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SEPARATE FILE

new POLITICS

a journal of socialist thought

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e-mail: **newpoliticsjournal@gmail.com**
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

(contents continued)

BOOK REVIEWS

WORDS AND PICTURES

From the Editors

IN THE DARK DAYS following France's defeat in World War II, Albert Camus wrote,

> The world I live in is loathsome to me, but I feel one with the men who suffer in it. There are ambitions that are not mine, and I should not feel at ease if I had to make my way by relying on the paltry privileges granted to those who adapt themselves to this world. But it seems to me that there is another ambition that ought to belong to all writers: to bear witness and shout aloud, every time it is possible, insofar as our talent allows, for those who are enslaved as we are.

Bearing witness and shouting aloud on behalf of the victims of injustice and envisioning and struggling for a better world — these were the lifelong activities of Julie and Phyllis Jacobson, late co-founders of this journal, their raison d'être. For seven years we have tried to live up to their mission, their standards, and now, as we approach the tenth decade of our lives (!) we are retiring. (Very able people will succeed us as co-editors.)

We have been lucky in finding writers and readers who care about what they write and read. And they care passionately. Moreover, our writers are knowledgeable; because of this and because they care about what they write, they have found their own voice — their articles are not formulaic. From the sweatshops in Bangladesh to the French intervention in Mali, from the sanctions in Iraq to American drone attacks — these are lucid, thoughtful articles. We believe that the authors are following in the tradition of Camus and the Jacobsons.

La lutte continue.

MARVIN AND BETTY

LETTERS

Bizarre Assertions

I read *New Politics* because it provides an in depth socialist perspective on politics available nowhere else, but some of your contributors make bizarre assertions.

Take John Halle's "A Visit to Bikernieki." After describing a horrendous massacre of Latvian Jews during WWII "carried out by copious rounds of machine gun fire, heard early in the morning to late in the evening, with soldiers descending into the pits to insure with their revolvers that no survivors remained," he proceeds to claim that the "crimes of the state of Israel approach[ing] holocaust proportions." In a mere six years, 1939-1945, 6 million Jews and 5 million non-Jews were murdered by Nazi Germany accompanied by countless acts of torture, starvation, brutality, etc. Nothing done by Israel to the Palestinians since 1948 approaches these proportions.

Then take Stephen Steinberg's "Race and Counterrevolution," where he equates the case of Emmett Till with that of Trayvon Martin and calls them "lynchings." Never mind that for allegedly whistling at a white woman Till was kidnapped, tortured, murdered, and his body dumped in a river, whereas Martin was shot to death in a scuffle with a vigilante who remained at the scene to wait for the police to arrive. To describe the Martin case in these terms is absurd.

Then take Roland Boer's article "The Dilemma of Freedom of Conscience." Does he really believe that in 1921 the Bund voluntarily "relinquished its stand on autonomy" and dissolved itself to join the Russian Communist Party? 1921 was the year that Lenin's government finally banned all non-communist political parties. The Bund's decision to disband was clearly made under duress. Had its leadership refused, they would almost certainly have been arrested. Political freedom was totally dead in the Soviet Union by 1921.

Finally Lichi D'Amelio's "Who Do You Protect, Who Do You Serve?" raises a question that calls out for an answer. She writes that "not since 2003 have there been such a high number of police murder victims." It is not clear to me how she differentiates justified from unjustified police killings, or is she actually saying that all Blacks killed by the police are murder victims? I sure hope not.

BENNETT MURASKIN
Parsippany, NJ

Halle Responds

I respond first to the three terms which Mr. Muraskin regards as inapplicable to the policies of the State of Israel directed towards its Palestinian minority.

With respect to "torture," Amnesty International reports going back to the 1970s have described its practice by the IDF as "widespread and systematic." As for "starvation," quoting Israeli official Dov Weinglass (with respect to the siege of Gaza), "The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger." As for "brutality," the "broken bones" policy associated with the legendary peacemaker Yitzhak Rabin would seem to be representative of what even Israeli doves take to be appropriate tactics.

Secondly, it should be noted that the passage in question refers not to genocide but to a "holocaust," a term which has been applied not only to Hitler's attempted extermination of the Jews, but to the fate of, for example, Native and African-Americans. With respect to these populations, the number of violent deaths inflicted by their oppressors was in some years, comparatively low. The crucial element in both holocausts was the deliberate attempt to create economic, social, and environmental conditions which undermined the viability of and ultimately destroyed a given culture. By these and other means, they were made "to understand in the deepest recesses of their consciousness that they are a defeated people." These words of Israeli Army chief Moshe Yaalon, perfectly applicable to the experience of African and Native Americans as to the Palestinians, signal clearly the intention of Israeli policymakers to inflict a holocaust, or a *nakba*, as the Palestinians themselves refer to it. It has not yet been completed, hence it is being "approached."

Those denying the stark similarities are deluding themselves.

JOHN HALLE
Red Hook, NY

Our Workers in Bangladesh
TOILING FOR $ 50 PER MONTH

VASJA BADALIČ

IN BANGLADESH, the transnational corporations' production system regressed into one of its most brutal manifestations. Most safeguards that could prevent or at least mitigate the exploitation of workers have been eliminated. While capital enjoys complete freedom, the working class, shackled by oppressive labor laws and a ruthless repressive apparatus, is struggling for bare survival.

"I've started working at the Azmat factory five years ago. Now, I work as a seamstress. I sew trousers. I work for export," says 23-year-old Sumi. Which transnational corporations does she work for? "I don't know which brands we're working for. The labels are stitched on in the last phase of production, so we don't see the brands' names. Only the management and the workers stitching the labels know for whom we're working," replies Sumi. Currently, her basic monthly salary is 4500 takas, $55. Last month she received 7000 takas, $86, but in order to get that little sum she had to work two hours of overtime each working day. In Bangladesh, the regular work week for assembly workers is set at 48 hours, eight hours per day, six days per week, so Sumi had to work 260 hours in total to get the $86 — on average she was paid $0.33 per hour.

VASJA BADALIČ *is a researcher at the Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law, Ljubljana, Slovenia. He is the author of two books,* For 100 Euros a Month: The Production System of Global Capitalism *(in Slovenian only), and* The Red Machinery: The Beat of Chávez's Revolution *(in Slovenian only). He has reported for all major Slovenian newspapers and magazines such as* Delo, Dnevnik, *and* Mladina.

"It's impossible to survive only with the basic salary, so I have no choice but to work overtime. That's why I don't complain if I have to work overtime. Nobody complains," says Sumi. The current basic wage rates in the export-oriented industry were set in 2010, and after that they have not been adjusted to inflation. Since in the past two years the annual inflation rate was around 10 percent, workers are now unable to cover even the most essential living expenses with their basic incomes. So they have to work overtime just to pay for staples and rent. How much is rent? Sumi cannot afford to live on her

own in a decent apartment, so she shares with one of her coworkers a small room for which they pay a rent of $25 per month.

Despite her meager earnings, Sumi admits that for lack of better employment opportunities elsewhere she wants to stay in Dhaka, the capital city of Bangladesh, and continue working at the Azmat factory. She has no plans to return to her village in Barisal district, about 200 miles south of the capital city, because she knows that it would be much harder to find a job there. Many female workers employed in export garment factories share a similar fate. One of them, a young girl named Asma, left her village in Jamalpur district, less then 100 miles north of the capital, about two years ago. As she settled in Dhaka, she found a job at the company KM Fashion where for the first six months she worked as an assistant in production, receiving a monthly wage of only $30. When she moved up the ranks and became a seamstress, she started getting about $50 per month. Like Sumi, Asma can not afford her own accommodation, so she has to share a small room with five coworkers. In total, the monthly rent is $37.

A "Competitive" Labor Force

A slum settlement called Pur Nagar, Beautiful Town, lies on the northern outskirts of Dhaka. As I walk into one of the narrow passages meandering through the settlement, I have to be careful not to step into a sewage ditch dug out right in the middle of the passage. On the edges of the passage, just by the walls of dilapidated one-story houses, there are piles of garbage, and there is even more garbage scattered on the banks of the river running just by the settlement. The electricity poles, standing on the corners of the streets, indicate that power is available, but, as people from the settlement claim, just sporadically. The slum's houses, built with bricks and roofed with corrugated metal sheets, are home to what the corporation executives define as a globally "competitive" labor force. The houses consist of small 40-square-feet rooms which usually accommodate two workers. Since a double bed covers about half the room's surface, there is barely any place left for other workers' possessions. The workers' clothes usually hang on the walls, while kitchenware and other items are stored under the beds. Some workers living in the slum do not have enough money to pay for their children's education at the local school where a fee of about $6 per month is being charged, so activists of a local labor rights organization opened their own "school," in reality just a 100-square-feet room with four desks squeezed inside. The costs for running the school, including wages for the three teachers, are being paid by the labor rights organization.

> About 80 percent of the labor force in export-oriented factories is female.

Mito, a 24-year-old girl from Patuakhali district in southwestern Bangladesh, moved to Beautiful Town in 2007. In that year she started working at A Plus, a company manufacturing garments for Disney and German retailers such as Lidl and Kik. Currently, her monthly salary is about $50. As all Bangladeshi workers, Mito is regarded as "competitive" not only because of her paltry salary but also because she is not entitled to some benefits which are usually the norm in Western countries. In Bangladesh, industrial workers do not receive any retirement benefits. They also do not receive health insurance. The national labor law stipulates only that workers are entitled to 14 days of paid sick leave per year, and that, additionally, in case of injury or death workers or their families are entitled to compensation. But corporations' bosses do not have to worry about working accidents causing major harm to their businesses because workers'

lives are valued as extremely cheap. If a worker dies at the working place, her or his family receives only $1250 of condolence payment. If a worker is seriously injured — i.e. injured in such a way that it is impossible for her or him to return to work — she or he receives $1570 of compensation.

What kind of benefits and bonuses are the workers entitled to? First, according to the labor law, companies have to pay various holiday bonuses. For example, for *Eid ul-Fitr,* the Muslim holiday celebrated at the end of the holy month of Ramadan, workers usually receive the equivalent of half of their monthly salary. Second, perhaps the most humiliating bonus is the attendance bonus. If workers are prepared to give up their four or five off-work days per month, and so completely transform themselves into production machines for Western consumers, they get, in addition to the salary, the attendance bonus. Even though this kind of bonus is not determined by the labor law, most of the factories choose to pay it — for example, some factories are currently paying $4 of attendance bonus per month.

What about severance pay? "In case a worker voluntarily resigns anytime during his first five years at the factory, he gets nothing. If a worker resigns after being five to ten years at the factory, he gets, for each year of work, a compensation equivalent to half of his monthly salary. If he resigns after more than ten years at the factory, he gets, for each year of work, the equivalent of his monthly salary," says Syed Sultan ud-Din Ahmed, the executive director assistant at the Bangladesh Institute for Labor Studies (BILS). "But if a worker is laid off by the company, he has to receive, for each year of work, the equivalent of his monthly salary, no matter how many years he worked at the factory."

Women as Machines

Adopting the male chauvinistic belief that women are traditionally better suited for carrying out monotonous, repetitive manual work, corporations chose to integrate mostly female workers into their Bangladeshi production units. There are no exact figures, but according to some estimates made by labor groups representatives, about 80 percent of the labor force in export factories is female.

The factory owners see women as more docile and obedient than men, and consequently easier to exploit. In order to establish an effective system of exploitation, the owners of export companies set up a hierarchical structure in which women are given the lowest positions, the most poorly paid jobs, while the upper echelons — management, line supervisors, security personnel — are being dominated by men. Sometimes, in the most extreme cases, male supervisors at the factories resort to humiliating practices and violence. "Sometimes women are victims of verbal abuse. Sometimes they are sexually harassed. There were even some cases of rape," says Nazma Akter, general secretary of Awaj Foundation, a labor rights organization representing workers in the export garment sector. In cases of sexual harassment, women usually decide not to file charges against the perpetrators. "In this religious society, women are afraid to go to the police and report a crime. If a woman goes to the police, people accuse her of being a bad woman, and of wanting to harm somebody. People think that a woman has to be silent all the time, and only has to listen and not speak," says Akter.

In terms of benefits for women workers, corporations also managed to keep their costs low. In Bangladesh, paid maternity leave is only four months, two months before and after delivery. According to the 2006 labor law, during maternity leave each woman has to receive a sum which is calculated on the basis of the average daily pay she received in the three months before taking maternity leave. The average daily pay is then multiplied by the number of days on maternity leave. Based on such calculation, pregnant workers should get from $150 to $250 on maternity leave, but for some company owners even these small amounts are too high. Instead of giving pregnant workers what is theirs, they summarily dismiss them. "In some cases, we noticed that pregnant women were fired. Sometimes they fire women in the first three or four months of pregnancy, when supervisors at the factory realize that they are pregnant. Sometimes they fire them just before taking maternity leave," says Akter, adding that to a certain extent it is possible to oppose these practices. "When they dismiss pregnant girls, we report about it to the corporation that placed its order to that factory. Besides, we also file charges against the factory owners. In these cases, we always win. The girls get the money that belongs to them. If they want, they can also go back to work in the same factory after maternity leave." However, says Akter, since only a minority of workers is represented by labor rights organizations, most of the summarily dismissed pregnant women never find justice in court.

At the Awaj office in central Dhaka, I meet Rahima, a 30-year-old woman, working as a seamstress at one of the factories belonging to the UTA Group. Rahima contacted people at Awaj to ask them if they could help the husband of Helena, Rahima's friend and coworker, who at the age of 30 tragically passed away during giving birth to her fourth child. "When Helena took maternity leave, the company didn't pay her the first half of her maternity benefit. Besides, after she died, her family should receive 100,000 takas [$1250] of condolence payment, but the company did not pay yet. She died a month and a half ago," says Rahima, hoping that Awaj can put some pressure on the factory owners so that Helena's husband will finally receive the money he is entitled to.

The Capitalist Underground

"In the past years, a lot of workers had to work informally. The employers did not provide them any contracts. But slowly the situation has improved. The number of formally employed workers is increasing," says Kamrul Ahsan, international secretary at the Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh (JSFB), a labor rights organization. As an unknown number of export factory workers still have to work informally, it remains unclear what is their exact number. According to the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), there are about 4 million formally employed workers in the approximately 5400 registered export factories. Some analysts, among them ud-Din Ahmed, claim that the actual number of workers, including the informal workers, could be around 5 million. Is it not possible to monitor the employers in such a way that we could at least know how many workers do they employ? "In the entire Bangladesh industry, which also includes export-oriented garments factories, there are about 12 million employees. The entire industry is being supervised by only 120 labor inspectors or so. It is impossible to expect that such a small number of inspectors can effectively supervise the entire industry," says ud-Din Ahmed.

It took about three decades for transnational corporations to transform Bangladesh into a

global garments production hub. Primarily lured by the vast pool of cheap labor, many major corporations (for example Nike, Adidas, Walmart, Target, Kmart, Gap and J.C. Penney) decided to move part of their garments production to this South Asian country. Data compiled by BGMEA show that garment exports, in 2012 at around $19 billion, account for a little less that 80 percent of all exports from Bangladesh. How is the export-oriented production organized? Production is being carried out in two types of factories — in factories located in export-processing zones (EPZ), and in factories outside zones. First established in the 1980s, EPZs are defined as tax-free and duty-free territories where only export factories are allowed to operate. Currently, there are eight EPZs in Bangladesh, employing approximately 350,000 workers in total. Besides garments, EPZ workers also sew or assemble other items such as toys, electronic devices, and musical instruments.

Yet most of the export-oriented production is done in factories which are not part of EPZs. These factories, which operate without any exemptions from taxes and customs duties, either get production orders directly from transnational corporations, or they are subcontracted by major Bangladeshi export companies which receive production orders from the corporations. In Mirpur, one of Dhaka's districts, I visit one of these factories, Glorious Sun Fashion Garments, with about 200 workers sewing shirts and T-shirts for about $50 a month. As I talk to the company manager, Rubaet Ahamed, he asserts that all his workers are adults, but as I later step into one of the factory units I feel as if I just came into a high-school classroom — with young boys and girls who instead of notebooks and pencils have sewing machines and irons in front of them. The manager confirms that they work only for export: for instance, they sew children's apparel for a French brand Tony Boy. Thus, teenagers employed in the capitalist underground produce clothes for teenagers living on the other side of the globe. In past years, says Ahamed, his young labor force also worked for H&M and Walmart. When they sew garments for Walmart, they work as subcontractors of another local company which got the production order from Walmart. The fabrics were provided by the buyers. "For sewing one T-shirt, we got around 10 to 15 cents," remembers Ahamed.

In Dhaka's northern district Baunea Bhad, there is another export company, Nipu Wool Sweater, specializing in the production of wool sweaters. The slum settlement where the factory is located looks even more miserable than other similar peripheral settlements in Dhaka. Across the run-down area there are countless improvised dwellings made of corrugated metal sheets and wooden planks. The narrow streets winding between the shacks are paved, while under the shacks in many cases there is just soil. Some members of the community enlarged their shacks by roofing over the sewage ditches running just in front of the shacks. They covered the ditches with wooden planks, and drilled holes into them, so that they can use that part of the shack as a latrine. In one of the settlement's narrow streets, immersed in the foul smell wafting through the air, stands the two-story Nipu Wool Sweater factory. "We have about 30 employees. We make around 300 sweaters a day. We work for our own brand Sublevel. But we also work as subcontractors for other brands," says the manager Jinadi Hasan Nishat. Their sweaters end up in German, Spanish, and Italian shopping malls. Last year, for example, they worked for the Spanish apparel retailer Zara. In the first half of 2012, they made about 16,000 sweaters for them. In that case, they worked as subcontractors of another local company, Kazal, which got the deal with Zara. "For each sweater we were paid around $2.50. When people from Kazal sold the sweaters to Zara, they received about $3.80 for each sweater," explains Nishat. A sweater made by Nishat's workers for about $2.50 was sold to European consumers for about $25. What about the workers? How much do they get paid per month? Since considerable physical strength is needed to manage the mechanical looms, almost exclusively men work in Nishat's factory, and their monthly salary is about $120. How many hours per day do they work? "They work from eight in the morning till seven in the evening. Lunch time is from one to two o'clock in the afternoon," says Nishat.

Burnt Alive

In November 2012, a fire broke out on the ground floor of the Tazreen garment factory in Ashulia, an industrial area on the northern edges of Dhaka. Since there were no emergency exits in the eight-story factory, many workers got trapped in flames, while others, in a desperate attempt to escape the blaze, jumped from the upper floors of the factory, thus injuring or killing themselves. In what has been the deadliest factory fire in Bangladesh, at least 117 workers lost their lives, most of them either burnt alive or suffocated by the heavy smoke, while about 200 workers got injured. After the fire, it has been revealed that Tazreen workers sew garments for Walmart, Sears, and C & A, a clothing retailer based in the Netherlands.

Due to lax enforcement of safety regulations, industrial accidents are common in Bangladesh. In cases of fire, overcrowded plants with locked fire doors and windows covered with metal bars turn into death traps for workers. According to the International Labor Rights Forum, about 700 garment industry workers have died since 2005 because of unsafe factories. After the Tazreen tragedy, Bangladesh's government, fearing outbreaks of labor unrest and bad publicity which could cause a decrease in production orders, promised to improve safety conditions in export factories. State authorities started conducting ad hoc safety evaluations in garment factories and are expected to rescind permits from those factories that fail the inspections. Moreover, the government promised to set up new fire hydrants in garment industry areas.

However, it remains to be seen if these steps will help make significant improvements in safety standards. In previous years, attempts to strictly enforce safety requirements already failed. For example, labor groups tried to introduce initiatives for the improvement of the safety situation by talking directly to the corporations, but the results were mixed. Many corporations avoided the initiative, saying that taking care of safety at the factories of their contractors was not their responsibility, while some corporations, pressed by labor activists, decided to provide some financing for the improvement of fire safety. Moreover, some corporations, for instance H&M, a Sweden-based garment retailer, decided to start conducting their own safety inspections in Bangladesh, thus avoiding local inspectors who usually proved to be unreliable.

In the past years, many corporations also imposed strict safety rules on their Bangladeshi contractors, and made them responsible to ensure that garments are manufactured only in factories that comply with these rules. But the effectiveness of this approach proved to be limited because many times contractors, breaching the agreements with the corporations, subcontracted the work further down the supply chain to unsafe factories without the authorization of the corporations. So even if corporations have strict safety rules for factories receiving the production orders, these rules are not enforced in subcontracted factories. According to Walmart, this is what happened at the Tazreen factory. Walmart's representatives claimed that, without their authorization, their contractor, a Bangladeshi firm called Simco, subcontracted the work to the Tazreen factory which did not comply with Walmart's safety rules.

> It is police batons and rubber bullets that determine the costs of labor, and not the free market's "invisible hand." The more workers get beaten or killed on the streets, the more they will be scared to make any new demands, and consequently labor costs will stay low.

The Number One Enemy — Trade Unions

"FACTORY OWNERS ARE FIRMLY convinced that trade unions will destroy their businesses. They are convinced they will lose all their profits if they allow workers to organize. And that's why they do all they can to prevent the establishment of trade unions," says ud-Din Ahmed. When the employers lobby for anti-trade union regulation, they can count on the support of the legislative branch which is contaminated with the interests of the export company owners. Amirul Haque Amin, president of the National Garments Workers Federation (NGWF), a labor rights organization, claims that 29 out of 350 members of the national assembly are also owners of export factories. Moreover, says Haque Amin, about 60 members of the national assembly are also linked to factories whether through family ties or through shares they acquired in the companies. So it is not surprising that the labor law, passed by legislators closely linked to the industry, provides mechanisms for company owners to suppress any workers' attempt to organize. For example, the 2006 labor law, or "black law" as it is called by labor activists, stipulates that the ministry of labor has to send the list of workers who want to form a trade union to the workers' employer who is supposed to verify the names on the list. It is in that period of time, just before the official formation of the trade union, that employers start putting pressure on their workers. "When the employers get the names, they start threatening workers who want to organize. Sometimes they dismiss them. Sometimes they hire thugs who threaten workers' leaders. These thugs go to workers' homes and harass them. That's why it's not possible to form a trade union," says Kamrul Ahsan.

In EPZs the situation is even worse. When the legislative body established the first zones, they decided that the national labor law would not apply to them. Instead of implementing the labor law in the zones, legislators invented new rules which prohibited the establishment of trade unions within the zones' boundaries. Years later, legislators slightly changed their stance by enacting a new law which allows the formation of some sort of workers' associations, the so-called workers' welfare associations. "These associations are mainly for show. Why? These associations don't have collective bargaining rights. They are not allowed to collect their own dues, so they have no funds to finance themselves. And they are also not allowed to link up with workers' associations formed in other factories. Each association has to remain within the walls of its factory; it is not allowed to cooperate with other similar associations," says Alonso Glenn Suson, country program director at the Solidarity Center in Dhaka, a labor rights group affiliated with the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS). Since these workers' associations are not allowed to operate as real trade unions, it is reasonable to conclude that their introduction was just a smokescreen to conceal the state authorities' actual anti-trade union posture.

As it is practically impossible to formally establish a trade union inside or outside the zones, workers secretly join informal labor rights organizations. "They don't allow us to form a trade union, but we nevertheless try to represent the workers when they need us. If a worker has a problem, she can come to us. We try to get in contact with her employer and solve the matter," says Ahsan. But because of threats made by employers, the number of informally organized workers is extremely low. In the entire export-oriented garment industry there are only about 20 labor organizations. How many members do they have? "All these organizations perhaps represent around 100,000 workers in total," says ud-Din Ahmed.

Knock, Knock! Open the Door! It's the Industrial Police!

Because of the unbearable conditions under which Bangladeshi workers are forced to work and live, massive labor unrest erupted across the country in 2006 and 2010. In both cases the protests were violently crushed by the repressive apparatus, by the police and the army, who represented solely the interests of the factory owners. In 2010, for example, the workers demanded an increase of their monthly minimum wage from $24 to $72, but the corporate "elite" came to the conclusion that such a raise would have been too much for their businesses. The corporations' bosses decided to fix the new minimum wage at only $43, a sum barely enough for survival, and as the workers, not accepting the humiliating raise, continued with strikes and demonstrations, the police and the army, acting as the corporations' de facto repressive arm, suppressed them. Although many times corporations love to pretend to be some sort of humanitarian organizations providing employment to the most marginalized inhabitants of this planet, it is evident, based on the repressive mechanisms used to crush even the most modest workers demands, that the corporation's top priority is to keep the cost of labor as cheap as possible. In this context it is police batons and rubber bullets that determine the costs of labor, and not the free market's "invisible hand." The more workers' get beaten or killed on the streets, the more they will be scared to make any new demands, and consequently labor costs will stay low.

After the 2010 protests the government introduced a new police unit, the industrial police, with the mandate to protect the assets of factory owners. Members of the industrial police have the jurisdiction to monitor the entire Bangladeshi industry, but if we take a look at the locations where they are actually deployed it emerges that they primarily operate in the export sector. "They are deployed in areas with large industrial production in order to gather intelligence about the workers. They want to find out who are the workers' leaders. They want to know why there are problems. They also try to resolve labor issues and make sure there is no protest," says Glenn Suson. From data collected by researchers at BILS it also transpires that the industrial police have two roles. "The company owners demanded the introduction of the industrial police. They want to protect their factories. In some cases, we noticed that the industrial police were helping workers by advising them how to present their problems to the employers. In some other cases, we noticed that they were doing exactly the opposite, they were harassing workers who supposedly presented a threat to the industry," says ud-Din Ahmed. According to him, it is unacceptable that policemen are involved in solving labor disputes because this is not part of their mandate. Since in the past years members of the repressive apparatus have been mostly busy with violently suppressing workers' demands, it is impossible now to accept them as neutral mediators engaged in solving labor disputes. It is unacceptable that, on the one hand, state authorities do all they can to prevent the organizing of trade unions, while, on the other hand, they support a special police unit whose members are now operating as some sort of mediators in labor disputes.

Back To the Roots

In factories located on the outskirts of all Bangladeshi bigger cities the capitalist mode of production returned to its roots — to the 19th Century. Most safeguards which could prevent the capitalist elite from brutally exploiting the labor force have been eliminated. The State, or what is left of it, has been reduced to a compliant servant whose only mission is to provide the factory owners with the means needed for exploiting the working class. The legislators' main task is to provide labor legislation that protects the owners of capital and prevents the organization of the working class; the key task of toothless supervisory institutions is to ensure that when workers' rights are violated, employers are not required to respond to it; and finally, if workers' anger morphs into street protests, the repressive apparatus crushes them.

