

Stop Assad’s genocide!

When Russia, Turkey and Iran agreed to create a “de-escalation zone” in Syria’s Idlib province last September, it was clear they were creating a concentration camp. Three million Free Syrians, including many from other parts of Syria, were targeted. This was a blueprint for genocide.

With the escalation of air attacks on civilians by the Bashar al-Assad regime and its Russian ally, the machinery of genocide was put in motion. Now hundreds have died, including women and children. Hundreds of thousands have been displaced, many driven to open fields or the bare shelter of olive groves.

Eman Afore, whose husband was killed, described her situation: “There is no way out of this hellfire. There have been attacks day and night. The jets and helicopters flying above made me and my children sleepless.”

Free Syrian revolutionaries are being pushed to the limit. But humanity is being put to the test.

ATTACKS ON HOSPITALS, FOOD SUPPLIES

The bombing of hospitals, schools, markets and neighborhoods aims at denying the necessities of life. In the words of Fadel Abdul Ghany of the Syrian Network for Human Rights, “This continuous targeting is no longer even simply an attack on the Syrian people and society, but an assault on all the most basic tenets of humanity, which will encourage other criminals and tyrants to replicate this unspeakable savagery.”

This is an accurate philosophic summation. The greatest horror of the attacks on healthcare

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

What is freedom?

by Faruq

What does it mean to be paroled from prison? The question can be answered in a variety of ways depending upon one’s philosophy of life. One could conclude that it is a chance to experience freedom; the opportunity to have extended mobility, including interacting with family and friends. But on a larger level, that kind of freedom is not real freedom.

FREEDOM ‘IN A STRANGE LAND’

Before release, all I had was time. It was all torture. Now, I don’t have time. The effort to sustain myself takes most of my time and energy. Freedom, for me, means having time to work out who I am, how I want to relate to others. That was true especially in prison. Bob Marley sang about how one cannot sing a song about freedom “in a strange land.” Out here I am in a strange land.

What is freedom in a real sense? We can break through limited thought and rethink the idea of freedom. This must be brought out front for serious thought and discussion. Central is what kind of world we humans want to live in.

In the mainstream definition of freedom as extended mobility, we become victims of capitalist thought. Extended mobility is being allowed to participate in the perpetuation of our own enslavement to the capitalist idea. In order to survive, you have to sell yourself. For freedom to have real meaning, it has to be projected beyond its present definition.

EXPERIENCE OF BEING RELEASED

I was released from prison several months ago. People ask me how it feels to be free. I respond

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Demanding a future, youth lead fight for climate justice

by Franklin Dmitryev

Schoolchildren continue to hold Fridays for Future strikes weekly across the world, demanding “that governments immediately provide a safe pathway to stay within 1.5°C of global heating.” Begun last August, the school strikes reached crescendos with two global youth climate strikes on March 15 and May 24. A week of actions is planned for September just before the UN climate summit.

Their message begins with the simple statement: “Our house is on fire.”

In the second global climate strike, diverse events were held in 2,350 places across the planet, bringing out over 1.8 million youth and supporters. In many cities of Europe and Latin America, major streets and bridges were packed by the young people who came out. Over 320,000 turned out in Germany alone.

Parliaments and government buildings were besieged from Wellington, New Zealand, to Odessa, Ukraine. Several hundred youths held a die-in for 11 minutes in New York’s Times Square, symbolizing 11 years in which to avoid a disastrous climate tipping point.

PROTESTS SPAN THE GLOBE

Where protests were prohibited, as in Russia, individual teenagers held separate vigils. In Guilin, China, 16-year-old Howey Ou held a daily climate strike for a week until the police stopped her. Vanessa Vash continued the climate strike she has been holding in Kampala, Uganda, since the beginning of the year.

In Uganda, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana and more than a dozen other African countries, the second global climate strike was followed the next day by hundreds of actions for Africa Vuka Day “to stop the development of fossil fuels infrastructure within Africa” and “to show the determination of the People of Africa to free themselves from foreign domination and exploitation.” They asked, “Whose development, exactly?”

Forty-seven of the youth activists released a statement for the climate strike day that said, in part:

“We have learned that if we don’t start acting for our future, nobody else will make the first move.... Emissions must drop rapidly—so that by the time we are in our mid- and late-20s we are living in a

All power to the Sudanese revolutionaries!

by Gerry Emmett

The Sudanese Revolution demonstrated its depth, maturity and resilience as masses once again took to the streets following the June 3 massacre of protesters in Khartoum. The Sudanese military had unleashed its brutal Janjaweed militias, now called Rapid Support Forces (RSF), on crowds sitting in outside military headquarters demanding a transition to civilian rule following the overthrow of dictator Omar al-Bashir.

Over 180 were killed, hundreds wounded, with both women and men being raped and many more disappeared. Bodies were dumped into the Nile River. Activist Mohammed Elnaiem described the collaboration between the army and the RSF forces: “The RSF came first in a small band, around three or four trucks, and started talking to the army. We thought that maybe the army—they were lower-ranked soldiers—would be on our side. But the RSF drove through the barricades that we had built, and the army didn’t do anything. Shortly afterwards, the army vehicles left. At that point most people understood what was

completely transformed world....But to change everything, we need everyone. It is time for all of us to unleash mass resistance.”

They called for adults as well as children to join in a week of actions Sept. 20-27 culminating in a general strike for the climate.

CHILDREN CREATING A FUTURE

The strikes reveal the resolve of a generation in the face of an existential emergency. Despite the colossal forces with which climate deniers have tried to bury the truth, a wave of children born in the 21st century has arisen to wash their filth away.

They are telling the world that business as usual spells their doom—and not only business as usual but the mea-

ger measures gathered under the umbrella of the Paris Agreement, celebrated by the establishment and those with little imagination as the greatest accomplishment in the decades-long shuffle to do something about the climate crisis, or at least to appear to.

Seizing every opportunity to speak out, graduating high schoolers organized Class of 0000 (classof0000.com), with hundreds of valedictorians and others with speaking roles at graduation ceremonies pledging to read a message about the urgency of the climate crisis, including: “Zero emissions. Zero excuses. Zero time to waste.”

Showing the success of the climate denial campaign, many cowardly administrators banned the message as “too political.” Silently allowing the future of humanity to be destroyed is allegedly not political. The stereotyped anodyne commencement speech is also political, but it’s a politics of acceptance of the status quo, acquiescing with the destruction of all we hold dear.

The global climate strikes were kicked off last year by Greta Thunberg, then 15 years old, who had been inspired by the activism and eloquence of students who survived the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Undeterred by jaded leftists dismissive of the Parkland students’ pleas for gun control, Thunberg tuned into their passionate message that they were not going to sit by while this society’s political representatives and economic powers did nothing to

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going to come next, and started to clear out. We realized that the army and the RSF were in coordination with each other—and that the RSF were in control.”

It should be noted that many Sudanese army officers have been arrested for refusing to move against the revolution.

Even as the Janjaweed/RSF were committing this mass atrocity in the capital, they continued their genocidal attacks in Darfur. In two separate massacres in the village of Deleij, 28 Darfuris were killed and dozens wounded. At least 45 villages have been devastated in the last year.

THE ESSENCE OF THE REGIME APPEARS

The deputy leader of the Transitional Military Council (TMC), and the real power, is General Hemeti (Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo), whom Bashir made head of the RSF in 2013 in recognition of his murderous service. The RSF then expanded into an instrument used against African immigrants heading to Europe, taking on a role previously played by Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, who was overthrown in 2011. The European Union aided in the

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Freedom=control of our own bodies

EDITORIAL

Republicans want to make abortion illegal by declaring a fetus a human being and women baby-making *things*. That is explicit in the language of a new Alabama bill that makes all abortions illegal once a fertilized egg is “in utero.” “In utero,” not “implanted in a woman’s womb.” The only exception is for a “serious health risk” “to the unborn child’s mother.” Here, a woman is a “child’s mother,” not a human being who happens to be pregnant. The child is the human being, the woman is the “vessel,” as one Congressman put it.

There are no exceptions for rape or incest because the question the bill’s sponsor wants the U.S. Supreme Court to decide is: “Is the baby in the womb a person?” Any amendment would contradict that point.” The U.S. is now in the same place Ireland was before the Irish voted out its abortion ban, when those running a hospital murdered Savita Halappanavar, who at 31 years of age died from septicemia, because she was denied an abortion while hospital administrators waited for her fetus to die. **Who is going to decide if the risk to the woman is “serious,” especially if the doctor who gives her an abortion can face a 99-year prison sentence?**

Donald Trump’s supporters want the U.S. to be like El Salvador, where women are jailed for miscarriages as well as abortions. They are fanatics that want to give what is clearly not a person—a group of cells with no brain or heart—every human right while stripping those rights from women. They are close to getting what they want, despite the fact that most people in the U.S. want abortion to be legal.

Fanatics don’t care about that, and Trump only cares about gorging his evangelical base with every morsel of misogynist, anti-trans, anti-gay, anti-human, racist scrap of poisonous politics, feeding them what they want in hopes they will excrete four more years for him to perfect his fascist view of the future.

ILLUSIONS WON’T HELP US

There are a lot of illusions about what will happen when Roe v. Wade is overturned. Some think it won’t be—it will and, in many ways, already has been; or that women will be able to self-abort, or that the “abortion pills,” mifepristone and misoprostol,

will be available so that they can be gotten to women who need abortions—they won’t.

Now self-abortion is illegal in six or seven states; women are having children they did not want, are being jailed for self-aborting, for having natural miscarriages; for taking half a valium or postponing a cesarean.

News & Letters



May 23, 2019, rally in Chicago against new abortion bans.

women to their vanguard organizations so women can understand that *first* they have to get rid of capitalism and *then* “the Party” will grant women our rights.

SOCIALISM MEANS WE CONTROL OUR BODIES

Today there’s a lot of talk about socialism, but who (besides us) has *always* said that it must mean that women have control of their own bodies? A socialist society would be one where workers control what they actually do with their bodies in the factory, in the office, in the home. It is one where Blacks and other people of color can walk the streets, drive cars, and live their lives feeling safe in their skins.

The left would do well to remember that one of Karl Marx’s most devastating critiques was that under capitalism “social relations...appear as what they are...as material relations between persons and social relations between things” (*Capital*, Chapter 1, p. 166). That is why revolutions must be total from the start, explicitly so, because they must be so deep and thorough that all human relationships are transformed and actually become human.

WHERE IS THE LEFT?

Now almost all the left does give lip service to the right of women to control our bodies. But abortion rights are something the left had to be brought to over decades and it still is not up there with doing something about U.S. imperialism, even though there is the U.S. imperialism of the global gag rule that was expanded by Trump, and is guaranteed to kill even more women.

Many of these leftists support Vladimir Putin, Iran’s rulers, and Nicaragua’s Daniel Ortega, whose country after revolution retained one of the most destructive abortion laws in the world. At best, most of the left treat the fight for abortion rights as an opportunity to recruit

Women defend land

Editor’s note: Below we print excerpts from an activist’s participation in a forum in Mexico on “Multiple violence and dispossession: women in defense of the territory.”

Economic and political strategies are declaring war on Indigenous peoples and their territories. These are the last gasps [of survival and resistance] that exist in the world. They are in the hands of the indigenous peoples, and there is a war to try and push us out.

LAND DWELLERS LEFT OUT OF DECISION

In Morelos, Puebla and Tlaxcala, the Integral Morelos Project [construction of a thermoelectric plant] will affect approximately 82 communities. However, the people who live in these communities have been the last ones to be informed that there was going to be a project in their territory.

It is usually thought that the struggle arose from the men organizing. But in Morelos, and in many communities, the struggle was carried a long way by women. In Huexca, it was women who decided to stop the construction of the thermoelectric plant. They said: “Tomorrow we will be here at 5:00 AM and close that thermoelectric plant construction.” Today marks seven years since that first action. The construction was stopped until the repression came.

Why did we decide to put our bodies in resistance? We are the ones that have contact with life itself, with nature, with the land, the health of the family and our community. That is why we defend what belongs to everyone. This is the strength of the women who decided to lead the struggle.

In Amilcingo [an Indigenous community], women’s resistance is crucial. We have the same voice and vote in the assembly as men. Young people also participate. The assembly is an important step of strength for the people and for women, because in the assembly the voice of the woman is heard.

WOMEN GIVE MILITANT DIRECTION

We women are giving another direction to this centuries old struggle. The fact that women participate by attending and deciding actions together gives a new direction and meaning to the struggles.

We need to heal, and women’s participation is helping. We continue in the fight because we will not allow the death of our assassinated comrade, Samir Flores, to be in vain. More than ever we are going to defend our territory. This war is for life itself, and that’s why we all have to find a way to find each other and fight together. In many ways the women are leading and pushing the struggle forward.

