the early days of the Women's Liberation Movement, where writing and organization often go hand in hand. In this captivating portrayal of women in the movement, Dunayevskaya ranges from revolutionary leaders to activists in the Women's Liberation Movement, from literati to philosophers, from working women on strike to Black women rebelling against their male comrades, both around the world and throughout history.

In the final part, Dunayevskaya draws attention to the fact that Marx is the only philosopher of the "total revolution," that is, a revolution that will touch and transform all human relations, a *revolution in permanence* that will never end. She underlines that Marx discovered a whole new continent of thought and revolution, and creatively brought together struggling concepts and practice in harmony.

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**Coming next issue: Interview with Melda Yaman, the translator**

Cover design by Sinem Can

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's note: Raya Dunayevskaya's letter of June 1, 1961, excerpted here ([Raya Dunayevskaya Collection #12813](#)), focuses on Hegel's Absolute Idea, both as part of a dialogue with the China scholar Jonathan Spence (see "Jonathan Spence, 1936-2021," p. 11), and part of the process of writing what would become *Philosophy and Revolution* (1973). At this early stage, she described it as "the new book on Marxist Humanism and the African Revolutions," in her June 3, 1961, *Weekly Political Letter*, "A Brief Outline of the New Book" ([RDC #13851](#)). There she mentioned that she was forwarding a copy of this letter to Spence since it explains "Hegel's Absolute Idea in terms of what it means to the book and the whole world's objective development." She was in dialogue with Spence as she developed her critique of Mao Zedong, stressing that Hegel's Absolute Idea was crucial for confronting problems of the day, such as the need to "counterpose the self-activity of the African revolutionaries to the administrative and actual exploitative shackles of state-capitalism plus the misnamed 'commune' militarized forced labor" (as in Mao's China), "the struggle for world power between the U.S. and USSR," and "what happens after revolution's success."*

### Dear Jonathan:

...It is time to go straight to the most "abstract" part, essence, of Hegelian philosophy, "The Absolute Idea" of his *Science of Logic*, to show how we live in the age of absolutes, and that the "subject" (Man, though he is "dehumanized" in Hegel as mere thought) has already absorbed all "objectivity" (science, world stage of technology, past history) and now the new society depends on all his "subjectivity" (not petty-bourgeois ego, but what Hegel calls "the individual, purified of all that interferes with his universality" [Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind*, ¶481], and Marx calls "the social individual"<sup>1</sup> who, however, is the only proof of the freedom of all, so that never again are we to counterpose "society" to the "individual" since he "is the social entity").<sup>2</sup>

**Follow through that last chapter, the most exciting 20 pages in all the world's literature, philosophical or real:**

1) Hegel begins by saying that we have reached the Absolute Idea which "has now turned out to be the identity of the Theoretical and the Practical Idea" and that this can be seen in the fact that "The Notion is not only *Seele* [soul] but also is free and subjective Notion, which is for itself and therefore has personality."<sup>3</sup>

Now many have stopped here and therefore I must warn you against that word "personality," so popular a word now both with African leaders and De Gaulle. In that very same paragraph, nay, sentence, Hegel goes on to explain that this personality "is not exclusive individuality, but is, for itself, universality and cognition, and in its Other has its own objectivity for object." **The key word is "Other." It will turn out to be "its own Other" for otherwise we would once again be confronted with a subject and its "other" (or opposite) as object whereas the whole of the logic depends on doing away with the opposition of subject and object. The greatness of Hegel is that, although he worked only with thought, he got that "other" worked out not as a "have," a possession, an object, but as an "is," that is, a dimension of the human being.** Until we do reach that point, and we still have 19 pages to go, the "personality" is not much higher than Fichte's Absolute Ego. The key word, "Other," then will turn out to be the universality of the individual, and until that moment we are barely on the threshold of the new society (that is what Absolute Idea is, you know).

Next he equates Logic to the "self-movement of the Absolute Idea...The self-determination therefore in which alone the Idea is, is to hear itself speak" (*SL*, p. 825).

The identity of history with logic so that the whole of the development has merely been the *unfoldment* of this Absolute sounded as the pinnacle of idealism in the 19th century. Indeed, were it not for the fact that Marx turned Hegel right side up and we could see that it wasn't "God" who "posited" himself on earth and the freedom of man came as a consequence, but, *vice versa*, that the struggles of man for freedom changing with each method of production on a higher level finally created the material foundations for total freedom and a new society via the class struggle (those two absolute opposites, labor and capital)—until Marx, in a word, Hegel couldn't tear himself out of theology, despite the fact that in his philosophy religion takes a back seat to philosophy.

By the beginning of the 20th century, "self-determination" became much more famous as self-determination of people, rather than ideas. But this shouldn't mean either that action "takes the place of" ideas, or that anything less than the *unity* of theory and practice can "evolve into"

1. *Grundrisse* by Karl Marx (Vintage, 1973), pp. 708, 749, 832.  
2. *Marx's Philosophy of Revolution in Permanence for Our Day* by Raya Dunayevskaya (Haymarket, 2019, hereafter referred to as *MPRIP*), p. 334. Excerpts of Marx's 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, included in *MPRIP*, were published in English for the first time in Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*.  
3. *Hegel's Science of Logic* (Humanities Press, 1976, hereafter referred to as *SL*), p. 824.

# Absolute Idea and self-liberation

a new society. If all we'll hear is Castro's voice, and *not the people speaking*, we do *not* get either the self-determination of the Cubans as people or the Cubans as thinkers who have finally overcome that most monstrous fact of alienated labor that Marx showed got its apogee in the division between mental and manual labor.

It is because thought is so close to life that Hegel could, in isolating thought *but* carrying its development through to its logical conclusion, come to the conclusion that it is all a question of method. The Second International was fast on the trigger, and tried to isolate method as a tool that could be "used" by anyone. They therefore could never *create* or, more precisely, have the proletariat create a dialectic of its own, but retreated to Kantianism and "men of good will" solving contradictions—and ended by sending worker to shoot worker across battle lines drawn up by their bourgeoisie. **Hegel here stresses that because logic is self-movement, that therefore "the logical Idea has itself as infinite form for content." In a word, you cannot abolish the difference between content and form unless this self-activity is its content. Only then, does content "as such" vanish and "the universal element of its form" is "the method" (*SL*, p. 825).**

And only then can Hegel draw the conclusion: "The method therefore is both soul and substance, and nothing is either conceived or known in its truth except insofar as it is completely subject to the method; it is the peculiar method of each individual fact because its activity is the Notion" (*SL*, p. 826).

**Activity, self-activity; determination, self-determination; movement, self-movement; method that is movement, source and action, thought and practice thus becomes Absolute Method, not in heaven, but among the earth people struggling for total freedom.**

Now let's break this Absolute Method down to see how it is subject, method, and object, and not a mere tool "to be used." Hegel says that, while we "must begin from the *beginning*," the beginning is nothing as simple as is usually imagined for it must be both simple and universal, and not just "abstract universality" but be "concrete universal," "that is, that which is *in itself* the concrete totality, but not as *posited* or *for itself*," for "It is the Absolute only in its completion" (*SL*, pp. 827, 829).

To reach completion, we therefore begin with an immediate that has been mediated but still is one-sided. You can call it first negation or analytic but you know that to be *objectively* universal it must also be synthetic. It is in the unity of the two moments that we will reach the "dialectic moment," and it is here, too, that we will first meet "Other" as "its own Other," thus:

"This equally synthetic and analytic moment of the Judgment, by which the original universal determines itself out of itself to be its own Other, may rightly be called the *dialectic* moment" (*SL*, p. 831).

It is at this point that Lenin, you will recall from the *Philosophic Notebooks* at the end of *Marxism and Freedom*, bursts into the definition of dialectic, singling out no less than 16 elements—objectivity, manifold relations, development, tendencies, unity of opposites, struggles (including contradictions and impulses), unity of synthesis and analysis, summation, totality, the singular and the universal, each end the whole, transitions, new sides, deepening appearance and essence, causality and universality, content and form, negation of negation—only to sum up the whole at the end as "simply" the "doctrine of the unity of opposites."<sup>4</sup>

When something is as rich as the dialectic, it is indeed hard to define it as any one thing, or as 16 things, because *for each age it is different*, that is to say, it is all the things and more, but *the one element that gets singled out as having gained by contact with the present can only be proven in life.* Hegel himself, for example, to stress the primacy of Thought, singles out its unity with Being: "The object in its existence without thought and Notion is an image or a name: it is what it *is* in the determinations of thought and Notion" (*SL*, p. 833).

**...For our age it is the unity of theory and practice, or the answer to the question of "what happens after" [revolution], plus the subjectivity that has objectivity in it. So let's get to that stage:**

First here we will have to watch the *second* negation; *all* the difference between revolutionaries and compromisers, which means those who retrogress in the end to the old, not forward to the new, lies in the distinction between first and second negation, that is to say, it is not just the abolition of the old, or the revolution, but the *transcendence* to what Marx called "positive Humanism,

4. *Russia: From Proletarian Revolution to State-Capitalist Counter-Revolution* (Haymarket, 2018, hereafter referred to as *Russia*), p. 104. Excerpts of Lenin's notebooks on Hegel's *Science of Logic*, included in *Russia*, were published in English for the first time in Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*.

beginning from itself," *not* stalling at the first negation, or transcendence, such as communism, or atheism, for "Only by the transcendence of this mediation, which is nevertheless a necessary presupposition, does there arise *positive* Humanism, beginning from itself." And why Marx insisted that "communism, as such, is not the goal of human development, the form of human society" (*MPRIP*, pp. 352, 340).

OK, let's get to that second negation as Hegel sums it up: "The negativity which has just been considered is the turning point of the movement of the Notion. It is the simple point of negative self-relation, the innermost source of all activity, of living and spiritual self-movement, the dialectic soul which all truth has in it and through which it alone is truth; for the transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality, and that unity which is the truth, rest upon this subjectivity alone" (*SL*, p. 835).

We have reached the point in the Absolute Idea which no other age could quite see it in all its concreteness as we do when we look at the African Revolutions that have truly nought of "material foundation" and yet are so far advanced as to fight for freedom without a single look backward. And while Mao's China's shortcuts may entice their leaders, it certainly doesn't them, who know that abolition of the opposition of Notion and Reality does in truth rest upon them alone, and because it does "rest upon this subjectivity alone" little Guinea dared say "No" to empire-builder De Gaulle.

Another reason that only our age can see is that no one previously, not even Lenin, could think of stopping to emphasize this passage and its paean to "personal and free": "The second negative...is no more the activity of an external reflection than the contradiction is: it is the innermost and most objective moment of Life and Spirit by virtue of which a subject is personal and free" (*SL*, pp. 835-36). And again: "The beginning was the universal; the result is the individual, the concrete, and the subject; what the former is *in it-*

*self*, the latter now is equally *for itself*..." (*SL*, p. 837).

Nor is there any longer a difference between inner and outer: "Each new stage of exteriorization (that is, of further determination) is also an interiorization, and greater extension is also higher intensity" (*SL*, pp. 840-41).

Finally, *since* "the pure Idea of Cognition is enclosed in subjectivity, and therefore is an impulse to transcend the latter; and, as last result, pure truth becomes *the beginning of another sphere and science*" (read: another society) **THEREFORE transition** is no longer "a perfected becoming" but "is an absolute *liberation*....Consequently there is no transition in this freedom" (*SL*, p. 843).