In order to conceal, at least to some degree, their true role in the contemporary production system and present themselves as champions of social responsibility, corporations introduced some measures — for instance, codes of conduct compounded with independent, third-party monitoring of the factories — to eliminate the most severe forms of exploitation (e.g., child labor, forced labor). By introducing codes of conduct, which in some aspects are stricter than Bangladeshi labor legislation, the corporations wanted to show that their goal is to improve working conditions at the factories. But, as it has become evident in past years, there is one big problem — these codes are not properly enforced. When corporations hire external auditing firms to evaluate working conditions at the factories, these audits are not conducted regularly. For example, unannounced audits of factories manufacturing for Carrefour, a French retailer, take place every two years, hardly enough to be sure that everything is fine in the factories. This is why many labor groups' leaders I spoke to in Dhaka see codes of conduct as some sort of public-relations stunt whose purpose is not to solve workers' problems but to project the corporations' image of socially responsible entities. Even if, labor leaders say, corporations pretend to care about the workers, they never truly address the workers' key demands — better salaries and freedom of association. These demands are regularly suppressed.

It is in countries like Bangladesh that the transnational capitalist "elite" reveals its true colors. After they eliminate, with the assistance of their local collaborators, all "obstacles" which could hinder the exploitation of workers, they establish, in accordance with their most intimate plans, a highly oppressive production system. It is interesting to see that in the past decades the power relations established in the garment factories by the capitalist elite endured through different regimes and political systems. "No matter which political party was in power, no matter in what kind of system did we live, in an authoritarian system, a military dictatorship or democracy, the situation in the garment industry remained the same through the years. They always suppressed all attempts to organize workers," says Amirul Haque Amin. Enduring through different political situations, the capitalist mode of production proved to be extremely resilient.

Long Live the Tyrant!
The Myth of Benign Sanctions

Ali Fathollah-Nejad*

They aim to bring recalcitrant tyrants to their senses, to put an end to their external as well as internal malefaction. With surgical precision, they pull the noose ever closer around the tyrant's neck, so that in hopeless despair he is compelled to behave reasonably in foreign affairs while, enfeebled, he lifts his bloodied hands from the throat of the oppressed people. It is a morally justified decapitation of evil, the salutary removal of a swelling tumor.

Undoubtedly, in this description sanctions are an extremely attractive option to do twice as well at a single stroke: The culprit is hunted down, right up to the tyrannicide, and the maltreated people are freed and released on to the path of democracy.

When it comes to Iran, debates revolve around a dual axis of war or peace, of dictatorship or democracy. Sanctions, it is implicitly assumed, are akin to peace and democracy. At a minimum, it is said, they constitute a necessary evil in order to put the tyrant in chains, and prevent him from completely unleashing his brutality, both externally and internally.

This is how the motivation for and the functioning of sanctions are portrayed within the dominant discourse. In short, sanctions are civilization's magic cure against barbarity. Viewed in this light, they fascinate political circles in the West and even parts of the Iranian diaspora. And not seldom, even the most enlightened intellectuals of the Western world are spellbound by the rosy rhetoric of their political leaders, leading many of them to content themselves with simply calling for a targeted and therefore effective application of sanctions to kill the tyrant and free the people.

Thus lifted onto this sacrosanct level, the rejection of sanctions is branded as complicity with the tyrant — a refusal to "tame" him.

Forming a central part of the debate surrounding Iran, the Western public is afforded the dubious luxury of relying on rhetoric rather than reality when assessing sanctions. In the face of that fantastic image of sanctions, a serious discussion about their extent and impact is flagrantly missing. However, if one takes the trouble to take a look behind the glittery façade of the righteous global policeman whose noble aim is to bring the evildoer down on his knees by way of sanctions, the sheer negative image

Ali Fathollah-Nejad *is a German-Iranian political scientist educated at universities in Germany, France and the Netherlands. Currently, he is finalizing his Ph.D. thesis at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London. In 2010, he was a Visiting Lecturer in Globalization and Development in the Middle East at the University of Westminster in London. Over the last few years, his research focused on the social, (geo-)economic and (geo-)political effects of the sanctions regime on Iran, the findings of which he has published in German, English and French.*

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of this very picture cuts the surface.

The Imposers’ Mindset

“UNPRECEDENTED SANCTIONS” against Iran are imposed, it echoes with an unmistakable sense of pride from the capital cities of the Western world. After all, the self-appointed “leaders of the free world” all have acquired a rather dubious specialization in designing and implementing a plethora of various kinds of economic sanctions, deployed to discipline the unruly tyrants of the Global South.

These sanctions, routinely called “targeted” but now self-assuredly called “crippling,” have long been rather crippling than targeted when it came to their impact upon the Iranian economy.

The automatic recourse to sanctions by Western policy-makers (most recently at the start of the Syrian crisis) is not only an expression of their perplexity and their delusional belief that you can meet a complex problem with a supposedly universal magic cure. Such desperate activism à la “Let’s do something” also unites these policy-makers with some Iranians, yet none of them contemplating the consequences of their sanctions policy or advocacy. At the same time, there is a moral superiority on display: After all, sanctions would represent an almost peace-loving antithesis to the crude use of force, they are at the least a means to avert war — but in any case they aim, in a targeted and intelligent fashion, at the Achilles’ heel of the tyrant.

Also, some policy-makers want us to believe that the never-ending tightening of sanctions reflected their paternal patience with which the democracies dealt with the evil opponent, in their noble aim to prevent the mad mullahs rushing to the bomb. These same politicians have all along displayed the apodictic certainty that Iranians would ultimately blame their own government for their economic malaise — in the improbable case this would not happen, the sanctions policy ought to be better “explained” to the Iranians, they insist. What does such a belief structure reveal about our appreciation of Iranians’ cognitive capability to adequately direct the blame for their increasingly desolate economic situation to either the pillages of a kleptocratic regime or the sanctions of the Western imposers?[1]

Crippling Economic Coercion

THE WESTERN-LED SANCTIONS REGIME against Iran, with its now virtually all-out financial and trade embargo, has since its qualitative leap in the course of the so-called nuclear crisis of the past decade, always been by its very design not aimed at a tyrannicide of any kind. On the contrary, as one of its main proponents has stated, “[Iran] must know that the West will work tirelessly to make Iran poor […].”[2] These sanctions, routinely called “targeted” but now self-assuredly called “crippling,” have long been rather crippling than targeted when it came to their impact upon the Iranian economy. In this respect, the country’s unparalleled isolation from the international financial system has constituted the eye of the storm, which wreaked havoc in even the most indubitably civilian sectors of Iran’s economy. The financial exclusion is precisely the reason why purely non-military items, most dramatically a great deal of life-saving medicine, cannot be purchased any longer. And, by the way, mind you that we can witness a stark case of “double-punishment,” namely when it comes to the tens, if not hundreds of thousands of Iranian victims of Saddam’s chemical warfare of the 1980s who are now deprived of vital medicine due to the sanctions imposed by the very same countries who were back then the providers of those chemical weapons. Imagine, for a second, how each of them and their families might feel in the current situation.

The neutral-sounding technocratic term "sanctions" veils its true significance as a means of economic coercion.[3] Does it likewise concern us in the slightest that international law can hardly be reconciled with the economic strangulation of an entire nation?[4] In an age in which illegal wars of aggression, politically and morally disguised as "humanitarian interventions," or likewise illegal drone attacks camouflaged as intelligent and clean police operations, have almost become the business of the day for Western democracies, warfare by economic means falls under the radar of public awareness. And when noticed sanctions are even thought of as a benign gesture in comparison to the military prowess that can be unleashed upon a country and the people inhabiting it.

The Trojan Horse Carrying the "Magic Box"

BUT HOW COME that for too long a time many have accepted the deployment of this economic weapon of mass destruction? What further rhetorical tools are used to justify the imposition of crippling sanctions?

To maintain the moral high-ground, at each and every round of ever-tightening sanctions Western leaders hasten to highlight that the measures adopted are not aimed at the people of Iran who, they never fail to add, deserve a better life than under the present regime. This implies that Iranians in turn somehow deserve the Western sanctions being proffered to them by a caring Uncle Sam to alleviate their misery and desperation, and to revitalize their hopes and aspirations. Many, including some Iranians themselves, have long bought into the rhetoric of the sanctions' imposers that the economic measures will boost the people's standing against a handicapped tyrant.

Asked what the sanctions entail, both representatives from the imposing countries and the proponents of sanctions promptly provide us with a glance into the "magic box" that is deployed in the fight against tyranny: the notorious human-rights violators, the tyrant's accomplices, have been identified and placed on an ever-expanding blacklist that prohibits them from travelling abroad and from accessing their international bank accounts; means of repression and control used by the tyrant against dissent are not sold to him anymore (at least not officially by the West). Finally, to paralyze the tyrant's external aggression, the provision of so-called dual-use items, i.e. items that also have a military purpose, are banned.

Rarely, someone will ask about the real utility and efficacy of such measures in alleviating the repression dissident Iranians are exposed to: What is the use of prohibiting someone to travel beyond the region who nearly never does so? Has the tyrant been so naive as not to recognize that he can purchase the same instruments of repression from a panoply of willful sellers on a globalized market? Do we care that the vast majority of items banned under the "dual-use" rubric are in fact used for civilian purposes? As in the cases of the "dual-use" items prohibited from getting into Iraq yesterday and into Gaza today, they constitute the most basic goods needed by various sectors of the civilian economy.

If the usefulness of such measures is next to negligible, so is there no point whatsoever to this "magic box"? While all the above-mentioned restrictions may well be morally justified, the key point is that its contents reflect only a very tiny percentage of the entire sanctions package that overwhelmingly has nothing to do with those measures enlisted and proudly enunciated.

However, because of the severity of the situation that has come about as a result of these sanctions, for over a year this Trojan Horse argument can no longer be sold with the ease that it used to be. The reason is that Iranians inside and outside the country have themselves felt the scourge of the sanctions on their everyday life, and begun to comprehend that the measures are by no means targeted but indeed crippling.

Nevertheless, respected figures such as the Iranian Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi (whose tireless commitment for human-rights needs to be commended) and some Western-based human-rights organizations (such as Justice For Iran) keep on feeding the Trojan Horse argument by incessantly calling for "intelligent" and "targeted sanctions against the regime," thus demanding the senseless and utterly useless growth of that "magic box." After all, is there any evidence to suggest that such demands have in any way benefited the cause of freedom and democracy in Iran? Or, rather, have they provided a cover of legitimacy for the continuation of the sanctions policy in its entirety? As such, one must bitterly admit, some freedom fighters have assumed the role of useful stooges for the economic strangulation of Iranians.

> Authoritarian regimes driven into a corner usually increase their repression against all kinds of opposition and are also able to shift the costs of sanctions onto the population, as a result of which they can prolong their rule.

But how may Iranians themselves feel about the "free world's" noble gesture of emphatical goodwill? Did the honorable cavalry of sanctions ever contemplate how it was for those people "who deserved a better life than under the present regime" to actually live in a country that is under a severe sanctions regime? What it felt like, when the cost of rent and basic food stuffs are constantly on the rise; when the country's currency has lost half of its value; when the specter of unemployment is boundlessly rising due to an economy virtually cut off from the ever so vital international trade; when international banking transactions, be it for personal or commercial purposes, if possible at all, can only be made at much higher fees via an increasingly limited number of third world countries; when every boarding of an aircraft resembles a gamble with your life due to the lack of spare parts; when food supplies from abroad cannot be unloaded because of lack of insurance; and when the stock of life-saving medication and equipment is rapidly depleting, with the specter of a humanitarian crisis clearly emerging on the horizon. This is only a piece of the gigantic dimensions of their "targeted sanctions against the regime." Similar reports from Iran are reaching us at an accelerated rate, day by day; they are accompanied by voices of desperation, people for whom in a repressive system the air to breathe becomes even thinner by way of sanctions.

The People as Hostage: Economic Sanctions and Democratization

THE SANCTIONS NARRATIVE is predicated upon the idea that there is a positive relationship between sanctions and democratization, for the tyrant is tamed and the people empowered.

Furthermore, there is a silent but nevertheless clearly heard hope that seems to unite Western politicians and some exiled Iranians alike: The economic hardship thanks to the sanctions would direct the people's anger towards the regime and ultimately bring it down in an act of extreme popular resentment. After all, there can be no freedom without sacrifice, echoes the loud heckling from parts of the Iranian diaspora from Los Angeles to London. The price is high but the time has come to pay it, Ramin also invokes on Facebook. Almost spitting, Sara replies, "We are paying the price for our freedom: In case you've missed it, the Evin prison is overcrowded!" Seen from the comfortable

SUV in California, this concept which exhibits a fascistic dimension hailing the principle "The greater the suffering, the greater the hope!" may have a certain charm. However, the underlying assumption is that it is acceptable to collectively punish Iranian society for the sake of a greater good — however ill-defined the latter may be.

On the ground, however, there is a connection whose logic we would never dare to doubt within the Western hemisphere: a sustainable and socially just democratic change is dependent not only on the energies of the middle class, but also on the intervention of working people and the poor. It is precisely this middle class, the workers, and the poor that are sanctioned to death in Iran. To put it differently, a person struggling for economic survival barely has the luxury of engaging as a *citoyen* in the struggle for democracy.

Young Iranians, who form the bulk of the population, suffer extremely at the hands of economic sanctions.[5] These are the same people whom the West otherwise has chosen as torch-bearers of a future democracy in Iran. Instead of assuming such a role, these same people are subjected to collective punishment.

Iran Sanctions — A Prime Showpiece: Widening the Power Gap Between State and Society

Taking into consideration the academic findings about the impact of sanctions, the Iranian case can potentially qualify as a prime showpiece: authoritarian regimes driven into a corner usually increase their repression against all kinds of opposition and are also able to shift the costs of sanctions onto the population, as a result of which they can prolong their rule.[6] The sanctions-imposing governments can hardly be unaware that entities connected to the ruling system, such as the Revolutionary Guards' economic empire, profit from the sanctions. With legal trade virtually illegalized, the civilian economic sectors across the board are damned to head-shakingly observe how black-channel operations run by powerful circles of corruption and nepotism flourish. Hence, as a precise negative image of the above narrative, the regime can even extend its power vis-à-vis civil society as a result of sanctions.[7]

Aware of such fatal consequences, civil-society representatives from inside Iran have consistently opposed sanctions. The West, which is always boasting of its support for the cause of democracy in Iran, has simply preferred to ignore these voices.

Sanctions Halting Centrifuges: A Political Fairy-Tale

The pronouncement by the German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle on the occasion of another round of sanctions reflects the prior concern of the West's political class: "The point is that we cannot accept that Iran rushes towards the nuclear bomb." Hardly anyone, however, recalls that since the massive tightening of sanctions in 2006, the number of centrifuges spinning in Iran has more than **decupled**. It is a fair assumption that in fact the nuclear program has much to do with a sense of uncertainty, for, after all, the country, literally besieged by enemy troops, was ever since threatened with war in the wake of its revolution — a perception that can hardly be extinguished by way of sanctions.[8]

In addition, sanctions aim to force concessions from Iran. Rather than adopting the Western cost-benefit calculation, that is, giving in when the costs of sanctions become unbearable, Iran's leaders react with defiance and proclaim their will to "resist" as long as it would take.[9] Sanctions also feed the regime's propaganda machinery about the malicious West which aims at subjugating the Iranian people.

A very common claim about the success of the sanctions policy gains currency every single time the Western media reports that Iran has agreed to "return" to the nuclear negotiating table. Only as result of the ever-tightening sanctions regime, it is suggested, the stubborn Iranians have agreed to engage in negotiations.

However, the truth is that Iran has shown more willingness to talk to the other side than vice versa — remember the Bush/Cheney administration's refusal to talk to so-called "rogue states"?

> Sanctions also feed the regime's propaganda machinery about the malicious West which aims at subjugating the Iranian people.

The Almost Forgotten Iraqi Tragedy, or A Favorite Tool of Western Policy

IT APPEARS as if there has never been the Iraqi tragedy — indeed a historical chapter of utter disgrace for Western civilization. First of all, this does not refer to the criminal invasion and occupation of the country in 2003. It was throughout the 1990s that this erstwhile cradle of civilization was already barbarically destroyed. The sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council and pushed for by Washington and London, were soon thereafter condemned as genocidal by one UN humanitarian coordinator (Denis Halliday) to the next (Hans von Sponeck). Nothing less than the social fabric of Iraq was shattered; food supply, the health and education systems all collapsed, as did the infrastructure.[9] While women and children — the most fragile members of society — suffered the most,[10] the tyrant remained firmly in his seat. It was a "different kind of war" waged against Iraq, as Von Sponeck later chronicled in his book.[11]

Even then, it was said that sanctions would intelligently target the Iraqi leadership while sparing the population; even then, it was about the "credibility" of Western policy facing a danger of utmost proportions. "Sanctions will be there until the end of time, or as long as Saddam lasts," then U.S. President Bill Clinton explained in November 1997. Confronted with the fact that the sanctions had killed half a million Iraqi children, his Secretary of State Madeleine Albright responded with the legendary statement: "I think it's a very hard choice, but we think that the price is worth it." The macabre logic to sacrifice countless lives on the altar of Realpolitik finds a certain resonance today, when Western politicians can hardly hide their joy about ever-stricter sanctions on Iran. Having this in mind, the famous Iranian dissident Akbar Ganji apocalyptically asked: "How many children under five years will have to die in Iran, which has three times as many inhabitants as Iraq?"[12]

Conclusion: Crippling Sanctions as an Act of Barbarism

THE FACT THAT THE CONCEPT of "targeted" or "smart" sanctions, which is an inextricable feature of the dominant political discourse, has been adopted unaltered and uncritically by the public discourse in general and many intellectuals in particular is a testimony of our com-

placency, our unwavering belief in the benign nature of any actions taken by the democratic West. It seems as if we prefer a convenient lie to an inconvenient truth. This self-deception is in fact a necessary act, if we seek to keep wagging the moralizing finger, both domestically and internationally.

Most importantly, what does this tell us about our moral constitution, if we are ready to sacrifice entire societies for our purported Realpolitik interests? Thus, in the righteous fight against tyranny, we hide our very own barbarity. For our sanctions are a brutal assault on an entire country and its more than century-old struggle for democracy and self-determination, whose survival has now become dependent on the drip of our incessant and crippling sanctions regime. Tumor-like, the sanctions have infected all areas of Iranian life, acting like a slow poison injected into society.

In a move of Orwellian proportions, the dominant discourse has unhesitatingly turned sanctions into an act of peace. If we unmask that our sanctions discourse is infested by double standards and hypocrisy, the naked truth will be that we are waging an economic war against the people of Iran; that the sanctions are indeed targeted, but rather at the civilian population; and that the sanctions constitute a form of structural violence directed at Iran's social fabric.

Therefore, two prospects are currently to be feared: either a suffering populace has to battle for sheer survival within a system that has been cemented through the external threat of force and sanctions alike, in an increasingly securitized and militarized polity; or, in the wake of an officially proclaimed policy failure of "targeted sanctions," the call for "targeted bombs" comes along swiftly, and needless to say, war will bury any prospect for democracy and decent life for decades to come.

So in the end, the entire image of the sanctions as civilization's magic wand is nothing but an insidious illusion, the sanctions package merely a poisonous mix wrapped in gift paper, the story of a neat and clean tyrannicide nothing but a PR-spun fairy tale. The Iranian experience of the double burden was not long ago expressed by the famous dissident cartoonist Mana Neyestani on the occasion of the imposition of severe unilateral sanctions by the European Union. In that caricature, the EU's leather shoe steps on the military boots of the regime underneath of which lies the democracy activist crushed into the ground. While the regime only reacts with a meager "ouch," the now doubly crushed democracy activist yells in direction to the EU: "To hell with your support!"

All in all, the West has put together a narrative with which both itself and the Iranian regime can live; but the people of Iran cannot. We should pose ourselves two honest questions: Does not everybody enjoy the same human and social rights regardless of the political system they live in? And: If sanctions keep tyrants alive, what would happen if they were removed in toto?

NOTES

1. See e.g. Younis, Mohamed (2013) "Iranians Feel Bite of Sanctions, Blame U.S., Not Own Leaders," *Gallup*, February 7.

2. Ottolenghi, Emanuele (2010), "Setting the Sanctions Agenda," The Journal of International Security Affairs, Washington, DC: The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, No. 18 (Spring), pp. 19-30, here p. 26.

3. See, for example: Carter, Barry E. (2008) , '"Economic Coercion," in: Wolfrum, Rüdiger (ed.*) Max Planck Encyclopedia of Public International Law,* Oxford University Press, last update by September 2009; online version available via www.mpepil.com.

4. "No State may use or encourage the use of economic, political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its sovereign rights or to secure from it advantages of any kind," UN General Assembly, Resolution 2131 (XX), 21 December 1965, para. 2. The resolution was decided without any vote against and with only one abstention. See also Carter, op. cit., Section 7.

5. Salehi-Isfahani, Djavad (2010) "Iran's Youth, The Unintended Victims of Sanctions," Dubai Initiative — Policy Brief, Cambridge, MA: The Dubai Initiative, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard

University. http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Salehi-Isfahani%20-%20DI%20Policy%20Brief%20-%20Iran%20Youth.PDF

6. For a good introduction, see Parsi, Trita & Bahrami, Natasha (2012) "Blunt Instrument: Sanctions Don't Promote Democratic Change," *Boston Review* (online), February 6, 2013 (www.bostonreview.net/BR37.1/trita_parsi_natasha_bahrami_iran_sanctions.php).

7. See Fathollah-Nejad, Ali (2013), "Iran's Civil Society Grappling with a Triangular Dynamic," in: Aarts, Paul & Cavatorta, Francesco (eds.*) Civil Society in Syria and Iran: Activism in Authoritarian Contexts*, Boulder, CO & London: Lynne Rienner, pp. 39-68.

8. See Parsi, Trita (2012) "How Obama Should Talk to Iran," *Washington Post*, January 14, 2013.

9. See International Crisis Group (2013) *Spider Web: The Making and Unmaking of Iran Sanctions*, Brussels: International Crisis Group (*Middle East Report*, No. 138, February; Khajehpour, Bijan and Marashi; Reza and Parsi, Trita (2013) "Never Give In and Never Give Up": The Impact of Sanctions on Tehran's Nuclear Calculations, Washington, DC: National Iranian American Council (NIAC), March.

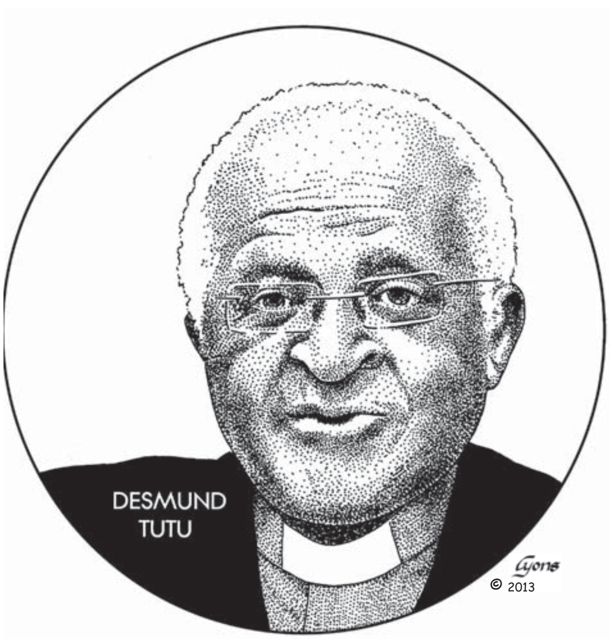
10. See Gordon, Joy (2010*), Invisible War: The United States and the Iraq Sanctions,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

11. On women, see Al-Ali, Nadje (2003) "Women, Gender Relations, and Sanctions in Iraq," in: Inati, Shams C. (ed) Iraq: Its History, People and Politics, Amherst, NY: Humanity Books.

12. Von Sponeck, Hans-Christof (2006) "*A Different Kind of War: The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq*," New York: Berghahn Books.

13. Ganji, Akbar (2011) "Mojâzât-e régime yâ mojâzât-e mardom-e Irân?!" (Penalties for the Regime or the People of Iran?), *Rooz online*, December 8 (www.roozonline.com/persian/opinion/opinion-article/archive/2011/december/08/article/-8c647ee49d.html).

CRUSADERS FOR JUSTICE



— **Desmund Tutu**
Archbishop emeritus of Cape Town, Nobel Peace laureate

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse, and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."
— *Quoted in* Ending Poverty As We Know It*, 2003, W. P. Quigley*

"Be nice to whites, they need you to rediscover their humanity."
— New York Times, *10/19/84*

"Israel will never get true security and safety through oppressing another people. A true peace can ultimately be built only on justice."
— *"Apartheid in the Holy Land,"* The Guardian*, 4/28/02*

"And then there are the Rohingya ... How can people be treated in such a way — hunted down, homes torched, beaten and killed — in the name of a warped sense of nationalism? Do the perpetrators not know that we are from the same human family?"
— *"Burma's chance to do right by all its people,"* Washington Post*, 10/19/13*

Turkey, The Erdoğan Government and the Left Today

An Interview with Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu

Dan La Botz (translation by Özlem İlyas Tolunay)

Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu was born in Anamur, Turkey in 1944. He joined the Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç) movement while he was a law student at Ankara University during the 1960s. Müftüoğlu participated in activities of the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C) together with its leader Mahir Çayan and his comrades, until the Kızıldere incident of 1972. He was put on trial that year because of his association with Dev-Genç and THKP-C, found guilty and sentenced to prison, though he was released by the 1974 general amnesty after having served nearly three years. During the 70s, he played a crucial role in establishing the Revolutionary Youth (Dev-Genç) movement and then the Revolutionary Path (Dev-Yol). He was tried as the number one defendant during the main Revolutionary Path trial that followed the military coup of September 12, 1980. He was released in 1991 after serving 11 years in the prison. He subsequently played a part in the establishment of the Foundation for Social Research, Culture and Art (TAKSAV), of the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) and of the daily newspaper *BirGün*. He is today a member of the ÖDP.

New Politics: Outside of Turkey and especially in the United States, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan is often portrayed as a leader who ended decades of military rule in Turkey, established a more democratic government, created economic prosperity, and allowed Muslims to practice their religion. Knowing that you do not share that assessment, how do you characterize Erdoğan and his government?

Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu: The military governments that we experienced in Turkey during the last half-century were extensions of the Cold War policies of the capitalist world. They were a fascist system of oppression for curbing the left and the working classes, and—unlike the image Erdoğan would now very much like to present to the Western world—they were not used to oppress the Muslims. As a matter of fact, generally there weren't any problems regarding Muslims practicing their religion in Turkey; on the contrary, today there is continuous pressure attempting to impose sectarian religious rules on society.

I see the Tayyip Erdoğan government as a project supported by the U.S. government, especially regarding the regional politics within the framework of the Greater Middle East Initiative. Erdoğan came to prominence as a politician within the "National Vision" tradition promoted by Refah (the Welfare Party), which embodied Turkey's most conservative, radical Islamist segments. The "postmodern coup" of February 28, 1997, put an end to the coalition government of which the Welfare Party was a member. The background to this crisis was formed by the obstacles raised by the Welfare Party against the implementation of the neoliberal policies of international capital. The dissolution of the Welfare Party opened the road to a new political formation, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), introduced on the political scene by a group including Tayyip Erdoğan. Unlike the

Welfare Party, the AKP aligned itself with the Middle East policies of the United States and was supported by the military as well as by the religious elites with commercial relations to international capital. The AKP rose to power by marketing itself as reformist and pro-change.