—Samantha
(Assembly of Resistance of Amilcingo, Morelos)

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In England, Fiona Mackenzie noticed how frequently “sex games gone wrong” is used as a murder defense. Often sensationalized as the “Fifty Shades of Gray” defense, courts blame female victims for supposedly “consenting” to “rough sex.” Mackenzie asked users of the feminist online site Mumsnet to help her gather a list of such cases, and received multiple examples, as well as reports from women who had been injured. Volunteers found 39 cases. They compiled a list of 56 cases of women murdered in the UK into a website “We Can’t Consent to This.” They plan to use this evidence to push to make this defense illegal.

* * *

“Jennifer,” an anonymous, white American woman, is speaking out about being forced by her evangelical Christian family to undergo female genital mutilation along with her sister as a child. Her father, a minister in a fundamentalist church, preached that women must be submissive to men and female sexual pleasure was a sin. She started a campaign to press Kentucky to outlaw FGM, stating it “takes away any chance of having a normal life.”

* * *

In June, a Canadian governmental investigation, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, issued its final report, “Reclaiming Power and Place.” It stated that over 4,000 women and girls missing and murdered over the past several decades should be classified as victims of genocide. The disproportionate level of violence resulted from “state actions and inactions rooted in colonialism and colonial ideologies.” The Assembly of First Nations issued a statement that this is part of a pattern consistent with the definition of genocide, including forced sterilization and the separation of children from their families through residential schools and abuse of the foster care system. The report contains over 230 recommendations, including that federal and local governments develop an action plan and that the citizens denounce racism and violence.

Review of ‘Invisible Women...’

by Adele

In this important book, *Invisible Women: Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (Harry N. Abrams, 2019), author Caroline Criado Perez explains how the notion that all of humanity can be represented as “man” or “mankind” has caused devastating, worldwide harm to all women and all of society. It references numerous studies and anecdotes showing how different areas of life are profoundly affected by our subconscious belief that the male experience is universal and the female experience is “niche,” unusual, and unimportant.

Women are half the human race, and our collective experiences of how we operate in the world need to be considered to plan for the common good whenever data is collected.

Perez focuses on how this bias towards seeing only the male experience exists even without the presence of conscious sexism because it is so embedded in our culture. She describes how a man told her she could not be objective because she viewed the world through a feminist lens, not grasping his own perspective was shaped by his experiences as a white man.

IS THERE A ‘UNIVERSAL HUMAN’?

This cultural inability to imagine women as important has led to ignorance of women’s collective impact on history. It has also led to the contributions of individual women in the arts and sciences being attributed to the men in their lives. The cultural belief that a woman can’t contribute to a profession or other public endeavor perpetuates itself when women are unaware of the accomplishments of other women and become discouraged from participating.

The view of man as the universal human causes injuries and impediments to job efficiency for women struggling with tools, uniforms, safety equipment, automobiles, and musical instruments designed for men. It leads to drugs being tested on only men and male lab animals, leading to ineffectiveness or

danger when the same drugs are taken by women. Women miss out on access to medications such as Viagra, which can relieve intense menstrual pain.

Perez discusses how harmful chemicals could have been removed from plastic products much sooner if their effects on the women making the products had been studied.

She explains how the invisibility of women’s unpaid caregiving for children and elderly or disabled relatives causes numerous, avoidable problems at their jobs. She explains the damage when governments attempt to cut spending by cutting public services, putting even more caregiving work onto women. As with the medical issues, Perez shows how listening to women’s input about their real needs is more cost-effective for governments and businesses in the long run. Taking their activities into account for urban planning can avoid huge problems for women.

THE VIOLENCE OF IGNORING WOMEN

Perez also discusses the invisibility of male violence against women and the disproportionate impact of natural disasters and war upon women. Women have improved security at refugee camps by insisting upon solar lighting and sex segregated facilities. They have explained the need for menstrual hygiene products, contraception, and abortion.

In spite of her encyclopedic amount of evidence for numerous and seemingly overwhelming problems, Perez is optimistic. She says women tend to listen to other women and promote their inclusion in the public sphere.

For example, female politicians and relief workers gather the missing data from women on how their lives actually function to provide innovative solutions. Society is also enriched when women can give their fresh perspectives that are not even imagined when only one point of view is heard. This book is an important and insightful reference work for creating a livable world.

Amazon workers organize cross-border solidarity

Editor’s note: Below are excerpts of a talk by Polish Amazon worker/organizer Agnieszka Mróz, on a U.S. tour seeking cross-border solidarity among Amazon workers worldwide, at a meeting co-sponsored by San Francisco Bay Area News and Letters Committee.

Oakland, Calif. I have been working at an Amazon warehouse in Poznan, in western Poland, for the last five years. In my warehouse there are about 5,000 workers. We get commodities from and for Germany. We unpack them, store them, repack them and send them back to Germany. All included, German Amazon workers make four times more than we do.

The warehouses in Poland are exactly like the warehouses here. We have high security, we have slogans: “work hard, have fun, make history” posted all over, against which we have our own signs, “work slow, strike hard, have fun, make history.”

Cross-border organizing has been taking place in Europe for the last four years. We identified com-



Urszula Wislanka for News & Letters

mon issues across Europe, opposing temporary contracts, low wages and wage differences, and increasing quotas enforced by weekly “feedbacks.”

GRASSROOTS UNION

Amazon workers in Portland and in Minneapolis all said, yes, yes, those are our problems, too. “Time off task” is a common problem. If you don’t scan an item for five minutes, the manager will see it in the system. It sums up all of your “additional breaks,” and at the end of the day you have to explain why you had 50 minutes of

those “additional breaks” during the 10-hour shift. If you have a problem with the computer, or if your scanner battery runs out, the system does not “see” your work.

I am a steward in my grassroots union, Workers’ Initiative, started three months after the warehouse opened. According to Polish labor laws, you just need 10 workers who vote to have a union. We did that in the parking lot before the morning shift started. Now we have 650 members and 15 representatives.

One of our campaigns, we call it “safe package,” is work-to-rule. When workers in Germany want to go on strike, we organize work slowdowns. Amazon says they are obsessed with safety. “Safety first” is their slogan. They tell you during training to check that every box is in good shape, look at every item from six sides, scan the bar code and compare the item with the picture on your computer, etc. If you did all that you could not fill 300 boxes per hour.

‘WORK FAST, DIE YOUNG’

We prepared a leaflet in five languages called “safe package” which quotes all the company rules for the various jobs. We hand out a lot of those on days German workers are on strike, with a slogan, “work fast, die young.”

Another example: put only one item in a box and send it to the packing department, because adding another item might make the box too heavy to lift

safely. This type of action started in 2015 among pickers who, instead of putting say 15 books in a box, would put one or two. The increase in boxes paralyzed the packing and shipping departments.

We have a workers’ newspaper, which we put out three times a year. We also leaflet at least once a month as a way to communicate with our members and all workers. These are not political statements, but our everyday experiences.

Our two most recent campaigns are Stop Feedback, the company’s practice of monitoring your quota every day and coming to you with “feedback.” The other is Stop the Rat Race. Workers’ evaluations are a rat race. If you do better than your co-workers, you will stay, but if you take your sick days, etc., you will not get another contract.

We attend cross-border meetings with workers from France, Italy, Germany, Spain and England. We have our own issues, like compulsory overtime, but we also don’t want to be scabs when workers in Germany strike. The meeting five weeks ago had 50 representatives from eight warehouses in five different countries. If you know Amazon workers who might like to come to our next meetings, please let them know about it.

—Agnieszka Mróz

Teachers debate how to oppose ‘reform’

Editor’s note: Teachers in the Praxis study circle on the book México: represión, resistencia y rebeldía raised the future of teachers’ resistance in Mexico.

Mexico City—Silvia (Jalisco Teachers’ Movement): We weren’t able to defeat the “educational reform” in 2016, and this had consequences: firings, deaths, detentions. There had been great support from parents in Chiapas, but not in the rest of the country. You can’t make a conclusion about a movement based on what occurred in one state.

The mass media made us look like the only thing we were defending was our own position. We were attacking privatization, which endangered teachers’ labor so that education would be profitable for corporate executives, like the program “Schools at 100.”

Many teachers’ movements independent of the National Coordinator of Education Workers (CNTE) began to surge in Jalisco, Coahuila, Quintana Roo and Veracruz, for example. In 2013, in Jalisco, 24,000 to 26,000 of us held an independent march. We’re beginning to establish connections with other states.

Graciela (CNTE, México state): Beyond the usual critique you could make of the CNTE, what needs to be recognized is its role in creating unity.

I had the opportunity to go to a community in Morelos with a project different than the State’s project of reproducing an education system that produces labor power for transnational companies. There is the germ of a totally different kind of education. The teachers don’t just let students eat the junk capitalism offers: They have gardens, raise chickens, and have a dining room for students. They want to fulfill their role as educator.

Besides resistance, we have to build something that is not imposed on us. That doesn’t say: “This is the plan, here are the instructions.” There are teachers who are not in agreement with certain matters related to the CNTE. However, in México state, we’ve come together in the Movement against Education Reform, comprised of various social organizations.

Claudia (teacher at College Preparatory Education Institute): Imagine that we’re in a collective where there is available every type of knowledge, ability, and tool that a human being requires to live among others. That is education. In our society based on exploitation, this philosophic question is resolved through class struggle.

One chapter of the book says: “Without an explicit vision of what type of new society we want to create...all our forms of struggle are going to find themselves facing a wall, an unbreachable limit.” You can affirm this after talking of the various pathways to oppose “education reform”: the protests, marches, occupations, etc.; the juridical (presenting a new reform proposal), and the educational, which is what we as teachers do.

We have a pedagogical plan. Yes, it is the curriculum, but each teacher carries it out. Some are fairly conservative, others search for an emancipatory education. The challenge is to make a pedagogical proposal as a collective force. That is part of what the colleagues in CNTE are presenting.

This chapter also notes that, once we returned to the classrooms in 2016, teachers asked, “What do we do now?” Some responded: “We don’t talk with the State: Resist, organize, make popular power.” But I get the impression that there was another pathway, which was to join with the project of President López Obrador. It would have to be seen how this would mature, where the reform is not cancelled but its spirit is conserved.

Letter from Mexico

Mexico in disarray

by J.G.F. Héctor

The Mexican economy is a mess. This is not just due to sloppy policies applied by old or “new” governments, but by the objective movement of capitalism in a technologically backward land.

The disaster can be seen even in the official figures. This year, 196,000 rank-and-file public workers have been fired, without any new hires! This not only affects the internal market, but the health, educational and security services that these workers used to provide. Just 39% of the public budget scheduled for this year has been spent!

This decay in the public budget is in direct relationship to the fall of the rate of profit that is organic to capitalism. As companies—state or private—experience a decrease in such a rate, less money goes to the government. In the first three months of this year, Mexico’s GDP has diminished 0.2%. The “solution” posed by the new “Left” administration is “more capitalism,” thus deepening the problem. How can we open a new way forward?

THEIR ANSWER: MORE CAPITALISM

On June 14, President López Obrador joyfully announced a deal with the “biggest 60 (national) companies” to invest \$32 million to create “jobs, wellness, peace and social tranquility.” This came one week after the infamous “agreement” with the U.S., in which Mexico accepted sending 6,000 troops to slow the flow of Central American migrants at its southern border, in order to not be punished with a 5% to 25% tariff on its exports to the U.S.

To whitewash this horrid “pact,” the administration is trying to push its developmentalist projects even further, especially in south Mexico. These are supposed to provide “jobs and prosperity” for Mexicans and Central Americans, magically solving the “migration crisis.”

Since these projects—like any capitalist project—are aimed at generating profits and not at solving human needs, they will just mean more exploitation and misery for the masses. “Economic growth” means the despoiling of lands and the assassination of Indigenous activists that is relentlessly taking place since the new administration came to office.

BEYOND CAPITALISM

The direction taken by this “Left” government leaves no room to think it is any different from previous neoliberal regimes. Despite their “good intentions,” it is not the people in office who actually run the country, it is the objective movement of world capitalism.

The administration is a mere pawn in this game, as was seen most clearly in the U.S.-Mexico “deal” on migration. The violent flow of capitalism, in which our country is but a weak vessel, will just make us sink into a deeper hole than the one we are already in.

No real solution will come from above. It is only the masses from below who can put an end to this exploitative system and open the door to a truly new human society. For this, a full-blown anti-capitalist view has to be brought to the fore. No negotiations with the government will do, even if they put a halt to some abuses, as it is not the government which is actually in charge of the country. At this crossroads of Mexican history, a whole philosophy of liberation is needed more than ever that can guide us past mere political reforms to full human freedom!