**All the rest of that last paragraph sings of freedom as RELEASE ("the Idea freely releases itself"), and "By reason of this freedom the form of its determinateness also is utterly free—the externality of space and time which is absolutely for itself and without subjectivity." Because having absorbed objectivity it no longer exists "as mere objectivity," but "arises to perfect its self-liberation in the *Philosophy of Spirit*" (*SL*, pp. 843-44).**

It is most important, for our age, to understand why, instead of going on with the paragraph on liberation, Lenin had stopped at the very first sentence in it, which read: "For the Idea posits itself as the absolute unity of the pure Notion and its Reality, and thus gathers itself into the immediacy of Being; and in doing so, as totality in this form, it is *Nature*" (*SL*, p. 843). Lenin disregards the rest of the paragraph, stressing that the *Smaller Logic* indeed ends with this sentence, and then remarks, "Stretches a hand to materialism" (*Russia*, p. 105). Further: "It is remarkable: in the whole chapter on 'The Absolute Idea' there is almost not a single word on God (scarcely a 'godly notion' slips out even accidentally) and moreover—this NB—the chapter almost does not contain *idealism* specifically, but its main object is the *dialectic method*. The sum and summation, the last word and gist of the *Logic* of Hegel is the *dialectic method*—that is extremely remarkable. And another thing: in the *most idealistic* work of Hegel there is the *most materialism*. 'Contradictory' but a fact."<sup>5</sup>

That is true, but it is not the whole truth, or, to be precise, it is not the whole truth for *our* epoch. We needn't prove the materialism of Hegel, but rather the idealism (materialistic idealism, but idealism nevertheless) of Marx which has been so perverted by the Stalins, Maos and Khrushchevs. When the "what happens after" revolution's success has become that monstrous opposite, state-capitalism, it is "freedom," the "release," "the personal and free," the *truth* which rests upon "subjectivity alone" that comes to the forefront, and all else are but first negation which must again be transcended and "only by transcendence of this does there arise *positive* Humanism, beginning from itself." Our task is to concretize this, *just this* Marxist Humanism....

Yours,  
Raya



Tanganyikans demanding independence from the British Empire in 1961.

# Marx's demystified dialectic and the 'new society'

by Ron Kelch

Karl Marx's immediate freedom Idea, a universal, human species essence that is ever open to the new, can be a beacon in our time of angst over the future of humanity and nature. Ours is a time of extremes, a time of multiple total crises—ecological, economic, political, including a genocidal scapegoating of minorities, and multitudes crossing borders everywhere, searching for freedom and survival. Ours is also a time of widespread despair and hopelessness about the future in the face of a 1930s-style, globally stalled capital accumulation with its political devolution into other-hating fascism, fomenting new forms of genocide and ever new realignments for another round of total war.

Marx's dialectic of freedom in-and-for-itself, which demystified and unchained Hegel's dialectic of life, can help those reaching for a different future. For Raya Dunayevskaya, Marx's lifetime of revolutionary practice, inseparable from his recreation of Hegel's freedom Idea, helped her make explicit "the new society" as Hegel's "self-thinking Idea"—the culmination of Hegel's dialectic of freedom in his final syllogisms in *Philosophy of Spirit*.

**Dunayevskaya, who had long called ours an "age of absolutes," posed in one of her last writings (June 1, 1987) a task for each generation to recreate the revolutionary dialectic anew and meet the challenge not only from practice but from the self-development of the Idea.**

Looking forward, this generation of multiple new freedom movements confronts a given political-economic reality that offers no hope for a future for themselves or humanity. Looking back after a similar period that led to holocaust, WWII and the Bomb, Jean-Paul Sartre had an early, though short-lived, moment of clarity. Sartre declared that metaphysics is not about abstractions, but in our time everyone is a metaphysical writer compelled to confront that freedom and the human are the absolute.

## KARL MARX'S IDEA OF FREEDOM

Marx never wavered from following out the principle of the human as the embodied Idea of freedom. Unlike Hegel, Marx's Idea of freedom is directly part of life and nature. Marx demystified Hegel, who had to extrapolate how to anchor his "pure Idea" in actual life and then nature.<sup>1</sup> Marx's universal is the human capacity to make an object out of their own life activity and to freely determine it.

This freedom Idea always comes up against, and never "merges" with, any given way human life activity and relations with nature are socially structured and materially limited by the level of development of productive forces. The specifically human dimension of life activity is to "produce in freedom" beyond the realm "of immediate physical need"<sup>2</sup> and beyond the given social necessity that mediates the individual's "free play of their own physical and mental powers" (*Capital*, 284) in their engagement with nature.

The Idea of humans freely determining their life activity repeatedly asserts itself, whether with respect to the environment, family relations, sexuality, an oppressed minority's assertion that their "lives matter," or one's everyday work life, which under capitalism means selling one's ability to labor as a commodity, and experiencing one's life activity as an alienated mere means to life.

Workers, who have been persistently challenging the ruling algorithms and competition with robots that reduce their working lives to something less than human, are now staging a wave of strikes and a silent but massive revolt that is wreaking havoc for the capitalist labor market. (See "[Workers, from union to gig, reject rules that bosses try to reimpose](#)," Nov.-Dec. 2021, *N&L*.) The Great Resignation is a massive rejection of workplace lives of disrespect and abuse laid bare during the pandemic. There is surely no lack of Reason, coming from multiple angles, in the mass opposition to the alienating organization of life activity under capitalism.

Youth enliven all of today's revolts. In the unfolding apocalypse of human-caused climate change, the youth certainly know the facts, the science, and theirs is a generational, international, human demand for a future for everyone. The appeal is beyond politics to a new social humanity or, 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 humanity's self-alienation

1. Karen Ng's *Hegel's Concept of Life: Self-consciousness, Freedom, Logic* (Oxford UP, 2020) shows how much Marx owed to Hegel's "mysterious" anchoring his "pure" freedom Idea in Life. My review-essay "New focus on Hegel's 'naturalism' impels another look at Marx" is a more thorough take on the continuity/discontinuity in the dialectic in Hegel, Marx and Dunayevskaya.  
2. *Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Collected Works* (International Publishers: New York) vol. 3, p. 276, further referenced as "CW" with the volume number and page number in the text, except for the commonly used Ben Fowkes translation of *Capital*, Volume 1 (Penguin, 1990), which is referenced with "*Capital*."

is the Idea of humans freely determining their life activity whether with respect to the environment or one's everyday work life. Youth Against Apocalypse's banner, "We Are the EARTH Protecting Itself," certainly would have resonated with Marx, who wrote, "that the human's physical and spiritual life is linked to nature means simply that nature is linked to itself, for the human is a part of nature" (CW 3:276). Yet resonance with a particular moment of the multiple ways Marx's Idea is determined to appear is not enough.

## MARX'S IDEA IN-AND-FOR-ITSELF

The unifying Idea in Marx's philosophy of revolution can only come into full existence if, as Hegel put it, it "hears itself speak." The Idea begins in Marx from a new embodied multidimensional freedom with respect to human life activity that is inseparable from nature.

*What Is Socialism?* recounts Marx's view that capitalist private property alienates the human laborer from "their own activity...from each other, from nature" (p. 10). Crucial for today is the universality of Marx's absolute opposite to alienated labor, namely, humanity's species-character, their multidimensional human essence as free determiners of their life activity.

**In the 1844 essay "Private Property and Communism" Marx rejects unthinking communism that is still beholden to the concept of ownership when it substitutes collective ownership for private property. Marx then singles out not labor in any narrow sense, but woman/man as the relation that most clearly reveals how human a society has become, or "to what degree human essence has become [their] natural essence ... to what degree another human being is needed as a human being," namely, needed as a free determiner of their life activity.**

Marx examined man/woman relation to pose the positive in the freedom Idea beyond communism's arena of property. The positive can only be grasped as "the actual appropriation of human essence," a unity of humanism and naturalism and a revolution deep enough to experience a new unified movement of thought and actuality. As Marx put it, the "actual appropriation of human essence" means that:

"The whole movement of history is...on the one hand, its actual act of creation—the act by which its empirical being was born; on the other hand, for its thinking consciousness, it is the realized and recognized process of development" (CW 3:296-7, alternate translation).

The whole of history is the coming to be of human essence as "empirical" fact. However, as "empirical" fact this ongoing emergence is "incomplete" without it being thinking consciousness's self-recognized process of development. Marx's Idea cannot be confined to communism as goal, but, rather, it is the ongoing self-actualization of the embodied freedom

Idea, which is the movement of the fact that is equally the act of cognition. In this way "nature is linked to itself, for the human is a part of nature."

## NATURE AS HUMAN

Marx notes approvingly that Hegel has to turn to nature at the end of the *Logic* to overcome Hegel's abstract self-separation from nature. Karen Ng (see footnote 1) doesn't discuss this moment of Hegel's development of the freedom Idea as Life.

**Hegel's Idea becoming nature has been as great a source of mystery and controversy among Hegelians and Marxists as Hegel's introduction of life as the immediate Idea. Dunayevskaya dismisses any reduction that Hegel "deduced" Nature from the Idea" or that it represents, according to Marx's overused metaphor, "that Hegel is standing on his head."<sup>3</sup> Marx noted that Hegelians got "such terrible headaches" at this point because here Hegel finally "abandon[s] abstraction and...arrives at an entity which is its exact opposite—at nature" (CW 3:343-4).**

Dunayevskaya later (April 3, 1987) summarized Marx's uniqueness with respect to the Idea becoming nature in Hegel: "...just consider how far in advance it is even of Lenin. Nature is not Practice. And Nature is not Sartrean exteriority. Nature, says Marx, is true essence 3. See "Hegel's Absolute as New Beginning," Dunayevskaya's October 1974 paper delivered to the Hegel Society of America, reproduced in *Art and Logic in Hegel's Philosophy*, eds. Warren E. Steinkraus and Kenneth L. Schmitz (Humanities Press, 1980), p. 170. Further referenced as HSA. This remarkable 1974 conference collection includes Murray Greene's "Hegel's Concept of Logical Life," which anticipated the new focus on Hegel's "naturalism."

because you can't separate Nature from Human Nature." (*Raya Dunayevskaya Collection #10887*.)

True essence, which for Marx is the freedom Idea that is directly part of life and nature and which is the absolute opposite of alienated human life activity, is the perspective from which Dunayevskaya approached Hegel's suggestion that the Idea's full self-liberation would only come in his *Philosophy of Spirit*, where, indeed, Hegel returns to nature in his conclusion.

## NATURE AND THE NEW SOCIETY

The living movement of Hegel's naturalism is in the syllogisms of the Idea's self-movement or "the self-thinking Idea," occurring at the end of *Philosophy of Spirit*. Dunayevskaya saw Hegel's "three final syllogisms in Absolute Mind as a new point of departure in the Idea and in the movement from practice" (HSA, 172).

Here (§575) Hegel begins a syllogistic sequence with where he ended the *Logic*. Logic-Nature-Mind has Nature as mediation, the whole between its presupposition Logic which it couples with Mind (Geist, Spirit, the social-individual).

The Idea appearing as Nature still has "the external form of transition," a sequential, transitional moment which is "implicitly the Idea." Nature manifesting the drive to be free is, in Marx's terms, the irrepressible drive for "human essence" to appear.