The Erdoğan government has eliminated the dissident components with pro-coup tendencies within the military bureaucracy remaining from the Cold War period. This has led to the government being perceived as having a democratic vision opposed to military domination, a perception that has provided significant support for the AKP by liberal politicians who favor the demilitarization of politics. However, the actual function of this policy has been to eliminate components within the Turkish Armed Forces that resisted their new tasks in line with the new NATO and U.S. policies, which have changed considerably since the Cold War.

> The secular state is being transformed, step-by-step, into a moderate Islamic state on the basis of Sunni Islam principles.

To sum up, the AKP is not a reformist and pro-change democratic Party, despite the image created both in and out of the country. It exerts an intense pressure against the struggles of dissident youth, workers, ecologists and working class people. Religious pressures on segments of society with minority religious beliefs are gradually being intensified everywhere and the secular state is being transformed, step by step, into a moderate Islamic state on the basis of Sunni Islam principles. I personally think all these developments pose a serious risk to the country's future in terms of freedom and democracy.

NP: What is the nature of the opposition to Erdoğan within Turkey? What are the major political parties and what are their differences with the government? How important is the left? And how significant is your own party?

OM: There is a large-scale social opposition to the practices of the AKP government. However, these large-scale opposition tendencies, such as they are, don't bear the character of an organized political opposition. The most organized and active opposition is the Kurdish Movement, represented by the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) in Parliament. The main opposition party in Parliament, the Republican People's Party (CHP), has not been able to free itself from the nationalist conservative political line towards which it was dragged during the Cold War period. The country is in need of a powerful left movement. At present, my party, the Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) does not have the possibility of being represented in the parliament due to the election thresholds. Taking strength from a tradition of revolutionary struggle embracing a large-scale social base, ÖDP is in favor of freedom and equality based democratic resolutions to the main problems of the country, especially the Kurdish issue.

NP: Under Erdoğan Turkey has seen a great deal of repression of students, Kurds, journalists, and the left. But in the last several weeks things seem to have gotten worse with the arrest of human rights lawyers. Why this crackdown at this time?

OM: I don't have any special information regarding the timing. It seems that Erdoğan's distress regarding his Syrian policies turning into a failure from his own point of view, is being reflected in these kinds of repressive practices within the internal politics of Turkey. AKP is a coalition of several tendencies and the tensions between "The Community" (the Fethullah Gulen Movement), and the aspirations of Erdoğan himself may sometimes reveal themselves through the policies of the courts and security agencies, which have been politicized completely lately. Since the practices of the government are never executed on the basis of clarity and legality, I don't think it would be correct to make more specific speculative comments not supported by data.

NP: Surprisingly, even as this crackdown has taken place, there is talk of progress on the Kurdish issue. During the last few weeks, several of America's and Britain's most important news media have suggested that Turkey may be at a turning point, that is, that there may be some negotiated end to the hostilities between the Turkish government and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK). Why is this happening now? What is the significance of recent developments? What outcome would you like to see? What do you think is the likely outcome?

OM: The Kurdish issue is no longer only an internal problem of Turkey. Therefore, solutions proposed to resolve this issue should be interpreted within the framework of political strategies of the international power groups for the region. So it seems very difficult for us to make a clear prediction in terms of the outcome in view of the numerous factors that shall have an effect on the possible outcomes and the process comprising not only one but many uncertainties.

In conducting these opening steps regarding the Kurdish issue, Erdoğan may be hoping to achieve an extended period without conflicts, especially in regard of his aspiration to the Presidency in the upcoming election process.

However, whatever Erdoğan's or others' interests might be, we support every development towards the peaceful resolution of this issue. We believe that it is necessary to have a social negotiation platform for an actual resolution of the issue on the basis of the principle of peaceful coexistence and that is impossible in an environment of war. If the government/state and the Kurdish movement/PKK can come to some sort of an agreement, regardless of the current aims of both parties, that will be a real achievement considering where we are today. I hope that putting an end to the persistent armed conflict, which bears the danger of people drifting gradually into an ethnic conflict, may lead to a social/political conjuncture in which the struggles of workers and proletarian classes will become prominent. In my opinion, the Kurdish people retrieving their freedom as part of Turkey's society, even if only partially, will pave the way for the actual freedom of all the working class people.

Oğuzhan Müftüoğlu

NP: Does Erdoğan's apparent opening on the Kurdish question suggest a liberalizing of the regime? Do you expect other changes to take place in other areas, such as democratic rights and labor rights?

OM: It is a widespread view among the left public opinion that the AKP government doesn't have a goal of liberalization as part of its own agenda. They are walking along a road aiming in the long run to reshape the country and society step by step on the basis of a sectarian fundamentalism and don't refrain from applying unlawful suppression against various dissident movements. Erdoğan suggests that he is creating a political opening. One of the goals of the opening policies is essentially to neutralize the Kurdish opposition, that being the strongest and the most organized power vis-à-vis the government. Most of the commentators in Turkey think that the parliamentary group of the BDP (Peace and Democratic Party) might give support to the AKP's Constitution proposals within the context of the new Constitution rewriting efforts going on in Parliament in exchange for some democratic rights. Although I think the chances for such an exchange are not high, this development will probably drag the country into an even more oppressive and authoritarian regime.

NP: What do you see as the path for the emergence of a left movement in Turkey? What do you see as the central elements of its program? Do you think it is realistic to imagine that Erdoğan and his party can be driven from power in the short term? Do you see a leftist government in Turkey's future in the longer term?

OM: Turkey's society, being under a heavy load of social problems sustained by the Republican regime that lasted nearly a century, seriously demands a real change and innovation. However, leftist movements have not been able to regain their strength after having been weakened and neutralized by the military coup of September 12, 1980, and have not been able to create a persuasive and effective power that will meet the demands of society. Making use of this vacuum on the left, the AKP party was rolled out together with a neoliberal "change" program, the party and its program both reflecting the demands of the capitalist world, and it succeeded in winning support from people both on the basis of their Islamic beliefs and their desire for change.

That's why the leftist movements are now generally deprived of a strong social support. Therefore now, in the first place, it is a prerequisite to obtain the people's support with an actual program for change against the AKP's policies whose content is now coming into sight more clearly. There is no alternative for the left other than an informed and organized grassroots movement against the governments backed by the capitalist powers.

One important difficulty is that the Social-Democratic Party, being a government alternative in Parliament, lost the support of the anti-system poor people after pursuing for years a nationalist conservative policy based on secularism. This situation, as also implied in your question, results in the assessment that it is not realistic to assume that the AKP government will be overthrown in the short run.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the established systems in Turkey as well as in America and Europe are leading humanity towards a complete disaster. Under these conditions I think the left is not only possible, but inevitable. If we can make it before humanity gets lost in an everlasting chaos....

Mali

A Neo-Colonial Operation Disguised as an Anti-Terrorist Intervention

JEAN BATOU (TRANSLATED BY DAN LA BOTZ)

IN MID-JANUARY OF THIS YEAR France invaded Mali, a former French colony that sits in the middle of what was once the enormous French empire in Africa that stretched from Algeria to the Congo and from the Ivory Coast to the Sudan. The French government argued that its invasion of its former colony was an anti-terrorist and humanitarian intervention to prevent radical Salafist Muslims from taking the capital of Bamako and succeeding in taking control of the country. Critics have suggested that France had other motivations, above all maintaining its powerful influence in the region in order to prevent European competitors, the United States, or the Chinese from muscling in, but also because of its specific interests in resources such as uranium. The situation is very complex, in part because of a historic division and even antagonism between the Tuaregs, a Berber people in the North of Mali, and the black African population in the South, but also because, in addition to the various Islamist groups, there are also numerous organizations of traffickers in drugs and other contraband. In this article, Jean Batou unravels the complexity of the situation to lay bare the central social struggles taking place. —EDITORS

LOOKING BACK ON EVENTS, it's important to point out the real ins-and-outs of the French military intervention in Mali, launched officially on January 11 on the pretext of preventing a column of Salafist pick-up trucks from swooping down on the city of Mopti and the nearby Sévaré airport (640 km north of Bamako), and thus supposedly opening the way to Bamako, the capital and the country's largest city. The emotions caused by the atrocities of various Islamist groups of North Mali gave this unilateral operation the allure of a humanitarian crusade supported by a large part of Malian, African, and international public opinion. Certainly the legal basis of support was weak given the illegitimacy of the government in Bamako, which—as we would learn later—had never asked for ground troops from France, but there was also the fact that the Malian army had been subordinated to the French, as well as the reluctance of the troops of the Economic Community of East African States (ECOWAS) to lend a hand. What then were the motives of this

JEAN BATOU *is a professor of Contemporary International History at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland. He is the author of numerous publications on the history of globalization and social movements. He is one of the organizers of the French language network "Penser l'emancipation" (Emancipatory Thought), which held its first broad conference in Lausanne on October 25-27, 2012. He is the editor of the Swiss bimonthly newspaper* solidaritiéS *(www.solidarites.ch/journal/).*

new French intervention in FrancAfrica, whose neocolonial character stood out clearly, even if it arose in a particular local and international context?

In order to understand such a complex phenomenon as the recurrent revolts of the Tuaregs of North Mali, as well as more recently the rise of political Islam and the role played by the armed Salafist groups in the region, it's important to take some distance from the emotional reports of the corporate media that reduced each event to simply the immediate appearance, contributing to rendering it impossible to understand. I will begin therefore by describing the social situation in Mali, a country dominated by poverty, large areas facing famine, and the growth of social and regional inequalities arising in the context of economic liberalization, an opening to foreign capital under the pressure of a succession of structural adjustment programs that began in the late 1980s. Then I'll turn to the history of Tuareg resistance to French colonialism, but also to the centralizing and repressive policies of independent Mali, without forgetting the long-standing resentment experienced by the black people there. Finally, I will attempt to analyze the specific role of certain actors, such as international investors who have encouraged the political rivalry of competing imperialist powers, the armed and mostly foreign Salafists and the traffickers (cigarettes, drug, arms, etc.) of Sahel. I conclude this overview by arguing in favor of the refusal to support the French military intervention.

A third of the fuel consumed by the French nuclear plants comes from this country.

A Ravaged Country

In 2011, the United Nations Development Program classified Mali in the 175th place of 187 countries in terms of human development. The most recent statistics indicate that women give birth to 6.5 living children, of whom six die before reaching the age of five years (half of those who survive suffer from retarded development). Death in childbirth affects one woman out of 200; nine out of ten homes have no electricity, 19 of 20 have no sewer system; three quarters of those born in Mali who are more than seven years old do not attend school, etc. And when international institutions want to show some progress in the last decade, they still have to concede that there has been a continual increase in social inequality—and of regional inequality (the homes of Gao, Timbuktu, or Kidal, in the north, have less than half the income of those in Bamako)—and growth in the number of poor people.

For the rural populations affected by recurring famines, the "lack of food" is today perceived as the number one problem. So last spring, some 13 to 15 million people of the Sahel—transition zone in northern Africa between the Sahara desert and the savannahs to the south—were facing hunger of whom 3.5 to 4 million were Malians. This is the remarkable situation of the descendants of a once great African empire of the Middle Ages called "Mali" by the Fulani people, a name meaning "to bring good luck." Later, it's true, its inhabitants experienced the brutal intensification of the slave trade that fed the Atlantic economies of the Europeans in the Americas as well as French colonization, both conducted by what can only be called terror methods. Vigné d'Octon, the nineteenth century anti-colonialist, has left this account of the taking of Sikasso (south-east of Bamako): "Everyone is captured or killed. All captives, about 4,000, herded along. [...] Each European received a woman of his choice [...] We are on our way back, some 40 kilometers, with the captives. Children and all those who are tired are killed with rifle butts and bayonets."

In these territories, death was ever present, and not just in the conquest. Death permeated the lives of the "natives," who were dispossessed of their land, who suffered forced labor and corporal punishment, the rape of women, the reduction of food crops in favor of one-crop export products (cotton in Mali), a suffocating tax burden (which after 1908 had to be paid in cash) and innumerable humiliations. Franz Fanon drew this portrait: "The colonized, such as the people of the underdeveloped countries and like all the poor people of the world, see life not as a blossoming, not as the development of a vital seed, but as permanent struggle against an atmosphere of death. This death at point blank range is characterized by endemic famine, unemployment, morbidity and, inferiority complex and a lack of doors to the future. "

After independence, largely controlled by the former colonial power which could count on the collaboration of a large part of the local elite, that heritage would lead to new famines such of those of the 1960s. From 1960 to1968, the Malian Modibo Keïta (recipient of the "Lenin Prize" in 1963) had used a developmentalist phraseology with a certain socialist flavor, advocating Pan-Africanism and non-alignment. He protested against French nuclear tests in the Sahara, succeeded in getting the French to close the bases at Kati, Gao, and Tessalit (1961), and gave support at an opportune moment to the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). Nevertheless, he had not really succeeded in breaking with the neocolonial relationship. Samir Amin showed, some forty years ago, the limits of that experience which he at that time rather harshly called "a farce." The bankruptcy of his policy, notably marked by the de facto return to la zone franc—the pegging of the Malian franc to the French franc—was followed, in November 1968, by a military coup d'état led by Moussa Traoré and the institution of a police dictatorship that would last 23 years.

This situation was reversed in March 1991 following significant union and youth mobilizations (after January), the suppression of which left hundreds dead. This social movement led a dissident group in the army, headed by Amadou Toumani Touré, to taking power which he quickly turned back over to a civilian government. Then Alpha Oumar Konaré lifted up by popular protests to become head of state, decided to pursue a policy of reducing public expenditures, privatizing resources, and increasing export revenues. The foreign debt that Mali inherited from the dictatorship in effect permitted France, the International Monetary Fund, and the African Development Bank to impose on Bamako even more onerous regressive social structural adjustments, which are, called—in all seriousness—a framework for the fight against poverty. The bleeding white of Malian society explains the emigration of some four million of its citizens, principally to Africa, but also including some 120,000 who have gone to France.

The Tuaregs: Between Geography and History

The Tuaregs are a group of about two to three million people in the Sahara and on the borders of the Sahel. They live principally in the states of Niger and Mali, and to some extent in Burkina Faso, Algeria, and Libya. They speak a Berber language, Tamashek, and are similar to the people of North Africa before the Arab conquest. Their settlement, their poverty, their location in the poorest neighborhoods of the cities, but also their acculturation are general trends at the regional level, promoting the formation of an outbreak of revolt endemic in large areas that separate the Maghreb (Northwest Africa) from FrancAfrica, the French sphere of influence in Africa. In reality, the situation of the Tuaregs is consonant with the arbitrary political architecture of post-colonial Africa that laid out arbitrary "borderlines" between the various states.

In Mali more specifically, it is extremely difficult to measure the demographic size of this people. According to the most credible sources, there are about 500,000 to 800,000 Tuaregs or approximately three to five percent of the total population of the country. In the three regions of the north, they represent however somewhere between one-third and one-half of the population of 1.5 million. However, unlike other inhabitants of this country, whose poorest people live in the countryside, it is the poorest among the Tuaregs who live in the cities, notably in Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal, but also in Bamako. This particular circumstance could help to explain the growing influence among them of the Salafist political groups such as *Ansar Dine*—Defenders of the Faith—who have used their considerable financial resources to take advantage of the resentments felt by the downwardly mobile Tuaregs.

The history of the Tuaregs and of their relations with other African peoples precedes colonization by several centuries. They are reputed to have played a role in the capture, transport, and trade in black slaves destined for North Africa or the Middle East. Their "traditional" social organization, which was very hierarchical, included a "sub-caste" of enslaved black African origin—the Ikelan or Bella—dedicated to serving in the home, salt production or agriculture. These forms of domination have partially survived the colonial era, and even if they are not specific to the Tuaregs—but also to other groups such as the Arabs, the Songhaïs and the Fulani—they are deeply resented by the black Malians. While a report by the humanitarian organization Tuareg Temedt (Tuareg Solidarity) stated that thousands of people were enslaved in the Gao region in 2008, this phenomenon is due at least as much to the impact of neoliberal policies—the growth of poverty, decline of public education and the presence of the central government, etc.—as it is to the survival of ancestral practices.

The Reason for So Many Rebellions

After the end of the 19th century, the Tuaregs offered a fierce resistance to French colonization. In January 1985 they inflicted a crushing defeat on Colonel Bonnier, who died outside Timbuktu with the rest of his officers, before Colonel Joffre could undertake his successful counter-offensive. Little by little the colonial power was able to occupy Azawad—North Mali— through a combination of bloody reprisals and the offering of privileges in order to co-opt tribal chiefs. The French authorities at the time considered the Tuaregs to be "white" people, superficially Islamized, and therefore likely to establish ties to the metropolis. In 1903, the colonial administration managed to conquer the principal tribal confederation, though it would take up the torch of rebellion again in the course of the First World War (1916-1917). This last general uprising did lead to a massacre. After that, all insubordination was cruelly repressed. In 1954, the colonial regime paraded the head of Alla ag Albacher, the inspirer of the resistance in Ifoghas mountains since 1923, through the streets of Boureissa to show what was in store for anyone who opposed the French authorities.

Three years after independence, the Tuareg revolt raged again in 1963-1964, led by the tribes of Ifoghas. It was partly due to the increased taxation of livestock keepers, considered backward and idle by Bamako, but it also reflected the refusal of some of the Tuaregs to be led by blacks that they still perceived as their servants or slaves. It was brutally crushed by the state-builder Modibo Keïta who did not hesitate to command the bombardment of civilian populations in the mountains, the poisoning of their wells, the machine gunning of their livestock, and forcing their children to sing in Bambara, the West African language spoken by the majority of Malians.

Hostilities broke out again from 1990 to 1995 (with an estimated 5,000 victims), leading to another wave of repression, but also to the explosion of inter-ethnic conflicts and the formation of self-defense militias among the other peoples of the Niger bend. Yet, this new eruption wasn't comparable to that of the first half of the 1960s, since it involved many returning from Libya or Algeria, where they had gone in the 1970s or 1980s, pushed by famine, to look for work, or to fill the ranks of the Islamic Legion of Kadhafi (dissolved in 1987) as well as the Polisario Front. They called themselves the *Ishumars* (from the French word *chômeur* meaning unemployed). The musical group Tinariwen, recipient of a Grammy Award in the U.S. in 2011 for *Tassili*, the best album in a foreign language, belongs to that generation in exile, which has largely broken with the traditional hierarchies.

Upon returning home, some of these young, unemployed people were recruited and formed into mobile groups, equipped with 4 x 4 vehicles and armed with light weapons, to harass the symbolic and strategic sites (such as the uranium mines at Arlit) in the neighboring state of Niger. Yet, lacking any really ideological foundation or credible political project, they have not been able to surmount their differences. In 1996, they were convinced to turn over their arms in exchange for a rehabilitation plan for their fighters, the withdrawal of the Malian army from the non-urban zones of Azawad, and the appointment of some Tuaregs to positions in the national institutions, as a token of the recognition of the claims of their people. This policy coincided with a temporary end to the drought and a rise in the price of livestock. However, arguing that the agreement had not been respected, the Tuaregs revolted; the uprising raised its head again in 2006-2008, temporarily halted by an Algerian mediation effort. The rebellion coincided with a new exacerbation of social inequalities. Similar developments took place in Niger in 2007-2009, when four employees of the French Areva company were abducted (June 2008) and liberated a few weeks later. The matter concluded through the mediation of Libya, which was then closely allied with France… Hostilities broke out again in North Mali in January 2012, in the midst of a terrible drought, but, following the collapse of the Kadhafi regime, due to the influx of arms and mercenaries who had either fought for the dictator or with the revolutionary opposition) and who had passed through either Niger or Algeria. In the middle of that month, a group of Tuareg rebels, apparently linked to the future Ansar Dine Salafist movement (created later in April), summarily executed 80 police officers, soldiers, and civilians at Aguelhok (160 kilometers north of Kidal), with that giving the signal that there would be war without mercy. At the same time, nearly 400,000 people fled the devastating battles that affected the region.

> The Malian authorities had never asked for a ground engagement, but only for air support.

If the Tuareg fighters at first seem less divided amongst themselves than they were in the 1990s, with the building of the Azawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA), they soon had to deal with the competing formation of the Ansar Dine Salafist group, led by Iyad ag Ghali, one of the principal leaders of the uprising of the 1990s, who in the meantime had served as a Malian diplomat to Saudia Arabia. It should be considered that the relative portioning of these forces, but also the homogeneity of each of them, remains limited, as has been shown by succeeding quick changes in politics of the MNLA and the recent split in Ansar Dine. In addition, neither one of them represents a very large sector of the population.

Coveted Natural Resources

Foreign capital is more and more interested in Sub-Saharan Africa, which, far from being a sub-continent ignored by globalization, has experienced growing interests in the areas of agriculture, mining, and energy. In Mali, the Presidential Council for Investment (CPI), founded in 2003, is made up of representatives of numerous multinationals—Anglogold, Barclays, Coca-Cola, etc.—and the FMI and the World Bank also attend its meetings. Beyond that, the Malian Agency for Promotion of Investments (API), created in 2005, notes that the influx of foreign capital is encouraged without restrictions (and permits the repatriation of dividends and of proceeds from sales or liquidations). In terms of land, the API asserts that 2.4 million hectares of arable land—of 4.7 million available to investors, the great majority of whom are foreigners, notably for the production of biofuels, even though the overuse of land—including cotton plantations—causes accelerated degradation and turns productive land into a desert.

In the area of mining, subterranean Mali contains many more resources than have yet been exploited. Its production of gold made the fortune of South African Anglogold and put the country in the 16th place in gold production worldwide (2009). Yet, the working conditions are deplorable, in particular for the child laborers less than 15 years old, and the risks to the environment don't in any case justify the economic benefits, which serve essentially to enrich the stockholders (20 percent of the capital is in Malian hands) and to service the foreign debt. The exploitation of other important mineral deposits—semi-precious stones, bauxite, uranium, etc.—is still in the realm of speculation.

There are great hopes in the future extraction of petroleum in the north of the country, in particular in the Taoudeni basin, but the drilling, mining, and transportation of hydrocarbons still pose technical, logistical, and financial complex problems, not to mention security issues. If French energy interests are linked to its military intervention in Mali, they are those of the Areva nuclear energy company which monopolizes the exploitation of the uranium deposits at Arlit in Niger (the world's fourth largest producer), located 300 kilometers east of the border of the Malian region of Kidal. One will recall that a third of the fuel consumed by the French nuclear plants comes from this country. Moreover, Areva has just signed an agreement for the exploitation of the Imouraren basin (the second largest reserve in the world), 80 kilometers to the south of Arlit, 60 percent of the capital of which is the property of this company. A first tranche of investment of 1.2 billion euros has been already programmed.

The French investors don't at the moment hold the privileged positions in Mali that they do in other countries of FrancAfrica, one more reason today for claiming economic returns on military investments, beyond that of the international promotion of French war materiel. Yet, as the Survie Association notes, France has achieved a trade surplus on the order of 300 million euros with Mali, five times greater than its foreign aid to that country.

Salafists and Dealers

The situation on the ground is complicated by the growth in power of two types of actors who largely coincide as they dispute the Sahel region:

1) The "jihadists" mostly foreigners who have emerged from the Algerian Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which a rival faction, the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) is specifically interested in Sub-Saharan Africa.

2) There are dealers of all sorts, in particular those who deal in cocaine and heroin, and their local contacts. Clearly, the financial sources and the political relationships of these two types of actors are a great deal more important and more diverse than those of the Tuareg rebels.

I. The rise of the Salafist armed groups of the Sahel is a result of their defeat in Algeria, but also of their weakening in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is reputed in the last few years to have established a new world center for terrorist activities in the African nations of the Sahel, from Sudan to Mauritania. It's hard to measure the effective forces claimed by the AQMI which was formed after the denial of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) electoral victory by the Algerian Army, in 1992, which preceded the implacable repression of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), a dissident faction of which escaped from the Algerian cul-de-sac and founded the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) in 1998; it became linked to international "jihadism" in the first half of the 2000s, before it took the name Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2007.

One would have to be pretty clever today to figure out how these groups from that exploded nebula function and how many armed troops they have, pulled as they are by the gravitational forces of hidden sponsors and also by the opportunities of lucrative traffic in hostage taking and ransom. It is, however, reasonable to distinguish these from political Islam following the Salafist line and with a certain popular base in the society, such as Ansar Dine in North Mali. The latter attempted to exploit to its advantage the endemic poverty, accentuated by shock treatments by the international financial institutions and implemented by the neocolonial authorities of Bamako. It thus expanded its audience with the goal of establishing a new regime based on its interpretation of Sharia law throughout the country.

The United States has decided to increase its presence in Africa by invoking the threat of terrorism, establishing in the new African Command (Africom) in 2007. A diplomatic source revealed by Wikileaks, noted that the general headquarters should be based in Mali and that this would multiply the collaborative efforts—joint exercises, training managers, etc.—with African military forces, including those of Mali, within the framework of the "Saharan Partnership against terrorism." So, on December 25, Obama announced a project for developing military cooperation with 35 African states, and on January 29, Niger revealed that it had accepted the establishment of a U.S. drone base. In reality, this beefed-up military presence is fundamentally intended to secure U.S. petroleum supplies (and other basic materials) shipped through the Gulf of Guinea, and to strengthen its position as it faces growing competition from China.

II. The importance of drug trafficking today—not only cocaine and heroin but also pirate brand name cigarettes—as well as illegal immigration passing through the Sahel to North Africa and Europe remains the subject of conjecture, although it seems established that they have experienced an increase in recent years with the proven assistance of large areas of state and local military units.

So, for example, in November 2009 an old Boeing 727 cargo plane—one of the few jets to have been able to land on a rapidly constructed airstrip—was discovered in the Malian desert, 200 kilometers north of Gao. Flying from South America, it had taken on cocaine for the French and Spanish markets, that had to be reached through Algeria and Morocco.

The Salafist fighting groups finance themselves by taking hostages and through trafficking in various commodities, which provides them money for arms. It was in this way that Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the presumed mastermind of the taking of the In Amenas hostages, Algeria, got the nickname "Mr. Marlboro." This situation has led more than one observer—from Tariq Ramadan to the spokespeople for the French Army—to call into question the religious objectives of these groups. As for me, I don't see why faith has to be opposed to profit and terror, though it is clear that popular Salafism is driven by other social dynamics than those nurturing Al Qaeda.

This imbroglio has led recently to the rise of numerous conspiracy theories attempting to divine what's behind the multiplication of armed Islamist groups in the Sahel, attributing it to one or another of the traffickers, to the interests of the United States, or even Germany, to the dream of an independent Sahelian emirate, rich in natural resources, separated from the FrancAfrican states of Mali and Niger. So it was in the name of the "lesser evil" presumed to be French domination of the entire region, that Samir Amin last January 23 surprisingly justified Operation Serval (or Operation African Wildcat), the French military action in Mali. It seems that France will play the role of the policeman of the European Union in the Sahel, continuing to carry out the work of preparing and training and reorganizing the armies of Mali and of the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) that was decided last November at the instigation of France at a price of 12.5 million euros.