LA homelessness up

Los Angeles—On May 4, the L.A. County Board of Supervisors released the latest estimated homeless count of 59,000, a 12% increase from 52,800 in 2018. The Los Angeles homeless population increased from 31,300 to 36,000, a 16% increase. As the numbers were announced, activists from “Services Not Sweeps” shouted out, “That’s an undercount” and “Shame on You!” Homelessness includes encampments and people sleeping in their cars and RVs, in shelters, and in parks or on sidewalks.

UNEMPLOYMENT = HOMELESSNESS

A major reason for the growth of homelessness is unemployment caused by automation. Machines, computers and robots are replacing human workers. Wages have remained stagnant, while rents have soared as affordable rent areas have gentrified. More than half the people in L.A. County pay 50-80% of their income on rent. The 1990 Costa-Hawkins bill prohibits California cities and counties from passing rent control legislation.

In South Park, one block west of Skid Row, a new 28-story hotel/retail space is in the application process. When high-rent tenants and accompanying businesses move in, they bring their anti-homeless NIMBY attitudes.

Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN), in Skid Row, has been resisting the LAPD’s sweeps, harassment, criminalization, and murder of the homeless population with street protests, lawsuits, and a know-your-rights campaign. They also inform low-rent tenants of their rights against unlawful evictions, and they fight for restrooms, water fountains, showers, laundry facilities, and trash cans in the neighborhood. Landlords and the media often blame the homeless for unsanitary conditions created by city negligence.

In 2016 and 2017, county voters passed two ballot measures to fund \$500 million in homeless services and \$1.2 billion to build 10,000 permanent supportive housing units (PSH). Two years later, after two-thirds of the money has been allocated and no PSH built, LACAN’s demand for an audit has been ignored for the last six months.

The growing homeless crisis has resulted in experimental tiny houses and conversion of shipping containers into housing to reduce costs. Officials in city, county, state and federal government have been negligent for years in funding housing for the homeless as well as very low rent and affordable housing.

—Basho

FROM THE WRITINGS OF
RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: Published in the Feb. 27, 1987, issue of News & Letters under the title, "Whither China?" this article anticipated the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement in a way that sheds light on today's realities. It does so by tracing the youth and labor revolt in 1980s China as well as the post-Mao Chinese Communist Party's maneuvers in politics and ideology.

by Raya Dunayevskaya

The December 1986 month-long student demonstrations in China brought into the open the present turmoil, but they were neither the cause nor the consequence of what is bringing the crisis to a climax. Behind the infighting within the Communist Party leadership trying to shift the blame for the present crisis from itself to the rank and file, there is a great deal more involved than either finding scapegoats, or the “West’s” dogmatic and vulgar glibness about economic “reforms” and political “democracy.”

Clearly, in one respect, it is a question of the succession to Deng Xiaoping which will be on the agenda in the fall when the Thirteenth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is held. But even that is only a partial answer, for it is not a question of *who* will follow Deng, but *what* will follow any successor. To avoid the answer to that type of burning question, Mao Zedong had called the near-civil war of the 1971 Lin Biao affair “the great disorder under Heaven.”

There is no doubt that that had been the most serious crisis since winning power, and that the crisis came not from the outside or from capitalist elements within the country, but from within the ruling Communist Party leadership, from the very one Mao had constitutionally designated as his successor (“closest comrade in arms”).

A whole decade has passed since Mao’s death. The disasters of his final decade called the Cultural Revolution have been halted. Yet the “new” world stage he set in motion by rolling the red carpet out for Richard Nixon in 1971 is exactly what happens to national questions in a global world when two nuclear behemoths are struggling for single world mastery and you do not unfold a truly independent challenge.

THE 1985 YOUTH CHALLENGE TO DENG’S OPENING TO JAPAN AND OTHER STRUGGLES

The Youth have always had a very special role in the Chinese revolutionary movements, and none more important than the 1960s (to which we will return). But to fully understand the ongoing demonstrations in 1986-87, we have to turn to the demonstrations the year before, to the final quarter of 1985. The demonstrations in China in 1985 were not on any youth problems; they were a challenge to Deng’s new policy on Japan. The students read Prime Minister Nakasone’s militaristic visit to the shrine where World War II officers lay buried as signifying the same retrogressionist move as Ronald Reagan’s visit to the Bitburg cemetery in Germany, which produced the same type of outcry against this so-called conciliationism with the Nazi-Japanese militarist past. It was a direct challenge to Deng’s deviationism, not only on Japan but globally, and not only on “foreign affairs” but nationally, from the labor/capital relationship at work (witness the steel workers’ strikes) as well as reflecting the continuing restlessness in the People’s Liberation Army.

That the CCP leadership understood that’s what the students were doing could be seen as early as Oct. 9, 1985, when the Japanese Foreign Minister, Shintaro Abe, arrived in Beijing to discuss the new Peace and Friendship Treaty that had been signed between China and Japan. The Chinese Vice-Premier Li Peng agreed with him that relations between China and Japan were now on an even keel, but nevertheless reminded the Japanese Foreign Minister of all the difficulties that there have been between the two countries.

Indeed, the Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that “Li obliquely blamed” the Japanese government for having caused certain “unstable elements in their relationship.” Since clearly the student demonstrations against Japan continued, it certainly cannot be considered an accident that the CCP official at that moment confirmed that “raprochement talks were going on between it and the Japanese Communist Party.”¹

At the same time there were contradictory reports (more or less *deliberately* contradictory), so that the reader didn’t know which one set the direc-

1. See the Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation Section of the *China Quarterly*, no. 105, March 1986. Indeed, the Documentation Sections of the magazine from the whole period of Oct. 1985 through Sept. 1986 are important both for military affairs and foreign affairs, with Japan on the one hand and Russia on the other, as well as actual economic developments in the country.

China’s youth revolt vs. Mao’s legacy

tion for the year. Was it, for example, a fact, denied by China, that it and the U.S. engaged in joint naval maneuvers, or was it a fact that China itself was undergoing great technological and militaristic developments in the Pacific? (See nos. 106 and 107 of the Quarterly Chronicle and Documentation Sections of the *China Quarterly*.)

FROM MARX TO MAO

To fully understand what 1987 has in store for China in light of what has been developing in the objective situation on one hand and the wrestling with the Mao legacy on the other, we have to turn to 1983. The significance of 1983 rests on the fact that it was both the Marx Centenary Year and the 62nd anniversary of the founding of the CCP.

What is of more immediate importance is Mao Zedong Thought. On Nov. 27, 1981, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party finally passed a resolution entitled, “Mao Zedong’s Historical Role and



Cover of *Whither China*, manifesto of the Sheng Wulien, 1968.

Maos unique experience in its protracted revolution in accordance with the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism... many outstanding leaders of our party made important contributions to the formation and development of Mao Zedong Thought and they are synthesized in the scientific work of comrade Mao.”

By 1983 there was a great deal more than just the continuation of Mao’s Collected Works. The question was what is that collectivity that produced Mao Zedong Thought? They have now issued the Selected Works of the present-day recognized leaders—Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Deng. Deng is the only one *living*, the one with the power, the one who is bringing about the most challenges to his own rule. The first who had to fall as these demonstrations reached a climax was his protege, Hu Yaobang.²

Let’s never forget that youth have a very special role in China in the 20th century. Back in the mid-1960s they even thought that they could use the Cultural Revolution as a point of departure, not just for democracy, but, as they put it, for having a real Paris Commune type of government. That is to say, a communal non-state form of government.³

The Western commentators rushed all too fast to compare the 1986-87 demonstrations to the move-

2. After Hu refused Deng’s order to expel Liu Binyan, Wang Ruowang and Fang Lizhi from the party for supporting the December 1986 student protests, Deng and allies forced Hu to resign in January 1987. See also “Millions in Hong Kong challenge Xi’s global ambition,” p. 11. —Editor
3. For Sheng Wulien documents see *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, p. 176. A 1982 edition has a new point of departure in its Introduction with my answer to Prof. George Armstrong Kelly’s critique in his *Hegel’s Retreat from Eleusis* (Princeton University Press, 1978).

ment of Democracy Wall in 1979-80. There is no doubt that it was closer to it in time than to 1968, when youth unfurled an altogether new demand in Sheng Wulien’s “Whither China?” manifesto that called China the centerpoint of world revolution precisely because it was the point of greatest world contradiction. But the placards for democracy that the 1986-87 demonstrators carried were not just for Democracy Wall, but covered the labor struggles, the arts struggle, the really massive, ongoing opposition to the regime for altogether new human relations.

IS DENG DOING THE OUSTING, OR IS HE BEING OUSTED?

Once, however, the gates were opened to a “collectivity,” it was not just a question of Mao or Mao’s successors, but the Marx Centenary, and that meant Marx’s Humanism. That brought back the old theoretician-propagandist Chou Yang, who in 1957 had unleashed the theoretical fight against Marx’s 1844 Humanist Essays; in 1983 he announced that he now welcomed them but he perverted them “to include even bourgeois Humanism.” At this point, the issue is muddled enough not to know which side of the fighting Chou is on—with the so-called “hardliners” who consider themselves true Marxists, or “reformers” who want to shift from Sinification of Marxism to rejection of it.⁴

What has happened objectively? The foreign affairs and the theoretical disputes are not the only crises. What is the determinant is the crises at home on the production lines, the poor living conditions and unemployment of the masses, as well as the restlessness in the “technologically reorganized” Army, while seeing the emergence of a new kind of profiteer. This is most evident in the five so-called special economic zones. Recently *The New York Times* reported one such area, Shenyang, the industrial capital of Manchuria, which is evidently so high on “reform” that it emboldened one manager to announce that he had cut the workforce at his factory from 1,000 to 800, adding, “I’ve still got 200 people too many.”⁵

The 1986 demonstrations only brought to the front the myriad crises that have been boiling up throughout the 1980s as China tried to catch its breath from Mao’s last disastrous decade. But China has found that once again it is facing the two nuclear behemoths and it dare not go to build an independent path. Has Deng, as well as “hardliners” and “softliners,” given up hope that there is an independent Third World that would lead to independence from both Russia and the U.S.?

Integral to that is the international question: where to globally? Had one merely to choose between U.S. and Russia? Was Russia really enemy number one, so that Reagan could consider China his card? The latest thing that China was very quick about denying was the Kyodo news account that China and the U.S. were participating in joint naval maneuvers. China said: absolutely no; they were just “exchanging greetings.” Somebody’s head will roll. Will it be Deng’s?

Feb. 10, 1987

4. This is not the place to work out Mao Zedong Thought as he tried transforming his substitution of guerrilla warfare for proletarian revolution into a new universal. First was the Great Leap Forward. This was followed by the challenge to Russia as head of the international Communist movement. By the mid-1960s we were witness to the great disasters which Mao called the Cultural Revolution (1966-71), which was *the* Great Substitution for Marx’s revolution-in-permanence. See the two chapters “The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung” and “Cultural Revolution or Maoist Reaction?” in my *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1982 ed.), and as well “Post-Mao China: What Now?” in my *New Essays* (News and Letters, 1977).
5. See *The New York Times*, Jan. 30, 1987.

Read the chapters of Marxist-Humanist books that China still bans in the Chinese editions



Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao

“The Thought of Mao Zedong”:

In our age of state-capitalism, revolution and counter-revolution are so interlocked that...Mao’s “revolutionary fervor” continues to be the academician’s preoccupation, so much so that they do not see the retrogressionism inherent in “The Thought of Mao Zedong”...acceptance of state-capitalism as the state of development the world has reached.



Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today

“Cultural Revolution or Maoist Reaction?”

“The Challenge of Mao Zedong”:

There is no doubt that some progress was made, if the measure of progress is not the way in which people live, but the way industry is developed.

The nonviability of state-capitalism as a “new” social order is proven by the same laws of development as that of private capitalism, that is to say, the compulsion to exploit the masses at home and to carry on wars abroad.

To order, see page 7

ESSAY

What is socialism?

Socialism and Women’s Liberation

This is the third of four essays on the topic: What Is Socialism? “Socialism and a Philosophy of Revolution” by Gerry Emmett, can be found at <https://newsandletters.org/socialism-socialism-philosophy/> and “Socialism, labor and the Black dimension” by Bob McGuire can be found at <https://newsandletters.org/essay-socialism-socialism-labor-black-demension/>. The last essay will take up “Socialism and Ecology.”

by Terry Moon

The vicious attacks on women’s right to control our own bodies (see Editorial, “Freedom=control of our own bodies,” p. 2), on immigrants (see “Trump aims to bleach the census,” p. 8), people of color, LG-BTQI+ people, and the poor makes a discussion of “Socialism and Women’s Liberation” more relevant than ever. That is because capitalism has failed women, in economic terms—what capitalism’s supporters brag is what it does best—and in every imaginable way. From unequal pay that is worse for women of color than white; to how the maternal mortality rate in the U.S. has more than doubled to 21.5 per 100,000 live births from 2000 to 2014—with women of color being those most likely to die;

to the approximately three women in the U.S. who are murdered every day by men who claimed to love them, to the shameful politicization of healthcare: capitalism has been a cause, not solution.