Marx calls such an empirical manifestation of the Idea "incomplete" because it still seeks immediate "historical justification by seizing on the particular moments of the process of development" like communism's opposition to private property (CW 3:297, alternate translation).

The maturity of our age has repeatedly revealed that the movement from practice is itself a form of theory manifesting itself in Nature "as implicitly the Idea." The implicit Idea appears in multiple dimensions as human essence manifests itself as Nature. Human essence is unchanging but there are ever "new forces and new passions" (*Capital*, 928) demanding recognition of their humanity as they confront societal barriers to freely determine their own life activity.

**However, our age has also revealed the "incompleteness" of immediate historical justifications, without the Idea's self-determination, "the process of development" standing on its own and "hearing itself speak," so that the Idea isn't forgotten as merely part of another transition.**

In the second syllogism (§576) Mind presupposes Nature, and is the whole uniting Nature and Logic as it "reflects on itself in the Idea" and "philosophy appears as a subjective cognition, of which liberty is the aim, and which is itself the way to produce it." Marx's human essence, or freedom with respect to life activity that is directly part of nature, becomes for "thinking consciousness...the realized and recognized process of development."

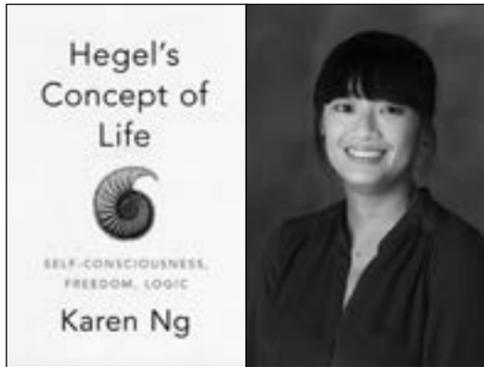
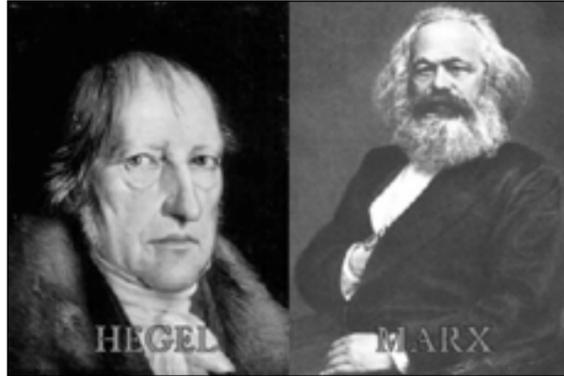
In Hegel's final syllogism (§577) the whole is *not* Logic but the Idea on its own, dividing *itself* into Mind and Nature. Dunayevskaya called this not the sequential "but the consequential *Self-Thinking Idea*," which, as Hegel puts it, "is the nature of the fact, the concept, which causes the movement and development, yet this same movement is equally the action of cognition" (HSA, 171).

In 1953 Dunayevskaya concluded, "we have entered the new society" (*Power of Negativity*, p. 30). Likewise, Marx's refusal to confine his Idea to communism or any historical moment that immediately justifies itself through its opposition to the old anticipates entering the new society as ongoing self-actualization of the embodied freedom Idea as the movement of the fact that is equally the act of cognition.

The true positive in the negation of the old (negation of the negation) can never accept any immediate historical justification like communism as "the goal of human development, the form of human society" (CW 3: 306).

The true positive is the self-recognized movement of the Idea, which Marx called "positive humanism beginning from itself" (CW 3:342, alternate translation).

Our time can appreciate that the Idea itself pulls to a different future, whether in Hegel scholars discovering Hegel's naturalism or multiple revolts from below challenging capitalism's statist politics and ideological delusions driving humanity over the abyss.



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## LABOR: TEACHERS FACE POLITICIAN BOSSES

Nationwide, teachers are under a renewed attack as the false idea gains traction that if schools are open the economy will recover. In Georgia and elsewhere, it is now illegal for schools to enact mask mandates. In Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed a law enabling school districts to impress into substitute teaching any staff member who holds a high school diploma. My first thought was: will they be given a substitute's pay on top of their regular wage? When I was teaching, I had great respect for school support staff. Most of them cared about the students and developed relationships with them that supported what we teachers were able to do. Many teachers oppose the law on the grounds that these staff people are not professionally trained. Hopefully they realize that: 1. Teachers are not the only ones who can educate a child; and 2. This kind of law opens the door for reducing pay for certified teachers. For this they can thank teachers' unions, which too often did not fight for the working conditions of school support staff.

Retired Teacher  
Michigan

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Despite Omicron, cities, states and school administrators are determined to keep the schools open at all costs. On Jan. 5 at 11 PM the Chicago Teachers Union voted a work stoppage until Jan. 18 to allow time for testing and data collection. Chicago Public Schools had told parents to get children tested, and return the results by Jan. 6, but didn't give out tests. Their disorganization and lack of communication

to the teachers and parents was appalling! A reporter visited a test kit drop box that had not been collected—test kits were overflowing and surrounding the boxes on the ground in below freezing temperatures. There wasn't even a backup plan to give children laptops. It's heartbreaking.



Elementary Teacher  
Illinois

## LABOR: AUTOMATION AND THE NEW HUMANISM

"Automation and the New Humanism" (Nov.-Dec. 2021 *N&L*) was startling. Automation requires another way of thinking. The visible proletariat are moved from one country to another. That section of the population is smaller in the U.S. but larger in the Third World. It becomes apparent that the worker has no country. In 1948 unionized musicians were resisting the mechanical reproduction of music, which was a boon, but jobs were lost. If the musicians' union had addressed that new phase of capitalism, the machine, things might have been different. Machines still dominate our lives. Marxist-Humanism is the only part of the Left that gets it.

Union member  
New York

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## PRISON ACTIVIST RESOURCE CENTER (PARC)

PARC's National Resource Directory focuses on rehabilitation and social justice. Its 24 pages feature 23 categories such as Legal Resources, Innocence Projects and Educational organizations and publications. We print once a year, and update the directory weekly on our evaluation sheet, included in each mailing. Our website has the entire directory available online. Prisoners receive it from PARC, the publisher. A FREE directory can be sent to prisoners across the country. We are not a law office and can't make referrals to attorneys.

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www.prisonactivist.org

# READERS' VIEWS

I am participating in an online Marxist-Humanist study group on Marx's *Capital*. Already, when discussing concrete and abstract labor in Chapter I, the question of where is the working class at the present moment was raised—especially in light of many defeats in class struggles. This may shed light on a deep problem in much of the Left focusing on questions of unequal distribution and the market rather than Marx's insistence on focusing on capitalist production. So it was timely to read the recent From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya column with its discussion of "Automation and the New Humanism" (Nov.-Dec. 2021 *N&L*). Her emphasis on workers thinking their own thoughts if we are willing to listen, seems right on target for today, when ideas from below are so often just ignored. Her pointing to the unity of the Abolitionists and Marx as a crucial moment before and during the Civil War speaks to today. Capitalism's voracious appetite for surplus value (and with it profits), has turned so much of society into "proletarians," that specific causes and movements seen as separate turn out to have much in common. Class and race dimensions are not in isolation from one another but in human liberation struggles can unite forcefully if the Idea of freedom is the energizing principle.

Eugene Walker  
Mexico City

## SOCIALISM, STATISM AND PHILOSOPHY

I read Franklin Dmitryev's *Reader's View* in the July-Aug. 2021 *N&L*. I happen to know Bhaskar Sunkara and many of the other editors and writers for *Jacobin*. To be clear, I'm to the left of Bhaskar and often disagree with him. [As Dmitryev stated], *Jacobin* does not receive a dime from any business interests, let alone the nuclear industry. As recently as two years ago, Bhaskar worked a part-time job and took a meager salary. I think the statement that *Jacobin* believes that "the answers to all problems center on technology, technocrats and the state" is a misunderstanding of their politics. The *Jacobin* staff are all Marxists, albeit of the more reformist variety. I often disagree with *Jacobin*, but to their credit they are non-sectarian and often publish views to their Left. Whatever the various real flaws of *Jacobin*, no other publication in my lifetime has introduced so many to Marxism. It is my most sincere hope that more people discover *N&L* and Raya Dunayevskaya.

C. Henderson  
Marianna, Fla.

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I just have to respond to Franklin Dmitryev's "Excerpts from the Introduction to the new pamphlet on 'What Is Socialism?': Marx's Humanism, Marxist-Humanism and Socialism" (March-April 2021 *N&L*). First I want to say that the article stood out above all others because it addresses foundational problems we face in today's society. One of the core issues in the article highlights how the labor class sees statism as the enemy. This is relevant because it addresses the major difference between state-capitalism (often confused with socialism) and a true to form people's socialism. A people's socialism would never concede their freedom to a state that has more power than the people it governs. That is contrary to socialism and in my belief that is Stalinism, not socialism. That is what we have today. State-capitalism, a government that is not for the people but for monetary inflation—and, yes, that is the enemy of humanism.

Joseph Davall  
Calipatria, Calif.

## FAKE 'RIGHT TO LIFE'

I'm angry at the so-called "right to life" movement. It's time for a major reality check for those claiming to be fighting for the rights of the "unborn." Every day

10,000 children worldwide die horribly painful deaths from starvation. With each passing day our planet is approaching the point where the massive starvation of children will become epidemic because of global warming and the breakdown of the world's agriculture. The continuing spread of nuclear weapons and tensions between the world's superpowers threaten all children on this earth—born, unborn, and ever to be born—with ultimate death from nuclear war. Where are the concern and protests against these impending catastrophes from those so opposed to abortion? It's time for the "right to life" movement to return to the real world from their "holier-than-thou" conservative Christian idealism.

Peace activist  
Northern California

## EVICITION TSUNAMI

In Detroit, more and more people are begging for help in response to evictions. One woman moved to a new apartment, but is not staying there because it is rat-infested. The landlord threatened to take her remaining possessions and rent it to someone else. Because of COVID-19 the court holds closed sessions and no one without a direct connection to the trial can participate. As a result, the proceedings are not public.

Marxist-Humanist  
Detroit

## AGRIBUSINESS vs. PLANET

"U.S.'s distorted agriculture" (online only) is true—and so much more. The consolidation of land into large agribusiness holdings and loss of sustainable family farming to large corporations. This and federal benefits skewed to large farms had led to Black farmers disproportionately losing their land. Then we could talk about farming practices: lack of genetic diversity in cloned crops can make entire fields susceptible to the same insect and disease pests. Pests evolve resistance to chemical pesticides, and chemical fertilizers do not provide everything needed to create healthy, resilient soils. The short-term search for profit leads to long-term wastelands. The dustbowls in the Midwest during the 1930s should be studied today.

Susan Van Gelder  
Detroit

## AFGHANISTAN EXPLOITED

I enjoyed especially the reporting (Sept.-Oct. 2021 *N&L*) on how the "invasion" of the country of Afghanistan by both Russia and the U.S. benefited the warlords that did control the ancient country, and basically still do. Despite claims to the contrary, the U.S. never goes into a country to "liberate" poor people, farmers, or women. It goes in because of some economic advantage—usually oil or mineral resources. When I was a prisoner at the State of Corruptarado's Kit Carson facility, we had a horticulture teacher who before taking the prison teaching job had applied to the CIA for an analyst job. As part of his application he had to do a research report on a world hotspot. He chose Afghanistan. He found that the country has large deposits of copper and lithium and that the U.S. was there to protect the Chinese workers who were building the railroad into China where the mined ore would be processed.