What Does French Imperialism Want?

One month after the opening of the French military intervention, its success seemed to be complete: the principal cities of the North had been taken and only one French soldier had been killed in combat (though a few more died since then). The scope of civilian losses and destruction on the ground remain hard to estimate given the media blackout imposed by France. The Salafist armed groups have evaporated, avoiding a frontal attack. The Malian officials have greeted the troops from the old colonial power as liberators, with undeniable popular support. The reprisals carried out by the Malian Army or by elements of the self-defense militia have failed to tarnish the French success, and not the least of the miracles is having conferred on François Hollande a stature of a real chief of state. According to *Le Parisien*, Operation Serval won the approval of 75 percent of those polled. This "dream scenario" has begun to fracture with the first military difficulties in the Massif of Ifoghas, the multiplication of attacks, and the kidnapping of French nationals in Cameroon.

That said, the apparent success of the first phase of these operations poses a question: wasn't there an overestimation of the firepower of the hardened and heavily armed troops who have fled before 2,000 French soldiers? How could France have the luxury of keeping the Malian Army completely out of the more sensitive conflicts, such as the taking of Kidal, which was captured without a struggle? How then can anyone believe that these Islamist groups were about to pounce on the center of the country before they had taken Bamako, the capital city with two million inhabitants who are violently hostile to them? Was the Malian army so unable to put up a fight against them? The *Nouvel Observateur* has revealed that, according to French intelligence sources, the Salafist fighters aimed at taking Mopti and its Sévaré Airport, while Captain Sanogo — the officer who staged a coup on March 22, 2012 — would profit by getting rid of interim president Dioncounda Traoré in Bamako. So that France, which had so far managed to cause problems for the putschists, notably through the pressures of ECOWAS, risked losing any credible political foothold in Mali. Its immediate response, prepared for in the field by Operation Sabre in September, would, on the other hand, give it time to work on site for a "democratic alternative," duly sanctioned in good time by elections. It was only later learned that the Malian authorities had never asked for a ground engagement, but only for air support. Those who promised the French an Afghan quagmire, and praised the prudence of Washington and Berlin, went badly astray for the moment. On the other hand, the Malian and regional authorities—through the International Mission Support in Mali (MISMA), which involves seven countries of ECOWAS, but foremost Chad—will have to pay their debt in fighting the Salafist units that have retreated to the sands and mountains of Azawad. There are also constant comments on the upcoming installation of a French base in the center or north of the country: "It is not a coincidence," noted one Senegalese commentator, "that the helicopter carrier Dixmude sailed from Toulon harbor to Dakar with a load as large as five TGV high-speed trains." Such a base would be within easy reach of the uranium deposits of Arlit, and above all of Imuraren, thatwas won over at great cost by Areva at the expense of its Chinese competitors. It would complement the already existing bases of N'Djaména, Abéché (in Chad), and Djibouti on the Sahara-Sahelian frontier.

At the same time, Paris will without doubt maintain a heavily armed intervention force in Bamako in order to assure a political transition on its terms against the restive sections of the Malian Army. It could also well be that it would provide a limited degree of autonomy for the Tuaregs, which would explain why special units assigned to occupy Kidal have kept the Malian Army away and why the DGSE (the French intelligence service), which is already in contact with the MNLA—"diplomacy" actively supported by Switzerland—has worked to split the Salafist Ansar Dine. It seems in effect that the spokesman of this group, Mohamed Ag Arib, for a long time an émigré residing in France and known to the French Foreign Affairs Ministry, has played a key role in setting in motion the new Azawad Islamic Movement (MIA).

Will France be tempted to play the partition card in Mali, along the recent lines of Sudan, building on its privileged ties with key sectors of the Tuareg rebellion, a move it has been accused of by certain Malian political leaders? Nothing is less certain, insofar as it would put in danger the privileged links that it maintains with its principal neocolonial pawns in West Africa, beginning with Niger. Recall that the Common Organization of the Saharan Regions (OCRS), established by the French Fourth Republic in January 1957, aimed to bring the territories of southern Algeria, northern Mali and Niger, and western Chad, potentially rich in oil, under French administration during the war in Algeria and in the context of African decolonization. In 1958, De Gaulle attempted to make the OCRS his number one priority, with the explicit support of the Socialist Party (then the SFIO). This plan failed, however, due to the resolute opposition of the Sudanese Union-African Democratic Coalition (US-RDA) of Modibo Keïta, supported by the principal Tuareg chiefs.

If the Tuaregs were to drop some of the ballast of their claims for autonomy, they could be useful in putting pressure on the central government in Bamako, whose refusal to follow consistently the French line is a little out of place in the FrancAfrican landscape. From this point of view, sending UN peacekeepers to maintain peace between Bamako and the rebel movement of the North—the MLNA and the new MIA—could provide useful cover for France by leaving sufficient freedom of action—including military action—while giving the next Malian political leadership the veneer of international legitimacy.

The French bourgeoisie won a significant battle in West Africa, at least for the moment, not only at the expense of its Western and Chinese competitors, but also of the peoples of the sub-region, who will now be exposed to a new stage of the neoliberal agenda that Paris and the European Union promote without reservations. The serval cat is certainly small, but is said to be able to urinate twenty times per hour to mark his territory. To cope with this increased activism of French imperialism in Africa, it is high time that the left and Malian, African, and international social movements stop thinking in "less-evilist" geopolitical terms and develop an internationalist perspective that takes as its starting point the dynamics of social struggles. The solution to the crisis begins with the Malian refusal of exploitation of the country by foreign capital, whether French, European, U.S., Chinese, Algerian or Qatari and its local cronies. It assumes the unity of its peoples to defend their sovereignty around a social and democratic program that does not overlook the right to self-determination.

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SOUTH AFRICA

The Marikana Massacre and the New Wave of Workers' Struggle

An Interview with Mazibuko Jara of the South African Democratic Left Front

JACK GERSON

I'M HERE WITH MAZIBUKO JARA. Mazibuko is from the Democratic Left Front of South Africa. He was spokesperson for the South African Communist Party and the deputy secretary for the Young Communist League, back a decade and more ago. He is one of the co-founders of *Amandla* magazine and the Democratic Left Front, and they've been extremely active in the support for the Marikana miners and for South African farmworkers, and elsewhere. We'll talk about this and more in this interview. Today is Sunday, Dec 2, 2012.

JACK GERSON: Mazibuko, can you give us a bit of background on the current events in South Africa and how you personally got involved and became so prominent in the South African movement?

MAZIBUKO JARA: I became a socialist in 1989, in the last years of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Since then I've been a committed Marxist socialist, so that explains my long-term involvement in the political struggles and movements in South Africa. Right now, I'm part of the Democratic Left Front, which has actively supported the recent wave of mineworker and farmworker strikes in South Africa, starting with platinum workers at the Lonmin Corporation's Marikana mine and spreading to other mines. That Marikana movement of workers' struggles has thrown the DLF into the spotlight in terms of what it can do to support the workers' struggle and also to bring a socialist perspective into those workers' struggles that goes beyond the immediate workplace issues. That is important because there have been some 18 years in South Africa of a post-apartheid political dispensation founded on a democratic constitution and including a democratically elected government, which has been dominated and led by the party of Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress (ANC). The ANC works together with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in the form of a tripartite alliance. Those 18 years have left a number of systemic features from the past quite intact. Firstly, the economic structure of South Africa remains a capitalist economy owned by a small number of capitalists, particularly in the mines and in finance and in agriculture, and a smaller layer in industry, especially manufacturing. Of course now, there's been a rise in the services sector alongside a wave of increased financialization of the economy.

So the post-apartheid administration has

JACK GERSON *is an Oakland-based writer and activist. Recently retired from public school teaching, he was a founder of the Occupy Oakland education outreach committee and of the Oakland Education Association's campaign to bail out schools and services, not banks.*

not really challenged the ownership/control of the economy by this capitalist class as well as the power of this capitalist class in general. There has not been significant redistribution of wealth through taxation or through land redistribution or other measures. But we've seen high levels of profits — super-profits in some instances — by South African companies. And these high levels of profits have been at the expense of South African workers. Workers have been more productive, which means they produce more profits. But we've seen a decline in the share of national income going to workers. This explains then why there has been a lot of unhappiness among workers, because there are billions of rands in profits, which are being held onto by the bosses instead of being invested in more productive investments or being paid as wages to workers. Of course, beyond workers there are millions more of unemployed people who are structurally out of the economic system. These unemployed people basically depend on the minimal social security program that the state provides with some elements of a social wage (basic amounts of water and electricity, free housing for the poor, etc.) But the social security grants and the elements of a social wage system are immediately undermined by the economic policies of the state, immediately undermined by the huge unemployment crisis. For example, the logic of a social wage is undermined by cost recovery, wherein the unemployed are expected to pay for the costs of these services. So the restlessness that we see among the unemployed and the workers in South Africa is basically an attempt by ordinary people to say what's the benefit of this constitutional promise if it's not changing our lives?

JG: The massacre of the Marikana miners this past August 16 has received international attention. Can you describe the events that led up to it, because there has been a lot of controversy and confusion surrounding these events? We've heard charges of "anarchism," and "nihilism" leveled at the Marikana miners and / or their leaders. There have been allegations that the Marikana miners have been deceived and led to murder their opponents. There have been accusations of "dual unionism." Can you explain the background to the miners' strike and the August 16 events?

MJ: The strike at the Lonmin mine in Marikana has deep systemic roots in the conditions of workers in that mine. For several years now that mine has increasingly used labor from labor brokers. So they would hire a company to bring workers on a part-time basis to work the mines, particularly underground. That group of workers who were brought in through labor brokers did not have full benefits and were paid very low wages. So that's quite significant, because many of these mine workers need to support two families: one in the mining area, and one in their rural homes in far-flung provinces or in nearby countries. But also, another factor is that the mining system has taken away the subsidy for accommodations that it used to provide to workers. It is true that these accommodations in the mining compounds were horrible. But now, the mining companies charge the workers for these accommodations in the mining compounds. So many of the mine workers have opted to stay in the informal settlements that emerged around the mining areas. That was a further squeeze. Apart from that, there have been very problematic attempts by management to increase

> South Africa is by all accounts the world's richest country in terms of the value of its mineral resources. In 2010 these were valued at between $2.5 trillion and $4.5 trillion.

salaries for certain parts of the workforce, but not for the entire workforce. And by the union's own calculation, that was meant to reward those more critical in the production process. But you can imagine the kind of unhappiness that this would generate, given that very few workers were getting any kind of fair wage.

But also: the National Union of Mine Workers (NUM), the largest union representing mine workers in South Africa, had increasingly become removed from the conditions, the grievances, and the demands of the lowest rank of the workers, the most exploited — particularly those who drill the rocks. Because those who drill the rocks must be physically strong, since they work the hardest and work the longest, and they were not getting increased wage rates at all. The NUM had increasingly been led by a layer of quite streetwise, English speaking, white-collar workers. Most of them had been working above the ground, as mining clerks or other officers in the system. So this combination of factors meant that there was no outlet, there was no forum, to hear and address the grievances of underground workers. In this combination of circumstances what then emerged was very significant anger, very significant agitation, which led to what is called an unprotected strike from the end of July or the beginning of August at Marikana when workers demanded a way out of their squeeze: they demanded a living wage, a wage that would make it possible for them to meet their expenses and live decently. This strike was basically an initiative of the workers themselves. Of course, the NUM was facing some competition from a smaller breakaway union called AMCU (Association of Mine Workers and Construction Union). However, to view the strike as NUM vs. AMCU is not helpful, because it ignores the real, concrete conditions that workers were unhappy about. NUM vs. AMCU is a dynamic that is part of the strike, but it is not the main dynamic. And anyway, as it turned out, that strike saw workers wanting to negotiate with the management on their own. That logic of workers wanting to feel their own power was also present in other strikes triggered by Marikana.

JG: I'm looking through the current issue of Amandla, the South African journal that you co-founded. Most of the issue is devoted to the uprising in the mines, beginning with an article "Marikana: 38 years." Here's a quote from this article: "South Africa is by all accounts the world's richest country in terms of the value of its mineral resources. In 2010 these were valued at between $2.5 trillion and $4.5 trillion." The article goes on to quote Jacob Zuma, South Africa's president, saying, "We plan to develop and integrate rail, road, and water infrastructure centered around two main areas in Limpopo: the Waterburg in the western part of the province, and Steelport in the eastern part. These efforts are intended to unlock the enormous mineral belt of coal, platinum, palladium, chrome, and other minerals in order to facilitate increased mining as well as stepped up beneficiation of minerals." That's from Zuma's State of the Nation address made this past February (2012) and the article says that this is part of the South African government endorsing the sentiments of the captains of industry that "we cannot miss out a second time on a commodities supercycle." So is this an essential part of the background to what happened, that is that the state is pushing hard and intervening at this point because of the cyclical increase of prices of commodities on a world scale, and for that reason trying to maximize profits by extracting more at this time?

MJ: The policy of government is to build significant infrastructure — road, rails, water transport — to ensure the smooth, efficient, and cheap transportation of minerals to the coast, so that they can be taken from there to global markets — China, Europe, North America. That's the basic logic. But then there's logic that says "let's take the minerals out as quickly as possible and maybe we can introduce some ways to do this efficiently," but the primary logic is to extract as much as possible. Now that is the option that the ANC government is going for. It's not even including the option of nationalization or any form of state ownership of mines in any significant and transformative way. Basically, that kind of infrastructure, financed by public resources, would make it easier for global capital to get minerals from South Africa more efficiently. Now, what that logic avoids is something that has been raised in huge debates in South Africa by COSATU but also by other left forces that have critiqued the structure of the South African economy as an energy-intensive, minerals and energy complex. Basically, this complex is about the extraction of minerals on the basis of cheap energy and cheap black labor. This complex has been the foundation of capitalist development in South Africa and its post-1994 reinsertion into the global economy even though the process of extraction of these minerals is polluting, even though this process cannot really encourage the development of other forms of industrialization.

So the development of the mineral and energy complex over the past 140 years has really structured the market economy in ways that have limited job-creating industrialization and the development of other sectors in that economy. This infrastructure development policy and program is compromised and limited in so many ways: extractive, thus maintaining the minerals-energy complex and maintaining the skewed structure of the economy. Also, what is not said very much is that this policy is based on financing which will be sourced from the financial markets. There's not going to be new fiscal allocations, but the funds will come from the financial markets. So this ties South African development even more closely into the global capital markets, because these financial markets will impose conditions which will maintain the structure capital knows to maximize its profits. This will have cost-recovery implications later on as well. It's a very significant policy arrangement that ties the South African economy further into the systematic exploitative and oppressive features that were imposed on us over the past 140 years and have not gone away but rather have been inherited and, as I have been saying, are indeed today deepening.

JG: Within the past few weeks an ANC government official was quoted in the Financial Times *as saying that she thinks that mining, or at least some mines, should be nationalized. And there have been articles in the South African press about some of the older mines being closed down. Does this mean that companies will attempt to divest themselves of the least profitable and most dangerous mines, the old mines where drilling now must go much more deeply? Are these the mines that the ANC government is most likely to nationalize — these less efficient, more dangerous, and less profitable mines — while leaving the more lucrative mining operations in the hands of private capital? Also, will the threat of mine closures and consequent unemployment be used to try to batter workers into giving up their struggle and lowering their demands? What are the different groups doing about that? (ANC; SACP; COSATU; NUM; etc.)*

What's needed is not just public ownership by the state, but under workers' control. That's crucial.

MJ: There has already been an earlier round of mining capital getting rid of marginal mines. This was done to entire shafts and even entire mines — entire companies, to aspiring black capitalists, under a program called Black Economic Empowerment. That program was used by mining capital and by government to say that this was the beginning of a change in the South African mining sector. Of course, that was limited, and anyway, it does not change the fundamental problem. So this current round of divesting away from marginal mines will build on that. But as you're saying, it's also something that will affect the workers' demand for a living wage from mining capital. But there have been a few reports that suggest that together with getting rid of marginal mines there is also the threat of more capital intensiveness with consequent reduction of labor in mining. So this is clearly part of a bigger logic: to maintain profits by reducing labor costs. This is a huge struggle that the mineworkers are going to face.

We of the Democratic Left Front are working with workers' committees in the platinum belt to convene a workers' assembly to work out a working class response from below to this threat. It will be a real test for the workers' committees. COSATU, the main workers' federation, which is aligned to the ANC government, is unlikely to lead a principled and sustained fight to resist and win against such threats. The ANC government itself is not about to go around nationalizing the mines — not even marginal mines. In its "State Intervention in the Mineral Sector" (SIMS) document, the ANC basically calls for the state to create a mining company which will buy shares, but otherwise will seek to explore new ventures when the state issues new mining rights. Already there is a state company called Alexkor, which is beset with problems, and anyway is not a major player. So, the creation of a new state company is not going to change the features of mining at all. It is different from nationalization because the state company is just one player amongst many other players in the mining sector. But also, it's likely to follow similar logic as any other private capitalist company.

The other thing they're talking about is then to increase taxes and royalties. Now, that would be quite significant. But still, it would not change the overall structure of mining or even the overall weight of the mineral-energy complex in the economy. This relates to changes in an important law called the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act. That act did something very interesting. According to this law, all mining rights are owned by the state, and then the state issues them in the form of licenses to companies on long-term leases. Now that's quite significant. It's still not the same as nationalization, since only the mining rights were "nationalized" and not the actual mining operations themselves. Now, other provisions of this law had called for effective consultation with communities when granting mining rights would affect the land rights of these communities. This law also had required that some of the revenue from mining investment should be disbursed in the form of social plans. But the state has been very weak about enforcing this. In fact, we've seen the state evict some mining communities, and we've also seen the state limit the land rights of other mining communities. Now, the debate taking place is how to strengthen the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Act so that it also meets real needs, including true beneficiation, (i.e. doing more of the mineral processing within South Africa). That is seen as value-adding, which could possibly create jobs. But again, there's a big question: Does that really change the structure of capitalist mining? Does that change the weight of the mineral-energy complex in the South African economy?

There's a bigger debate, a debate about which industrialization path South Africa should follow. Now of course, what we of the Democratic Left Front advocate is a link to a low-carbon path of economic development that's socially owned. Now, the kind of debates that the DLF has taken to the workers' committees and to the workers' strikes — what we are saying to them is that yes, the immediate struggles are crucial, but actually the immediate struggles are explained by bigger forces at play that will in the future be shaped by much larger and more confident fighting workers' forces.

JG; Doesn't the history of the past give some evidence that it's not going to be possible to proceed to a society with economic justice unless there is social ownership of many of the key industries in the economy? Isn't *it the case that another path has been followed in post-apartheid South Africa, one where some prominent black anti-apartheid leaders — like Cyril Ramaphosa, who for many years was president of the National Union of Mine Workers, now are themselves wealthy capitalists, and that although they are a relatively small number, their affluence is pointed to as supposed evidence of fundamental change, while in fact the multinational corporations continue to profit, continue to have their way, while the masses continue to suffer exploitation and oppression, as you have so clearly explained? And is anything being offered now — any path other than social ownership? Is what the ANC government is now exploring really just saying, "We will continue down the old path of private ownership? But some of that is failing — some enterprises are unprofitable. We will take over the unprofitable ones and continue to leave the profitable ones in private hands."*

MJ: That's the heart of the systemic crisis of the South African economy. Because that economy has been about the production of cheap labor as the base for accumulation. Cheap labor under the conditions of private ownership of the means of production — those two factors combined form the basis for accumulation. Now the Marikana movement shows that the majority of the people do not accept that. Now, can the ANC offer something as an alternative? The ANC is not about to break with the fundamental logic it has followed. It may foster some changes here and there, but the key contradictions remain the same, remain unaltered. This is a crucial issue, because any path to a more just economic system will require significant changes in who owns, who controls the means of production. What's needed is not just public ownership by the state, but under workers' control. That's crucial. But also important is the actual process of the extraction of surplus. Therefore labor conditions and how to organize workers are also crucial issues. Related to that is also the control of the distribution of the surplus. Right now, the measures the ANC government proposes say nothing about the extraction and the distribution of that surplus. Again, this goes back to the kind of systematic change that's required: workers' control goes beyond the logic of the capitalist system.

Even though to me those solutions seem logical from an objective perspective, to actually achieve them is another matter altogether. Because to do this requires a confident working class that fights it out and wins it. We're still some distance away from that. So what we're likely to see are still changes within what we have. We're likely to see the ANC government try to protect capitalist profitability, capitalist ownership whilst maybe introducing some reforms here and there, as I've mentioned earlier. That may offset the crisis for a few years, but it's not going to displace or destroy the crisis.

JG: Speaking of the crisis: Can you talk about what appears to be a major uprising among farmworkers in the Western Cape, and possibly relate their actions to the miners' strikes and demands?

MJ: Farmworkers in South Africa have not ever gone out in the thousands into strike action on a collective basis until what we saw at the beginning of October in a small town in the Karoo Desert called De Doorns. De Doorns, by the way, had broken out in violence in 2008 and in 2011, tensions between workers from Lesotho and Zimbabwe on the one side and South African workers on the other, because the workers from the other countries were being paid less than the South African workers. Now the interesting thing is that in this current strike, we've seen the unity of all the workers. By the way, the same farmers also exploited the differences between African workers and so-called "Colored" (mulatto) workers. So now what we've seen in this strike is working class unity across these divisions.

Now, in terms of systematic explanations, what explains the farmworkers strike? The agricultural sector in the Western Cape emerges from a history of slave ownership and slave-master relationships going back to the 16th and 17th centuries. So that logic pertains to this day. That explains why we have such low levels of organization. Even though the new post-apartheid government introduced minimum wage and some minimal conditions for farmworkers, those did not really mean anything because they were so far away from a living wage. The deregulation and liberalization of agriculture was much more systematic. When the new government deregulated and liberalized agriculture in 1996, it took away a floor of support that was built up by the apartheid regime, a floor of support that was publicly financed and publicly owned and also made a difference in protecting, for example, income of farmers but also in ensuring low prices of food for consumers. This is part of the bigger picture of the post-apartheid government sending signals to global capital that South Africa will play in the new liberal game. Now, deregulation and liberalization exposed South African farmers to competition from well-subsidized farmers in the North. As a result, there have been significant shifts in labor — shifts to seasonal and casual work, thereby undercutting the impact of the new labor relations regime that was supposed to protect farmworkers. So there were two opposing shifts taking place at the same time: one introducing farm worker rights under labor law, but on the other hand seeing systemic shifts in the labor regime under deregulation, liberalization, and globalization of agriculture.

In addition to the question of the minimum wage there is the question of land redistribution.

So the heart of the problem goes back to agricultural policy. Yes, the farmworkers demand to double their wages from something like 69 rands (which would be about 8 dollars) a day; now farmworkers are demanding about $15 or $16 a day. That is still not anything close to what is required for a living wage, but it is a significant step forward. The government now promises that it will institute public hearings and will solicit inputs, suggestions, and questions from the public. Of course, the public includes very reactionary farmers, who have now armed themselves to the teeth in preparation for a second wave of farm worker strikes. So without a change in agricultural policy, we are not going to see a change in the agricultural sector. This also raises the question of land redistribution, because the farmworkers should be the owners, the controllers, along democratic lines, of these farms. Of course the workers have not put the demand in that way. But many of these workers have been evicted from farms because they had owned a few head of cattle or had planted a few hectares for their own consumption. In addition to the question of the minimum wage there is the question of land redistribution. For the first time this demand is really out there, and it would mean that there would never, ever be a return to the slave-master relationship. That relationship has been broken now by the farmworkers coming out in the way that they have. The strikes may be temporarily defeated, or may not achieve all of their demands, because of factors that for now favor the current system on the land, such as the mobilization and power of the farm owners and the lack of political will on the part of government. The challenge facing us now is how do we build on this militancy of the farmworkers, who have broken out now from a structure of isolation and oppression.

JG: You mentioned that the Democratic Left Front has been active in the workers' committees at Marikana and also among other miners, and that the DLF is calling a conference for early next year. Has the DLF also been involved in support activities for the farmworkers?

MJ: The Democratic Left Front is an active part of the struggle of farmworkers. We have two affiliates who are very crucial in these farmworkers strikes. The first affiliate is a trade union called the Commercial Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU), which has some 8,000 to 10,000 members in the farming districts. The second affiliate is called Mawubuye Land Rights Forum. *Mawubuy*e means "let the land return" to its owners. This affiliate organizes farm dwellers and people who have been evicted, landless people in the farming districts. Those two groups have been crucial in driving the farmworkers strikes. Yesterday — or rather, today South African time — there was a rally of 1,200 farmworkers that was organized by these two groups, with the support of the DLF. Last year [i.e., 2011 — JG] both organizations, together with the DLF, organized a speak-out campaign, the "listen to the people" campaign that reached about 5,000 farmworkers. Farmworkers would come out to speak about their conditions. There were many such local meetings. Out of this campaign and these meetings came the decision on the part of CSAAWU, Mawubuye Land Rights Forum, the DLF, and a few other organizations to establish what is called the Legal Center for the Defense of the Rural Poor. It's not going to be a legal group that replaces the workers organization, but it is going to use the law to defend workers and farm dwellers. That's crucial because there's an axis of social relations in the farming districts that includes the magistrates, the police, and the farmers and other officials in the state system. This axis acts to keep the workers repressed and tied down. The biggest difficulty is still the social conditions in the farming districts, because the farmers have inordinate power and also because of the vast size of the agricultural regions and the lack of money, resources, and organizers to cover such vast distances.

JG: So it seems as though there's not just enormous unrest, but that there are indeed enormous tasks facing the South African working class and facing organizations like the Democratic Left Front who are attempting to support and help organize and give coherence to these struggles. You've already spoken about the DLF's work with the miners and with the farmworkers. Can you discuss the DLF's overall approach, and how it hopes to be able to rise to the pressing needs of the overall struggle — in terms of its organizing, its publications, etc? It seems like there are enormous tasks and with them enormous opportunities.

MJ: The tasks are huge. Our strategy towards the overall situation, and towards the tasks arising from this situation, is to attempt to foster a broad front of fighting forces of workers and unemployed in order to consolidate their anti-capitalist instincts into a consciously anti-capitalist set of organizations and struggles. This front would also then put forward programmatic perspectives on immediate reforms, immediate demands, alongside what we have called an eco-socialist program. To say this in different words: the Democratic Left Front's strategy is to then build a united front of struggle on an anti-capitalist basis and also to advance alongside it an eco-socialist program, and this includes taking up immediate struggles around immediate demands for immediate reforms. That's a huge task, given how vast the country is and how vast the working class is, and how powerful the capitalist class is. And of course, there is the institutional dominance of the ANC and the South African Communist Party and COSATU. The still fairly modest work on our part since early last year has begun to give confidence to sections of the working class that have previously been marginalized or misrepresented by the dominant institutions in that society. Now the key challenge that we face is how to quickly step up what we want to do, in order to meet the rising tempo of workers' struggles that have taken place since the massacre at Marikana. Without a doubt, we can expect to see hundreds more struggles — strikes and other forms of protest — particularly because the trade union leaders of COSATU are still willing to compromise and not push struggle as far as they should.