IS ‘SOCIALISM’ ANY BETTER FOR WOMEN?

How do women fare under socialism? To address that, we cannot look at Russia, China, Cuba, etc. These countries are not and never were socialist, they are not “state-socialist,” they are state-capitalist societies, mostly totalitarian, and the needs of capital rule them. Women in these countries do not do better than women in the U.S. and often fare worse. To see the promise of socialism, we must look at the few times where women have created the freedom to carve out their vision of a free society. Those moments occur during and after revolutions, before they become transformed into their opposite.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 revealed how ambitious women’s plans were for a new society. Women leaders like Alexandra Kollontai were so anxious to build an independent women’s liberation movement that they proposed the first All Russian Congress of Women to begin only five days after the Bolsheviks planned on taking power. The complexities of the Revolution postponed that meeting until the next year, when 1,000 women, mostly workers and peasants, jammed into the hall where only 300 had been expected. By 1919 women had formed the Zhenotdel (women’s section or department). While the Party men, except for Lenin, wanted to confine its role to bringing women into the Party, the women wanted it to do so much more and do it autonomously.

The hostility to Zhenotdel was not limited to men outside the party whose wives and daughters began demanding freedom. After Lenin’s death, Stalin moved as fast as he could to destroy it. The destruction of the Zhenotdel was not separated from the destruction of the revolution as a whole. By 1930 it was dissolved; that same year the official slogan for International Women’s Day became “100% Collectivization.”¹

One of the greatest examples of what women created in the process of revolution is the 1871 Paris Commune. There women like Louise Michel completely transformed the education system, educating girls and boys together, taking classes outside so children could have fresh air, bringing nature, music and poetry into the classrooms, and throwing the clergy out of education so that children could learn the truth, not dogma. Men and women were paid the same, worked together, made decisions about what would be produced, how it would be produced and how it would be distributed. They met nightly to make these decisions and the entire time women were fighting to be equal to men in all endeavors, including on the barricades.

In our age women in the Arab Spring took part in all the struggles, and still are, as is seen in Sudan and Algeria today. In Egypt, women in Tahrir Square in 2011 showed themselves

as revolutionary fighters, and many said that for the first time they felt that the men in the Square treated them as human beings. The first move of the counter-revolution was to physically attack women in Tahrir Square in an attempt to divide the movement.

What women were able to create in the brief spaces revolutions created show us what is possible. Is it “socialism”? It is the beginnings of a new society, full of potential, revealing what Marx called “the quest for universality,” and the joy of being “in the Absolute movement of becoming.”

HOW DO WE NEED ANOTHER HUMAN BEING?

In his 1844 Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts, Marx made it clear that to him the relationship of man to woman was the measure of how free a society had become, or how far it needed to go. He said that we would know when society has advanced to a new stage “when another human being is needed as a human being.” Raya Dunayevskaya deepened that by saying that what is involved as well is how deep and total revolution has to be.

What has muddled the waters on socialism and women’s liberation, is something Dunayevskaya pointed out in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women’s Liberation, and*

Marx’s Philosophy of Revolution (p. 104): “...the most serious errors of not only bourgeois but of socialist feminists are that they...above all, have helped those men who have tried to reduce Marx to a single discipline, be that as economist, philosopher, anthropologist, or ‘political strategist.’”

Most feminist theorists read Karl Marx, not to find what he worked out, but to see what he left out. He is attacked as not feminist, as only interested in workers—as if women haven’t always been workers—or they insist that he only took up capitalism and not patriarchy so Marxism must be supplemented. Often that supplementation mangles or misinterprets Marx’s categories.

Alison M. Jaggar is an example of a feminist theorist who interprets Marx in a narrow way. Even though her work *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* was written many years ago, it is one of the most serious feminist discussions of Marx and an example of the truncated view of Marx that is still being put forth today.

Jaggar critiques Marxists—and makes no distinction between post-Marx Marxists and Marx—for theorizing that, “once women are fully integrated into wage labor, there is no material basis for the sex specific oppression of women” (p. 223). But this was not Marx’s idea.

In a much-maligned paragraph, Marx writes: “modern industry, by assigning as it does an important part in the process of production outside the domestic sphere to women, to young persons, and to children of both sexes, creates a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of the relations between the sexes...”

Jaggar, like many others, interprets this to mean that Marx thinks that “participation of all in public production” will end “the oppression of any group by another” (p. 225). She rightly criticizes this, because she knows that women’s oppression is not linked only to the workplace, and that freedom for women “requires a far more total transformation of our society and of ourselves...” (p. 389).

TRANSFORMING HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

What Jaggar misses is what Marx says in the very next paragraph—that “in its brutal capitalistic form,” women’s entry into the labor force can be nothing other than a “pestiferous source of corruption and slavery.” Obviously he wasn’t saying all women have to do is work. Rather, the entire society must be transformed so that the way we produce things would be done in a liberating manner.

Marx was not saying that working outside the home equaled either socialism or the end to women’s oppression. In every subject he touched, be it production, anthropology or history, Marx was always looking for how human relations were changed. That was his focus, because he was trying to work out the creation of a new society built on new, human, instead of alienated, relationships.²

A currently popular feminist theorist, Silvia

Federici, tried to create an alternative theory of “social reproduction,” contending that having children and raising them is labor akin to value-producing labor that Marx worked out as a hallmark of capitalism. She theorizes that women’s role in reproduction is more important than factory labor because the woman is creating and raising the next generation of workers, and is therefore producing the most important commodity, labor power.

This mangles Marx’s category of “reproduction” as how capitalism reproduces itself, where to Federici it means reproducing children.

In specifying how capitalism works and what types of labor it values, Marx is not making value judgments. He is *not* saying that what workers do is more important than what women do. What he *is* doing is showing how capitalism works and reproduces itself. Capital makes the reproduction of human beings subordinate to its own reproduction instead of the other way around.

The reproduction of capital is about production for production’s sake, the accumulation of capital, and at the same time reproducing the exploitative social relations that define capitalist society. To understand this, one has to comprehend how capitalism reproduces the alienation—the thingifying of human beings—rather than liberating people.

Capitalist relations turn the human being into a thing and make things—commodities—the center of life. While there is no question that women’s oppression preceded capitalism, the objectification of all those who labor and create value impacts women as well as people of color and others. Ending that kind of objectification will have significant ramifications in our task to create a new human world and fight the objectification of women and others that seems to permeate society.

One of capitalism’s hallmarks is the law of value, where value is determined by socially necessary labor time. One way it manifests itself is as a drive for maximum production from the worker and minimum pay for her.

It also engenders revolt. If we see the dialectic as self-development through contradiction, then we recognize that those women in Russia who participated in the Zhenotdel, the women in the Paris Commune and in the Arab Spring, were fighting not only for their rights as workers but also for the freedom of women. The “quest for universality” that Marx pointed out is revealed in how women and others struggle as whole human beings. A Black working woman fights for all her rights at the same time; she is not Black one day, a worker another, and a woman a third. This is another reason that revolution has to be total from the start. We fight as who we are and who we want to become.

This revolt—which living in a sexist, racist, homophobic, anti-immigrant society brings out—sheds a new light on all kinds of questions, including “reproductive labor,” and how deep the transformation has to be. Not only do all human relationships have to be transformed and actually *become human*, but work too has to be something entirely different. Instead of the kind of life-shortening drudgery work is now for so many the world over, Marx raised what it could be in a new society: “life’s prime want.”

REVOLUTION—TOTAL FROM THE START

In *Capital*, Marx was not expansive on what the new society was to be. He did find the subject that would overthrow it—workers, men and women—because they know it best, and are the ones who experience its brutality and alienation first hand, and they are in a key place, at the point of production. Not only is what they produce alienated from them, but the very way they produce it, what they are doing with their own bodies in the act of creating commodities, is also alienated from them. To overthrow capitalism, then, labor is vital, just as women are vital in ending sexism and people of color in ending racism. This is part of what Dunayevskaya meant when she said that women’s oppression shows us just how deep and total revolution has to become.

Clearly to Marx and to women’s liberation, socialism cannot be a simple change in who is leading a country or even who owns its resources. The goal of revolution cannot stop at getting rid of tyrants like Trump, Putin, Viktor Orbán, Rodrigo Duterte, or Xi Jinping—all of whom, by no coincidence, strive to suppress women’s struggles to break out of traditional roles and liberate ourselves. That is just the beginning.

That is why Marxist-Humanism has been stressing Marx’s concept of “revolution in permanence,” because history has shown the insufficiency of a revolution stopping at the mere overthrow of government. Revolution must become permanent so that all human relationships are transformed in the process. There cannot be a blueprint for socialism. It will be what we make it.



Egyptian women demonstrate against Mubarak in February 2011.

1. “Women and the 1917 Russian Revolution,” *News & Letters*, by Terry Moon, Nov. 1987.

2. “Is Marx’s *Capital* about women’s freedom?” by Terry Moon, *News & Letters*, May 1999.

RISING THREAT OF THE RIGHT

Gerry Emmett’s article, “European Union elections: mixed signals” (May-June *N&L*), is a timely reminder of the dangers inherent in a decaying capitalist civilization. Just as across Europe, the far right is making headway here in the UK, as can be seen by the Brexit vote and the ongoing Islamophobic rhetoric which is spouted on an almost daily basis. It seems that most of the British Left is caught in supporting Brexit with all the reactionary consequences. There can be no Lexit.

**Subscriber
Northeast England**

The aid workers in Arizona who left food and water for refugee immigrants in the Arizona desert were convicted. The next one faces 20 years! We are living under fascism, which means that Nazis could march—with a police escort—right next to Detroit’s Gay Pride Parade. After all, don’t they have freedom of speech? No one knows yet if they had a permit, which the Gay Pride Parade was required to have.

**Patt
Detroit**

When I heard that Nazis had showed up to taunt the Pride Parade in Detroit, it brought back memories from 40 years ago when these same Nazis, National Socialist Movement, opened a headquarters/bookstore in

Don’t miss these
Chicago events!

Saturday, July 6:
Building Solidarity
with the Syrian
Revolution

4:00 PM, Rally at Michigan Ave. and Ida B. Wells Dr.
5:30 PM, Forum at 228 S. Wabash #230 with Fred Mecklenburg (News and Letters), David Turpin Sr. (Anti-War Committees in Solidarity with the Struggles for Self-Determination), Mary Rizzo (Palestine and Syrian Revolution solidarity activist, with report from Italy), Syrian artist Etab Hrieb.

Saturday, July 27:
Critical Reflections
on Capitalist China

7:00 PM at Fine Arts Building, 410 S. Michigan, Studio 632B
Talk by Richard Gilman-Opalsky. Sponsored by News and Letters Committees, the Anti-War Committees in Solidarity with the Struggles for Self-Determination, and Repeater Books.

READERS' VIEWS

Southwest Detroit. Daily mass picketing initiated by News and Letters Committees and including leftists, Holocaust survivors and local community groups shut it down, and then shut down NSM when they moved to two other working-class racially mixed neighborhoods. Yet Detroiters still have to block NSM today.

**Bob McGuire
Chicago**

CORRUPTION OF THE CRIMINAL
INJUSTICE SYSTEM

There is a lot of wrongdoing that is up for debate, but I know personally that the DA offices of Los Angeles County are corrupt (see “Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles DA, must go!” Nov.-Dec. 2018 *N&L*), starting with Pomona, then Glendale and Burbank. I have been locked up for telling the truth and their policy is to keep it quiet. Please know that witnesses change their story, and names of people that are plaintiffs are changed. In my case I can speak on that.

**Reader
Los Angeles**

ABORTION BANS ATTACK WOMEN

Indiana’s fetal burial law that the U.S. Supreme Court just approved requires that fetal remains from an abortion be buried or cremated by the clinic or doctor providing the abortion. The spinners, even liberal ones, are saying that has little to do with abortion but it has everything to do with limiting abortion rights and influencing the way the public thinks about abortion, fertilized eggs and fetuses. It has everything to do with shaming women and imposing the state’s beliefs onto each woman who has an abortion. It is, essentially, a “personhood” law, that is, it recognizes a dead egg, a few cells or fetus as a human being that must be buried or cremated. What about the woman’s dignity? What about her beliefs?