Prisoner  
Cañon City, Col.

## TAIWAN FACES CHINA AND U.S.

Love the article "China's and U.S.'s imperial maneuvers" (Nov.-Dec. 2021 *N&L*). The Taiwanese people for years now have not seen themselves as Chinese but as Taiwanese. This shows with not only

electing the progressive party's candidate Tsai Ing-wen three terms in a row but also the surveys and polls show only about 15% of Taiwanese citizens consider themselves Chinese. This whole show of power is just another example of the overgrowing state-capitalist threat from not only China but the U.S., which is becoming more authoritarian every day. I hope that more human beings resist this whirlpool of capital accumulation and fight back.

William S.  
Texas

## DESMOND TUTU

I am very grateful Rev. Desmond Tutu lived and I was shocked at his death, although he lived a long, meaningful life that benefited many. Rev. Tutu was a proponent of human rights, including being an anti-racist who helped defeat apartheid in South Africa, and an ally to LGBTQ+ people. Though he did not see South Africa transform into a country completely free from oppression, including from racism and classism, he is an inspiration to me and, I hope, to many in the world.

Yoga Teacher  
Chicago

## WITH THE MIGRANT CARAVAN



Alfredo López Casanova

Thank you for the in-person report about immigration in Mexico. (See "With the migrant caravan in Mexico," online only.) It's so disheartening that there is this historical change toward migrants over the decades. I had hopes for López Obrador, but I saw immediately after he was elected president of Mexico how quickly he gave in to the U.S.

Diana Sabina  
Chicago

## U.S. vs. PALESTINIANS

Regarding "Solidarity with Palestinians needed as state powers scheme," July-Aug. 2021 *N&L*, I do not completely agree with Gerry Emmett's analysis. Emmett did not specifically name the U.S. as the principal supporter of Israel's horrible oppression of the Palestinian people. He called attention to Israel's connection with the capitalists of Russia, China and India. But it is the U.S. capitalists who are the most committed group supporting Israel's unending violence toward the Palestinians. It was President Trump who backed even greater reactionary forces and actions in Israel. I hope *N&L* will consider this in determining the next article devoted to ending the occupation of the Palestinians and preventing more violence in this terrible and chronic conflict.

Rama Kumar  
Fairfax, Calif.

## To our incarcerated readers

Prisoncrats sometimes choose to return an issue to us undelivered. 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.

**RACIST CENSORSHIP**



There's proposed legislation in Oklahoma to withhold 10% of state funds from public institutions if they teach any parts of the "1619 Project." This makes the

Scopes trial in post-World War I Tennessee seem minor by comparison. Oklahoma was formed as a territory decades after slavery, yet shares a common attitude with slave masters.

**Bob McGuire**  
Chicago

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I am overwhelmed by how much forces of counterrevolution released by Trump are trying to make USA into another Afghanistan. They have completely turned the clock around: In 2020 the media were all discussing Black Lives Matter; now they are focusing on "Critical Race Theory" being shoved down the throats of innocent white children. Very innocuous books are being banned from schools and libraries on the strength of parents' objections.

**Steve**  
Detroit

**LEARNING FROM 1619**

For years now, I have used quotes and examples from American revolutionaries such as George Washington and Ben Franklin to make my points. I recently finished reading the *1619 Project*. It was an eye opener. Washington, Jefferson, and many other "founders" were slaveholders. Even Lincoln held off on the Emancipation Proclamation until he deemed it politically and militarily expedient. I may well continue in this vein, but with eyes wide open. There is no country for young or old workers. A new patriotism must be created—a patriotism of planet Earth.

**Curtis**  
Kalamazoo, Mich.

**BACKLASH TO WOMEN, BLACKS**

It's important to point out that when women demand respect, there's a mentality that interprets demanding respect to destroying men. Critical Race Theory is just telling the truth of history but an in-

terpretation is that it is destroying white people. This is so aligned with ancient patriarchy.

**Anna Maillon**  
Los Angeles, Calif.

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**RACISM AND THE FAR RIGHT**

With the first-year anniversary of the right-wing storming of the Capitol, there were rightfully a multitude of analyses and commentaries on the event. However, the vast majority were rather superficial, discussing the threat of neofascism (quite real) and the need to protect "liberal democracy" by running for office in local elections, passing voter protection legislation, etc. Rare was the analysis that posed the need to examine capitalism itself, and specifically in the U.S., the fact that the long history of white supremacy has always undergirded the deep contradictions of American civilization's vision of democracy. Without a serious analysis and concrete steps to uproot this foundation of our society, fascism will remain and return again and again.

**Civil rights veteran**  
Los Angeles

**CENSORSHIP IN PRISON**

I am another youth oppressed by this capitalistic state that deprives us of our so-called liberty and freedoms for profit. I have been incarcerated for two and a half years in this for-profit system of corruption and oppression. This country does nothing for us but impose their own views on the masses and disallows views of those who stand against this system. I am barred from ordering books that I politically align with. My wish to order *The Communist Manifesto* was denied. I am requesting a subscription to your newspaper.

**Prisoner**  
Stockton, Calif.

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I must report the heavy hand of government censorship has struck down on me with a mighty blow. Last year the North Central Unit mailroom claimed that the book *They Can't Kill Us All* by Wesley Lowery promoted racial violence. It is written from an African-American point of view. A previous head at the mailroom allowed an inmate to have this book. Now our mailroom workers claim that the [May-June 2021 issue](#) of N&L promotes violence. This is not the only crazy thing. I get *Our Daily Bread* every other month. The address card contains a Bible verse and full

color landscape picture on the other side. With the new mailroom coordinator, I have not been getting the card. Newsletters from places like Titus House Ministries, a religious group, are now photocopied instead of coming in with their color intact. [See article page 8.] The prepaid envelope for my Salvation Army Bible study was declared contraband and destroyed. Another inmate had his copy of *The Watchtower* denied him. They photocopied the front cover and sent it to him, then shredded his religious material. Our mailroom morons need to be fired!

**Prisoner**  
Calico Rock, Ark.



**THE 13TH AMENDMENT AND SLAVE LABOR**

A giant issue today is that the lifeblood of prisons is slave labor. Prisons could not function if prisoners did not do all the physical work. The U.S. is the only country in the world that has legal slavery in its Constitution—the Exclusion Clause of the 13th Amendment. I've been informed that more than 65 organizations are involved in the effort to: 1. Take the Exclusion Clause out of the Amendment, or 2. Pass an Amendment that bans slavery as punishment. I know you love giving ink to discussions of Marxist theory—how about devoting space to something that really could make prisoners' live better, stopping slave labor and how prisoners can join the fight for abolition.

**Prisoner**  
Cañon City, Co.

\*\*\*

*Editor's note: We also love giving ink to riding the Constitution of the Exclusion Clause. If you search [newsandletters.org](#) for "13th Amendment" you'll find Faruq writing on "Prisoners discuss impact of 13th Amendment," Robert Taliaferro on "George Floyd and the 13th Amendment," and a dozen more articles and Readers' Views. Thanks for bringing this important issue up again for our readers.*

**INCARCERATED IMMIGRANTS FACE RACISM**

At California Health Care Facility, we are fighting the good fight for those of us who are not fortunate to have "legal" status in this country. The VISION Act (AB937) introduced in the California legislature last year would end harsh double punishment of incarcerated immigrants who are handed over to ICE after completing their prison terms. CDCR has no legal reason to hand people over upon their release, yet they choose this racist policy. California is a sanctuary state. While other people who pay their debt to society return to family and community, incarcerated immigrants face deportation simply because of where they were born. We urge everyone to help keep families together by supporting AB937.

**Prisoner**  
Stockton, Calif.

**TRANS WOMEN ABUSED IN PRISON**

I'm not sure if you can help or not but doesn't the Prison Rape Elimination Act and federal law, as well as the Mandela Rules, prohibit routine cross-gender strip searches? This place is using male staff to strip-search Trans women. They are refusing to provide women officers to do the search, not even providing a female chaperone. They force Trans women to be alone with one male officer and be stripped and examined. How is this legal?

**Prisoner**  
Torrington, Wyo.

\*\*\*

Federal law determines gender by genitalia and Trans women are placed in men's prisons. This is a recipe for state-sanctioned rape. My friend's name is Yanna, and she is an incarcerated Black Trans woman. Like most Trans inmates her crime was financial in order to raise money for transition surgery. Since her incarceration in 2014, she has been raped a documented 135 times, including gang rape and rape by a staff member. She suffers from undiagnosed PTSD, and rarely leaves her cell. She is safe at this facility, and people look out for her. We are fighting for her compassionate release.

**C. Henderson**  
Marianna, Fla.

TO OUR READERS: Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to N&L?

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# Homelessness & the needed humanism

by Faruq

**San Francisco**—Market Street is the main artery for San Francisco's political, financial and cultural powers. Because the street has lights, the homeless congregate there at night for safety. The Orpheum Theater put on a performance of *My Fair Lady*, a musical about a homeless girl, singing: "All I want is a room somewhere/ Far away from the cold night air..." She is picked to be groomed as a high-class lady.

## HIDING THE HOMELESS

We, Urban Alchemy, who work on Market Street, have to get the homeless away from the theater, so that the fine high-class people—who pay \$\$\$ for the ticket, \$20 to park their car, a lot more if they want a dinner before, or refreshments after—can walk into and out of the theater without seeing an actual homeless person.

**All the money going into the "homeless problem" is spent on mediators: not just Urban Alchemy, but an army of street cleaners, social workers, various medical services. If those resources were actually provided to the homeless, maybe they could get off the street.**

The question of "solving" homelessness seems overwhelming. But where you have to start is simple, you have to be human. Little incidents, like helping a blind man negotiate a street full of obstacles, have to become a general sentiment. Empathy is recognizing that what you want for yourself you want for others. Everyone's life matters. The abyss I see every day on the street says clearly that Black lives don't matter.

**Acknowledging humanity in your neighbor, in the homeless people on the street, is the beginning of the change we need. A universal principle throughout all those particular situations is relating to another human being as a human being, including especially their need for a basic shelter.**

There is a cry for Black businesses as a solution. But to be in business, you have to sell things, usually for more money than what one pays in large stores. When your Visa card is your philosophic rudder, it is not freedom. Capitalism muddles your brain.

There are echoes of Booker T. Washington in what Nipsey Hussle did in Los Angeles. In his 1895 speech Washington advised, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Hussle built a shopping mall in the hood, helping the community. Even though he was fatally shot outside his store in March 2019, he made a dent. A Nipsey Hussle lyric is "what they call you in the hood, N..." For people of my generation, your reputation in the hood was everything. A bond represented by what they called you in the

## Untitled (Unexceptional and Unforgettable)

Ode to my first three years of solitary confinement, commissioned by the founder of Los Angeles's Compassion Prison Project.



"I'm going abroad now. please feed the fishes."; his last and lonely wishes.

Scrawled red on the wall, but in no way violent; in forced solitude and deftly silent.

Well-nigh a decade then, he'd lived next door; plagued and poor, El Bay the Moor.

Though we'd never met, we never let the other alone;

brotherhood as weightless as a bird bone.