So there are many questions that the workers are asking through their actions. But of course also what we have seen is a denialist response on the part of government. This adds to the tasks confronting us, because communities and workers must be defended legally and in other ways when the state now calls for direct physical attack. So these tasks are huge. We have a limited activist base, but we have learned quite a lot in a short space of time. But we still have so much more work to do to consolidate the lessons learned and the gains. This will not be easy. The DLF will have a conference in April to discuss how to deepen what we have been doing up until now. We do not want to fool ourselves into thinking that now that we have arrived on the scene, we can rest on our laurels. In fact, the fact that there is now recognition by the conscious and fighting elements of the working class of a left perspective throws even bigger challenges, because this struggle is still in its very early stages. Now, if we are to sustain and enlarge that confidence that they are developing in a left perspective, then that left formation must be much more sophisticated, much more advanced than we are at this stage.

JG: Do you see the DLF as being the nucleus of a future mass workers party in South Africa? Do you see the need for such a party?

MJ: Without a doubt, there is a need for a mass party, founded on the basis of a socialist program that would be based among workers and the unemployed. However, such a party is not going to come from on high as a result of a declaration from the left. It can only be an outcome of a combination of left work on the ground and also working class struggles of the kind that we are beginning to see, working class struggles that open the door to education, to debates, to consciousness of the need for such a party. Yesterday at the farmworkers' rally some of the speakers called for a party of this kind, and there was a huge response from the crowd of 1,200. But that response alone is not enough to say that we can go ahead and start such a party now. There are debates in the DLF about that. Some of the affiliates of the DLF, for example, the Mpumalanga Party, which is a breakaway from the SACP in Mpumalanga province, as well as a few other groups argue for forming a workers' party now. For me, the debate needs to be approached very much along the lines of what I have said. And also, we must avoid an electoral focus for such a party. The notion of a party in South Africa tends to focus narrowly on the questions of elections of a president and parliament and those kinds of institutions. For me, such a party will be a powerful influence only if it remains rooted in working class struggles. And it must ensure that working class movements remain organized, remain conscious, and are oriented towards an anti-capitalist perspective. That is going to be crucial. I see the DLF indeed as a major component of such a party. Basically speaking, the DLF is the largest left initiative in South Africa since the end of apartheid in 1994, representing a wide range of left and working class forces and groups in struggle.

JG: You've talked about the potential and the possibility in the future of building a mass workers' party. On the other side, do you see a development to the right of the ANC, or inside the ANC (perhaps Julius Malema) that could pose a threat to move to an even more explicitly repressive, right-wing populist approach than the ANC government's current policies? You described how the post-apartheid ANC government moved to deregulation in the farming area, and perhaps a bit later you can also talk about education where they also seem to be following neoliberal policies. Although they are following neoliberal policies, given what's happened at Marikana and more generally throughout the mining sector, and given the intense conflict in the Western Cape's agricultural region, is it going to be necessary to move to a more openly repressive *strategy that would retain the veneer of the ANC's image while moving to a more openly repressive, right-populist strategy, such as organizing gangs and probably inciting inter-tribal violence?*

MJ: Some of the phrasing used in the Democratic Left Front has referred to the securocratic logic of the ANC (i.e., the increased influence of the repressive state security apparatus in overall state policy) and the state as being authoritarian populist. Zuma, the current president, has consolidated the security cluster — that is the police, the army, and the intelligence organizations. He has now interfered politically in the criminal justice system — in the courts — in ways that attack movements and attack struggles. In addition to that, consistent with Italian populism, the Zuma government has also attacked access to information, the right to know, the right to protest. The Marikana massacre was part of the use of the security cluster to suppress dissent. So the ANC doesn't need a split for that to happen. It's already doing it. It's quite capable of doing it. What's going to reinforce that logic is the fact that there's a huge social crisis that the ANC is not capable of resolving, because of the global crisis, because of the continued capitalist ownership, which continues to produce and reproduce this huge reserve army of labor, and also these underemployed workers. What we have seen elsewhere in post-colonial southern Africa has been this kind of shift to securocratic responses to the failures of the post-colonial government to address systemic issues that it should have addressed. My prediction going forward is that there will be a continuation of those policies, but that they will be combined with some form of additional social programs — whether it will be social security grants or some other programs. And that will be used as an example of the ANC being able to meet needs and demands. There are not enough dynamics within the ANC to lead to a split. A split would be possible if the Communist Party and COSATU were to the left of the ANC and pushing on key demands. That's not happening, and it's not going to happen.

JG: Maybe we can talk for a few minutes about education. I'm particularly interested in this as an education activist and retired public school teacher. What are conditions like in education, in the schools, in South Africa?

MJ: The main achievement of the post-apartheid education system has been to deracialize education formally and then to equalize the amount of expenditure. Under apartheid, the white child got about 36 times more money from the state for education than did the black child. The post-apartheid government equalized those expenditures. Also, a significant part of the country's GDP is spent on education. However, that has not improved the quality and outcomes of the education system. That is because the education system has been structured on a neoliberal basis. So there has been downsizing introduced, forcing experienced teachers out of the system. And senior managers have been put in charge of the system who have no idea how to develop human resources, on how to educate. For example, in the Eastern Cape, in the 18 years since the end of apartheid, there have been at least 14 heads of the education department. So on average, each head of the education department there has lasted little more than one year. That is indicative of the kind of crisis of leadership that exists in education in South Africa: no meaningful changes

> Mandela: If the ANC government does to workers what apartheid did to them, then workers must do to the ANC government what they did to apartheid.

develop, because as you know it takes time to introduce meaningful changes in education. Also, the post-apartheid government still has not addressed the working conditions of teachers and the wages of teachers. Teachers' wages are still very low. And then thousands of schools across the country still lack labs, lack libraries, lack basic facilities and infrastructure. The minister of education had to concede this in court last month [November 2012 — JG], where she agreed to put in place a school infrastructure program. So, although South Africa has put money into education, its schools, teachers, and students remain the victims of neoliberal policies that imposed downsizing, large class size, low teacher wages, inadequate resources and facilities, and an overall lack of understanding of the nature of education on the part of senior education management. The other problem is that the teacher unions and the main student organizations have been politicized very narrowly along ANC lines, and to be uncritical supporters of the ANC. They have not been politicized in a class sense. So they do not primarily take up as issues the real educational needs of the working class, especially the need to overall improve the quality of education for children of working class families. This does not happen at all.

JG: Do you think that since the state has been managing and running education as you have described, is this an argument against nationalizing the mines?

MJ: Liberals and the capitalist press have made this argument. What it forgets is that to build a state that works takes time. And particularly if workers' control is introduced, then certainly we are looking at a very different dynamic.

JG: Mazibuko, we've now been speaking for over an hour. I think that this has been very valuable, very informative. Is there anything you would like to add?

MJ: I think two things. One: those in the United States progressive movement need to understand that Mandela's ANC has failed the project it mobilized the world for: to defeat apartheid and bring justice to South Africa. There's no doubt about that. Whatever loyalty people may have to the ANC and to Mandela should not blind them to that reality. Then that leads me to the second conclusion: that as the result of the failure of Mandela's ANC, very active fighting by the South African working class against these conditions is not going to stop, not even in the face of increased repression. So this throws a huge challenge to people in the United States, who must decide on which side of the struggle they stand. Will they heed Mandela's own call, made at the COSATU September 1994 Congress? Mandela said then, "If the ANC government does to workers what apartheid did to them, then workers must do to the ANC government what they did to apartheid."

JG: Thank you, Mazibuko. Thank you very much.

Jewish Alternatives To Zionism

Bennett Muraskin

Zionism is but one of many ideologies/movements that have competed for the loyalty of Jews as the guarantor of their freedom and security. The fact that it achieved success with the establishment of Israel in 1948 causes people to forget that its success was not preordained. Further, no one can deny that it has come with a heavy cost in both Jewish and Arab lives. From a historic perspective, it may be worth examining other visions to secure a Jewish future. Every road not taken need not be a dead end.

The classic Ultra Orthodox position is that Jews must wait until the Messiah comes before returning to Zion. Zionists are conceived as a bunch of apostates — heretics, socialists, atheists, etc. — who have attempted to pre-empt the will of God. Some ultra-orthodox, in particular, the Lubavitcher Hasidim, have made their peace with Israel. Others have not — and to this day there is an ultra-orthodox Jew who serves with the PLO —on the grounds that Jews should live under Arab rule until God decides to redeem them.

For decades, the leaders of the Reform movement maintained that Jews are not a people or a nationality, but a religious group. Their age-old status in European ghettos as a segregated and oppressed minority was imposed from without, and once abolished, Jews had no reason to think of themselves as a separate people. Judaism is exclusively a religion. It teaches ethical monotheism which is incompatible with nationalism. Reform Jews do not seek to return to Zion. They do not seek to rebuild the Holy Temple. That is why they called their synagogues, "Temples."

Where Jews are persecuted, they should struggle for religious freedom and equal rights. Their objective should be to integrate into the broader society. Once living in a free society, Jews should adopt it as their "Zion," which is what early Reform rabbis called the United States. Since Zion was here, there was no Zion to return to.

The classic Reform position against Zionism did not begin to change until after the Balfour Declaration, principally due to the efforts of Louis Brandeis, and was probably still the majority position among Reform Jews until the 1930s and the rise of Nazi Germany.

The major proponent of the classic Reform perspective in the United States was Rabbi Elmer Berger (1908-1996). In 1942, after it became clear that Zionists in Palestine were seeking a "Jewish state," he formed the American Council for Judaism to combat Zionism in the United States, which had become very popular due to the efforts of Rabbi Stephen Wise. Berger argued that Zionists were substituting worship of state power for worship of a universal God, that a Jewish state would corrupt

Bennett Muraskin *is a union representative for state college/university faculty, librarians and professional staff in NJ. He has written three books:* Humanist Reading in Jewish Folklore *(2001),* Let Justice Well Up Like Water: Progressive Jews from Hillel to Helen Suzman *(2004) and* The American Jewish Libraries Association Guide to Yiddish Short Stories *(2011). He is a regular contributor to* Jewish Currents *magazine.*

Jewish values and also violate the rights of the native population. To support a "Jewish state" in Israel was also to jeopardize security of Jews in the Diaspora by raising the specter of disloyalty to their native land.

A biography of Berger has just appeared called *Rabbi Outcast* by Jack Ross. The American Council for Judaism still exists, but it is very small. Yet as public opinion surveys and the U.S. election results consistently show, Jews place domestic concerns such as jobs, taxation, health care, and education far above loyalty to Israel. Younger Jews show the least attachment to the Jewish state.

> Younger Amercan Jews show the least attachment to the Jewish state.

The classic ultra-Orthodox and Classic Reform positions are explicitly anti-Zionist. For very different reasons, so was the position of the Jewish Labor Bund, founded in Vilna in 1897. It reached its prime in Poland between WWI and WWII as the representative of the Jewish working class, supported by other elements of the Jewish community as well, because it was seen as a champion of Jewish rights. The Bund advocated for socialist revolution—not in the Bolshevik authoritarian manner—but still a radical transformation of society. As such, they saw their task as uniting with non-Jewish socialists in struggling to achieve this objective. Their principle was *doykayt* —here-ness. "Here" being the Diaspora. For the Bund, Jews were primarily a people whose roots were in Eastern Europe, with Yiddish as their language and Yiddish as the basis of their culture. They should preserve their language and culture by struggling for cultural autonomy within Eastern Europe. What this autonomy would consist of, I will discuss later, because their cousins, the Diaspora Nationalists led by Simon Dubnow, more fully developed this idea.

The Bund was much more than a labor union or political party. It excelled in creating a myriad of cultural, educational, social institutions to serve their constituency—from youth and student groups, to women's groups, to Yiddish schools, newspapers, sports teams, theaters, choruses, orchestras etc. The Workmen's Circle is still alive as an organization dedicated to Yiddish culture and social justice.

To immigrate to Palestine was to betray the cause of socialist revolution and Jewish cultural autonomy. It was to surrender to anti-Semites who wanted to rid Europe of Jews. Bundists and Zionists were like oil and water because Zionists considered the Diaspora experience to be a disaster and Diaspora Jews to be pathetic, if not suicidal. Bundists and Zionists also clashed on the language issue. The Bund were partisans of Yiddish, the Zionists of Hebrew — and the Zionists took their fervor for Hebrew so far that they sought to stamp out Yiddish in Palestine and in the early years of Israel.

The Bund did establish some branches in the United States and published a Yiddish magazine, but it never took root here. Its closest counterpart here was the Workmen's Circle, but it was never as hostile to Zionism as the Bund.

Autonomism or Diaspora nationalism was the brainchild of Simon Dubnow, the great Russian Jewish historian, considered to be one of the intellectual architects of secular humanistic Judaism. He looked at Jewish history and saw that Jews did not really come into their own until they became a Diaspora people. Had Jews remained in ancient Judea, they would have been nothing more than a small people with little impact on the rest of the world. But in the Diaspora, they thrived. How? By establishing varying forms of political/cultural autonomy—in Babylonia both after the destruction of the First Temple and the Second Temple; in Alexandria in the late Greek and early Roman period; in Spain under Muslim rule around the 10th century; in the Ottoman Empire after the expulsion from Spain in the 16th century; and especially in Poland and Lithuania, beginning in the 15th century. Jews had outgrown territorial nationalism and ascended to Diaspora Nationalism, becoming what he called a "cultural spiritual nation." This was the secret to Jewish continuity.

Dubnow (1860-1941) took part in the 1905 Russian Revolution and afterward founded the *Folkspartey* to fight for Jewish autonomy within the framework of a democratic multi-national state. He hoped that the Russian Revolution of March 1917 would create such a state, but he opposed the Bolshevik Revolution and immigrated to Latvia in 1922. Why Latvia? After WWI, as part of the post-war settlement, many new nations emerged in Eastern and Central Europe out of the ruins of the German, the Russian, and the Austro-Hungarian Empires. For example, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the Baltic states — Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. As a condition for their international recognition, these nations had to sign "minority rights treaties" to protect the rights of the many minority nationalities who remained there when the new borders were established. The Jews were recognized as a bona fide national minority and were guaranteed state support for the maintenance of their own communal institutions like school systems. Latvia actually had a Minster for Jewish Affairs in its government.

This was the closest realization in East Europe of Dubnow's principle of "national cultural autonomy," and of course it was short-lived. But at least on paper and to a limited extent in practice in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the right of Jews to cultural autonomy was recognized.

What Dubnow envisioned was a system where, either through state support or through taxes legislated by the Jewish community on the Jewish community, there would be Jewish schools, social welfare agencies, cultural institutions, recognition of Yiddish as an official language, etc. At the same time, Jews would be free and equal citizens of the state where they lived.

Unlike the Bundists, Dubnow was a liberal democrat rather than a socialist. Whereas the Bund was convinced that Jewish capitalists were just as bad as any other capitalist and could not be trusted, Dubnow saw opportunities for Jewish unity across class lines.

Further, unlike the Bund, Dubnow was not anti-Zionist. Rather he was non-Zionist. He welcomed the emigration of Jews to Palestine to establish agricultural settlements and local industry, but he was not sold on the idea of a Jewish state. He firmly believed that Palestine could not absorb more than a small portion of the world's Jews and that there were many Jews who did not want to live there. For Dubnow, Jewish life in the Diaspora was actually a fuller and richer experience than Jewish life in a single territory.

Like the Bund's, Dubnow's ideas did not transplant well to the United States, but his followers did support efforts to form Jewish community councils and the American Jewish Congress to give voice to Jewish communal interests.

Dubnow was a good friend of Ahad Ha'am (1856-1927) and both are considered two of the founding fathers of secular humanistic Judaism. Ahad Ha'am (meaning "one of the people") was born Asher Ginsberg, and he is best known as the philosopher of cultural Zionism. Yes, he was a Zionist, but in those days, i.e., pre-WWII, there were many who did not insist on a Jewish state. Rather, Ahad Ha'am was in favor of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. He envisioned a "national spiritual center" steeped in Jewish values and devoted to educational and cultural development that would slowly but surely revitalize Diaspora communities throughout the world.

The Diaspora was in decay, he believed,

but it was not realistic or practical to expect all Jews to settle in Palestine. And merely settling in Palestine was not the answer either, if it was not based on Jewish ethical principles reflected in a systematic Jewish education and cultural development. He also expressed concern that Jews fleeing persecution to establish new homes in Palestine were disregarding the rights of the native inhabitants. Therefore Ahad Ha'am opposed both the political Zionism of Herzl, whom he saw as a wheeler-dealer with no understanding for Jewish culture, and Labor Zionism which he saw as too focused on land acquisition for its own sake. He also disagreed with Dubnow because he believed that without a vital Jewish presence in Palestine, the Diaspora would wither.

Jewish culture emanating from Israel—its literature, its films, its music and dances—have no doubt enriched the experience of Diaspora Jews, but the deleterious effect on Diaspora Jews of Israeli's occupation of the West Bank, the oppression of its Palestinian inhabitants, and its alignment with U.S. foreign policy must also be weighed in the balance.

Another variant of Zionism that has been discredited by modern Zionists was bi-nationalism. Its advocates included some very prominent Jews including Albert Einstein, Henrietta Szold, Gershom Sholem, Judah Magnes, Martin Buber, and Hannah Arendt. It was based on the premise that Palestine was already populated with a majority of Arabs, who also had national rights. Therefore it was impossible to justify the establishment of a Jewish state. A Jewish state could be imposed only by force, which was morally repugnant and would lead to endless wars.

As Einstein said, "I should very much rather see reasonable agreement with the Arabs on the basis of living together in peace than the creation of a Jewish state. Apart from practical considerations, my awareness of the essential nature of Judaism resists the idea of a Jewish State with borders, an army and a measure of temporal power, no matter how modest. I am afraid of the inner damage Judaism will sustain."

Magnes, the most prominent bi-nationalist, was an American Rabbi who moved to Palestine in 1923, where he became one of the founders of Hebrew University and its first chancellor. To avoid bloody conflict with the Arab population, it was necessary to share power. As Magnes said "A Jewish Home in Palestine built up on bayonets and oppression is not worth having."

Einstein changed his mind. He supported the 1947 Partition Plan and sided with Israel in the 1948 war. But Magnes actively opposed the Partition Plan, favoring a joint Jewish-Arab administration and eventual integration of a bi-national Israel into a Middle East federation. He died in the United States just before the outbreak of the war in 1948. To the end, he opposed the creation of a "Jewish state" as contrary to Jewish values and unjust to the native population.

Another prominent bi-nationalist, Martin Buber, counterposed what he called "Hebrew humanism" to Jewish nationalism. He also opposed the partition in favor of a bi-national arrangement. Other bi-nationalists believed that the UN should establish a Trusteeship until the parties reached agreement. Or that Jews and Arabs should start with local councils and work their way up to larger jurisdictions. After the war, Buber accepted the existence of Israel, but advocated for compensation for Arab refugees displaced by the war and equal rights for Arab citizens of Israel.

The bi-nationalists consisted of intellectual types like Magnes and Buber but also a segment of the Socialist Zionist movement known as Hashomer Hatzair, based in the kibbutzim. Where they sometimes differed was on the issue of Jewish immigration — whether it should be limited or unlimited; whether it was essential that Jews become a majority of the population or it was enough to achieve parity. But regardless of who was in the majority, bi-nationalists believed that power should be shared equally and the national rights of both groups should be respected.

The bi-nationalist Jewish organization the League for Arab-Jewish Rapprochement and Cooperation actually reached an agreement in 1946 with an Arab organization called New Palestine, but the leaders of New Palestine were assassinated. The problem was that the Arab side, with very few exceptions, did not want a bi-national state. They believed that Palestine had already absorbed more than its share of Jewish immigrants and wanted to cut off further immigration. Outnumbering Jews by 2:1 even in 1947, their leaders were willing only to accept a single state with a Jewish minority.

Whereas the cultural Zionists and bi-nationalists favored a Jewish homeland rather than a Jewish state, yet still considered themselves Zionists, the Canaanite movement repudiated Zionism altogether. Founded in 1939, it was officially known as the Council for the Coalition of Hebrew Youth. The key word is "Hebrew" because they believed that Jews should return to their roots as a Hebrew-speaking people from the Middle East and sever their relationship with Jews outside Israel. Israel should not be a Jewish state, with ties to Jewish communities around the world, but a Hebrew state with ties to the Middle East. Their brethren were not Diaspora Jews, but the Arabs, their fellow Semites. Judaism was seen as purely a religion that should be discarded as a relic. Jews in Israel should stop thinking of themselves as Jews and start thinking of themselves as Hebrews. The Canaanite movement influenced many Israeli writers, artists, and historians, but faded as a movement by the early 1950s and has no followers today.

A more grounded, but equally obscure Jewish alternative to Zionism was the one known as Territorialism. Its first appearance you may have heard of. It emerged at the Zionist Congress in 1903, where Herzl himself announced that he would be willing to accept Uganda, then a British colony, as a Jewish homeland. (He previously expressed interest in Argentina.) There was an uproar and Herzl backed down. Then in 1905, British Zionist Israel Zangwill broke away from the Zionist movement to found the Jewish Territorialist Organization to look for Jewish homelands outside Palestine. It gave up the ghost a few years after the Balfour Declaration created a "Jewish national home in Palestine."

> Judah Magnes: "A Jewish Home in Palestine built up on bayonets and oppression is not worth having."

But this was not the end. Territorialism came back to life in the form of the Freeland League for Jewish Territorial Colonization, founded in Great Britain in 1935 — this time with a decidedly socialist and Yiddishist orientation.

It was born of despair that time was running out for the Jews of Europe. Its mission was to find an under-populated region of the globe whose government was willing to open it up to Jewish settlement. It was not conceived as a single solution. The hope was that more than one such territory could be found and that at least a fraction of European Jews could be saved. Like Zionists, the Territorialists believed that Jews had no future in the Diaspora, not only due to the threat of Hitler, but due to the threat of assimilation in countries where Jews lived freely, such as the United States. Where Zionist and Territorialists parted company was over the question of the appropriate homeland. Territorialists looked at Palestine and saw a region with a large Arab majority that would not yield peaceably to a Jewish state. They were also Yiddishists who resented the Zionists rejection of Yiddish.

When Israel was ultimately created, the Freeland League welcomed it as a place of refuge for thousands of dispossessed Jews but issued the following statement: "At this time both because of the limited area and the hostility of the Arab population, we dare not allow the whole Jewish future to depend solely on Israel." It reiterated its call for "a free land that will be secure from anti-Semitism and assimilation on one hand and statehood and its pitfalls on the other. A land that will be steeped in freedom and Jewish culture and help build a peaceful, productive and authentically Jewish home."

But where? Its best shot was Australia. Before the outbreak of WWII, the leader of the Freeland league, Isaac Steinberg, traveled to Australia in an attempt to negotiate a deal that would bring 75,000 Jews to the sparsely populated region of Kimberly—or as a second choice, the island of Tasmania. He actually gained the support of certain government officials, public figures, newspapers and trade unions. But there was too much opposition—including from the Zionist movement who did not like the competition.

Next to Australia, the South American nation of Surinam showed the most promise. It was then a Dutch possession. Negotiations between the League and the Dutch government extended from the late 1940s into the early 50s, before they collapsed. The League also expressed interest in Alaska, Canada, Argentina, and Angola. Lowering its expectations, it looked to the United States as the site for all-Jewish towns where Jews would build homes, own farms and business, operate schools and establish cultural institutions, with Yiddish as the prevailing language.

So what happened to the Freeland League? In 1979, it dropped its territorialist goals and transformed itself into the League for Yiddish, led by Mordkhe Schaechter. It still exists today and publishes a Yiddish journal *Afn Shvel* (*On the Threshold)* edited by Sheva Zucker.

Steinberg was a fascinating figure for another reason. He was the rare combination of an observant and socialist Jew. Representing the Social Revolutionary Party, he actually served as Minister of Justice in the first Bolshevik government. Steinberg did not work on Shabbes, and stories are told that Lenin agreed not to hold meetings of his cabinet during that period. When Steinberg saw that the Bolsheviks were creating a dictatorship, he left the country. YIVO Institute for Jewish Research presented in exhibit on the Freeland League in 2011, and there is an upcoming book on Steinberg by Adam Rovner.

A few words about Birobidzhan. In the late 1920s, the Soviet Union announced the creation of a Jewish autonomous region in an area of the Russian Far East. A small population of ethnic Koreans lived there. The Soviet Union and its supporters worldwide promoted Birobidzhan as a bona fide Jewish homeland where Yiddish would be the official language. For a while, it generated a fair amount of enthusiasm, even among non-communist Jews. About 50,000 Jews immigrated there and to this day, it is the home to a few thousand Jews and a Yiddish newspaper. It cannot, however, be considered a Jewish alternative to Zionism because it was not developed by Jews, but by the Soviet leadership headed by Stalin.

Jewish settlement in the Crimea was another matter. Successful agricultural colonies were established there in the 1920s, before the creation of Birobidzhan, supported by Jewish communists in the Soviet Union and international Jewish organizations. In 1944, Jewish communists close to the Soviet government comprising the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee proposed that the Crimea could be a home for Jews who wanted to start new lives after surviving the horror of the German invasion. The Kremlin at first ignored the proposal but later used it to fabricate accusations that the Committee conspired with the United States and American Jewish "Zionists" to take over the Crimea and sever it from the Soviet Union. The leadership of the JAFC were arrested in 1949 and executed in 1952.

One idea that never received serious consideration, but makes sense to me was for the victorious Allies to have provided Jews who survived the Nazi holocaust with a homeland out of German territory. New borders were drawn after World War Two shrinking German territory by giving eastern Germany to Poland, which proceeded to expel the German population, and dividing what remained of Germany in two. Within the context of these and other post-war territorial changes and population transfers, a strong case could have been made for a Jewish state as a form of German reparations.

In 1941 Lord Moyne, British secretary for the colonies, suggested to David Ben-Gurion that Jewish refugees could be resettled in East Prussia after Germany was defeated and the area's German inhabitants were expelled. Ben-Gurion responded that "the only way to get Jews to go [to East Prussia] would be with machine guns." Maybe so, but West Germany and later united Germany have attracted a steady migration of European Jews. Furthermore, expulsions and machine guns were both factors in the war that created the state of Israel in 1948.

Indeed, there were many Jewish alternatives to what is now considered mainstream Zionism, i.e., standing for the establishment and maintenance of a "Jewish State" in Israel, and they represent(ed) a range of perspectives from anti-Zionists to non-Zionists and Zionist dissenters.

The debate continues today, as some Jews inside and outside Israel question whether Israel should become a state of its citizens rather than of the entire Jewish people.