**Feminist
Chicago**

The Hyde Amendment is the only legislation I can think of that lets people determine what they want their

taxes to pay for or not. I didn’t want mine to pay for Trump’s inaugural bash, his upcoming usurpation of the 4th of July celebration in Washington, D.C., or his relatives’ completely unnecessary trip with him to Britain. I have no choice. But somehow people feel justified in saying they don’t want their money to pay for a poor woman’s abortion, often resulting in a forced pregnancy that, at worst can threaten a woman’s life, and at “best” force—yes force—her to have a baby she does not want. Down with the Hyde Amendment!

**Women’s Liberationist
Chicago**

SUPPORT MAÂTI MONJIB!

Maâti Monjib, publisher of the Arabic edition of Raya Dunayevskaya’s *Marxism and Freedom*, is under attack by the Moroccan state again! On April 22, Monjib went on a 48-hour hunger strike. He is threatened with dismissal from his post at Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco, and from the civil service. Four years earlier, Monjib led a 24-day hunger strike to defend his freedom of movement because the government banned him from traveling. He was prosecuted along with six other people for “threatening the internal security of the State.” The trial is ongoing and he is the subject of incessant state press campaigns of defamation and moral harassment in his workplace. To support Monjib, go to https://secure.avaaz.org/fr/community_petitions/Mounia_Bennani-Chra_Des_universitaire_sinquientent_face_aux_entraves_a_la_liberte_academique_subie_par_Monjib/.

Editors

NURSING HOME BLUES

Sadly, capitalism has generated a homophobic, racist, ageist society that has created a nursing home “industry.” (And I bet you thought an “industry” was a system of producing things, not places to care for those who need assistance!) The culture Suzanne Rose describes in “Nursing home blues” (May-June *N&L*) underlies even facilities serving middle-class residents with constant family visits. Nevertheless, the “lowest-level” (read: lowest-paid, hardest-worked) staff is most likely to provide kindness and human interaction with nursing home residents, despite the generally anti-human, poisoned atmosphere.

**Retiree
Detroit**

WHY READ N&L?

N&L is real and very diverse in your reporting. I particularly dig the coverage of that racist pig of a president, Donald J. Trump. If the people don’t come out in droves to oust him in 2020 then the country deserves this chump. Honestly, the Democrats are just as corrupt as the Republicans, just as greedy and kapitalistic to the core. As a true revolutionary, I believe in the total overthrow of the U.S. government and believe that the Constitution, drafted by racist-rapist slave owners, should be dismantled and replaced with one that truly serves and benefits the people. One where education and medical services are accessible to everyone regardless of race, sex, class and national origin.

**Black Moses
Portage, Wisc.**

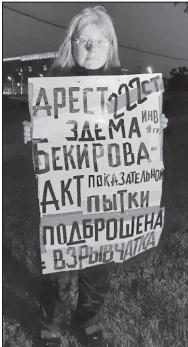
N&L has a lot of good info and what goes on in the world are things that the other papers don’t tell you about. Where I’m at, I don’t get to see a lot of news. I have been in ad-seg for almost five years now and I’m about the struggle. I would love to help get this kind of living out of the way. The things that go on in Missouri are out of control. I just love knowing that there is someone else fighting the struggle with me in this world. I try to share *N&L* with a lot of people, but some just don’t want to hear the truth about what goes on in the world. But I love the truth and I want to be a part of it.

**Prisoner
Charleston, Mo.**

SUPPORT CRIMEAN TATARS!

When we started monthly pickets in support of the Crimean Tatars in 2016, there were searches, arrests, murders, disappearances. Now there is another wave of repression against the indigenous people of Crimea. Families have been taken. In June, eight Crimean Tatars were arrested in the case of hizb ut-Tahrir [a party legal before Russia seized Crimea], adding to 58 others. Their persecution is politically motivated. Our June 18 picket called attention to the Crimean Tatar political prisoner Eden Bekirova, who was kidnapped before having heart surgery. Crimean Tatars who collect money for the families of political prisoners are persecuted, as are relatives who go to court to see their loved ones.

**Human rights activist
Saint Petersburg, Russia**



NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE ECONOMY AND DIALECTICS OF LIBERATION

Raya Dunayevskaya’s column on “The economy and dialectics of liberation” (May-June *N&L*) is very timely! In these Orwellian times, rich people are toasting good fortune, while working-class people are wondering when their checks will shrink or stop or the eviction notice will come. More strikes are happening, though not on the level before Reagan smashed unions. Still, unrest doesn’t necessarily mean revolution, especially when the far right is working night and day to channel discontent into their fake, racist, sexist, etc., revolt that is more about their power than liberating anyone. Too much of the Left has no clue, either trying to plan things out for the workers, or chasing after the whites who let racism get the better of them (and overestimating how many of them are actually working-class). When will we put the dialectics of liberation in the driver’s seat instead of creating new barriers between workers, youth fighting climate crisis, and all the other forces of revolt—and between them and dialectics of liberation in thought?

**Solidarity activist
Southern California**

ENVIRONMENTAL RACISM

Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel dropped all the charges in the Flint water disaster—in order to start over with new cases. Her team of prosecutors includes Kym Worthy, Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney, who discovered tens of thousands of untested rape kits in a Detroit police warehouse and for years relentlessly pursued testing them and bringing justice to hundreds of women. People were shocked and confused at the news, but the cases are no longer in the hands of former Attorney General Bill Scheutte, who jumped into the Flint crisis only when he saw an opportunity to advance his political career.

**Susan Van Gelder
Detroit**



Charles Denby “led a walkout strike in an auto plant to get Black women away from the glue room and into the sewing room” (“Socialism, labor and the Black dimension,” May-June *N&L*). It is worth pointing out that he wasn’t saying Black women need more stereotypically feminine work. Actually, he was protesting the segregation policy. Only white women had been assigned to work in the sewing room, where air quality and other conditions were better than in the glue room.

**Buddy
Los Angeles**

●

NO NUKES!

I am greatly impressed with the May-June issue of *N&L*. I cannot remember any other issue in the past two-three years that has the same sense of urgency. I love the inclusiveness, depth and clarity. As an advocate for total disarmament of the world’s 15,000 nuclear weapons, I emphasize the absolute importance of disarming all the nuclear arsenals of the world. Humankind has become desensitized to the mortal danger posed by nuclear weapons since the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945. Then there was worldwide terror that these horrible nuclear bombs may spell the end of the human race. Today, nuclear weapons remain our greatest danger. The youth are keenly conscious of climate change yet seldom mention that an international crisis could provoke a nuclear holocaust. We need to shake people awake to the fact that nuclear weapons must all be destroyed if we want humanity to continue to exist.

**Rama Kumar
Fairfax, Calif.**

Pro-nukers repeatedly describe the fears of us anti-nukes as “unreasonable fears.” I once asked Michael Shellenberger if he knew that “unreasonable” and “fears” were two separate words, but he didn’t think it was funny. However, our fears are real.

That’s why those who are addicted to “progress” and who want to believe the lies of the nuclear industry and who believe nuclear power can be made safe have to make us look “unreasonable.” But they are wrong and we are reasonable. They ignore the future debt balloon awaiting the generations that will have to deal with spent fuel, the most dangerous substance man has produced, that lasts for 100,000 years (conservative estimate), has become 80,000 tons of extreme radioactivity, and we haven’t dealt with the first spoonful. Soon we’ll have to stop whistling past the graveyard because we’ll be in it. We are leaving behind a legacy of sickness.

**January
Chicago**

VOICES FROM BEHIND BARS

We are being warehoused; there is no rehabilitation in U.S. prisons unless you seek it out for yourself! We need to stand up, fight and resist the Prison Industrial Complex! The time is now! Call your local congressman, write the President! Stop mandatory minimums—see famm.org (Families Against Mandatory Minimums). The Administration gets prisoners to kill each other and lose good time for less severe charges. We are U.S. citizens and going to be back out in society. The country needs to fix and change this corrupt system.

**Prisoner
USA**

The rich are trying to throw away the key against people of color and poor white people. They are forcing us into work programs like Prison Industry Authority and make state money on our misery. I’m losing hope fast.

**Prisoner
Soledad, Calif.**

The public needs to see how these state prisons continue to steal money from us and our family and friends and it needs to be stopped.

**Prisoner
Hunlock Creek, Penn.**

I appreciate getting news from around the world that’s little publicized through other papers. I know there are things going on that just like

in this prison (Google “Lucasville prison riot”) tend to get swept under the rug. It’s 2019 and we still don’t have proof that mass incarceration betters society, much less an individual.

**Prisoner
Lucasville, Ohio**



Thanks for sending me the newspaper free of charge and for printing the article I wrote a while back about LGBTQ issues in the U.S. Just about every article printed in “Queer Notes” has shed light on the problems people in the LGBTQ community face. I respect y’all for being receptive. Lastly, I would like to say thank you for all the other guys y’all send *N&L* to as a gift that are unable to reach out to thank y’all on their own behalf. We appreciate y’all’s effort and consistency.

**Prisoner
Toledo, Ohio**

I’ve been the beneficiary of a subscription for the past couple of years. I’d like to extend my grateful thanks to the donor who made this possible. *N&L* has become an important part of my life. I greatly appreciate the foundational lessons coupled with current articles featuring their applications. My copy gets read and discussed with an engaged group. Prison can be an isolating experience. *N&L* is a conduit to the world.

**Prisoner
Lexington, Ky.**

TO OUR READERS: Can you donate \$5 for a prisoner who cannot pay for a subscription to N&L? It will be shared with many others. A donation of \$8 pays for a subscription plus the Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers pamphlet to be sent to a prisoner. Prisoners are eligible to continue their free subscriptions when they first get released, a time when the system tries to make them forget the struggle.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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7-8/19

Trumpism aims to bleach the census

When billionaire hedge fund manager Paul Singer first approached Republican strategist Thomas Hofeller to ask for advice about whether he should fund a legal effort to allocate political power based only on a census of voting age citizens, Hofeller said that was impossible without a citizenship question. He then ran his own analysis on the possible political effects of using a base population of only citizens when redistricting. As he wrote in 2015, it would be “advantageous to Republicans and non-Hispanic whites.” Or as Black social commentator Jamil Smith put it recently in Rolling Stone, “One question about citizenship could help calcify white minority rule in America.”

DESTROYING ACCURATE REPRESENTATION

The Constitution says that seats in the House of Representatives and electors in the Electoral College are to be geographically reallocated every 10 years according to a census of “all persons.” However, in the era of rampant ICE raids, a citizenship question would allow a workaround of that clause through an undercount of noncitizens. Phoenix resident Orlando, who spoke to NPR without giving her last name, said: “People are very frightened about everything now... no one trusts anyone.”

Up to his death in 2018, Hofeller would never release his analysis to the public—while the legality of partisan bias in redistricting is disputed, racial bias is clearly not allowed. However, last May his daughter found hard drives containing his documents. She gave them to lawyers who argued the census case at



One of the many demonstrations against Trump's plan to add a question on citizenship to the U.S. Census. This one is in front of the U.S. Supreme Court.

the Supreme Court, who realized some text in the Trump Administration's court filings was lifted from Hofeller's writing. One paragraph matches word for word, detailing what a legal pretext for a citizenship question might be—the same Voting Rights Act argument put forward by Trump lawyers: “[D]ata on citizenship is specifically required to ensure that the Latino community achieves full representation in redistricting.”

On June 12, the ACLU asked for a delay of the imminent census ruling in light of the new evidence. If anyone could engage

double-think and believe that a president who slurs whole demographics of people is also concerned about fair representation of racial minorities, they might be a bare majority on the Supreme Court. Five judges upheld Trump's [Muslim] travel ban last year on the grounds that the court should not second-guess the Administration's official statements as to motive.

On April 23, hundreds of people rallied on the front steps of the Court. They chanted, “Without status or with status, we are here!” Signs read: “It's in the Constitution, everybody counts,” “No census without us,” and “We southeast Asians will not be invisible.” Concurrent rallies gathered in New York and Orlando, Fla., where signs read: “Caring for our children also means making sure they are counted.” Claudia Alarco Alarco told Al Jazeera immigrant families like hers are “asking for just treatment that we so rightfully deserve because of the contributions we have made in this country.”

Contributions made by immigrants include unpaid hours of labor and payroll taxation without benefits. Looking back at the Bracero Program and Chinese Exclusion Acts, payback for the extracted labor of Mexican-Americans and Chinese-Americans was often a final deportation of citizens and non-citizens alike. That general model persists in present time.

Boston activist Cassie Moreno wrote in a recent tweet: “It's taken hundreds of years to start to rectify the legacy of who counted and who did not. We're still fighting every day...It's on us to stand up for everyone to have a stake, to have a voice, to be reflected.”