As lighthouse sand windmills trade signals at dawn; reflections for revolutions daily shared with a yawn. He'd say, "Don't ever cave, rule your cave; the trick is to be brave, but not too brave."

No, we weren't proud of our address, but we still had a name; be it a Moor's, mine, or yours, we're all one and the same.

The forgotten, the disgraced, the one-night stands; figure 8s on broken skates in subterranean lands.

I can't fight back the tears that I'll never cry; he was meant and made by them to die. They threw at once the rock, the paper, and the scissors; to bludgeon, to conceal, to carve mental fissures.

They found a martyr on cold concrete that night; for them, it wasn't too firm, rather just and right. He chose to sleep, and it was hardly a choice; Rendered lifeless since they first entombed his voice.  
—Charles Tooker, Soledad, Calif.

hood used to be meaningful. Now, it has no value. Snitching has become commonplace. Someone will sell you out for a nickel.

My people, cats on the street—white, Black, Brown—don't talk about freedom anymore. The talk is about getting money. Money is a palliative for what is wrong, but it is not a substitute for freedom. All former prisoners I know want to have a car. Some people work three jobs to have a BMW. The spate of "smash and grab" actions are all about trinkets. Why do people get so caught up with money that way?

## THE HUMANISM OF FRANTZ FANON

Harriet Tubman was right, she could have freed more slaves if they knew they were slaves. That's what I see on the streets today. People don't see any alternative to chasing the dollar.

Capitalism engenders selfishness, breaks down your connections to others. Frantz Fanon said, white man laughs when he hears Black man talk about unity, because he knows many things he can use to set people against each other. What we learned in solitary at Pelican Bay prison is that we have to work out for ourselves the human connection to others across racial lines, overcoming the prison-enforced racial designations.

We used to have study groups in the yard. A frequent group project was to write two pages on Black history. Many reports focused on the drive to end slavery. It was a form of humanism, a demand for slaves to be recognized as human beings. But humanism has to have a life after ending formal slavery. I have to ask myself constantly, what happens after Pelican Bay? We have to learn from Fanon, whose humanism kept going deeper into the idea of freedom in order to set afoot a new human being not only for Black people fighting racism but for the whole world.

## No aid on the way out

continued from p. 1

factors. They suffer the same traumas as returning combat veterans, but unlike military veterans who have the support of their country and organizations to help them see their way free of the horrors of their respective wars, returning felons do not have such networks.

## STARTING ANEW WITH STRIKES AGAINST THEM

They are not considered viable members of their communities. They are prevented from getting many jobs they may be the most qualified for because of their ex-felon status. They are denied housing in some areas, licenses, even the ability to achieve higher education, depending on their felony record.

With all those roadblocks in their paths, they are still required to pay any remaining judicial obligations they may have incurred; they must pay bills just like any other citizen in the community; pay for required treatment as a condition of their release—regardless of whether it is needed or not—and regardless of what those added expenses may do to their limited budgets.

**If a parolee or probationer chooses eating, paying their taxes or other bills over paying the fees for a "mandated" program, they could very well end up back in prison on a violation for days, weeks or even years.**

It is no wonder that some ex-felons decide that being inside makes more sense than being in a world that no longer exists for them, and they find ways to return to prison.

Sadly, we can justify spending \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year locking up people regardless of the offense, yet we can't justify a small portion of that amount to be used for viable approaches to reentry services for those same individuals.

**This society has fine-tuned the logistics of incarceration down to a science: arresting, investigating, trying, convicting, housing, clothing, transporting, guarding and feeding millions of prisoners around the country with martial efficiency. Yet when it comes time for people to return to their communities, they are left to their own devices to find housing, transportation, and jobs, even after decades of confinement. When they fail, the logistics of incarceration fire up again in lockstep to gladly welcome them back to the fold.**

We, as a culture, need to do better. When any citizen fails because society refused to extend its resources to help that person, regardless of their status or social condition, then the culture is a failure as well. When that happens, the culture's obtusely arrogant expressions of greatness belie its true nature: a society of lies.  
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*Writer's note: After nearly a quarter century of contributing to this column in News & Letters, this will be my last submission from this particular aspect and condition of our culture. By the time that you read this, I will be a free man after over 38 years of confinement. I will be working diligently with the News and Letters Committees family while I am back in the world, along with other organizations which have sought my counsel over the years. Nearly four decades of confinement leaves an indelible mark on one's soul. To the brothers and sisters still confined, I promise you this, you will never be forgotten.*

## VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

### New prison policy violates the law

The Wisconsin Department of Corrections recently enacted a policy in which it contracted with an outside source to photocopy mail sent to its incarcerated wards, to begin within thirty days. They made this contract to reduce the influx of psychoactive substances some have sent through the mail. While the agency may enact such a policy, it may not do so in a manner that impinges upon the rights of the incarcerated, nor contrary to duties it must perform as established by law.

#### PHOTOCOPIES ROB PRISONERS AND FAMILIES

First, incarcerated persons have a property interest in the original mailings. While the DOC may disallow the originals from an institution, the agency must have a mechanism by which the incarcerated may dispose of those original mailings—be it mailing or shipping them to friends and family, or throwing the items away.

**A photocopy of a child's drawing lacks the value of the original, both to the child artist as well as the parent or family member recipient. To destroy the original without permitting recovery steals something from that family, hindering, in some ways, rehabilitation.**

That property interest creates a Constitutional Due Process issue. The department must have a legitimate means for the incarcerated person to protect an original mailing sent to him or her. Oddly, the DOC already has policies for the incarcerated to "dispose" of disallowed items, it has simply decided to illegally rescind them through the use of a contractor.

Second, one of the mechanisms of the new policy returns to sender any mail that arrives directly to an institution. State and federal law require a prison to process mail, therefore an institution violates the law by returning mail to sender. What message does a correctional facility breaking the law express to people incarcerated for breaking the law?

**Additionally, a 30-day window for prisoners to inform their friends and family of changes, which expired just before the holidays, seems counterintuitive to rehabilitation. Studies show that outside support aids reentry success. How will this policy affect those who irregularly write their incarcerated friends and family? The USPS allows six months for changes of address, why can't the Wisconsin DOC follow that model?**

Third, the incarcerated have a statutory right to receive gift money in any negotiable form sent to them at an institution. Although the department has contracted with another vendor to manage most incoming money, how will the vendor contracted to photocopy mail perform the duty created by statute? And, if an institution will return to sender any mailing it directly receives, and if that mailing contains gift money, it then just as clearly violates a right the incarcerated have, and neglects a duty it has an obligation to perform.

#### A WASTE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Fourth, destruction of original mail items implies that the contractor will test each piece of mail (and photograph) it receives for drugs. A review of drug-related incidents suggests only a small percentage of individuals engages in the illicit smuggling of drugs. Why not focus on those few who break laws using the USPS to enter illegal substances into prisons? Instead, the DOC would violate the rights of the incarcerated to test 100% of incoming mail. What a waste of taxpayer dollars.

While people incarcerated in prisons have done more than skip Sunday school, they spend time separate from society as their punishment for crimes. Each retains his or her basic human dignity, and maintains many of the basic rights granted all American citizens. For the Wisconsin DOC to ignore that violates more than statute. Dostoyevsky said that if you want to measure a society you need only look to its prisons.  
—Sean J. White

Have you always wanted to know more about socialism?

### What is Socialism?

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

To order see page 7



# Attack on abortion harms democracy

The raging attack on abortion rights is an attack on freedom. The anti-abortion mob would force women to have babies they do not want or feel they cannot have, especially poor women and women of color—those who have the fewest options in our pretend democracy. Yet the only ones speaking and fighting against the anguish that will be unleashed are women. Outlawing abortion will certainly lead to death, if not outright from back-alley abortion, then from doctors waiting for a fetus’ dishonestly named “heartbeat” to cease while a woman in a health emergency sickens and dies—her *actual* heartbeat held hostage to a group of cells no larger than the end of a finger.

## ‘LEADERS’ FAIL WOMEN

While many women tie their hopes of saving abortion rights—which is a “right” even now for fewer and



Chicago marchers showing opposition to any Supreme Court decision that would overturn or gut Roe v. Wade. The message of this sign is that when abortion is illegal women die.

fewer women—to the Democratic Party, no one has held Democrats’ feet to the fire. Cowards that they are, neither Barack Obama nor Joe Biden, or for that matter Kamala Harris, have used their bully pulpit to tell the truth about what will happen to women when—and who is kidding themselves these days by saying “if”—Roe v. Wade is trashed.

**They should be shouting about what happened to 31-year-old Savita Halappanavar in 2012, whose death from septicemia after being denied an abortion during a miscarriage led to overturning Ireland’s ban on abortions; of what happens to women in El Salvador—especially peasant women—who are unfortunate enough to have a spontaneous miscarriage and are falsely accused of abortion and jailed for the next 30 years. (Approximately 10% to 20% percent of pregnancies end in a miscarriage.) They should denounce the lies being spewed by Trump’s Supreme Court, two of whose members are sexual predators.**

Pundits and politicians are only arguing about how anti-abortion politics will impact who may be elected in the future. The media, instead of wasting space in endless opining about the Supreme Court’s legitimacy, should accept the fact that they now have *none* and get on with telling the world how many women died and were maimed before abortion became legal in the U.S.; and how many U.S. women now are being jailed for spontaneous miscarriages or for taking prescription medication while pregnant.

And while we’re at it, let’s stop lying that any of this has to do with concern for women—the biggest lie of all. It has to do with punishing and controlling women; with getting even with a women’s movement that transformed our reality, that dared to challenge men’s control not only of women’s lives but of the world.

## FASCIST ATTACKS ON WOMEN’S FREEDOM

There’s a reason that tyrants and fascists—including Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, Polish President Andrzej Duda, Russia’s dictator Vladimir Putin, our own rapist ex-President Trump, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan, as well as Brazil’s executioner Jair Bolsonaro, Turkey’s misogynist leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Taliban who now rule and ruin Afghanistan, and others—attack and undermine women’s freedom whenever and however they can.

Trashing women is an extremely popular thing to do while you’re on the way to creating fascism. Is your country’s economy tanking? Are your people dying by the

## Chile’s new beginning?

continued from p. 1

electoral victory with some 55% of the vote—under the banner of *Frente Amplio* (Broad Front), a coalition of left-wing groups—going against Jose Antonio Kast of the Chilean Republican Party, an admirer of Pinochet.

One hopes that Boric is correct when he proclaims, “If Chile was the cradle of neoliberalism, it will also be its grave.” While his election is to be cheered, there is a vast difference between a Left electoral power, which will face a sharply divided Congress, and the powerful Left movement which has been growing in the streets over the past decade—students, a women’s movement, Indigenous land occupations—demanding not reforms, not only an end to Pinochet-ism, but a new way of life and labor.

hundreds of thousands in a pandemic you bungled from the beginning? Is pollution killing your population; fires burning your forests, and rivers and lakes overflowing and flooding communities? Are you involved in an unpopular war?