Whether the bi-national solution can be revived depends on a change in attitude from both sides.

Imagining a New Political Landscape in Israel and Palestine

Patrick O. Strickland

Ramallah. In November 2012, the United Nations General Assembly approved a resolution to upgrade Palestine to a "nonmember observer state". The usual suspects—Israel, their American financers, and a few of their mutual allies—voted against the resolution, but it overwhelmingly passed.

The international community was shocked the following day when Israel announced its plans to develop and settle the E1 area, which would the dissect the West Bank into two segments and encircle East Jerusalem, the projected capital of Palestine's new state, with a ring of illegal Jewish settlements. In effect, Israel announced its willingness to formally kill the already moribund two-state solution.

Many European countries quickly expressed outrage. Britain, Spain, France, Sweden, and several others summoned their Israeli envoys to protest the decision. The United States chimed in, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said, "These activities set back the cause of a negotiated peace."

Though the November vote did not carry the legal weight of a UN Security Council decision, it signaled that the world has uniformly committed itself to solving over six decades of dispossession, occupation, exile, and ethnic cleansing through a two-state solution based on 1967 borders, establishing a Jewish state in around 78 percent of historical Palestine and a sovereign Palestinian state in the remainder, consisting of territories occupied by Israel in the June 1967 War: the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem.

But what are the real implications of the two-state solution, and should we endorse it?

Two States?

The peace process, more than mere simulacrum, is extremely harmful. The Israeli government and its American backers have drawn out negotiations for almost two decades while Israel's colonial front, a band of settlers armed with a toxic ideological concoction of theocracy and nationalism, rapidly usurps the embattled remains of Palestine one plot of land at a time.

Indeed, from the onset of the Oslo Accords, Israel established a pattern of violating its mutually agreed responsibilities. As the Institute for Middle East Understanding points out, although former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin "publicly agree[d] to a settlement freeze, Israel continued Jewish-only settlements on Palestinian land unabated" and refused "to agree to any provisions in Oslo that would call for an independent Palestinian state."

According to Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, Israeli settlements, illegal under international law, almost doubled during the Oslo years (1993-2000), swelling from a West Bank settler population of 110,900 to 190,206. These numbers exclude occupied East Jerusalem, which Israel has formally annexed, though

Patrick O. Strickland *is a freelance journalist based in the West Bank. His writing has appeared in* Al-Jazeera English, International Socialist Review, CounterPunch, Socialist Worker, Al-Akhbar English, Electronic Intifada, *and elsewhere. He is presently working on his first book, a brief history of unarmed resistance in Palestine.*

the international community has not recognized it. Today, over 500,000 Jewish Israelis live in state-subsidized settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

These settlements snake through the West Bank, dissect villages, usurp Palestinian land, separate families, and impose de facto restrictions on Palestinian movement. Coupled alongside martial law, Jewish-only roads, and a crudely named “separation wall” that has thus far placed around 8.5 percent of the West Bank on the Israeli side (according to Israeli journalist Hagai Mattar), strategic settlement activity has made it possible for the Israeli government to put the nail in the coffin of the two-state solution and install a complex system of segregation and oppression that does more than simply echo South Africa’s Apartheid regime.

Meanwhile, ineffectual groans of disapproval, punctuated by expressions of “deep concern”, alight from Washington as the colonization presses on unhindered.

But even if two states were tenable, the premise at work is inherently racist and exclusionary: the separation of Jews and Arabs based solely on ethnicity. The two-state solution, according to Israeli demands, entails mutual land swaps that translate into redrawing the borders to include the bulk of the illegal settlements alongside a population exchange of Palestinian citizens of Israel into the West Bank, stripping them of their citizenship and once again tearing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their careers, lives, and families.

Those Palestinians who remain inside Israel, on the other hand, will ostensibly remain mere footnotes in an exclusively Jewish state. As Israeli politician Tzipi Livni, largely considered liberal and moderate, tellingly said, “Once a Palestinian state is established, I can come to the Palestinian citizens [of Israel], who we call Israeli Arabs, and say to them ‘you are citizens with equal rights, but the national solution for you is elsewhere.’”

> But even if two states were tenable, the premise at work is inherently racist and exclusionary: the separation of Jews and Arabs based solely on ethnicity.

Furthermore, Israeli negotiators have consistently asserted that the keystone components of a viable two-state solution are not acceptable and non-negotiable: East Jerusalem and the Right of Return. East Jerusalem, home to almost 300,000 Palestinians, Israel says, is off the table because it has been formally annexed and will never again be divided. Unrestricted access to East Jerusalem, however, is crucial to Palestinian Muslims and Christians alike because of its religious, cultural, and historical significance.

Hebron, March 2012. Photo by Dylan Collins.

The Right of Return, according to UNRWA, affects some 4.7 million registered refugees scattered throughout refugee camps in the oc-

Kuf Qadoum, February 2012. Photo by Dylan Collins.

cupied Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria. In respect to international law, this right is enshrined in UN General Assembly Resolution 194, article 11, which states that "refugees wishing to return to their homes and live in peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest predictable date and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible."

Israeli politicians and their supporters, however, argue that the Right of Return is an impractical demand because it will result in an Arab majority and spell "national suicide," as it's so often put. In other words, population control.

After two decades of non-starters, peace talks, and fruitless negotiations, it is clear that the peace process towards a two-state solution was never a serious or acceptable alternative in the first place. Hence, in recent years many Palestinians have switched their goals from territorial liberation to political, civil, and national equality in a single democratic entity.

Building One-State: Democracy and Equality as Precursors

RATHER THAN LABORING TO compensate for the many insults to justice inherent to the two-state solution, it is time to re-imagine the political landscape in Israel and Palestine by seeking a single, democratic and secular state encompassing all of present-day Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip.

In order to achieve this end, a long struggle must be conducted, which involves no small number of laborious tasks. Chief among these is restructuring political, economic, and public dimensions of life in Israel and Palestine.

Firstly, political participation must be stripped of its ethnic-based preferential components and take on a citizenship-based approach. Only in a unified state that represents—and is

Nabi Saleh, April 2012. Photo by Dylan Collins.

represented by—each and every one of its citizens, regardless of ethnic, sectarian or religious affiliation, will justice and peace become meaningful prospects rather than vague abstractions that exist merely in the speeches of politicians.

Secondly is public life. In present-day Israel, public life is firmly rooted in a Jewish-centric perspective, in which public holidays, cultural celebrations, health and food laws, and public transportation schedules, to name only a few examples, are all overwhelmingly derived from Jewish tradition. The public space ought to be desegregated in order to forge a common culture based on both Jewish and Palestinian heritage, rather than one over the other.

Thirdly, and most importantly, the one-state solution demands a radical restructuring of the economy. Far reaching economic policies ought to seek to cultivate equality for all the systematically oppressed demographics: Palestinians in Israel, the occupied territories, refugees, and non-European Jews, who have also suffered from destructive economic policies that place white European Jews at the top of the socioeconomic hierarchy.

More specifically, it is clear that policies based on notions of equal distribution of public and governmental resources are crucial. If a single democratic state is left to the vices of the free market, a system of socioeconomic preference will persist for decades to come, much as it has in South Africa.

It's time to abandon efforts towards two-states. Of the many solutions proposed over the last few decades to end the 64-year-long partition and occupation of Palestine, the only viable one is a democratic, secular, and socialist state within the entirety of its historical borders.

Rather, the world ought to begin the long struggle towards a one-state solution, the only alternative to systematic and institutionalized racism. As Palestinian-American academic Saree Makdisi recently wrote in a *New York Times* op-ed, "Like Palestinians, [Israeli Jews] will lose the dream and prospect of a state of their own. But—also like Palestinians—what they will gain in turn is the right to live in peace."

Removing the Stigma of Past Incarceration: "Ban the Box" Laws

BILL MOSLEY

PICTURE YOURSELF going into a job interview, as many readers of this publication no doubt recently have done or will do in the future. You have a solid record of experience relevant to the position, but you will still need to stand out in a large field of candidates for the same job. Imagine your employer asking the usual questions about your background and suitability for the job, which you handle with ease. Then comes the question: "You checked the 'yes' box for the question on whether you have been convicted of a crime. Why should we hire you when other candidates have clean records?"

Each year, over 700,000 Americans are released from the nation's prison system and returned to society at large.[1] Being freed from the unnatural and inhumane confines of prison should fill ex-convicts with optimism and hope. But for most former inmates, release brings with it the stress of a new challenge — re-integrating themselves into a society that is seemingly designed to cause them to fail.

But first, some background. Approximately one in four American adults have had some sort of brush with the law,[2] most often in their late teens or twenties. A disproportionate percentage of these consists of persons of color — according to the NAACP, African-Americans and Latinos together comprise 58 percent of inmates but only one-fourth of the U.S. population.[3] One in three African-American males born today can expect to spend time in prison at some point in his life, with men in their late teens or early twenties most likely to be arrested. An African American man without a high school degree is less likely to be employed than in prison.[4] Many of these men are the products of poor neighborhoods and troubled families where disincentives to antisocial behavior are weak or missing, and where the full weight of the law tends to fall on even minor transgressions. For these young men, even a minor crime can come with a life sentence of being nearly unemployable, since most job applications ask whether the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime. Those who check the "yes" box often find their resume landing in the trash.

Especially in the United States — which incarcerates more than two million people, more than any other country both in absolute numbers (even more than China) and as a percentage of the population[5] — ensuring that former prisoners can obtain gainful employment after release must be considered a critical part of their rehabilitation. To be sure, the U.S. criminal-justice system pays little more than lip service to rehabilitation; its primary emphasis is isolating prisoners from society, often with little attention paid to how they will fare once released. But the specter of hundreds of thousands of ex-convicts being dumped on the streets each year, many of them driven back to crime by lack of meaningful employment opportunities, should give everyone pause — especially given that of all persons arrested for alleged crimes, half of them have prior convictions.[6]

Advocates for ex-prisoners viewed job dis-

BILL MOSLEY *is a member of Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and a member of the editorial committee of the* Washington Socialist, *Metro DC DSA's newsletter.*

crimination against the formerly incarcerated as a civil rights violation. Why, they ask, should employers be allowed to shut out qualified job seekers who, although once imprisoned, had paid their debts to society? By the late 1990s they had begun to press for "ban-the-box" laws, under which employers would be allowed to ask about criminal records only after an interview — and deny employment only if the conviction indicated the applicant would be unsuitable for the specific job. For instance, an embezzler could be denied a job handling money, and a child molester could be kept out of a daycare center. But no one could be routinely denied employment for, say, a teenage drug-possession conviction.

The first statewide ban-the-box law was passed in Hawaii in 1998, banning both public and private employers from asking about an applicant's criminal record until after being offered employment. The idea spread, if not exactly like wildfire; since then seven other states have adopted similar measures — although only one state, Massachusetts, goes as far as Hawaii in banning discrimination by both public and private employers; the laws of the other states (California, Colorado, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Mexico and Rhode Island) apply only to hiring by state agencies. In addition, over 40 cities around the country have passed their own municipal versions of the law. Most "ban the box" for only city hiring or for vendors who do business with the city, but a few — including Philadelphia and Newark, N.J. — also cover private employers in their bans.[7] One of the latest cities to pass a ban-the-box law for municipal employees was Richmond, Va., which adopted its measure in late March.

Earlier this year, the District of Columbia considered and then rejected a proposal to extend its ban-the-box law, currently covering only applicants for jobs with the city, to also cover private employers. The bill was proposed by DC Councilmember and former Mayor Marion Barry — himself an ex-offender, having been convicted for crack cocaine possession in 1991 following a celebrated FBI sting, as well having pled guilty to tax evasion in 2005 (he served prison time for the former offense but not the latter). Cynics have said Barry's sympathy for ex-convicts stems from his own run-ins with the law. But it's more likely that he drew his inspiration from his long career as an elected official serving mostly minority citizens, many of them suffering under employment discrimination due to their own criminal records — including Barry's current constituents in DC's Ward 8 with its high concentration of poverty and overwhelmingly African-American population. His activism, prior to being in elected office, in SNCC and the Free DC movement (which advocated home rule for the District) also undoubtedly contributed to his viewing discrimination against ex-convicts as a civil rights issue. Nevertheless, the influence of the DC business community was sufficient to kill the bill.

> For these young men, even a minor crime can come with a life sentence of being nearly unemployable, since most job applications ask whether the applicant has ever been convicted of a crime.

It is understandable that many employers might believe it is in their interest to avoid hiring ex-convicts. But it also is in the interest of society at large to reintegrate ex-convicts into society, and to stop adding to the large underclass of former prisoners with minimal prospects of earning an honest living.

Studies are lacking on the impact of ban-the-box laws on recidivism. However, when one looks at crime trends in Hawaii, the state with the longest experience with these laws, it's notable that overall crime rates and the rate of property crime have declined dramatically — by 32.0 and 34.4 percent, respectively — since the law was passed in 1998, compared to nationwide declines of 28.6 percent in overall crime and a 28.2 percent in property crimes. Crimes against property — burglary, larceny and vehicle theft — are what one might expect less of if ex-convicts are able to find work in the legal economy. (Interestingly, Hawaii's rate of violent crime has risen over that period, while that of the United States as a whole has dropped).[8]

Of course, helping ex-convicts find legal employment should be only part of the reform of the prison-industrial complex. Other problems abound: the lack of meaningful training and rehabilitation opportunities in prison, the trend toward prison privatization (which provides a financial incentive for prison-owning corporations to lobby for more incarceration and harsher sentences) and the tendency of government to view low-income communities of color as largely law-enforcement problems rather than people in need of jobs, education, health care, better housing and other services that affluent Americans take for granted. Nevertheless, ban-the-box statutes could provide a first step toward breaking the stranglehold of past mistakes on millions of Americans' future life prospects.

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Tip of the Iceberg

ROBERT JOE STOUT

THE ROLL OF NAMES was impressive: Iñaki Garcìa, Marìa Francisca Ize-Charrin, Louise Arbour, Giovanni di Girolamo, Erika Mann, Alberto Ignacio Glender, Alexander Koeln, Teresa Àvila, Eva Lichtenberger — all with impressive titles and extensive backgrounds in government, jurisprudence, and human rights. They urged, condemned, pontificated; they interviewed government officials, journalists, human rights practitioners; they invoked the names of the High Commissioner of the United Nations, the European Parliament, and the International Brigades of Peace, organizations they belonged to and represented. With them they took back to Europe the word "Oaxaca," a place name most of their constituents could barely envision, much less pronounce.

They also took with them laptops and tape recorders filled with the testimonies of victims of police and paramilitary beatings, torture, assassinations, and rape — accounts that detailed what *grupos armadas irregulares* linked to Oaxaca's governor Ulisès Ruiz had committed. Garcìa, the director of the International Civil Commission of Observation for Human Rights (CCIODH), delivered a detailed report of violations that had occurred in Oaxaca to the UN High Commissioner of Human Rights on June 20, 2007.

Ruiz laughed off the commission's findings and recommendations. Six years later only one of the assassinations, beatings, tortures, or rapes reported by the commission had resulted in arrests and that conviction was overturned for lack of evidence.

The CCIODH wasn't the only foreign human rights organization to assess violations in Oaxaca. Amnesty International's Secretary General Irene Khan personally delivered AI's findings to Mexico's President Felipe Calderòn in August 2007. Calderòn posed with her for photographers and assured her that Mexico was a country *apegado a la ley* ("pegged to the law") and violations would be investigated and prosecuted.

No prosecutions took place.

Calderòn's highest ranking cabinet minister, Secretary of the Government Francisco Ramìrez, had dismissed without response hundreds of complaints after violently repressing an anti-Latin American-European Union Summit demonstration while he was the governor of Mexico's state of Jalisco. Hardly the individual to enforce human rights, particularly since he was a long-time friend and associate of Oaxaca's governor Ruiz, who Khan insisted had "clearly shown" that he lacked the political will to confront the violations.

Oaxaca wasn't the only place in Mexico that brutal repressions of popular sentiment occurred. Estado de Mexico security forces swept through San Salvador Atenco, arresting over 200 people, sacking houses and raping a number of women. Prosecutions swiftly followed: of community leaders accused of sedition and other federal crimes, not of the false arrests, tortures

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ROBERT JOE STOUT*'s books include* Why Immigrants Come to America*,* Blood of the Serpent: Mexican Lives*, two novels and several volumes and chapbooks of poetry. He lives in Oaxaca, Mexico.*

or rapes that the security forces committed. An attorney helping pro bono with the defense told me the attack was preplanned to teach residents a lesson for successfully opposing a government plan to convert their farmland into an interna-

Fear of retaliation by soldiers or paramilitaries has impeded filing formal charges "particularly since the government does nothing to resolve them."

tional airport four years before.

Publicity given the murders and disappearances of hundreds of young women in Ciudad Juàrez, Chihuahua, nudged the federal government to form a special commission to prevent and eradicate violence against women. Underfunded and lacking qualified personnel, the commission was discarded three years later without having diminished violence against women in that border city.

Throughout President Felipe Calderòn's six years in office (2006-2012) Mexico's federal government refused to investigate criminal complaints against the military but turned them over to armed forces tribunals where the cases routinely were dismissed. By 2012 human rights advocates had confirmed over 6,000 violations by the military for arbitrary arrests, torture, grand theft, disappearances, beatings, and rape.

The 6,000 cases only included violations that victims actually reported. "They're merely the tip of the iceberg," Mexico City human rights lawyer Aracely Arsuaga told me. Fear of retaliation by soldiers or paramilitaries has impeded filing formal charges "particularly since the government does nothing to resolve them."

From 2007-2012 only one Mexican military officer was convicted of human rights violations. Journalists, victims, and human rights advocates who reported abuses frequently were harassed. In September 2009 Gustavo de la Rosa of the Chihuahua state Commission on Human Rights sought asylum in the United States after receiving death threats from unidentified persons who told him to stop criticizing military human rights violations and to cease defending victims of military aggressions in Ciudad Juárez. Governmental insistence that the military could do no wrong gave soldiers freedom to do as they chose without fear of chastisement, creating a situation where both the military and the drug corporation capos thumbed their noses at legal restrictions.

In addition thirty-five journalists were assassinated and eight others disappeared from 2007-2012, some the victims of organized crime but the majority because they were involved in political investigations.

Like many countries that signed international human rights agreements, Mexico established commissions and enacted legislation to conform to those agreements. But in practice the laws and commissions created a buffer that protected violators and/or nullified the effectiveness of the laws. Many of those appointed to head commissions were career politicians with close ties to the government. The laws established bureaucratic procedures for processing complaints but also created detours that agencies which had been signaled out for violations could use to evade compliance.

Mexico's federal human rights president Josè Luis Soberanes responded to Human Rights Watch's investigation of 2006-2007 violations in Oaxaca by detailing over forty "errors" in HRW's assessment. Most of the so-called errors involved misspellings or expressions of opinion. HRW retaliated angrily, setting off a ping-pong of accusations and counter-accusations that permitted the Mexican government to claim compliance with human rights legislation without investigating or taking action on charges that included assassinations, kidnapping, torture, and false imprisonment.

Even when federal or state human rights commissions advocate prosecution, they have to do so through government prosecutors who may or may not actively pursue verdicts. General Guillermo Galvàn, Mexico's Secretary of the Defense from 2006-2012, derailed prosecution of soldiers accused of abuses by insisting that those levying the charges were "politically motivated" and the accusations were exaggerated or falsified; consequently, they were discarded.

Similarly, state prosecutors in Nuevo Leòn rejected detailed human rights commission charges after the slayings of two university graduate students by claiming that the investigations were "one-sided" and did not include a wide enough panorama of observations and opinions. Their own investigations (which may or may not have taken place) failed to corroborate the human rights reports, and the documents were archived without action being taken.

This is not to underestimate the value of human rights advocacy. Without it victims have no representation: no one to go to bat for them. But it has to be recognized that human rights has become a political, not solely a social or humanitarian issue, and politicians use it for their own benefit. Advocating human rights makes them "one of the good guys" who's interested in his constituents' welfare.

Governments like those of Mexico sign accords knowing that by doing so they solidify their ability to promote tourism and foreign investment. They pass the required laws and regulations but don't fund compliance; they inadequately staff state and federal human rights agencies; and they respond to international criticism by detailing the steps they've taken on paper but never realized in actuality.

Seven years after litigation through international civil rights agencies the accusation filed by two young *indigena* women who had been raped by Mexican soldiers remained unresolved. Despite impressive backgrounds and titles, the international authorities couldn't penetrate the buffers set up by the Mexican government whose representatives on more than one occasion have let it be known that they consider "outside" groups like HRW and Amnesty International as "meddlers" who have no business intruding in Mexico's internal affairs.

This is not to say that the international accords and commissions shouldn't exist or have failed to improve situations that existed in the many countries involved. But compliance with these accords and the laws instituted to reflect them in Mexico remains shadowy and uncertain just as it does in Mexico's neighbor to the north where the mistreatment of *indocumentados*, imprisonment without trial, and supplying arms to drug organizations goes unprosecuted.

Despite international agreements, prestigious commissions and beautiful laws, adherence to human rights remains enfeebled by non-compliance, detours and the abilities of those in power to redefine, falsify and amend. The laws exist, but for many human rights victims their existence is ephemeral, a distant melody that only others hear.

Collective Homeownership

Simon Swartzman

As the housing crisis plows through our neighborhoods, it leaves behind the same bleak scenes. The former owner separated from her home, her neighbors, her children's schools, and possibly her children themselves — a tragedy anonymous to millions of analogous others across the country. Neighbors staring down the dead, wall-eyed windows of the vacant homes on their block and seeing the promise of rising crime and falling attendance at block parties. Sheriffs, guns drawn, separate households from their houses, and police patrol the walls erected between people-ready homes and the already homeless people. According to the 2010 census, there are 143,000 vacant homes in Chicago. The Chicago Coalition for the Homeless reports that 93,780 people were homeless at some point over the course of the 2010-2011 school year, and that this number is rising. While employers tell many that there isn't enough work, mortgage servicers and the courts are working overtime to keep the wheels of the eviction process at a constant whir.

Evictions supposedly enforce the right of private property and the value of homeownership. But, from the crisis, we've been granted a glimpse beneath this ideological carapace, toward the machine's internal joints and cartilage. A temporary veneer for speculation's perpetual turmoil, private property and homeownership are now being dismantled by the very system they have disguised. These ideologies discarded, speculation on land and housing is assuming a new historical form: ownership of the land by a collective of investors. This emerging form of collective ownership presents us with a potential liberatory parallel: ownership of the land by a collective of neighbors. Here I will map the historical trajectory leading to this new collective homeownership, beginning with mortgages and the mortgage market.

In a testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, Christopher L. Peterson identified three eras of mortgages. The first era consisted of two parties: the debtor and the creditor. Mortgages were more economically burdensome, which, along with racist and sexist policies, limited access of mortgages to "none but the most affluent men of European ancestry." In this era, the creditor's goal was "originate to hold." The lender originated the loan in order to hold onto it and collect the interest payments from the debtor, all on what is called the primary mortgage market.

After the Great Depression, the second era began with the establishment of government-sponsored entities (GSEs) such as Ginnie Mae, Fannie Mae, and Freddie Mac. These hybrid businesses—privately run for-profit, but publicly sponsored and regulated—helped to "purchase, insure, or in some way exercise some underwriting oversight in the capitalization of the loan." Financial analysts "discovered" the technology of securitization, and these GSEs loosened the lender's original hold on the loans. The third era saw the development of private-

Simon Swartzman *is a volunteer with Communities United Against Foreclosure and Eviction (stopeviction.wordpress.com), organizing with his neighbors in Chicago against debt and for the human right to housing.*

label securities and sub-prime loans, extending the logic of securitization and free trade as far as it could. In these second and third eras, the practice switched to "originate and distribute," which involved trading mortgages on a secondary mortgage market.

Originate to Hold

Mortgages, like houses on the housing market, are commodities created for a mortgage market. The mortgage market is a subset of a larger credit market, which Doug Henwood describes as the "financial heart of capitalism":

> [D]ebts, mere promises to pay, are nonetheless transformed into commodities in the eyes of creditors. This capitalization of promised incomes enables nearly everything, from an industrial plant to an unspoiled wilderness to a human life, to be modeled as a quasi-credit, whose value today is the value of its future earnings stream — profits or wilderness services or wages — adjusted for value over time using prevailing interest rates and maybe an estimate of risk.

This capitalization turns the future exploitation of anything, including land or workers, into future value. Financial speculation tracks, calculates, and estimates this value as it is capitalized across time. It manages and optimizes the temporal flow of future earnings streams in the same way that logistics manages geographical flow of commodities. But how is value shuttled through time? Why does "holding" an originated loan lead to collecting a future earnings stream?

Debt is an odd commodity. It is produced from the money pledged from our future wages, earned by our future labor, which we could call "debt labor." Since debts assume that future labor will be realized under the wage labor of capitalism, debt labor is the basis for future value and its exploitation is the basis for future surplus value. Financial calculus allows this future value to be computed as present value today (future value = present value + rate of interest). For finance, computation is transmutation, and this future value actually exists, in modified form, on the books for banks today as a commodity, debt. Each month, the present value catches up with the future value; the worker goes to work for both wage labor and debt labor; and the formerly future value now becomes actual wages, mailed to the lender as a loan payment.

In this way, mortgages are an extension of the exploitation already going on in the workplace. Banks capture additional surplus value when we are consuming goods, beyond the surplus value extracted by bosses when we are producing goods. But, more than just colonizing a new spatial terrain of exploitation, debt labor exploits in a new temporal way as well, compared against wage labor as described by Marx in *Capital, Vol. I*. Wage labor begins with a free worker approaching his employer in the job market and selling his time (full time, part time, temporary, etc.) for money (wage, salary, tips, stipend, etc.). This exchange requires that the worker sells his ability to work as a commodity only "temporarily, for a definite period of time." Otherwise, if the worker were to sell his time indefinitely, "once and for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity."

> Capitalist production accumulates profits with diminishing returns causing stagnation in the economy as a whole, which this new source of ready capital helped temporarily stave off.

What about when that "definite period of time" is expanding, as it does with debt labor? When a worker takes out a mortgage, student loans, or credit card debt, the present credit speculates upon her future wages. Both she and the creditor presuppose that she will sell an indefinite period of her future time to a future employer. This time is indefinite for three reasons. First, she has no assurance of her hourly wage 30 years into the future: it is completely opaque given inflation, the indeterminacy of the future wage share, and the unpredictable course of class struggle. Second, as she goes deeper into debt, she must promise to sell more and more of her future years to pay for her needs now. Third, with predatory loans like adjustable rate mortgages that have targeted African-American and Latina/o households, the interest rate can change unexpectedly, and therefore so can the amount of future time that the worker must sell herself to pay off the loan. As debts accrue indefinitely, debt labor converts the worker's future self into a second vendible commodity, alongside her present ability to work. "Originate to hold" is, in fact, holding onto the worker's future time in this world.