Only after slave rebellions and abolitionism—not to mention English textile workers' prevention of a British entry into the Civil War on the side of the South—did the U.S. do away with the constitutional clause counting Black slaves as 3/5 of a person (all of which benefitted Southern white clout even as the labor power of Black people was stolen and any semblance of political self-determination denied). Native Americans counted as zero, but fought wars to defend their human connection to a homeland and in contemporary times pushed back against incursions of unmitigated resource extraction and forces of cultural erasure.

The continuing efforts to gain self-determination will be hindered by a skewed census. If a citizenship question proves to mean undercounting people of color, not only will that further dilute political representation, but it would spell the loss of federal dollars for infrastructure and social safety net programs, for example school lunches.

CENSUS DATA WEAPONIZED BY ICE

Undercounting minority neighborhoods also could result in more lopsided rollouts of the emergency response to a natural disaster. As much as Hurricane Katrina in 2005 revealed baseline callousness of politicians and police toward Black residents of New Orleans, poor census data would do still further damage.

The Census Bureau has stressed that personal data is confidential for 72 years. However, block-by-block data is not; it was used with chilling efficiency by the military in 1941 to abduct Japanese-Americans, many of them citizens, and put them in camps behind barbed wire. It's easy to imagine that ICE will utilize block citizenship data.

Submitting a form while leaving a question blank should trigger an in-person visit, so non-citizens are not likely to do this. Not filling out a form at all translates into a situation where everyone else in the household will also go uncounted. This is why, in some of the most heavily immigrant communities, the General Accounting Office projects a potential census miss amounting to 17% of residents. A revival of humanist philosophy is needed to get us out of the dystopian spiral.

—Buddy Bell

Prisoners debate socialism & capitalism

by Robert Taliaferro

Over the past several years there has been a heated debate in the U.S. regarding socialist idealism, and its relationship to the capitalist structure that defines this country. These conversations are often discussed in the same breath as Senator Bernie Sanders, former president Barack Obama, and a variety of candidates currently vying for the Democratic nod towards a presidential bid in 2020.

PRISONERS' DIVERSE OPINIONS

This discourse is not limited to people in the community; these same issues are discussed nationwide within its prisons, with an interesting level of diversity which rivals the opinions one finds beyond the prison walls.

The division of opinions regarding socialist ideas, versus capitalism, often falls along racial lines, with Black prisoners often more supportive of a socialist agenda, while white prisoners—especially in their forties and older—tend to be more capitalist oriented, particularly if they hail from rural communities.

In discussions and arguments against social programs that have been inspired by ultra-right conservatives, there is a rhetorical idealism that a socialist agenda of any ilk would immutably damage the fabric of American society and its core values.

This conservative fearmongering has been seen throughout the history of this country whenever the concept of socialism has been raised. This is especially so whenever any ideas are presented which refer to equitable distribution of wealth, equal pay for equal work, issues regarding mass incarceration, reasonable and affordable healthcare, raising the minimum wage, or other social programs that are created to enhance the quality of life for all, regardless of color, gender, economic or social status.

Opponents of socialist agendas feel that U.S. culture is, at its core, hardwired and destined to be competitive and that through this competition the nation will progress in a meaningful manner.

They also feel that a socialist agenda will destroy any personal incentive for individual growth, adding that the end result would be that people would rely on the state to manage their needs with little or no effort being put forth by the individuals to change their lives.

CAPITALISM VIEWS PEOPLE AS LAZY

Donald Trump and his supporters, for instance, feel that ideas like a responsible immigration policy which protects Dreamers and allows them a clear path to citizenship, would discourage individual efforts of competitive advancement for those who—for instance—immigrated to the country legally, thus providing no real incentives to achieve. Such rhetoric disregards the fact that many of those dreamers have, in fact, contributed substantially to those vaunted American values that he and his cronies espouse.

The reality of capitalism is that it's all about privilege and class. That small percentage which controls the majority of wealth dictate the terms on which the means of life—ranging from where one can live to how much one can earn at a specific job—can be used to control a segment of the population in an inequitable and discriminatory fashion. It is a form of social and economic slavery; a doctrine of human greed and selfishness which robs the workers who produce the means for garnering wealth, and inequitably rewards those who own the companies who, in turn, exploit those workers.

The social and cultural unrest that is prevalent today is largely traceable to conflicting elements in our communities that restrict, and marginalize, individuals per their cultures, race, gender or gender identity, economic or social status. This aspect of marginalization is a primary component of the capitalist doctrine.

In contrast, the reality of socialist agendas is that they are based on a belief in equality, individuality and initiative for every man, woman and child regardless of their circumstances—a worldwide democracy, for the freedom of everyone, that defines a civilization that takes into account the needs of the many, rather than the inherent greed of the few.

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

continued from p. 1

politely, checking the desire to gush and say what I believe. Not because of fear, but out of respect for that person's mindset. Not everyone is going to agree with how I think, and I am learning to accept people's different positions.

The experience of being released did not come the moment I walked out of the prison gates to friends waiting to pick me up. The moment of emotional and mental effervescence came four and a half years earlier, in May of 2014—the morning I was released from solitary confinement at Pelican Bay State Prison to go to another high security prison. For decades I had no hope of ever leaving solitary alive. By the time of my actual release, that earlier experience could not be topped.

Walking out of prison in early 2019 seemed a formality because I had come out only to walk into the vicious struggle for survival of the fittest. The ability to procure basic human needs, i.e., food, clothing, and shelter becomes most important. The constant pursuit of the fulfillment of those needs consumes newly released prisoners, but it also constitutes a cycle of oppression that minorities of low income are caught in. There can be no pursuit of peace, happiness or liberty. This is the so-called freedom that I'm supposed to be elated over.

SHAPING FREEDOM

The shaping of the idea of freedom that pervades my whole conscious being has no particular design, because it is predicated on a dialectical process. A human society is one where necessities like food, clothing, and shelter are no longer the privilege of a wealthy few, but a right of human existence.

The first thing I have to do is find shelter, but that doesn't mean just a roof. It means people who can help you sustain your ideas. That's why having collaborators and discussing ideas is so important. We need cohesiveness that can keep us together.

I discovered *News & Letters* and Marxist-Humanist ideas by accident. But humanism grabbed me. In a place that enforced racial identification I/we were trying to break through racial designations. I was trying to understand people, not from the perspective of who they are as separate individuals only, but how they embody their ideas. That's what enabled me to survive the torture of solitary confinement in Pelican Bay.

Being able to read about Marxist-Humanism kept me focused on who I wanted to become. The first thing to go in solitary is your mind. Marxist-Humanism steadied me. Working out how to sing freedom “in a strange land” demands continuous feeding of your mind, not just your body.

The truth of the ‘Woolsey Fire’

“The Santa Susana Fire” should be the name of the California wildfire called “Woolsey.” A photo, shot from a helicopter for CBS-LA, records the origin of Woolsey fire to be at Santa Susana Field Lab (SSFL). That lab’s impact on the dangerous chemicals and isotopes released by the fire are just the latest in an historic string of insults perpetrated by SSFL on the environment of southeast Ventura County and Simi Valley (see: “A failure of governmental candor: The fire at the contaminated Santa Susana Field Laboratory,” by Daniel Hirsch (<https://bit.ly/2GAJYup>) and “Woolsey Fire Aftermath” by Martin Fleck in *Physicians for Social Responsibility* report Vol. 41, No 1, Spring/Summer 2019.)

Public/private responsibility for SSFL and its string of accidents—including a nuclear fuel meltdown—passed through the hands of several large defense contractors, all of whom, when “ordered” to clean up the site, kicked the can down the road. No one was prosecuted, in spite of the law.

SSFL was an “experimental” place. Its 10 low-yield nuclear reactors (four of which were accident sites) had no containment structures. Accidental and routine emissions were vented directly into the atmosphere or the water. In addition SSFL fabricated fuel using plutonium and uranium, tested tens of thousands of rocket engines, and, in the “hot lab,” de-cladded highly irradiated spent fuel from other U.S. reactor sites for examination.

FIRE BURN AND CALDRON BUBBLE

Toxic waste at SSFL was burned in barrels ignited by rifle fire or in open pits. It included: “A million gallons of trichlorethylene, a [carcinogen]... flush[ed] rocket engines...then percolate[d] into the ground and groundwater...dozens of other...chemicals, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), dioxins, heavy metals, volatile organic compounds and semi-volatile organic compounds, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and perchlorate contaminated soil...and water...the EPA found...contaminat[ion] with radionuclides, including strontium 90, cesium 137, and plutonium 239.”

In the word of Dr. Robert Dodge, “These toxic materials are in SSFL’s soil and vegetation, and when it burns and becomes airborne in smoke and ash, there is real possibility of heightened exposure for area residents.”

Lab workers who were to test soil, water and vegetation samples for radiation drove off the isotopes in question by heating the samples before testing. Vegetation was washed to remove contaminants, then tested. Water? Filtered before testing to get rid of pollutants. According to the Union of Concerned Scientists: “Community leaders and elected officials pushed for independent measurements, which the Energy Department kept promising but kept resisting.”

The State of California’s Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) conflated polluters with clients and regarded the public as the enemy of both.

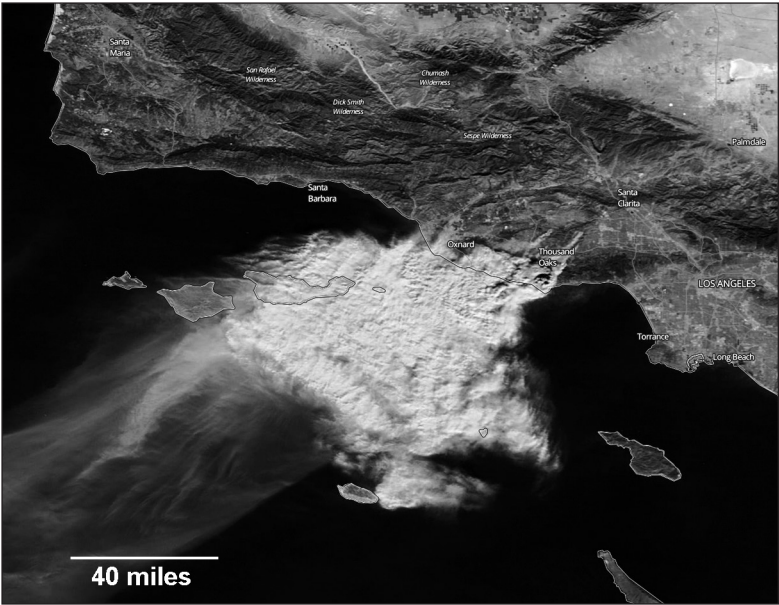
“Given that our state toxic agency was responsible in part for the site still being contaminated, it is not surprising that it dismissed health concerns from the fire related to SSFL,” said Denise Duffield, Associate Director of Physicians for Social Responsibility-LA.

Public health studies reveal higher death rates for workers and elevated cancer rates among those living within a two-mile radius as opposed to five miles from Santa Susana: 60% greater for some cancers.

After this sordid history was made public, grassroots protest produced a law and a promise of cleanup that was to have been completed “by 2017.” At the end of 2017 the cleanup had not yet started.

BUT WAIT! THERE’S MORE!

After the fire the DTSC issued a statement say-



Satellite image of the so-called “Woolsey Fire” taken on November 9.

ing no contamination had been released from SSFL by the fire. When asked for data, none was forthcoming. The smoke was not tested, as all samples were taken days after the fire; well-known SSFL contaminants were not included; in response to hand-held radiation monitoring, the benchmarks for risk were set so high (100 to 10,000 times higher than normal standards) that no risk levels were found.

Daniel Hirsch reports that the DTSC was asked in 2000 to consider that a fire at SSFL would sully the atmosphere with contaminants known to be at the site. Answer: such a fire was “completely ‘speculative’ and non-credible.” But it is exactly what happened as a result of “shoddy environmental controls.”

Oddly, the “by 2017” agreement to clean up the site was rescinded on the same day as the fire.

—Jan Boudart

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Dallas, Texas, police are investigating the murders of two Trans women and the stabbing of a third within the last seven months as connected hate crimes. Muhlaysia Booker and Chynal Lindsey were found dead, and an unnamed Transgender woman survived being stabbed. Booker and Lindsey are among nine Transgender women—all of color—reported murdered in the U.S. since Transgender Day of Remembrance 2018. Worldwide, many murders of Transgender people go unreported. Dallas police held an LGBTQ+ Town Hall Meeting on May 23, updating the community about the three crimes, asking for any information the community might have, and assuring them of the support of the police and City Hall. The audience was urged to be vigilant and aware of their surroundings, and a question and answer session took place.