## EDITORIAL

**What can you do that won’t cost you a thing? Go after women’s right to abortion, to birth control; take your country’s signature off UN resolutions to end violence against women; rescind the law that made it illegal for a man to rape his wife while joking about how some women are so ugly that you wouldn’t even rape them; start a campaign to guilt women into having more children because your population is dropping and make it extremely difficult for them not to have children if they get pregnant. These actions will win you a fanatical, loyal base who will also be racist and hate immigrants and LGBTQI+ people.**

Women keep asking ourselves: Why do I have to keep fighting the same fight? At least part of the answer is that the attack on women—just as the attacks on Black people and immigrants—is central to the task of undermining democracy and saving a decrepit, unworkable, exploitative, racist-patriarchal capitalism. And it seems to be working for the fascists very well.

## No to Putin’s planned war in Ukraine

continued from p. 1

**familiar post-Cold War pattern. As we saw in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosnian miners in Breza and other cities were central to the support of besieged Sarajevo and a multi-ethnic state. They remain a force today.**

Likewise, Romanian miners were participants in that country’s revolution. Activists recorded the way the post-Ceausescu government then promoted ethnic hatred of Roma to defuse their militance.

## THE EXAMPLE OF KAZAKHSTAN

The January uprising in Kazakhstan sheds light here. This is a legitimate mass struggle against both political repression and economic exploitation, sparked by the government’s massive increase in gas prices. Again, there is a history of revolt among the country’s oil workers—ten years ago, at least 14 striking workers were massacred in Zhanaozen.

Beneficiaries of this kind of repression include corporations like Chevron, ExxonMobil, and Shell, which partner with the Kazakh government.

**It should come as no surprise to find, near the center of this knot of exploitation and repression, the wastrel son of the current U.S. president. Hunter Biden described the former Kazakhstan security chief Karim Masimov as a “close friend.” Like Biden’s payoffs from Ukrainian energy company Burisma, it illustrates how the “democratic” Western ruling class, alongside former Communist oligarchs, took advantage of the brutal primitive accumulation of capital following the end of the Cold War.**

The Russian (with Armenia and Belarus) imperialist intervention in Kazakhstan, followed by treason charges against Masimov, is another aspect of the current realignment of world imperialism. In truth, we are already seeing a low-level world war.

## THE STARK CHOICE FOR HUMANITY

Today’s world crisis is total—economic, political, and philosophic. The competing state-capitalist powers can offer us nothing but the prospect of another war that, between nuclear and biological weaponry, puts the survival of humanity in doubt. They are barely hiding it anymore. Despair is their new normal.

**Yet all of post-Cold War history shows that working people’s struggles have pointed to an alternative way of life, of cooperation and coexistence. There is no necessity for tailending any imperialist power.**

The distinction of humanity in nature resides in our power of choice—in our freedom. That choice now amounts to either transcending the inhuman logic of capitalism, or following it yet again into war. In the words of Afro-Ukrainian songwriter Gaitana, “You’ve got so much from angels, but from demons as well.”

We say no to war in Ukraine, and yes to freedom and self-determination for all people, and to revolution in permanence!

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# QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Nobody’s Darling, the new Queer bar in Chicago owned and run by Lesbians of color Angela Barnes and Renaudo Riddle, is challenging racism and misogyny within Chicago’s Queer community. The bar is near the Northalsted neighborhood, formerly called Boystown, which for years has been noted for racism and misogyny (see “Queer Notes,” *N&L* March-April 2021, and “Expose demonization of Black Gay youth,” *N&L*, Sept.-Oct. 2011). Which is not to say that all of a sudden racism and misogyny within the LGBTQ+ community outside of Boystown suddenly magically disappears. Nobody’s Darling’s clientele includes people with a variety of sexual orientations, gender identities, races, genders and classes, monogamous and polyamorous.

\* \* \*

Rebecca Juro, Trans journalist, radio host and advocate for Trans rights, died from a recurrence of lung cancer. She was 59. Media colleagues and Trans community members expressed their sadness and hailed her legacy. Juro contributed to periodicals, including *The Advocate*, *Gay City News* and the *South Florida Gay News*. She also launched an Internet radio show *The Becky Juro Show* and email blast *Becky’s List* where she wrote about Trans life and politics. Her mantra appropriately was, “the T is not silent.”

\* \* \*

Crowds cheered in Chile’s streets, waving Mapuche, Women’s Liberation and Pride flags, as their president-elect, progressive leftist Gabriel Boric, gave his acceptance speech. (See article on page 1.) Boric overwhelmingly defeated misogynist and anti-LGBTQ conservative Jose Antonio Kast. In December, outgoing President Sebastián Piñera signed the same-sex marriage bill that recognizes same-sex parents and grants full spousal benefits and adoption rights.

\* \* \*

South Korea’s National Health Insurance Service prevailed in a lawsuit Gay man So Seong-wook brought, hoping for restoration of his spousal benefits on his partner Kim Yong-min’s employer’s health benefits. In early 2020, So was placed on the health plan, likely the first instance of an unmarried same-sex partner gaining that right. He was later removed from the plan after South Korea’s news media reported the story. South Korea, still, only recognizes marriage between one woman and one man. LGBTQ+ group Chingusai responded that the court showed through its cowardly decision that it just didn’t want to touch the issue. While homosexuality is not banned in South Korea, anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination is also not banned.

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The online *News & Letters* does not wait for a deadline to post articles, editorials, essays and analyses of ongoing local and world events—we update as things happen. If you want to keep up on Marxist-Humanist reporting, post comments to begin a dialogue, or order literature, then check out the online paper regularly.

### Recent online-only articles:

- \* “Rittenhouse acquittal: U.S. criminal injustice system, vigilantes, politicians target liberation movements and ideas”
- \* “Women WordWide” on Afghanistan; Turkish women march against violence; women in Poland demand legal abortion; and 7,000 women in Spain protest male violence
- \* “Free speech and revolution”
- \* “With the migrant caravan in Mexico”
- \* “U.S.’s distorted agriculture”
- \* “Deadliest Transgender Day of Remembrance”

# COP26: Rulers stifle youth response to climate emergency

continued from p. 1

intertwined with violence against our women and girls.”

The following day, a [protest outside JPMorgan Chase headquarters](#) in Glasgow included about 30 frontline Indigenous activists holding “Air back” and “Ice back” banners. “We are fighting against the pipelines, against the capitalist institutions,” said Nikal.

Guiquita, of the Waorani people in Ecuador, told the

March for Science



Frankie the Dino joins the youth at the school strike for climate in Glasgow, Scotland, on Nov. 5, 2021.

crowd her ancestral territories are “being destroyed by oil companies that continue to destroy and cut down trees, and they’re destroying the last rainforest we have left.”

## RADICALIZATION OF IDEAS

As always there was a People’s Summit confronting the official summit of nation-states and their corporate partners. This time it was organized by the [COP26 Coalition](#), with [200 events](#) such as workshops, forums, artistic presentations, rallies and a people’s tribunal. The tribunal found the UN framework guilty of failing to address the roots of the climate crisis, and the colonizing industrial countries and China plus agricultural, mining and food corporations, guilty of destroying the Amazon rainforest. Participants demanded that action to fight the climate crisis be effective and just, eliminating fossil fuels, and entwined with decolonization, reparations, feminism, anti-racism, agroecology, free trade unions, peasant-led struggles, disability rights and Indigenous rights, and opposing—in their words—false solutions, climate capitalism, neoliberal agendas, green colonialism, militarism and criminalization.

[Asad Rehman of War on Want](#) proclaimed: “Even today in the corridors of power, in the negotiations, our governments are making decisions which basically say the lives of Black, Brown and Indigenous people, of the poor and of women, are not worth saving...and the priority is the extraction of profit.”

Many participants pointed out that this was the [least inclusive COP](#) ever, with the pandemic, vaccine apartheid, travel restrictions, and high costs preventing many country delegates, scientists and activists from attending. Most who got to Glasgow were shut out of the negotiating rooms, while [fossil fuel lobbyists outnumbered any country’s delegation](#).

How much the movement has developed is reflected not only in the predominance of youth among participants and leaders—especially young women, people of color, and people outside of gender-sex norms—but in its development in ideas. It emphasizes system change not climate change, or #UprootTheSystem as the call of the [Sept. 24 climate strikes](#). It has brought to the fore what they call MAPA—Most Affected People and Areas—the differential relations of power, exploitation and oppression between nations and between classes and social groups within nations.

## ENERGY TRANSITION AS SUBSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

In the face of multiple movements from below, the rulers tightened their grip on the UN process and the discourse around climate. A great deal of their rhetoric and action aims to limit the “rapid, far-reaching and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society” that [scientists have been saying](#) for years is needed. Even the International Energy Agency—a brainchild of Henry Kissinger that is close to the oil industry—dramatically warned last May that there must be “no investment in new fossil fuel supply projects, and no further final investment decisions for new unabated coal plants,” and internal combustion car production must be quickly phased out.

**This is what the rulers want to confine to an “energy transition,” a technical change from one set of energy sources to another. Even that is kneecapped by their tender concern for the welfare of fossil fuel capital—not for its workers, however, as much as they are used as pawns to justify continuation of the status quo.**

For governments and businesses, the overriding need is to keep decisions in their hands, and not allow any real

self-determination from below. One key part of their approach is to frame the issues around supposedly keeping our hallowed “way of life,” without allowing us to ponder how we have been forced into this alienating way of living dependent on oil, private cars, long commutes to punishing work weeks, social isolation, an explosion of plastic materials containing toxic substances, and subjection to constant surveillance and systematic manipulation built into social media, entertainment, education, “smart” devices, and so forth—let alone the specter of falling wages, job loss to automation, increasing weather disasters, famines, mass displacement, more pandemics and supply chain breakdowns.

**Oil companies are waging a concerted campaign to convince us all that we need them, they provide the oil our lives are engineered to depend on, they are the experts on energy, they have the capital, so we should leave it up to them to transition us.**

In circumstances of ongoing destruction of the environment on which society depends, at most the “way of life” of the wealthy can be preserved for a time at the expense of the billions who will suffer increasingly.

## STOP DIGGING

This approach to COP26 yielded plenty of rhetoric and grand announcements with little actually accomplished.

What complicates the negotiations is competition between the U.S., China, Europe and other countries, characterized by what Karl Marx called “the most fundamental right under the law of capital...the equal exploitation of labor-power by all capitalists.” In keeping with this right, climate agreements lack any kind of enforcement mechanism. In contrast, trade agreements contain draconian enforcement tools, some of which are [being used right now](#) by energy companies to stop governments from restricting oil drilling. Repealing that sacred right was, of course, not even suggested at COP26.

The last-minute change to the Glasgow Climate Pact, rammed through by India and China, got a lot of press—changing the aspiration of a coal “phaseout” to “phase-down”—but that press attention gave short shrift to the larger problem: that what was missing from the Glasgow pact, the Paris Agreement, the Kyoto Protocol, and in fact everything from the UN climate process, was a complete, rapid elimination of fossil fuel production and use, and the global construction of the infrastructure and other conditions needed to make that feasible without turning numerous countries into sacrifice zones.

**Instead, nation-states and corporations have showered the world with lies. While the summit was underway, the [Washington Post](#) reported “a giant gap between what nations declare their emissions to be vs. the greenhouse gases they are sending into the atmosphere,” amounting to billions of tons a year, plus huge exaggerations of how much carbon dioxide trees are absorbing.**

The biggest accomplishment of COP26 was the opposite of helpful: detailing rules for a [global carbon offset market](#), oriented toward expansion of profits based on [false solutions](#), some of which cause harm, while benefits of others are exaggerated. Countries take credit for “solutions” like [burning wood pellets for energy](#) and claiming it as “carbon-neutral.” In Robeson County, North Carolina, a predominantly Black and Indigenous population is suffering from the pollution of a factory turning trees into these pellets, which are sent to the UK to be burned, with the process subsidized by both countries’ governments.