Our current capitalist economy is dependent upon this debt labor and its commodification of workers' futures. Financial circulation moves debt through the entire organism of capitalism, sustaining the system only by moving the sustenance—future labor time, hopes and livelihood—farther and farther away from the worker and her present. She is placed at odds with her future self, becoming the middle management that oversees her future work on the capitalist class's behalf. The class struggle becomes internalized as a psychological struggle, disguised as her conscience and a moral obligation to make good on her promised debts. The question of housing, posed to workers every month by the bills demanding rent and mortgage payments, is dependent upon this alienation of the worker from her future self. Ultimately, the housing crisis is the crisis of our jobs, our future jobs, and our lack of jobs, objectified into the terms of four walls and a roof. What appears to us as a contradiction between homeless people and people-less homes is, in Marx's words, "the contradiction of estranged labor with itself." It cannot be resolved independently of the alienation of work in capitalist society, with debt labor predominating as the form that this estranged work takes.

Even as it appears to be enforced through conscience and consent, the "originate to hold" mortgage ultimately maintains that hold through coercion. David Harvey has analyzed how "fictitious capital," like rent and the principal and interest rates on loans, is determined solely by future exploitation, by how much value a landlord or lender can expect to extract. Since wages may go up, down, overseas, or out of existence entirely, according to the course of the class struggle, the financial math of a mortgage is less about probability and more about power. And this power must be consistently used against the debtor. Debts, unlike most other commodities, are bought, held, and distributed on the credit market as unfinished products. A mortgage sitting on the bank's books for 30 years is still being "produced," the promised loan payments still being squeezed from the debtor. The bank drives the production process of that debt through courts and credit scores, shame and sheriffs—until the day it is paid off and disappears. These legal threats require work and workers, who are found throughout the civil and chancery court systems, in debt collection and credit score agencies, and in the bank's asset management departments. This public-private partnership has dedicated itself to enforcing the "future earnings stream" of a mortgage, and transmuting the stack of mortgage papers into a commodity of reliable value. Commodification of debt demands the coercion of the debtor.

Originate and Distribute

PATRICIA LINDSAY, a former fraud specialist at New Century, summed up the shift from the first era of mortgages to the second and third eras in a testimony before the Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission. "Under the 'originate to hold' model," she said, "the core question for the lender was 'if I make this loan, what are the risks that I won't get paid back?'" Under the "originate and distribute" model, the "definition of a good loan changed from 'one that pays' to one that could be sold." This shifted the risks of not getting paid back from individual investors to the mechanism of the financial market. According to data from John Geanakoplos, a Yale economist who has made a career applying mathematical models to the secondary mortgage market, the residential mortgage market was 5 trillion dollars in 2002 and increased to 10.6 trillion over the next five years. By 2007, most of that debt (6.6. trillion dollars—only 0.8 trillion of which was jumbo loans for the richest homeowners) was originated and then securitized and distributed. The remaining 4 trillion dollars was originated and held unsecuritized by the banks.

Mortgage-backed securities have had huge consequences on our society, and have revolutionized the relationship of homeowners and tenants to the land that they live on—often in ways that displace and disengage whole communities. However, in the talk about MBS, many commentators find the idea to be so abstract and antithetical to the house as a physical object that they treat it as something fake and manipulative. MBS are seen as the BS that caused the foreclosure crisis, and Wall Street is blamed for faking its way into profits at the expense of the rest of us. The danger of this opinion is that it ignores the logic behind MBS and behind finance in general. Instead of treating MBS and the rise of the financial sector in general as recent steps in the wrong direction, we need to understand that they are the logical endpoint of the deeper logic of capital as it drives financial history and our society. The laws of capital, the skeletal structure of speculation, need to be addressed in whatever form they exploit people.

When one looks at where MBS came from, it becomes clear that they are not simply a tool used by the financial sector for manipulation. Like the Internet and most other major technological innovations of the 20th century, the government developed the technology of MBS before it became a source of profit for private corporations. In 1970, the Government National Mortgage Association, government-sponsored entity (GSE) under the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and which is quaintly referred to as Ginnie Mae, developed the first MBS so that it could "channel global capital into American housing markets, helping make more mortgages available." Here is the tall tale of how mortgage-backed securities tamed the Wild West of housing finance, as recounted by Ginnie Mae. You can almost hear the campfire crackle:

> In its earliest days, housing finance was a fragmented, inefficient and illiquid market, with mortgage rates varying considerably from region to region, and some locations having practically no funds available at all. This was a direct consequence of the near impossibility of selling individual mortgages on the secondary market. Lending institutions would issue a mortgage, collect payments, and file the mortgage away until the principal was paid off [i.e., originate to hold]. The problem: a lack of available, consistently priced capital put a ceiling on the number of new mortgages that could be issued. Ginnie Mae solved this problem and revolutionized the American housing industry in 1970 by pioneering the issuance of mortgage-backed securities.

The legend of Ginnie Mae, a pioneer in the frontier of financial derivatives, is backed up by Geanakoplos' financial theory course at Yale University, where he recounts his own "personal history" developing the secondary mortgage market. According to his story, Ginnie Mae and its cousins Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac buy mortgages from the banks that originated them and merge them into pass-through pools of fluid capital, and then sell shares in the pools to shareholders. These pools collect the debtor's mortgage payments and pass that money along to the shareholders. These pools turn individualized mortgages into fungible, standardized assets. The debt is rearranged along with other debts, bundled like newspapers to be shipped and handled quicker and safer by vehicles in the financial market. This, in Ginnie Mae's words, "available, consistently priced capital" is much easier to re-sell on a growing secondary mortgage market than the "near impossibility of selling individual mortgages." Seeing the potential in this financial innovation, non-GSE corporations later began creating pass-through pools as well.

> Ownership, trying to keep pace with the new methods of profit, disappears into a blur of movement, like swift, single electrons that disappear and then reappear as indiscrete, gaseous clouds.

From these pass-through pools, financial institutions like Geanakoplos' innovated further. Beginning in 1986, they bought shares in these pools and "tranched" them, using the same shares to back multiple loans. The outcome was new securities called collateralized mortgage obligations (CMO), which were then broken down even further. In the 1990s, CMOs were typically broken down into 90 pieces each, differentially dividing the risk out into each piece and rating those risks as AAA, AA, A, down to the riskiest BBB. Later, financial institutions took that riskiest BBB tranche of sub-prime mortgage CMOs, and then pooled and re-tranched those as collateralized debt obligations (CDO). Then it created CDOs, which took AA and A tranches and re-tranched those. Then there was insurance on these loans through credit default swaps, CDSs.

In this way, mortgages were spread through the secondary market by a process called pyramiding. Pyramiding is the re-use of collateral across multiple transactions downstream. The physical home acted as collateral for the mortgage, which acted as collateral for the pass-through pools, shares of which acted as collateral for CMOs, which were collateral for hedge funds. Through federal housing policy after the Great Depression that created the Federal Housing Administration, fully amortized mortgages, GSEs, MBSs, and, eventually setting the stage for CMOs, CDOs, CDOs, the government helped finance shift from holding future surplus labor to distributing it. Ginnie Mae is boastful of how efficiently it "converts individual mortgages into safe, liquid securities for investors around the world." The government did this not just for the needs of individual investors, but for the integrity of capitalist society. Capital is value in motion, and by definition it must move. For future surplus value to be turned back into present capital, it can't be held in one place. The secondary mortgage market began turning the static, held sunk cost of a mortgage into fluid, and distributed capital ready for reinvestment. The faster it was distributed, the more it was pyramided and tranched and re-sold, the more capital could be squeezed out of a single mortgage. Capitalist production accumulates profits with diminishing returns causing stagnation in the economy as a whole, which this new source of ready capital helped temporarily stave off.

But how did this shift change the needs of housing and power relationships between households and their investors? Geanakoplos estimates that this pyramiding of mortgages reduced mortgage rates by 1%, allowing extension of the scope of mortgage and indebtedness throughout society, beyond the "ceiling on the number of new mortgages" that Ginnie Mae laments. At the same time, the standardization and pooling improved investor knowledge of what they were buying, and helped the investors buy only those loans that fit their portfolio, allowing them much greater returns. Capital's convoluted path through securitization is not a new form of exploitation, but an exacerbation of the old form, broadening and deepening the deployment of debt labor throughout the U.S. working class. Each investor expects a slice of the surplus value, which workers send to their creditors as loan payments. As more agents join the mortgage market, each expecting their share of the extracted exploitation, the lender is encouraged to increase demands.

From this base of pooled and distributed interests, the secondary mortgage market elevates the coercive, legal threats that drive each mortgage's "production process" to the level of state policy and state morality. Through the 2000s, mortgage lenders, vendors, and investors benefited despite their delirious expectations that home equity automatically creates more equity. Beneath this expectation hid the axe of eviction, threatening each worker to hand over her future surplus value to the mortgage servicer. Mortgage and housing speculators remained vaguely aware of the threats used on their behalf, but unable to draw a connection between that coercion and the miracle witnessed in the housing boom. Their faith in the self-replicating magic of money was confirmed with each expansion of the market. With the sudden contraction of the housing and mortgage markets, speculative institutions didn't lose faith in the promise of redemption for their debts, but they looked to a new source for this salvation. It began to direct its moral pleas and coercive threats towards the working class as a whole. While declaring that the people of the United States should make good on these promised debts, they also threatened that their fall would eradicate the United States. The U.S. government, easily convinced by its allies on Wall Street, bailed out these investment banks, fulfilling the prophecy that "money becomes more money with time."

Financialized Ownership, Distributed Holdings

While capitalism has delineated new stages for homeownership and home speculation, it is also tearing the foundations out from under previous stages. As one example, finance capitalism has unraveled the idea of private property ownership even as it relies on this ideological spur to housing price speculation.

The "originate and distribute" model continues in a frenzied chain of "and distribute and distribute and distribute…." The Recorder of Deeds tracks the legal ownership of the original loan's promissory note in what is called the chain of titles. So, if Bank of America sold my note to Wells Fargo, then they must pay the Recorder of Deeds to record that change. Each subsequent change costs more in fees. Since the movements of financial transactions can happen in less than a tenth of a second, these fees limit the speed of distribution. Tasked with securing judicial property rights for financial institutions, the state levied this fee to cover the expenses. But capitalists know how to avoid paying what they owe.

The Mortgage Electronic Registration Service (MERS) was established as a way to disengage the distribution and redistribution of promissory notes from the official public records. So, Bank of America would instead pass the promissory note to MERS and record that with the public record. MERS would then maintain a private record, a shadow Record of Deeds, while Bank of America could distribute and re-distribute the loan at the speeds that the technology of MBS allows. The idea of owning a deed, based upon who has ownership of the physical document, is reduced to registration, a shell of the juridical concept of private property. MERS is the Napster of the foreclosure industry, and MBS is the mp3; both provide many new possibilities and potentialities by revolutionizing the idea of property rights through innovations in the technology of exchange and expropriation. Ownership, trying to keep pace with the new methods of profit, disappears into a blur of movement, like swift, single electrons that disappear and then reappear as indiscrete, gaseous clouds. In the same way that industrial capital socialized the production process during the industrial revolution, financial capital has socialized property during this financial revolution. Through high-speed financial transactions, financial capital has partially unlinked capitalism from the ideology of property rights, an ideology that the historical logic of capital has relied upon heavily in the past.

As we are caught in the middle of this revolution in the concept of ownership, voices pop up on either side of the historical moment. Ellen Brown captures the new ambiguity of this idea of ownership:

> At the root of the problem is that title has been recorded in the name of a private entity called MERS as a mere placeholder for the true owners. The owners are a faceless, changing pool of investors owning indeterminate portions of sliced and diced securitized properties. Their identities have been so well hidden that their claims to title are now in doubt. According to the auditor, "What this means is that ... the institutions – including many pension funds — that purchased these mortgages don't actually own them...."

Another commentator prognosticates that MERS and industry abuses will mark the end of older forms of land speculation, writing, "A deadly combination of MERS, robo-signing, and illegal shortcuts have created a horrific situation. A bedrock of our society — the ability for the owner of a piece of real estate to confidently convey that property, along with all associated property rights — is now in danger." Even as his bedrock is disappearing, capitalist society continues, showing no sign of foundational failure. Private property, it turns out, is not the bedrock that he supposes it to be.

Collective Debt, Collective Ownership by Investors

Because of the speed of transactions, the idea of ownership of loans is getting harder and harder to pin down, but this also reveals a deeper, quantum uncertainty to the concept of private property rights. This underlying problem preexists the holding of a mortgage or the distribution of the mortgage, beginning with the origination of the mortgage and of the house as a commodity.

Many homeowners who, during the housing boom, staked claim to their share in the right to private property found their claims revoked when the boom busted. According to William Barclay, of the 50 million mortgaged homes in the United States, many were fairly early into their 30-year maturity when the foreclosure crisis hit:

> Most U.S. houses with outstanding mortgages have loans originated quite recently, reflecting the strong industry push for refinancing and home equity loans, including aggressive marketing to neighborhoods previously denied access to mortgage credit. Over 40 percent of all existing mortgages were written between 2004 and 2009, the peak bubble years, and another 28 percent were written between 2000 and 2004. The relatively recent origin of most mortgages helps explain the extent of the boom in issuance of mortgage backed securities (MBS) and derivatives, such as collateralized debt obligations (CDOs), based on these issuances.

The two-thirds of all mortgage debtors who were foreclosed on between one and ten years into a 30-year mortgage may have less faith in the idea of private property. This, during a recession and foreclosure crisis that has hit African-Americans and Latina/os the hardest. This, when home equity is a much larger source of equity for African-Americans and Latina/os than it is for whites. This, after many in African-American and Latina/o populations here in Chicago migrated from the U.S. South or Latin America so that they could establish this home equity, saving up generations and generations of wealth to establish homeownership, only to see that equity and their connection to this new land wiped out in a matter of years or months by the crisis. Over the past few decades, MBS, CDOs, and other mortgage technologies brought more and more believers to the altar of homeownership, bending knee to the idol of private property. In the past few years, the housing market pulled the curtain to the ground, revealing the sacrilegious financial pulleys and wires that kept the idol suspended in midair. Undeterred, liberal and Democratic acolytes, projecting their voices out towards the middle class, demand that the stagehands release their god of Homeownership from its counterweights and tethers, so it may ascend to its rightful place alongside Freedom and Equality. In fact, it is the reverse: if the fetish of homeownership could be moved, the taut strings and scaffolds of speculation would collapse around it.

Even as the crisis tests the faith of the 34 million households who took on mortgages in the preceding 9 years, it revealed that latent within this speculative ideology is the leeway to radically transform the definition of ownership. Speculation is perpetually transitional and conditional, employing all logics and verb tenses except the present tense. Value on Wall Street never is \$X. It would be \$X if Y happens, or it will have capitalized into \$X after Z months. With speculation on land through technologies like mortgages or home equity lines of credit, the same is now true of homeownership. In most cases, you can't say that "K. owns this house." There is more complex causality at work. You can say that a mortgaged home would be owned by the bank if the homeowner defaults and enters foreclosure. Or, put another way, you can say that the home is owned by the homeowner, on the condition that they keep paying their mortgage. Mortgage constantly threatens the "owner" with expropriation through force of eviction. Mortgage makes ownership conditional, determined by the probability that a mortgage will default. Interrelationships throughout society shape these probabilities: housing prices, interest rates, minimum wage legislation, new financial technologies like adjustable rate mortgages, gentrification, education, employment. While real estate agents, mortgage brokers, and judges explain homeownership and private property through algebraic identities, finance uses calculus and probabilistic statistics, derived from every variable in the class struggle. The algebraists may be blindsided by what appear as tectonic shifts in the supposed bedrocks of ownership. Property law, if it has not done so already, will accommodate these shifts through new legal structures that allow speculation and capital accumulation to continue regardless of the changing terms of the debate.

Speculation recomposes the idea of ownership across not just time but also geographical and virtual space. When houses are produced as commodities, each one is simultaneously a home (how the land is used by its inhabitants) and a property value (how the land is exchanged as an item of value). This dual aspect of a house makes itself especially apparent in those 50 million mortgaged houses. A mortgage breaks down into initial money and collateral, which is the house itself. When the house acts as collateral, the property value backs up the mortgage debt. The debt is "collateralized." In exchange for attaching the property value to this debt, the debtor receives money equivalent to the property value as a credit, and her future surplus value is promised to the lender. The collateralized debt, as a commodity, now has two aspects:

1. a future earnings stream — recouped to the creditor through loan payments, the future surplus value sent back to the lender, paid for through the wages of the debtor's future labor — and

2. the collateral of a house — which itself is a commodity with two aspects, (a) as a physical, useful home and (b) as an exchangeable good with a certain property value.

The lender is promised either the future earnings stream (1) or, in cases of default and foreclosure, the property value of the home (2b); the house as a useful home for a family (2a) is immaterial to the owner of the debt, who cares only about the exchangeable value. The lender can calculate this promise of future value into a present value, for which he can sell the debt or hold onto it.

Creation of a collateralized debt is like the production of other commodities in that previous commodities (e.g., wood and iron nails) are put together to make a new commodity (e.g., a chair). However, unlike other commodity production, collateralization apparently separates the property value of the house (2b) from its physical use-value (2a). The house's property value circulates virtually through the secondary mortgage market along with the debt, even as that value remains inextricably attached through information technology and legally binding paperwork to a home on a street somewhere.

Collateralization appears to bifurcate usage of the house from its value, and at the same time splits the idea of ownership in two, between the debtor's home-ownership and the creditor's value-ownership.

> I. Home-ownership allows for the everyday use of the physical building and its neighborhood. It extends the right of present stewardship of the house, conditional upon future debt repayment (1).
>
> II. Value-ownership allows for the exchange of that equity that exists "in" the house. It promises ownership of future value, without any conditionality; future value is assured for the value-owner, either as mortgage payments (1), property value (2b), or, as is often the case, both.

The homeowner can claim to be the sole owner of the house, but that claim is partially fictitious and temporally proscribed.

These two ownerships become separated geographically as the value of a debt circulates through other parts of the economy, moving farther and farther away from the neighborhood where it originated. At the same time, the value remains linked to that neighborhood through legal registries at the Recorder of Deeds and quasi-legal registries like MERS.

This link between the two forms of ownership is then stretched and contorted when the mortgage debt is pyramided and tranched. Investors can buy slivers of ownership of pooled debts, collectively owning the value of an agglomeration of individual collateralized debts. Value-ownership is spread across the market as thinly as possible to offset the risk of default by any one debtor or group of debtors. Pyramiding allows collective ownership of this debt vertically across multiple transactions. Tranching allows the collective ownership of this debt horizontally across multiple investors. The investors' collective ownership of these debts prefigures their collective future ownership of the asset: either houses across the world or their value.

Meanwhile, the debtor and her neighbors continue to "own" and use these houses. Similar to the collective ownership of debts, ownership of houses in neighborhoods begins to take on collective aspects. Neighbors are integrally linked through the physical and social structures of their neighborhoods. Urbanization binds households together as they share the resources of their everyday lives, allowing potential for solidarity. However, this solidarity is fragile, subject to every intemperate turn in the economic stability. When neighborhoods face the perpetual crises of urbanized capitalism—gentrification, housing shortage, resource shortage, job shortage, etc.—a community of people loses sight of their interconnection and solidarity, resorting to a competition over the community of things.

Nevertheless, as the homeownership and mortgage markets expands, a contradiction appears as the two parties—investor and homeowner—and their respective class allies—other investors and neighbors—enjoy equal rights to these houses. Furthermore, the two forms of ownership face each other as opposing forces. As the primary and secondary mortgage markets become more intensive and robust, girded vertically and horizontally by pyramiding and tranching, this encourages extensive speculation, gentrification, and competition in neighborhoods, which jeopardizes the solidarity of those communities. As the solidarity of a community and the interconnection of the community members become stronger, the housing market stumbles, the pyramids crumble, and the tranches disintegrate.

This contradiction is exacerbated by over-collateralization. Financial institutions buy CMOs of sub-prime loans, tranche them, and then over-collateralize those loans by selling up to 8 percent more than the value of the collateral that they bought. This is done as a buffer against losses from default on those loans, but it also means that ownership of the property value may be extended beyond the actual existing houses as commodities. This is done because, as Geanakoplos states, collateral is a "scarce resource." But the supposedly scarce resource is bound to a commodity that has been over-produced by the housing bubble. Neighborhoods are inundated with homes sitting vacant and empty, and 50 million homes are mortgaged and financed, yet it is considered a scarce resource in the mortgage market. Geanakoplos continues that, as a response to this perceived scarcity, collateral requirements get looser, the same amount of collateral backing larger and larger amount of borrowed money as it pyramids upwards. This spreads the underlying property value even farther throughout the market. Collateral requirements cyclically tighten up again before expanding even farther than before. Value-ownership ebbs and flows into larger and larger pools, socializing the ownership of property among an increasingly wealthy investing class. A corresponding wave of crises spreads through neighborhoods, turning their overabundance of resources into manufactured scarcity, testing the bonds of neighborliness.

Even as it develops healthily, the commodification of housing and debt ruptures everything it touches. It separates the house from itself, the owner from the wages she brings home, and neighbors from each other. But this separation follows from the prior alienation of the homeowner as a worker. The alienation of work produces the conditions for the alienation of homeownership, and the second completes the first:

> Private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labor, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself.… Only at the culmination of the development of private property does this, its secret, appear again, namely, that on the one hand it is the product of alienated labor, and that on the other it is the means by which labor alienates itself, the realization of this alienation.

Even after a worker sells away her current—or future—time, the private property that she buys with those wages leads to further alienation: from her neighbors, from her work, from herself. Like the capitalist's private property that she confronts at work, the private property that she secures as a home is constantly alienating itself from her. Private property for her becomes, more and more, the capitalist's private property against her. Her piece of land is eroded by streams flowing towards the capitalist's aquifers. This is the crisis inherent in even the healthiest housing market.

With a foreclosure, the curtain drops and the investors and homeowners face each other with equal claims. The bifurcation between home-ownership and value-ownership reveals itself as a fiction, as the home and the value are two aspects of the same commodity. As Marx notes, when these two aspects of the commodity (use and exchange) become too split, and this split becomes generalized in society, the unity of these two aspects—two parts of a whole—reasserts itself in the form of a crisis. In the foreclosure crisis, we saw the two aspects reasserting themselves in neighborhoods across Chicago and across the country. The separation of these two aspects explains why Geanakoplos' claim about the scarcity of collateral strikes us as odd. The house as a totality was never the collateral at the base of the pyramided marketplace; one aspect, the property value, was stretched as far as possible, while the home as a physical, useful object stayed where it was. The distance between the home and its value became more and more tenuous along the chain of titles. And thanks to MERS and fiber optics, the speed at which the value separated from the home had become faster and faster.

The crisis was the catalyst, the push that changed the potential energy of the commodified house into the kinetic energy of dropping housing prices, falling Chancery court gavels, advancing sheriffs, and skyrocketing crime rates. But these different events in the crisis are simply different appearances of the same social relation between debtor and lender, translated into economic, judicial, and criminal systems. In the ensuing scramble for restitution, the "owners" of the debt and the "owners" of the homes each asserted their rightful ownership. Even though possession is nine-tenths of the law, the 1 percent live by a minority ruling. The lenders—thanks to their power in those economic, judicial, and political systems—become instated as the true owners. In return, the masses of homeowners become non-owners, tenants.

During a foreclosure, the lender trades in his partial value ownership for complete ownership of the house. In the current mass expropriation of homeowners, these collectivized debts become collectivized ownership by investors and financial institutions. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac together own about 180,000 vacant homes, selling them in bulk deals of 2,500 homes at a time. Other banks are following suit, and investors are waiting to buy up these homes, possibly to hold onto them as rental properties. The collective ownership of debt is therefore a prefiguration of the collective ownership of land, but not by the community. Historian James Livingston points out a parallel in Marx' *Capital, Vol. III*, where Marx

> suggested, without rhetorical flourish, that the late-nineteenth-century combination of modern corporations and modern credit, both predicated on a separation of ownership and control of assets, had created remarkable new realities. It signified "the abolition of capital as private property within the boundaries of capitalist production itself." It also entailed the "transformation of the actually functioning capitalist into a mere manager, an administrator of other people's capital."

Livingston follows this further, arguing that we are witnessing "the socialization of private property effected by modern corporations and modern credit—the process we now call the 'financialization of assets.'" The collateralization and securitization of mortgages represent, to paraphrase Marx's quote above, "the abolition of capital as private property within the boundaries of capitalist [land speculation] itself." Similarly, the landowners of past capitalist epochs are replaced with managers, such as MERS, mortgage securitizers like Fannie and Freddie, and the banks that act as loan servicers.

Even without its "bedrock" of private property rights, capitalism continues. During this transitional moment in the idea of private property, the banks are caught enforcing both the old ideas of ownership and the new ones, depending upon which definition of ownership is currently in their best interests. Bank of America will still rent the sheriffs to evict their former homeowners (now bank tenants). The sheriffs will still uphold property rights for capital even while capital undermines the bases for those rights. We must expect them to do the same when the majority of society questions their private property rights to our neighborhoods.

Even still, could this be a possible steppingstone towards community control over land and housing, as opposed to capital's control? Could these vacant houses be the hollow shells of an old world, out of which we can build a new one?

Just as capitalism has nurtured and milked the judicial ideology of individual private property, the collectivized debt structures of finance capitalism are anticipating a new form of capitalist collectivized ownership. But it could be that finance capital is simplifying the task before us: our emancipation from the exploitation of debt. Instead of expropriating multiple capitalist landowners one by one, we are faced with the task of simply shifting the social relation of the market, placing ourselves in the role currently filled by financial investors. Finance capital has created the form for the socialization of ownership, especially of land, and has developed the accompanying technology for maintaining collective rights. The mutual fund may be a short leap from the utopian idea of mutual aid. Perhaps the "democratization of finance," which would introduce financial structures into everyone's life, can be replaced with introducing real democracy into the financial structures themselves. All that remains is for us to make that leap from socialization of the majority's housing for the ruling minority, to socialization of the majority's housing for the majority.

On August 12, 1810, after Shawnee leader Tecumseh saw large tracts of Shawnee land along the Wabash River had been commodified and sold to the United States, he declared,

> The way, and the only way, to check and to stop this evil, is for all the red men to unite in claiming a common and equal right in the land, as it was at first, and should be yet; for it never was divided, but belongs to all for the use of each. For no part has a right to sell, even to each other, much less to strangers—those who want all, and will not do with less.... Any sale not made by all is not valid.

I can't assume that Tecumseh speaks for the millions of Native Americans who lived on U.S. land before their genocide. Nor can we adopt their models for collective ownership to our current situation without adaptation. But the displacement of working class communities, especially those of color, bears some formal resemblance to the displacement of Native Americans. For instance, the malleable uses of a legal document—a treaty with the Indians, a promissory note or an affidavit from Bank of America—to serve the expediencies and interests of banks and landowners, even if that means the legal document itself needs to be completely disregarded. As there are analogies in the problem, so we can draw analogies in the solution. Our idea of ownership as it exists now on this Chicago land was preceded by other ideas of ownership, when this land was "owned" by the Odawa, Ojibwe, and Potawatomi. Did they understand ownership how French and English settlers understood it then, or how mortgage lenders understand it today? How will we understand ownership tomorrow?