* * *

After Transgender woman Layleen Polanco was found dead in her cell at Rikers Island, hundreds of people rallied to honor her life, to call for a full investigation into her death, and for the jail to be closed. While the official line of the prison is that Polanco was in one of Rikers’ two large communal cells that house Transgender women, and then in a restrictive housing unit, her former cellmate reported that Polanco was in reality moved to a solitary housing unit, despite the fact that she had a seizure illness.

* * *

Transgender woman Ellen McReady was denied entry to Goldfinger, Tokyo’s largest annual party for Japanese—as it turns out—cisgender women only. McReady and her wife, whose marriage is not recognized in Japan, started Transgender and Queer community safe space WAIFU, which meets regularly, and is being greatly lauded, including on social media. Meanwhile, Transgender women and their supporters are organizing a boycott of Goldfinger.

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Britain and USA: get out of Chagos!

Port Louis, Mauritius—LALIT deplores the USA’s State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus taking the same position as colonizer Britain, making Africa into a “*terra nullius*” (nobody’s land). Her May 6 statement is on the issue of Britain’s decolonization of Mauritius—including the Chagos Archipelago and Diego Garcia, where the big U.S. military base squats.

Her statement that the issue is “purely bilateral” is in response to the findings of the UN’s International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ruled that Britain immediately complete its decolonization of Africa, in particular of Mauritius. For the dispute to be “purely bilateral,” i.e., between Mauritius and Britain alone, the U.S. and Britain would have to believe that the African Union and its people do not exist. In addition, all 14 ICJ judges, including the U.S.’s own judge, must have been in the wrong to decide that the ICJ should hear the multilateral case.

The old colonial doctrine of “*terra nullius*” is the only philosophy—a profoundly autocratic one—that they can possibly be relying on to maintain that the issue concerns only Britain and Mauritius, when the entire African Union proposed the motion.

Now Britain is blubbing that, “The ICJ findings are only an advisory opinion.” The subject of the advisory opinion was the incomplete decolonization of Mauritius at the time of its independence in the 1960s, thus the incomplete decolonization of Africa. The findings, by 13 judges to 1, were three-fold: 1. Britain failed to decolonize Mauritius properly, and this is unlawful. 2. Britain must decolonize Mauritius completely at once. 3. Other UN states must help oblige Britain to do so.

NEOCOLONIALISM LIVES ON

Even though the entire African Union sponsored the resolution and the entire General Assembly called for the opinion by voting the resolution, and the entire Court accepted jurisdiction (14-0) and it even called Britain out (13-1) for having acted and for still acting illegally, Morgan Ortagus’ press statement asserted:

“The United States supports the UK’s continued sovereignty over the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) and the April 30 statement by the U.K. Government. The joint U.S.-U.K. military base on Diego Garcia plays a critical role in the maintenance of regional and global peace and security.

“The United States views the BIOT as a purely bilateral dispute between the U.K. and Mauritius...”

LALIT deplores this colonial mentality. We deplore the cruel deportation by the UK/U.S. governments of the Chagossian Mauritians who were living there. We deplore the illegal dismemberment of Mauritius by Britain in its excision of Chagos from Mauritius. We deplore the reason for all this dictatorial behavior by these two states to maintain military occupation of Diego Garcia through a secretive military base outside all democratic purview.

This new U.S. communiqué signed by Morgan Ortagus, following as it does Alan Duncan’s declaration in the British Parliament, makes Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth’s cowardly position about maintaining the military base on Diego Garcia after reunification of the country all the more irrational, and all the more damaging to the decolonization and demilitarization process as it enters an important phase.

—LALIT, May 8, 2019

LGBT: ‘Lives in Transition’

The images at Serbian photographer Slobodan Randjelovic’s *Lives in Transition* exhibit revealed many aspects of life for Queer people in Serbia. While Serbia’s LGBT community breathed a sigh of relief with President Slobodan Milosevic’s exit and with the passage of a law that says LGBT people cannot be treated as unequal, Serbian society remains largely homophobic and transphobic. The photographs and captions show a Queer community that hopes, fears, desires, loves and struggles. The exhibit, drawn from the book of the same title, shows, as the exhibit catalogue states: “the remarkable and inspiring resilience in the human struggle against a repressive and intolerant social environment and demonstrates how friendship and community can help people shape their own futures.”

Lives in Transition is one book in the series *Diverse Humanity*—photography books that depict Queer voices in various Queer communities, many of them marginalized and persecuted, speaking, confronting and questioning rigid societal so-called ideals about personhood and family. In addition to sexual orientation, diversity of gender identity and expression past the binary are explored. To see the books in the series go to: <https://www.diversehumanity.com/>

—E. Barclay

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Millions in Hong Kong challenge Xi’s ambitions

History and the future jammed together in Hong Kong during June, in the march of 180,000 commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Marches of over a million protested against a looming extradition law that would fast-track dissidents in Hong Kong to face injustice in Xi Jinping’s China.

SOLIDARITY WITH TIANANMEN DISSIDENTS

In the Spring of 1989 the people of Hong Kong had held demonstrations in solidarity with students



Youth and others own the Hong Kong streets, June 16, 2019.

leading mass demonstrations in dozens of cities of China. Then army tanks killed at least 3,000 people at the occupation of Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Since then, every year on June 4, activists in Hong Kong have been able to keep the memory of that movement and the massacres in Beijing and Chengdu alive.

Many marchers this year were not yet born in 1989 when more than a million students and workers marched and biked to Tiananmen Square. That revolt had begun after the death on April 15 of former Party Chairman Hu Yaobang, who had been dismissed after students in 1986-87 spearheaded demonstrations across China for science, democracy and freedom. (See “China’s youth revolt vs. Mao’s legacy,” p.

YOUTH IN ACTION

by Buddy Bell

Students throughout Brazil have been protesting a spending freeze on education. On May 6, thousands surrounded a military college in Rio de Janeiro where the country’s president was speaking. In response to his proposal for a “numbers-based, efficient and managerial” approach to education, students’ signs said “Education is Not a Commodity.” The proposal to target sociology and humanities programs for cuts happened after teachers in Brazil were fired for holding discussions about gender or politics. Thousands of youth demonstrated in more than 100 cities on May 15 and May 30. Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte both saw more than 250,000 people in the streets. In Goiania, indigenous students marched with signs reading, “Indigenous Land, Core of Resistance.” On June 14 all transportation networks were stalled in Sao Paulo, as transportation workers struck in solidarity with the students and to safeguard their pension system that is also a candidate for the chopping block.

Hundreds of students in Catalonia held a strike in central Barcelona on May 9 to demand a 30% cut in their tuition that would bring them on par with other semi-autonomous regions in Spain. Students and sympathetic local citizens are collecting signatures for a popular legislative initiative on the same question. If, as expected, they are able to exceed a threshold of 50,000 signatures, the proposal will be automatically introduced before the Parliament. Elsewhere in Spain, 30 college students in the Valencian community protested the Department of Education on June 9 over the sudden adoption of a new and difficult math entrance exam for public universities. Student union coordinator Carlos Naranjo told local newspaper Levante that “the test doesn’t try to evaluate,” but is a back-door method to “impede and eliminate students from the working class.”

In New Jersey, about 70 students held a sit-in on the lawn of Princeton University’s Title IX administration offices each day from May 7 to May 15. A smaller group maintained the presence through each night, taking shelter under campus archways during rainstorms. They were demanding consistency, transparency, and staffing changes to ensure independence in the way the university adjudicates reports of sexual assault. Various anonymous testimonials posted at princetonixnow.com illustrate a negligent process flawed by conflicts of interest and sloppy enforcement. After meeting with organizers of the sit-in, the university is talking about enacting some portion of their proposals in the fall, and students have encouraged alumni to withhold donations to the university until it follows through.

4.) Gatherings that began to honor Hu steadily spread across China and deepened until the occupation of Tiananmen Square on May 4, 1989.

Rejecting the occupiers’ demands for democratization, the regime declared martial law on May 21 in response to the hunger strike on the Square. The People’s Liberation Army’s 27th Army based around Beijing was sent to clear the Square, but workers and ordinary citizens of Beijing blocked troop trucks and talked to soldiers, turning troops back. That bought time for the occupation, time even to found the Beijing Autonomous Trade Union and oppose the state-capitalist regime calling itself Marxist by singing the International. Unleashing a massacre, the regime ordered the 45th Army to clear the Square without regard to life or limb, warning soldiers who had not heard students’ demands that they were traitors.

RESISTING BEIJING INJUSTICE

This year is 22 years after Britain returned their colony of Hong Kong to China under a “one country two systems” agreement to guarantee semi-autonomy for Hong Kong until 2047. And this years’ commemoration of the Tiananmen Square massacre was followed on June 9 by more than a million people protesting the Extradition Bill that would legalize dissidents being sent to face China’s injustice system. That system has a near-100% conviction rate from bogus trials. With the Extradition Bill, China would have no need to kidnap opponents as it had done to five booksellers.

When thousands of young people gathered around the Legislative Council on the night of June 12, the police reacted with violence, using the rubber bullets that Britain had used against a strike and youth uprising in 1967. On June 16, a day after government head Carrie Lam announced a delay on the Extradition Bill but not its withdrawal, almost two million (out of a Hong Kong population of seven million, the equivalent of 90 million Americans marching on Washington) marched again.

But since Carrie Lam answers not to seven million but to one—Party Chairman Xi Jinping in Beijing—she neither resigned nor conceded to protesters’ demands. While thousands of workers joined the protest, Lam did have the support of the head of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions, who organized a counter-protest of just 40 people!

That pathetic counter-“protest” speaks volumes

Pride confronts Nazis

Detroit—Participants at Detroit’s Motor City Pride March on June 8 were shocked and horrified to confront 15 armed Nazis in full regalia, surrounded by a cordon of mostly Black Detroit police officers. Mainstream media did not report on this story, largely leaving it to social media for reports, photos and videos. The events reveal the serious threat of fascism and the limitations and divisions within identity politics when class differences, the power of mass movements, and historical memory are disregarded.

POLICE PROTECT FASCISM

Nazis had threatened in April to disrupt Pride Day: “NSM [The National Socialist Movement] will be armed and counter-protesting the freaks,” wrote their self-identified “commander” on Russian social network VK. Nazis marched, thanks to a police escort, through downtown Detroit during the Pride festivities.

The organizers of Motor City Pride asked citizens to “leave it to the Detroit Police,” but the Metro-Detroit Political Action Network reported: “Three members of the houseless community joined the front line in trying to stop the [Nazis], but were shoved aside by [police] riot shields. A fuming unified bloc of Antifascists and Pride goers shouted ‘Class traitor!’ at the cops and ‘Who do you serve, who do you protect?’ and began shouting ‘Queer Power!’”

“A ‘Nazis Are Scared’” chant caught on...NSM only managed to disrupt Pride proper for 10 minutes and Detroit proper for 20, five spent cowering in a van.”

One Black activist raised serious questions when he posted, “We should have been informed...” He was echoed by another questioner: “Shouldn’t people have been notified so a unified and strategic community response could have been organized as it was in Dayton last month when the KKK came to town? Why wasn’t a formal statement declaring zero tolerance for hatred issued by the city? Why the false equivalency that equates citizens verbally protesting fascism with armed Nazis? Wasn’t pushing a woman to the ground assault? Taking a stand against fascism should be the work of all citizens and not just a few. I wish the city had trusted the good people of Detroit and beyond to come together and fashion a broad-based response. As Mama Lila [Cabbil] often said, ‘Silence is violence.’”

—Detroit observer

about its big brother, the All China Federation of Trade Unions, whose role is one of trying to stifle Chinese factory workers’ revolts. The surplus value created by two generations of Chinese workers producing for the world market has emboldened the global ambition of Xi, counting on investments in the Belt and Road Initiative to assert power across Asia and Europe and Africa. But Xi has made striking factory workers, student activists and lawyers representing workers and peasants the target of arrest and even extra-judicial disappearance.

JAILS FILLED WITH WORKERS

Xi has simultaneously tightened repression at the edges of his empire, especially in expanding concentration camps for Uyghurs in Xinjiang and in speeding up taking control of Hong Kong. He has designs on Taiwan, whose capitalist class he could work with like the capitalists on the Communist Party Central Committee.

But the people of Taiwan, which suffered its own massacres in 1947 at the hands of the Nationalists who ruled China before the 1949 Revolution, chose to commemorate the martyrs of Tiananmen Square and deny the Party of their butchers.

—Bob McGuire

Sudanese revolution

continued from p. 1

construction of concentration camps for these immigrants even as genocide continued in Darfur.