**The European Union proposes to add nuclear power and natural gas to its list of allowed “sustainable investments.” [Indonesia](#) proposes to [redefine palm-oil-driven deforestation](#) as reforestation.**

In fact, as soon as COP26 was over, the Biden administration promptly held a [record-setting auction](#) of leases for 308 oil and gas drilling tracts in the Gulf of Mexico. China [ramped up coal production](#) on the eve of the summit. The UK [backtracked](#) from plans to phase out natural gas home heating. Germany, even with the Greens now in a coalition government, undercut its goal to eliminate coal by weasel-wording it to: the phase-out will happen “ideally” by 2030.

Watching what they do, not what they say, we can see that the [world is headed for](#) two and a half to three times as much global heating as we have already had, which

would be far more than three times as disastrous as the 1.1°C warmup we are already suffering under. Emissions keep rising, and so does the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. U.S. emissions from energy and industry [rose 6.2% last year](#).

## WHAT PATHS OF DEVELOPMENT?

The summit’s biggest issue of all, loss and damage, was unresolved at the summit. Essentially, the countries suffering most from climate change, which in general contributed the least to it, want reparations, which the imperialist countries refuse to discuss. Instead, they grant miserly aid, mostly loans to already debt-saddled nations and repackaging of existing aid, and most of it is geared toward profit-making projects for multinationals. In place of reparations, the term “loss and damage” was invented, so that the poorer countries could beg for help surviving the mounting destruction of climate change. Even that, however, is still up in the air.

The African revolutions of the mid-20th Century posed a non-capitalist path of development, but that was undermined by neocolonialism from without and, at the same time, the separation between masses and leaders weighed down by lack of technology and capital, who turned to one of the two poles of world capital and ended up treating the masses as mere labor power.<sup>1</sup>

Just at the moment when creative new actions and thinking are raising the possibility of alternative, anti-capitalist paths of development, the powers that be are working hard to reduce that too to a mere “energy transition.” Consequently, they would limit aid to grants and loans from states, state-controlled multilateral lenders and private banks, and head off solidarity from below.

**The masses of the previously colonized countries are portrayed as a threat to jobs and borders, rather than the ones with whom the masses of the industrialized countries could join together to create a totally new way of life, determined by freely associated human beings—in which, as Marx put it, wealth exists to satisfy human beings, as opposed to the worker existing to satisfy the need of existing values to increase themselves.**

The overall approach of keeping control in the hands of capital, at a time when militant movements are challenging it and demanding much more radical action, is part of the impetus for the global trend of attacks on democracy and criminalization of social movements. That fact makes all the more unrealistic the capitulationist attitude of so many anti-capitalist theoreticians and activists whose thought is depressed by the urgency of the climate crisis and the ascendancy of counter-revolution, so that multiple ones—from [Noam Chomsky](#) to Andreas Malm<sup>2</sup>—say there is no time to overthrow capitalism, so we have to work within it. This leads to appeals to use democratic institutions at the very moment that they are being drained of democracy, and they have already proved completely incapable of any serious action with regard to climate other than ramping up militarism, closing borders, letting climate migrants die in the Sonoran Desert or the Mediterranean Sea.

Giving up on revolution means capitulating to capital’s control.

The only practical approach is a revolutionary one that is part of the struggles from below and raises the banner of a new society where the human relationship with nature and technology is not determined by capital but by freely associated human beings.

1. See “The African Revolutions and the World Economy,” chapter 7 of *Philosophy and Revolution* by Raya Dunayevskaya.
2. Chomsky: “The time required for succeeding at such efforts is simply too great for addressing this crisis. That means we need to solve this within the framework of existing institutions, which can be ameliorated” (“Noam Chomsky: ‘It Doesn’t Have to Be This Way,’” *Jacobin*, Oct. 27, 2021). Malm: “No dual power of the democratic organs of the proletariat seems likely to materialise anytime soon, if ever. Waiting for it would be both delusional and criminal, and so all we have to work with is the dreary bourgeois state, tethered to the circuits of capital as always” (*Corona, Climate, Chronic Emergency: War Communism in the Twenty-First Century*, Verso, 2020).

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# Don't Look Up movie speaks to threat of climate chaos

What would humanity do if faced with an Extinction Level Event? This is the focus of the dark comedy *Don't Look Up* directed by Adam McKay. Satire has been used throughout history to get people to look at themselves; in this case, McKay was extremely effective. His choice of Leonardo DiCaprio as a main character, an astronomer who helped to discover the comet, isn't a coincidence as DiCaprio has had a real-life role as a climate activist.

**As someone alarmed about climate change, I felt the lunacy in the film of not only the White House "sit tight and assess" non-reaction to an impending catastrophic comet strike (referred to as a "planet killer"), but the public's reaction: varying low degrees of interest, doubt, ridicule and running to their political camps ahead of facing the reality of a nine-kilometers-wide meteor guaranteed to destroy life on Earth in six months.**

## YOUTH IN ACTION

by Buddy Bell



Demonstration in Yinmabin Township, Myanmar, on Jan. 18, 2022, one of many that are defying the Tatmadaw.

About 40 young protesters ran down a street in Yangon for several minutes on Dec. 29, carrying a banner that said: "Fight for Our Rights." A video of the event, [posted online](#), ends with the burning of a Myanmar military uniform. Then the banners and signs are thrown down and the protesters disperse in all directions. Massive pro-democracy marches against the coup of Feb. 1 have been halted for now because soldiers and police simply shoot everyone who shows resistance.

Even small demonstrations like the one in the video represent a mortal risk for the participants. At least two of the demonstrators held signs calling for a "no fly zone in Myanmar." People in Kayin state, who have been claiming autonomy for more than 80 years, now have an active [request](#) to the UN for a no fly zone to protect them from regime airstrikes. The solidarity with them from the youth of Yangon is emblematic of the thoughts and actions of demonstrators throughout 2021, when the diverse peoples of the nation came together in opposition to dictatorship and fascism, and forged new human connections.

\* \* \*

Students at Chicago's Goode STEM High School walked out of class on Dec. 13 to decry unchecked racism in their school, including racial slurs and the disproportionate targeting of Black students for punishment. One of about 50 students who walked out, Kendall Canteberry, was interviewed by [Chalkbeat](#): "We are tired of the racism, tired of how we are being treated...[R]egardless of how many times we report [instances of racism], nothing has changed. They always say the same thing: 'Changes will be made soon.' We hope that this protest and this walkout finally changes things...I really hope we can really sit down and change things for students and staff to be happy."

\* \* \*

Activists from the Kurdish Youth's Assembly in London marched through Trafalgar square on Jan. 9 to mark the ninth anniversary of the gruesome deaths in Paris of three Kurdish women: Sakine Cansiz, Fidan Dogan and Leyla Şaylemez. Given their activism for Kurdish autonomy, the women were likely shot by an assassin who worked for the Turkish government, or some independent group of chauvinist ultra-nationalists. A [press release](#) from the Assembly stated: "In an era where transactional relationships of EU states with Turkey are superseding the rule of law, we condemn the silence of international governments against state barbarism." The youth protesters marched carrying signs that said, "Paris, city of shame. Justice for our Heroines!"

The amount of derision placed at the feet of so much of our society was palpable throughout the film. Just about everyone was parodied: the mass media, the selfish politicians, billionaires, the gullible public, etc.

### DELIVERS SUCKER PUNCH

*Don't Look Up* is filled with stars and is replete with witty dialogue. However, the sucker punch it delivers remains with you. Both myself and a friend cried after watching it.

In the face of impending doom, what does it take to wake up political leaders? For example, isn't the current threat of climate change—as seen in the wildfires in Australia and the U.S., the heat waves across much of the world, the floods and droughts—enough? Instead, we have the Glasgow fiasco or COP26 in 2021 (see article page 1). It became a [political platform for politicians](#). After so much work on the part of climate change activists, scientists, and others who care, this was a profound disappointment. *Don't Look Up* summed up the alarm so many of us feel.

### 'TECHNO SOLUTIONS' TO CLIMATE CHANGE

The character of Peter Isherwell, the billionaire owner of BASH Cellular, represents the arrogance and raw power that billionaire capitalists have. Isherwell, played so well by Mark Rylance, seems a combination of powerful billionaires. He has the weird mannerisms of

## Agony of Afghanistan

Half a year after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the Taliban purges women from public life, brutally murders its opponents and has forced thousands to go underground or leave their country.<sup>1</sup>

**The statistics of economic collapse are appalling: 97% of the population of 38 million are expected to live in poverty in 2022; 18.4 million already rely on international aid. There are reports of families selling daughters as young as five into marriages for cash to buy oil and flour. Millions of children are already malnourished and a deadly famine looms. Only a few international aid groups remain as overwhelming need continues to increase.**

Although local reporting is sharply curtailed, resistance is widespread and multi-dimensional. It is critically important to seek out and support those efforts by bringing their work to international attention.

Women have been especially creative:

\* *Partnering with organizations like Unfreeze Afghanistan*, "a new women-led campaign supporting the Afghan people's wish to live in peace and prosperity," which works to directly pay workers, circumventing aid to the Taliban.

\* *Moving street protests to private homes*. Activist Naema Asadi said women were forced to abandon their street marches after the Taliban obtained a list of the protesters. "We turned to holding protests at home, so our voices are not silenced. A small group of women [hold] placards and speak on camera," which they then try to get onto social media. The [December 3 decree](#) called for the enforcement of certain women's rights that are enshrined in Islamic law. The Taliban abolished the Women's Affairs Ministry and reestablished the brutal Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.<sup>2</sup> Afghan women's rights activist Wazmah Frogh says, "we literally laugh at" the new Taliban decree on "women's rights."<sup>3</sup>

\* *Working from abroad or underground*. Hundreds of women judges are living in fear and anonymity. Members of the Afghan Women's Network report that girls and teachers banned from school have secret reading circles.

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) issued a statement at their protest on International Human Rights Day, Dec. 13 (<http://www.rawa.org/index.php>):

**"The Taliban are pretending to be 'changed' in order to gain global financial and diplomatic support and the lifting of sanctions. How can one expect 'change' from a medieval and alien mercenary group whose whole existence is associated with murder, suicide, explosions and savagery? On the one hand, the U.S. and the West have imposed sanctions on the Taliban, on the other hand, they have romantic relations with Taliban officials and their diplomatic relations continue. These powers are again sacrificing the people of Afghanistan in order to swallow the last assets of the country. Afghan women know that they are at the forefront of the fight against fundamentalism and for freedom and justice. They say that there is no way out of the current situation except the struggle for justice."**

Freezing needed funds is a form of violence. To the excuse that releasing the \$7 billion frozen funds would help the Taliban, one Afghan woman activist retorted, "So you would punish 38 million innocent people?" Revolutionary support groups must call out the real criminals—the powerful nations who created and perpetrate this human disaster.

—Susan Van Gelder

1. "Afghans resist Taliban and the world," *News & Letters*, Nov.-Dec. 2021.
2. Abubakar Siddique, RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty's Radio Azadi.
3. <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2021/12/13/afghan-womens-rights-taliban>

Meta's Mark Zuckerberg, the lunatic ideas of Microsoft's Bill Gates and the desire to found a multi-planet civilization like Tesla's Elon Musk.

**The film also addresses some of the public's reaction to scientific discoveries with doubt and skepticism. As billionaires such as Gates, Musk and Zuckerberg gain outsized influence due to their immense wealth, working people have less and less control over our lives.**

Though no one votes for Bill Gates, he is even taken seriously about subjects way beyond his expertise, such as geoeconomics. Gates wants to deal with climate change by [temporarily blocking the sun](#) with special particles. This is more than alarming. The parallel to Gates's influence in the film is Isherwell's claim that there is a wealth of valuable minerals in the comet—it's a gift! It's a gift that his half-assed techno-solution can't handle. He intends to break up the comet into 20 "manageable" pieces. Any scientist who criticizes Isherwell gets fired.

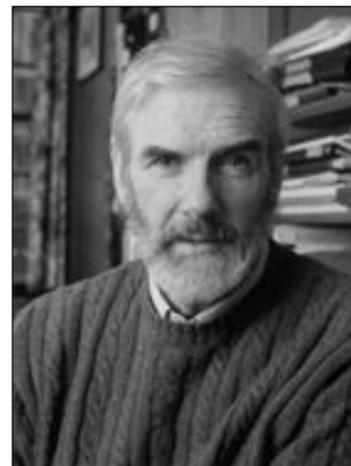
Critics' views vary, but overall climate scientists have positive reviews such as Peter Kalmus. According to Kalmus, writing in [The Guardian](#), "speaking as a climate scientist doing everything I can to wake people up and avoid planetary destruction, it's also the most accurate film about society's terrifying non-response to climate breakdown I've seen." I couldn't agree more. Hopefully this film will serve as a wake-up call to our greed-filled political leaders.

—Diana Sabina

## Jonathan Spence (1936-2021)

It is with regret that we learned of the passing of Jonathan Spence on December 25. Spence was a noted China scholar at Yale and the author of more than a dozen books on Chinese history spanning centuries and social classes. Outside of *The Search for Modern China*, his most comprehensive history, his books tended to take off from the story of an individual, whether a pivotal figure of their time or a relatively obscure player, to open a window on the life of that era.

Books like *Treason by the Book and God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan*, found a wider readership than professors of Chinese history could normally count on. There were few aspects of China's history that he was not knowledgeable about and fascinated by, and he shared that fascination with his readers.



### CORRESPONDENCE WITH DUNAYEVSKAYA

It is of particular interest to Marxist-Humanists, and not incidental to Spence's life work, that in the 1960s he participated in the research that Raya Dunayevskaya was doing to dig deeper into the unique form that state-capitalism took in China.

**Dunayevskaya credited Spence for "some of the research" in the chapter "The Challenge of Mao Zedong," added to the second edition of *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 Until Today* in 1964. Their collaboration required a dialogue on Marxist-Humanism, from rejection of the vanguard party vs. movements from below to discussion of Hegel's Absolute Idea (see p. 4).**

In an April 1961 essay marked "For Raya Dunayevskaya from Jonathan," Spence analyzed documents, reporting that "the organization of the soviets and indeed the manufacture from above of soviets that Trotsky had warned against in *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, as well as the incidental purges, lead one to see the revolution during this period as imposed from above by a very small elite, rather than as the expression of a genuine revolutionary spirit by the peasants and workers of China." He jokingly vouched for the accuracy of a Japanese spy report on Mao's Jiangxi Soviet, given that it was unlikely that Marxist-Humanists had been able to infiltrate Japanese espionage.

**On Feb. 9, 1962, Dunayevskaya answered Spence's questioning her calling Mao Stalinist despite differences between China and Russia:**

**"Stalin was a name, only a name, for an objective world phenomenon, that of state-capitalism. That, and that alone, explains how Mao could disregard every rule in the book of Stalin as the Russian phenomenon, and still be a 'Stalinist.'"**

Marxist-Humanism became known to Marxist dissidents like Wang Ruoshui and Liu Binyan, although they had no way of opening a dialogue with Dunayevskaya while she lived. We in News and Letters Committees are doubly grateful to Jonathan Spence, for a lifetime of public scholarship and for his work with Raya Dunayevskaya on critiquing Mao's state-capitalism.

—Bob McGuire

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# WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

French President Emanuel Macron's conscious and calculated use of fascist language in saying how he'd like to "cover [the non-vaccinated] in shit" was shocking. This was coming from "Jupiter," the representative of high French culture, defender of civilization against neo-fascists like Marine Le Pen and the National Rally.

**Although Macron has borrowed Far Right rhetoric before—in relation to immigration—this marked a new low. But he may have felt it necessary to go there in response to the unexpected campaign of Eric Zemmour.**

Zemmour, author and television personality, has staked out an anti-immigrant position that includes an explicit appeal to France's high culture and history. He is also a believer in the racist "Great Replacement" theory as laid out by Renaud Camus, who supports his candidacy.

## SIGNALS THROUGH THE FLAMES

Zemmour has founded a new party, Reconquest, in reference to that theory. He kicked off his campaign stating, "The reconquest is now underway...of our economy, security, identity, sovereignty, country." He pledges to abolish immigration and the right of asylum.

So Macron felt forced to create his own damned class, his own wretched of the earth, the non-vaccinated.

**It took the wit of Diderot, and the philosophic genius of Hegel, to describe this kind of situation where the high and low, the noble and the base, keep changing places in the culture of self-alienation.**

For those of us who have to live through such a time, it's more like watching a French presidential campaign conducted by tongues of flame in a burning cathedral.

## Maxwell's iceberg

The Dec. 29 guilty verdicts in Ghislaine Maxwell's sex-trafficking trial don't end the Jeffrey Epstein story. Prosecutors conducted it to reveal as little as possible about their network and associates—as if "settling family business"—but much has been learned.

**That is, the public has learned what the ruling class already knew. For example, Donald Trump said in 2015, "That island [Epstein owned] was an absolute cesspool....Just ask Prince Andrew." Christine Pelosi wrote in 2019: "It is quite likely that some of our faves are implicated." Cindy McCain said in 2020: "We all knew about him. We all knew what he was doing."**

The names of men Epstein trafficked young women to were not released. Crimes seem to have been recorded, judging by the large number of DVDs that were seized from Epstein's New York mansion. Why were they made? By and for whom?

Epstein connected to the fashion industry through his financial patron, Leslie Wexner, owner of L Brands, and through his alleged trafficking associate, modeling agent Jean-Luc Brunel (who is set to go to trial in France, in what looks like another cover-up).

**We now know that Epstein was a regular visitor to the White House within a month of his friend Bill Clinton's inauguration. It shifts the question as to what Epstein's project may have been, to "How might Epstein's project have fit into Clinton's project?"**

The Clinton presidency corresponded to the fall of Communism in East Europe and Russia, a moment when compromising material on political figures would be useful. Access to the human trafficking networks that developed at the time could have helped supply that.

# French election shows bourgeois crisis

## REELING BACK CENTURIES

The French election is like a prism refracting the crisis gripping Europe as a whole. A continuing economic crisis was only made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic and the futile methods many governments have used in response.

**Lockdowns and mandates, done in the name of flawed science, enforced by technocrats in office and brute force in the streets, have seen a massive rollback of human rights. The reality of elderly men and women knocked down, and young girls beaten into unconsciousness by German police, Dutch protesters mauled by dogs, and Austrians denied all civil rights loom behind Macron's fascist words.**

## Africa's capitalism and Sudan's revolution

In December, a summit of heads of state of the East African Community endorsed the membership request of the Democratic Republic of Congo. When this takes effect in April, it will make Congo the seventh official member of the EAC.

Thomas van Linge [twitter.com/ThomasVLingel](https://twitter.com/ThomasVLingel)



Sudanese masses resist coup, October 2021.

**Other EAC member states include Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan. Congo borders a number of these countries. It must be remembered that the 1994 genocide in Rwanda ultimately led to the Congo wars that killed millions between 1996 and 2003—Africa's world wars. Echoes of these continue in Kivu, eastern Congo, with militia raids on villages and Rwandan military operations.**

The current agreement would allow for easier military interventions into these mineral-rich areas of Congo. In return, it will give Congo access to east African port facilities to allow for easier trade in its goods. The proposed goal of the EAC is to become one unified state, the East African Federation, with a Constitution and a single currency.

## RELEVANCE OF SUDAN'S REVOLUTION

All these plans are being made over the heads of the African masses. The contradictions between the people, local capitalists and other power brokers, and world imperialism will intensify as these developments go forward. In effect, the elites would like to create a mechanism for mediating these social contradictions.

**This testifies to the immense importance of the Sudanese Revolution, where exactly these contradictions are being fought out by millions of people seeking freedom. In January, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, economist and technocrat, was forced to resign after a failed attempt to share power with the military, which had staged its coup**

This has nothing to do with epidemiology, virology, or any other real discipline.

## NOT A QUESTION OF PERSONALITY

Neither this retrogressive French election rhetoric, nor Europe's lockdown and surveillance measures, are a matter of personalities. They are manifestations of capital and its needs of the moment.

**The politicians who articulate these needs probably have no idea that they are doing so.**

Unfortunately, the historic French Left has become so marginal they barely feature in the political landscape. Part of this is due to their avoidance of philosophy, despite every nuance of Hegel and Marx playing out before their very eyes.

## in October.

Tens of thousands of protesters had taken to the streets in the capital, Khartoum, and other cities to demand a return to civilian rule. They want the military out of politics. They demand nothing less than freedom and self-determination. Seen in the context of African capitalist development, the Sudanese Revolution is the signpost pointing to future struggles.

The original vision of an East African Community grew out of the African Revolutions of the 1950s-1960s against colonialism.

The fact that these revolutions were unable to continue and deepen has had dire consequences for Africa and the world. The Sudanese Revolution, in its depth and potential, deserves all our support.

## Hong Kong repression

The Communist Party government is clamping down in Hong Kong following rigged Dec. 23 Legislative Council elections that were boycotted by most voters.

**In late December, pro-democracy online newspaper *Stand News* had its offices raided and was forced to close. Seven senior staff members were arrested and charged with "conspiracy to publish seditious publications."**

The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) protested the arrests. In retaliation, HKJA chairman Ronson Chan was briefly arrested. His home was raided, searched, and computers and banking records confiscated.

Earlier, in November, reporter Bao Choy of Radio Television Hong Kong was arrested for her coverage of an incident in which police worked with a government-organized mob to attack protesters.

## MASSACRE OF THE MEMORIALS

Also in late December, authorities began removing Hong Kong's public memorials to the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre of thousands of pro-freedom activists in Beijing. On Dec. 23 the "Pillar of Shame" sculpture was removed from the University of Hong Kong, the most high profile Tiananmen memorial in China.

**Other memorials were removed or effaced at Chinese University and Lingnan University, over the protests of students, artists and activists. According to artist Chen Weiming, "Since the Chinese Communists implemented the national security law in Hong Kong [last June] they have eradicated the freedom of press, of assembly, and the freedom of expression."**

In perhaps the most sinister sign of things to come, police Major General Peng Jingtang was sent from Xinjiang to take over the military garrison in Hong Kong. He has been in charge of the brutal paramilitaries repressing the Uyghurs.

## 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](http://www.newsandletters.org).