Hemeti, originally from neighboring Chad, has become wealthy through violence. He used his militias to make money from gold mining, smuggling and human trafficking. The last skill was useful to him in providing Darfuri child soldiers to the war in Yemen, for which he has doubtless been well paid. It is known



Part of the protest near the army headquarters in Khartoum, Sudan, April 7, 2019.

that Saudi Arabia has promised over \$3 billion to support the TMC regime.

Hemeti has been abetted by outside powers. Did the U.S. and the Gulf States give a green light to the June 3 massacre? U.S. Charge d’Affaires Steven Koutsis attended an iftar meal with Hemeti and his henchmen; Hemeti and nominal TMC head General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan had visited Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates officials.

IDENTITY OF THE REVOLUTION

The masses’ rejection of Bashir’s fundamentalism forced the TMC to distance itself from the Muslim Brotherhood and some Islamists (though this distancing is also supported by the TMC’s reactionary backers, Egypt and Saudi Arabia). On the other hand, the TMC has given its supporters assurances that Shari’a law will continue to influence legislation.

More significant is the continuing reclamation/transformation of Sudanese identity that has been essential to the revolution. The class component, cutting across ethnic boundaries, expressed itself from the beginning as struggles over food prices became revolutionary struggles over what kind of society Sudan should be. This will remain a determinant as Sudan is over \$50 billion in debt to various creditors.

The revolutionary role of women continues. The inspiring invocation of the Nubian Kandakes of the past has been translated into concrete demands for women’s greater empowerment. Under Bashir and the TMC alike, women have been targeted for abuse, including sexual harassment, rape and beatings for “wrong” clothing or behavior. The revolution is demanding women make up a significant portion of a civilian government.

The revolution’s direct confrontation with the racist, genocidal Janjaweed/RSF highlights the reclamation of Sudan’s African identity. This is also internationalism in the spirit of Frantz Fanon that has seen solidarity demonstrations in Kenya (which was attacked by Kenyan authorities) and among Black youth in the U.S. and UK.

The future is unwritten. As Mohamed Khalil, a protester from Port Sudan, stated: “Our revolution is still incomplete. Our main demand is civilian rule and I’m sure we will achieve it.”

WORLD VIEW

By Gerry Emmett

India and the European Union are the world’s two largest democratic electorates. Recent election results in both show the deep crisis in bourgeois society. It is worthwhile to view them together, as two poles of the post-colonial world.

MODI’S DYSTOPIA

One of the most popular Indian films was the 1977 classic *Amar Akbar Anthony*, about three brothers, separated at birth; one is raised as a Hindu, one Muslim, and one Christian. They come to learn that they are all one family and work together to overcome corruption.

This was one idea of Indian society. The April 11 to May 19 general election manifested an opposite idea. The Hindu chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and its allies won 353 of 543 seats in the Lok Sabha.

This is terrifying. The BJP has rewritten history books to exclude India’s 22 million Muslims. Critics have been threatened, and some jailed or killed. When journalist Gauri Lankesh was assassinated, a Modi ally called her “a bitch who died like a dog.” Student leader Umar Khalid, who survived an as-



Hindutva mob wields swords and sticks in attempt to attack a small group of Muslims in Ahmadabad, India.

Far Right, anti-immigrant parties in the May 23-26 European Parliament elections as a reason for complacency. But these parties actually led the voting in the UK (Brexit Party), France (Le Pen’s National Rally), Italy (Salvini’s League), Poland (Law and Justice Party) and Hungary (Orban’s Fidesz). This happened in post-colonial, post-Holocaust Europe, the Europe of the martyr-heroes of the Resistance to fascism.

As Natalia Banelescu-Bogdan of the Migration Policy Institute wrote, “A decade ago, the most im-

portant check on the influence of populist radical-Right parties was the fact that they rarely entered office...Regardless of the actual legislative (or disruptive) power they will possess in the European Parliament, radical-Right parties have shrewdly used last week’s elections as a vehicle to continue to reposition themselves away from the fringes and into the mainstream.”

WHAT KIND OF SOCIETY?

There is a worldwide resonance to these elections. The existential question, “What does it mean to be human?” has now become a universal question: “What kind of society is fit for human beings to live in?”

It isn’t simple. Some “Left” parties have adopted the Right’s anti-immigrant rhetoric, for example; and the Right has flirted with “populism” that co-opts some Leftist positions.

The U.S. Left is hardly immune from these issues. Indeed, the most notable feature of the renewed interest in socialism here is its effort to come to grips with the country’s history of racism. This latest generation has both a right and a duty to work this out as internationalism.

Stop Assad’s genocide

continued from p. 1

facilities, for example, is that they have been conducted through the mechanism of the UN. Many destroyed hospitals had given their coordinates to the UN with the promise that they would not be attacked—yet this information was used by Russia, a UN Security Council member, to target them! Emergency rooms, dialysis centers, maternity hospitals—every attack a violation of the Geneva Conventions and a war crime. First responders have been targeted, too, including White Helmets and Violet Organization ambulance crews.

Farmers’ fields have been burned. Journalist Emma Beals said, “With farming, civilians in opposition areas have a degree of self-sufficiency, but if the crops are destroyed and food supplies are low then they can’t feed their children and the population only has the option of whether to flee or capitulate.” And there is nowhere left to flee to.

ATTEMPTS TO SILENCE THE REVOLUTION

These attacks on civilians are the essence of state terror. Market bombings during the month of Ramadan were timed to coincide with the hours people were shopping for iftar meals, and mosques were bombed at the hours of prayer.

Equally terroristic are attacks on centers of the Syrian Revolution like Kafranbel, Ma’arat al-Nu’mān, and Saraqeb. These towns have opposed the Assad regime, ISIS and Al Qaeda. They have explicitly called for universal human solidarity.

The regime and its allies mean to destroy the spirit expressed by journalist Haneen El Sayed in March, on the 8th anniversary of the revolution: “The bombs and airstrikes won’t stop us from demanding our righteous freedom. That moment I was able to express my opinions and my freedom of speech against oppression was indescribable. I’m grateful to the revolution for that feeling, for changing my life forever, and for teaching me to stand by my principles in peaceful resistance.”

In Free Syria, the freedom and dignity of the human spirit has raised itself above the power of physical violence, political hypocrisy, and cowardly silence. The continuing existence of the Syrian Revolution, judges the historic claims of every philosophy, faith and institution, and especially those of the Left which claims these values as its own. It demands our revolutionary solidarity.

AN ABSOLUTE SPLIT WITHIN THE LEFT

When the revolution began, fascist regime supporters raised their slogan: “Assad or we burn the country.” What too many failed to recognize was that this sentence amounted to more than its obvious nihilism. It summarized the logic of capital—from “primitive” accumulation to absolute general law of accumulation and back again. For too many would-be revolutionaries, this failure of theory split philosophy from reality, and created an absolute di-remption within the Left.

There is another Left struggling to be born out of solidarity with Free Syria. It has announced itself as a world-historic possibility in the brilliance of the Sudanese Revolution that overthrew Assad ally Omar al-Bashir, and the Algerian overthrow of Assad apologist Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

By directing the full measure of its brutality and cynicism at the revolutionaries of Idlib, the old world is desperately attempting to crush this new vision of possibility. The old is only proving once again that it lacks any historic right to exist. In solidarity with Free Syria, the new finds its footing along these opening paths to freedom.

Trump plays with fire in his ‘golden era’

What is behind Trump’s threat to attack Iran? Some see it as straightforward threat, as most of us understood his earlier threat to destroy North Korea; others see it as a bluff, in light of his later brotherly relationship with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un.

THE DEVIOUS POLITICS OF OIL

Without pretending to read minds, it may be worthwhile to see the present moment of threats made and withdrawn in light of Trump’s use of capitalism’s lifeblood commodity, oil, and the continuity and discontinuity of U.S. imperialism.

Trump has continued the legacy of President Obama in regard to the development of U.S. oil drilling, fracking, and pipeline building. His only innovation in that regard has been to replace the idea of “energy independence” with what he calls “energy dominance.”

As Trump claimed in 2017, “The Golden Era of American energy is now underway.” This thinking doubtless forms part of the background of the OPEC+ grouping of leading oil producers—the U.S., Russia and Saudi Arabia—that is meant to supercede the old OPEC.

THE ILLUSIONS OF IMPERIALISM

It may be why Trump has so forcefully opposed Obama’s Iran nuclear agreement, which was equally cynical but less ambitious.

That would make more sense than the idea that Trump cares about Iran’s genocidal war in Syria, or that Israel or Saudi Arabia dictates U.S. policy.

He may imagine that “energy dominance” coupled with military power can stabilize the bourgeois order in a way advantageous to the U.S. In this light China, with which he is currently carrying on a trade war, would be the ultimate prize—approached through intimidating or co-opting its allies in North Korea, Venezuela and Iran.

Most worrisome, just as it was and is in Trump’s

Karol Modzelewski 1937-2019

We mourn the passing of a great revolutionary, Karol Modzelewski, who, along with Jacek Kuron, declared in 1964 that the post-war economic planning of the Polish Communist regime was a statist form of capitalism. Modzelewski’s living legacy is that he never wavered, in theory or practice, from the principle of a freedom-filled future rooted in the self-activity of the masses of workers themselves.

A leader in the rise of Solidarity, which eventually brought down the regime, he ruthlessly criticized what it had become when it took power.

We met Modzelewski in Warsaw in 2001, where we shared our appreciation of his perspective, about which we wrote a few years earlier in *News & Letters* (see “Solidarnosc 15 years later: What happens after?” Oct. 1995 *N&L*). By then he was saying another generation would have to take up the effort where his left off. He asked us about the U.S. and dreaded the consequences of the 9/11 attacks on the New York Twin Towers.

—Urszula Wislanka and Ron Kelch

A tale of two democracies in crisis

sassination attempt, was refused police protection.

FORTRESS EUROPA

Like Modi’s BJP, Europe’s Far Right is making an effort to redefine civilization in its own image.

Too many commentators have taken the 25% (as against an “expected” 30%) vote for

Far Right, anti-immigrant parties in the May 23-26 European Parliament elections as a reason for complacency. But these parties actually led the voting in the UK (Brexit Party), France (Le Pen’s National Rally), Italy (Salvini’s League), Poland (Law and Justice Party) and Hungary (Orban’s Fidesz). This happened in post-colonial, post-Holocaust Europe, the Europe of the martyr-heroes of the Resistance to fascism.

As Natalia Banelescu-Bogdan of the Migration Policy Institute wrote, “A decade ago, the most im-

threats against North Korea, is the possibility of a slip or unforeseen event precipitating a war that nobody wants and nobody will win. The pre-World War I world indulged in such imperial dreams until it awakened to the nightmare of 1914.

Marx’s *Capital* foreshadowed that nightmare in its working out of the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation. Trump, as he would be first tell us, is no Marxist.

Algerians in revolt

Algerians returned to the streets of Algiers and other cities, June 21, to keep the pressure on military chief General Ahmed Gaid Salah, and demand the ouster of those he protects: interim President Abdelkader Bensalah and Prime Minister Nouredine Bedoui.

They are seen by the revolutionaries as merely a continuation of the regime of ousted President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The revolutionaries call for the entire old ruling elite to answer for decades of authoritarianism and corruption. Beyond this, the masses are calling for freedom and dignity.

While General Salah has attempted to divide the crowds along ethnic lines by focusing attacks on the Berber minority, which makes up 10 million of Algeria’s 42 million people, demonstrators have rejected this. “No to regionalism, we are all brothers!” they answered.

When the Arab Spring erupted in Tunisia in 2010, demonstrations spread to Algeria. Then, the government was able to contain them. As in Sudan, now the people are in the streets, having learned many hard lessons from Egypt, Libya, Syria and Yemen in the interim.

FORCES OF REVOLUTIONARY REASON

One telling slogan in the demonstration was “The problem is the persistence of idolatry and not the replacement of the idol.” It is the voice of the social individual, calling for a creativity that is both individual and collective.

In that regard, the presence of women in the movement has been especially notable, despite attacks from police and, at times, from men who claim that feminist demands would split the movement.

Far from that, women have been involved in organizing the student and trade union movements. They were part of the nationwide general strike in March that saw teachers, transport and oil workers come out in opposition to the rulers.

A statement by the Algerian Women for Movement Towards Equality spoke of women’s role in Algeria’s history of freedom struggles. It said,

“Alongside men, women conceptualized, developed and conducted struggles in the hopes of building an egalitarian society...The active and unconditional participation of Algerian women in the February 22nd Movement encourages us to reaffirm our determination to change the system in place with all its components, including its sexist, patriarchal and misogynistic aspects.”

The creative presence of women, youth, workers and national minorities in the Algerian freedom movement promises much for the future.