Editors' Note: A fully footnoted version will be found on our website, newpol.org

After 65 Years—Will Peace Finally Come to Colombia?

Interview with Ricardo Esquiva

DAN LA BOTZ (WITH LILLIAN HALL)

COLOMBIA HAS THE LONGEST HISTORY of ongoing political violence in Latin America. Some date the beginning as April 9, 1948 when Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the Liberal Party's presidential candidate, was assassinated, leading to the Bogotazo riots that took 5,000 lives and unleashed a civil war between Conservatives on the one hand and the Liberals and Communists on the other. Between 1948 and 1958 that war took 200,000 more lives, injured hundreds of thousands more, and displaced perhaps a million. That period, known as *La Violencia* was followed immediately, by commencement of the guerrilla warfare, partly under the inspiration of the Cuban Revolution of 1959, that still continues. Liberals and Communists, some now converted into followers of Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara, established several guerrilla organizations in the mountains fighting to overthrow the Colombian government. One group emerged from those movements that in 1964 founded the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which worked with the Colombian Communist Party (PCC) that had its own organization and led labor and community groups in the city.

In 1984, President Belisario Betancur (1982-86), a Conservative, negotiated a ceasefire with several guerrilla organizations, including the largest group, FARC, as well as the National Liberation Army (ELN — also founded in 1965), and the April 19 Movement (M-19 — founded in 1970). Between 1984 and 1989 some of the guerrilla organizations (though not the ELN) ceased hostilities and attempted to enter civilian political life through the creation of a political party, the Patriotic Union (UP). However, rightwing, paramilitary death squads murdered between 4,000 and 5,000 demobilized FARC members, many of them UP political leaders including a presidential candidate and elected congressmen. Consequently the FARC ended its truce and returned to the armed struggle. The experience of the assassination of their activists who accepted a transition to peaceful political activity in the 1980s left the FARC leery and wary of new negotiations.

Several developments in the 1980s and 1990s changed the political situation. First, the FARC was accused by the Colombian government, by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) of being involved with the Colombian drug cartels, a charge the FARC denies. Second, the Colombia government gave tacit support to rightwing paramilitary organizations that assassinated not only those believed to be members or supporters of the guerrillas, but also community leaders, labor unionists, or outspoken political dissidents. At the same time, sometimes secret and sometimes public negotiations between the Colombian government and the guerrilla organizations continued

DAN LA BOTZ *is the author of several books on labor and politics in the United States, Mexico, and Indonesia. A Socialist Party candidate for the U.S. Senate from Ohio in 2010, he is a member of the editorial board of* New Politics.

throughout the 1990s, though ultimately without success.

Colombian President Andrés Pastrana Arango (1998-2002) entered into "Plan Colombia" with the United States, which provided almost one billion dollars in military assistance to fight both drug traffickers and the guerrillas. At the same time, he entered into negotiations with the FARC and the ELN, granting them a demilitarized safe haven of 16,200 square miles, about one and a half times the size of the state of Maryland, though, after three years, the negotiations broke down.

President Ávaro Uribe (2002-2010), an independent, pursued a hard line against the guerrillas while tolerating and encouraging the illegal paramilitary organizations as well as setting up legal paramilitary groups with tens of thousands of members. Between 2003 and 2005, Uribe negotiated the disarmament of the right-wing paramilitary United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) and passed a law that would reduce sentences for crimes they committed, though some paramilitary groups continued to operate. Several AUC leaders and other paramilitaries were extradited to the United States to be tried for their involvement in the drug trade. Uribe attempted various negotiations with the ELN and the FARC, some through the efforts of Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, but all failed.

The current president, Juan Manuel Santos, a conservative and former Minister of Defense who was elected on the ticket of the Social Party of National Unity made up of the followers of former president Uribe, decided to initiate a new peace process. The current "peace dialogues," as they are called between Colombia and the FARC, began in Norway in October and moved to Havana, Cuba in November. Colombia and the FARC have put everything on the table from the demobilization and disarmament to the release of hostages by the guerrillas and of guerrillas' prisoners by the government. There is also the question of the country's five million displaced persons, more than those of any other country in the world except Sudan. Also on the agenda are the questions of the reintegration of the FARC into civilian life and the political future of the FARC. Other guerrilla groups are not participating in the talks, though parallel talks with the ELN could also take place.

The most important and difficult issue on the table at the moment is that of some sort of distribution of land, which many see as the root of the problem from the beginning, that is, the oligarchy's monopolization of land throughout the country's history. The peace talks have led to a reaction by the oligarchy and by "ex"-paramilitaries who have formed the Anti-Restitution Army that has started killing people and threatening human rights workers, peace activists, and land restitution activists. While President Santos sees the negotiation of an agreement as key to his political future, former president Uribe, whose former alliances with the paramilitaries could lead to future legal problems, has been doing everything possible to sabotage the negotiations. Many believe this is the best change in years, perhaps the best chance ever, to negotiate peace in Colombia.

Ricardo Esquiva: Peace Activist

The son of an Afro-Colombian father and an indigenous mother, Ricardo Esquiva was raised on the Caribbean coast. When his father developed leprosy and was institutionalized, Ricardo lived on the streets until the Mennonite Church took him in and educated him in their school. From that small school, he went on to study law and then returned to the Caribbean coast to organize poor farmers in Montes de María. Accused of being an ideologue for the guerrillas for his community organizing, Ricardo, his wife and four children fled, first to Cartagena and then to Bogotá. There, he founded Justapaz, the Christian Center for Peace, Justice, and Non-Violent Action. He served as its Executive Director for thirteen years, developing work with displaced communities and projects for sustainable economic development and peace education. His work with conscientious objectors brought him into conflict with the Colombian military and forced him to flee into exile in the United States.

Ricardo also helped establish the Commission for Restoration, Life, and Peace of the Colombian Council of Evangelical Churches (CEDECOL), which he still serves as National Coordinator. In that capacity he facilitated the development of five regional commissions of pastors and lay leaders to help Protestant churches provide emergency assistance to the displaced, to develop small-scale economic projects, and to work with local leaders to build a grassroots movement for peace. He has participated in national and regional dialogues with legal and illegal armed groups in Colombia.

In 2004, he moved back to the Caribbean Coast, forming a small, non-profit, faith-based organization, Sembrandopaz (Sowing Peace). As a founding member with three Catholic Bishops of the Foundation of Development and Peace of Montes de Maria, Ricardo works regionally and ecumenically to increase civil society participation in a "laboratory of peace" funded through the European Union. Working with CEDECOL, he has helped create a network of Associations for a Dignified Life in Solidarity (RED ASVIDAS) to develop income-generating projects, to reweave the social fabric, and to create an infrastructure for peace. There are now about 130 local, municipal, and regional church-based associations of ASVIDAS on the Caribbean coast, which include 5,000 people, 230 congregations, and 29 denominations. He was the recipient of the Tanenbaum Center's Peacemaker award in 2005 and the Fellowship of Reconciliation's International Pfeffer Peace Prize in 2008.

Interview with Ricardo Esquiva

NEW POLITICS. *Can you tell me something about how you became a peace activist? Did it come from your family's experience? School or university? Or from your experience in the social movements?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. I think that the place where one is born and the people with whom you are born affect who you become later in life. In my case, the fact was that our family didn't have land — we were landless peasants. The fact of marginalization makes you ask questions. The fact was that my dad was a leper and that was considered a public calamity. Lepers at that time were caught and kept in a place where healthy people, even their healthy children, couldn't enter, this made one ask questions. After that, I went into the Mennonite world where 100 healthy children of parents with leprosy were gathered in a center. We were the poorest of the poor, the poor children of lepers, and that also prepared one to ask questions and get involved in these issues. All these things pointed me in this direction.

After the Mennonite school, I studied in Bogota and there in high school, maybe in the fourth year, I had contact with the priest Camilo Torres Restrepo. He was a Colombian priest who promoted the idea of liberation theology and later joined the guerrillas and died in combat. He had come to talk at our school, and after that several of us joined the work he was doing in the barrios. The work with him in the barrios as part of the *Frente Unido* (United Front) was training people and changing people's political culture. Leadership training. And that initial dialogue with him, plus my concerns prompted by the Anabaptist Menonnites, as well as my personal concerns for justice and watching the civil rights movement of the blacks in the United States — all that made me an activist and made me start to work in the barrios of Bogota with the youth groups associated with the United Front.

NEW POLITICS. *Why did you become a peace activist rather than a guerrilla or a political militant?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. I lived my youth at a time when Latin America thought revolution was just around the corner. After the Cuban revolution, Latin America had a strong political resurgence. And in the universities many students joined the guerrillas. Many friends of mine were slaughtered because of being associated with the guerrillas or simply being accused of being a guerrilla. But I never took that step of joining the guerrillas. I never saw it as a clear way. Instead, I thought about other forms of political struggle besides armed struggle; I think the theology of the Mennonite church led me not to take that step.

NEW POLITICS. *You're a person of African descent. Has your race and your experience as a black person been important for your personal development and your choice of the path of peace?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. Yes, of course. I lived in Bogota in a racist and classist society. Even though one wouldn't want it, it marked you and pushed you to look for answers and alternatives to such a racist and marginalizing society. I had to struggle a lot because of my color, and that was a strong ingredient in my search. I didn't choose to be an activist. Life pushed me to be one. I couldn't be anyone else. It's like when a current pulls you along and you can't do anything else. For me, there was no other option.

NEW POLITICS. *Do you think that the independent organization of black people is important for the construction of the peace movement?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. I think that it's important that blacks or indigenous groups search for their cultural identity, so that they have autonomy, but then to unite with other groups and work for a better society. I think that a black group should look for its identity not to separate from others, but instead to join in the struggle for peace and justice within society. A black group on its own will never go anywhere.

NEW POLITICS. *Colombia has the longest history of political violence in Latin America. How do you see the national perspective at the moment?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. They say there is no ailment that lasts 100 years, nor people who could stand it. I think that Colombia is seeing the time of the end of this ailment that been going on for so many years, the armed conflict. At this historical moment, we're seeing that there are the right conditions so that the government, the establishment, and the guerrillas could end the armed conflict. Then each one will explore the ways to fulfill their interests without the use of arms. I think we are in a moment of concretizing hope. These dialogues taking place in Cuba between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia can put an end to war and then the hard work of building peace, or rather continuing to work for peace, goes on. Peace itself won't come from the dialogues, as warriors never make peace. The most that the warriors can do is end the war, and that helps a lot towards the building of peace.

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NEW POLITICS. *How do you see Colombia's political situation? Can the parties of the guerrilla organizations (FARC and ELN) reach an agreement this year? How do the coming national elections affect those possibilities?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. What we can achieve this year are agreements between the government and guerrillas to begin an armistice this year. But dialogues with the drug traffickers and the criminal bands will have to come afterwards. I don't think that the formation of new political parties will come out of the dialogue, but social movements can come out of them and help construct peace. The current government hopes to end this year with an agreement with the FARC and present themselves as the ideal ones to construct the peace in the next period. The dialogues are key to who becomes the next president. For the current president, Juan Manuel Santos, it is absolutely necessary to have signed an agreement. If not, he won't be reelected. It's key.

NEW POLITICS. *What is the role of the peace movement in this context? Are there social movements independent of the parties and of the guerrilla organizations? Is there a united peace movement or are there various movements?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. I think that embryos of peace movements exist: strong embryos for peace but they haven't managed to join together. So there isn't "a peace movement" in Colombia. These small movements are independent of the political parties and the armed groups and as they grow and strengthen it will affect their ability to lobby and have an impact. At this moment, we are very weak but with a vocation for growth.

NEW POLITICS. *What is the role of the Walk for Peace? How can marches or this march in particular bring Colombia to peace?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. This walk, this march, like others that will happen and others that have already happened, mark a possibility that indicates that there are communities who can work together to struggle for their reparations and their rights. The thirty-two rural communities that marched on April 5th are in special circumstances. They are in Montes de Maria, in the Caribbean region, where there are two peasant reserves. They are also in four municipalities that the government has declared a "zone for the consolidation of peace." The government says it has already invested considerable resources there. That's why this will call the attention to the whole country. What these communities are demanding are their reparations. So the question is: what happened to all those resources? All that money? Why are these people marching? Something happened. Something is amiss. If 1,000 peasants expose themselves to dangers and walk 114 kilometers to Cartagena to make their demands, then clearly something is really wrong.

This helps the work for peace by showing that there is unity and that people can come together for their cause. This is proof that these embryonic groups can work together.

NEW POLITICS. *You have been one of the principal actors in the peace movement in Colombia. How do you see your personal role in the future? Do you plan to change your activities? Will you continue to organize at the base of society, or will you lecture, write, train cadres? How do you see your personal future?*

RICARDO ESQUIVA. First, I'm not one of the important people in building peace in Colombia. I'm just a worker that works at the base. I have been one of the many actors in these movements. I dedicated 30 years to build a national movement for peace from Bogota, the capital, but I saw that perhaps that's not the way. I arrived at the conclusion that one must strengthen the regions. And to do that you have to work at local levels, with local communities. That's why for the last eight or nine years I've dedicated my time to working with local communities. For now, I think I'll continue in that role, as a kind of supporter and mentor to these groups in their processes of building peace. I think the work is to plant the seeds of hope, and cultivate hope and transfer hope to communities, to have hope in themselves and believe in themselves, so that they see that the strength comes within them, not from outside. The only thing that can transform things is the united efforts of communities. For the moment that's what I think I'll do. Tomorrow I may think something else. These are living movements. Not linear, not mechanical processes — they are living, organic processes.

On the 70th Anniversary of Victor Serge's *Memoirs of a Revolutionary*

Richard Greeman

Seventy years ago, Victor Serge put the finishing touches on his masterpiece — *Memoirs of a Revolutionary: 1903-1941* — which he (correctly) considered "unpublishable" in his lifetime. On February 28, 1943 he wrote the following entry in one of his *Carnets* (Notebooks), which recently came to light in Mexico and were published for the first time in France in 2012.[1]

Souvenirs

"Jeannine's birthday.[2] Finished *Souvenirs*, which I will probably entitle *Souvenirs of Vanished Worlds* in the French edition... What is left of those worlds which I have known, where I have struggled? France before the First War, the war, victory, Spain, where the revolutionary fermenting was rising so powerfully, the Europe of 'birth of our power,'[3] Russia during the great epic years, the Europe of boundless hopes, Germany and Austria at indecisive crossroads, the Russian Thermidor, the West of popular fronts? Nothing of these worlds will ever be reborn; we are being launched at top speed toward something new, through disasters, toward unforeseeable rebirths or toward long dusks, which at times will resemble rebirths... And how many dead left behind me on all those paths! Three or four generations of comrades... The book is finished; I'm at an impasse. Is it publishable? It is dense, a difficult read, for I wanted to make of it a precise and thought out testimony, not the emotional adventure of Me, which is what it would have taken to write a 'best-seller' [Serge's English]. But that's not its real defect: it accuses the Stalinist regime, pitilessly objectively, even more than my novel [*The Case of Comrade Tulayev*[4]] deemed 'unpublishable at this time' in New York by virtue of an 'unwritten law,' as one publisher put it, which forbids criticizing Russian despotism, 'our ally.' [Serge's English]. Thus, the more a book is intense, rich, irrefutable, and the better it pokes its finger in the wound from which the universe is suffering, the less chance it has of being published. This will probably change, and perhaps soon, but how to live counting on this soon which could contain an epoch when every semester carries its weight of rent and daily bread?

"At times the crushing feeling of an impasse closed at both ends. It's no longer an impasse; it's a vast prison yard. No way to get an article into an American magazine (same reasons, and my name scares them), two great unpublishable books, crying out with truth — no possibility of finding work here. I tell myself that I must struggle while adapting myself, write in half-tones, avoid dealing with problems where the least *mot juste* acts like salt on a wound, that there are still ways, under these conditions, to pose the human question; but at times I feel a heavy discouragement ... The way things are going, won't my very signature be a handicap to my writings, even if I succeed — it will be difficult — of putting in them a mere murmur

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Richard Greeman *is leading a Victor Serge study group at the Brecht Forum in NYC this year. His book* Beware of Capitalist Sharks! Radical Rants and Internationalist Essays *(Illustrated)' is available on Amazon (free downloads at www.lulu.com).*

of what ought to be shouted from the rooftops?

If I were younger — more muscular force — I would wait it out, working at any trade that brings in the bacon. But I have nothing left in sum but a brain, which nobody needs at this moment and which many would prefer to see pierced by a small definitive bullet."

Victor Serge's Political Testament

WHAT WOULD VICTOR SERGE'S POLITICAL position be if he were alive today? During the 60-odd years since Serge's untimely death, this question — a priori unanswerable — has been asked (and answered) many times — on occasion, as we shall see, by self-interested politicos and pundits. The consensus among these postmortem prophets is that this hypothetical posthumous Serge would have moved Right, along with ex-Communists like Arthur Koestler and the N.Y. Intellectuals around the *Partisan Review*. It is of course, impossible to prove otherwise, but the fact remains that throughout the Cold War neither the CIA-sponsored Congress for Cultural Freedom nor any other conservative anti-Communist group ever attempted to exploit Serge's writings, which continued to speak far too revolutionary a language and remained largely out of print. Nonetheless, the specter of an undead Right-wing Serge continues to haunt the critics, and there are reasons why.

To begin with, in January 1948, a month after Serge's death, that great confabulator André Malraux launched a macabre press campaign claiming Serge as a deathbed convert to Gaullism.[7] The sad fact is that six days before he died, Serge had sent a grossly flattering personal letter to Malraux, begging the support of de Gaulle's once and future Minister of Culture (and Gallimard editor) to publish his novel *Les Derniers temps* in France.[8] Desperate to leave the political isolation and (fatally) unhealthy altitude of Mexico for Paris, Serge indulged in an uncharacteristic *ruse de guerre*, feigning sympathy for Malraux's "political position" — according to Vlady, at his urging. Serge's ruse backfired. His letter and the news of his death reached Paris simultaneously, and Malraux seized the moment by printing selected excerpts and leaking them to C.L. Sulzberger, who published them in the *N.Y. Times* — thus recruiting Serge's fresh corpse into the ranks of the Western anti-Communist crusade.[9]

Aside from this letter, there is zero evidence in Serge's writings, published and unpublished,[10] of sympathy for Gaullism or Western anti-Communism — quite the contrary. In 1946, Serge sharply criticized his comrade René Lefeuvre, editor of the far-left review *Masses*, for publishing an attack on the USSR by an American anti-Communist: "If the Soviet regime is to be criticized," wrote Serge, "let it be from a socialist and working-class point of view. If we must let American voices be heard, let them be those of sincere democrats and friends of peace, and not chauvinistic demagogues; let them be those of the workers who will succeed one day, we hope, in organizing themselves into an independent party." A few months later, Serge followed up: "I understand that the Stalinist danger alarms you. But it must not make us lose sight of our overall view. We must not play into the hands of an anti-Communist bloc [...] We shall get nowhere if we seem more preoccupied with criticizing Stalinism than with defending the working class. The reactionary danger is still there, and in practice we shall often have to act alongside the Communists."[11]

To complicate matters even further, in the course of a fraternal discussion with Leon Trotsky over Kronstadt and the Cheka in 1938, the "Old Man" unjustly (on the basis of an article he hadn't read),[12] portrayed Serge as abandoning Marxism along with Stalinism and drifting to the Right.[13] Nonetheless Serge, despite political differences of which the reader of these *Memoirs* is aware, continued to defend Trotsky to his death, helped expose Trotsky's murderer, and collaborated with Trotsky's widow, Natalia Sedova, on *The Life and Death of Leon Trotsky*. Yet generations of Trotskyists have reflexively

"…the general trends are still those defined by the socialists of 1917-1920 toward the collectivization and the planification of economies, the internationalization of the world, the emancipation of oppressed and colonized peoples, and the formation of mass-based democracies of a new kind. The alternative was also foreseen by the socialists: barbarism and war, war and barbarism—a monster with two heads."
—Victor Serge

handed down Trotsky's caricature of Serge as a 'bridge from revolution to reaction' — an accusation apparently confirmed by the "Gaullism" charge.

More recently Serge's posthumous rightward drift has been alleged on the basis of his guilt-by-association with erstwhile U.S. leftists and socialists who subsequently moved Right. (Of course Serge's main political associations were in Europe, a fact this argument ignores.) One recalls that in Mexico Serge lived by his pen (like Marx in exile who wrote for Greeley's *N.Y. Tribune)* writing news articles in English for the Social-Democratic press (the staunchly anti-Communist *Call* and *New Leader*) as well as think pieces for the *Partisan Review* (whose editors had supported his struggles to survive in Vichy France and Mexico). Many of these N.Y. Intellectuals did indeed move rightward, beginning with James Burnham in the 1940s. Thus Serge, it is argued, "would have" moved Right too. Yet, not long before he died, Serge vigorously attacked Burnham, writing: "The paradox that he has developed, doubtless out of love for a provocative theory, is as false as it is dangerous. Under a thousand insipid forms it is to be found in the Press and the literature of this age of preparation for the Third World War. The reactionaries have an obvious interest in confounding Stalinist totalitarianism — exterminator of the Bolsheviks — with Bolshevism itself; their aim is to strike at the working class, at Socialism, at Marxism, even at Liberalism…"

All this would be just a sad footnote were it not that the posthumous image of a right-wing Serge, based on the old Gaullism and NY Intellectualism arguments, was still being agitated as late as 2010.[14] To lay this ghost once and for all, let us quote Serge's last significant political statement, generally considered his "political testament."

Thirty Years After the Russian Revolution was dated August 1947 and published in Paris by *La Révolution proletarianne* in November 1947, the month of his death. There Serge writes: "A feeble logic — pointing an accusing finger at the dark spectacle of the Stalinist Soviet Union — deduces from this the bankruptcy of Bolshevism, hence that of Marxism, hence that of Socialism […] Aren't you forgetting the other bankruptcies? Where was Christianity during the recent social catastrophes? What happened to Liberalism? What did Conservatism — enlightened or reactionary — produce? Did it not give us Mussolini, Hitler, Salazar, and Franco? If it were a question of honestly weighing the many failures of different ideologies, we would have our work cut out for us for a long time. And it is far from over …"

As far as capitalism is concerned, Serge concluded:

> There is no longer any doubt that the era of stable, growing, relatively pacific capitalism came to an end with the First World War. The Marxist revolutionaries who announced the opening of a global revolutionary era—and another period of barbarism and a "cycle of war and revolution" (as Lenin put it, quoting Engels) would follow — were right. The conservatives, the evolutionists, and the reformists who chose to believe in the future bourgeois Europe carefully cut into pieces at Versailles, then replastered at Locarno, and fed with phrases dug up at the League of Nations — are today remembered as statesmen of blind policies….
>
> The Marxist revolutionaries of the Bolshevik school awaited and worked toward the social transformation of Europe and the world by an awakening of the working masses and by the rational and equitable time when men would take control over their own destinies. There they made a mistake — they were beaten. Instead, the transformation of the world is taking place amidst a terrible confusion of institutions, movements and beliefs without the hoped-for clarity of vision, without a sense of renewed humanism, and in a way that now imperils all the values and hopes of men. Nevertheless the general trends are still those defined by the socialists of 1917-1920 toward the collectivization and the planification of economies, the internationalization of the world, the emancipation of oppressed and colonized peoples, and the formation of mass-based democracies of a new kind. The alternative was also foreseen by the socialists: barbarism and war, war and barbarism — a monster with two heads.

As Peter Sedgwick put it in 1963: "Whatever else they may be, these are not the words of a man of the Right, or of any variety of ex-revolutionary penitent."

About the 2012 Translation of Serge's *Memoirs*

THIS IS THE FIRST COMPLETE, UNEXPURGATED edition of Victor Serge's classic to be published in English (*Memoirs of a Revolutionary,* NYRB Classics Edition), and thereby hangs a tale. Translating Serge has ever been a labor of love (and of political commitment), and this was especially true for Peter Sedgwick, who undertook to translate into English the *Memoirs* in the early 1960s when Serge was an all-but-forgotten figure. Sedgwick (1934-1983) was an English psychologist (and later politics lecturer) author of highly original works on politics and psychology and well known for his vast erudition, pungent wit, and personal modesty (see www.petersedgwick.org). Sedgwick had a difficult childhood during WWII, became a Christian Socialist as a youth, then a member of the Communist Party until the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Leaving the CP, Peter was a founding member of what became the New Left in Britain — first within the Socialist Review Group, then the International Socialism Group. After graduating from Oxford, where he had been a scholarship student at Balliol College, Peter began translating the *Memoirs* for Oxford University Press in whatever spare time he had left over from raising two young children, while eking out an uncomfortable living as a tutor organizer in Her Majesty's prison at Grendon Underwood, where I first met him.

It took Sedgwick years to complete this heroic project, to which he brought scrupulous fidelity to Serge's French, a vast (and indispensable) knowledge of revolutionary history and politics, a wry sense of humor and a vigorous English style which well-suited Serge's passionate laconism. So I was shocked when Peter informed me in 1963 that Oxford University Press had told him that as a condition of publication his translation had to be shortened by one-eighth — an economy measure![5] So with heavy heart, Peter expurgated his translation, making nearly 200 separate cuts so as to preserve as much as possible the coherence of Serge's dense, highly compressed narrative.

Today, thanks to a Greek socialist and Serge fan, we have an integral version of Serge's original text. In 2007, George Paizis (former senior lecturer in the Department of French at University College London and a longstanding member of the Socialist Workers Party) volunteered to go painstakingly through the French and English texts, identify the deleted sections, and translate them anew. Hence this first unexpurgated edition, which includes Peter Sedgwick's seminal Translator's Introduction, Adam Hochschild's eloquent post-Soviet Foreword, and a Glossary of revolutionaries and institutions mentioned by Serge (first occurrence indicated by an asterisk).

Since the 30s, Serge has been well-served by his volunteer corps of English translators, mostly Marxist militants with a love of French and French literature, from U.S. Trotskyist leader Max Shachtman (and sympathizer Ralph Manheim) to the late Al Richardson of *Revolutionary History in London* (who collected and translated all of Serge's *Writings on Literature and Revolution* in 2004) and Ian Birchall, revolutionary socialist writer and activist who gathered and translated Serge's reportage on revolution and counter-revolution in Russia and Germany.

French novelist François Maspero, whose leftist publishing house revived Serge's books (all but forgotten in post-war France) in the rebellious 60s, recently remarked: "There exists a sort of secret international, perpetuating itself from one generation to the next, of admirers who read, reread [Serge's] books and know a lot about him." As Adam Hochschild notes in his Foreword, "It is rare when a writer inspires instant brotherhood among strangers."

Back in 1963 when, inspired by Serge's artist son Vlady[6], I began translating Serge's novels and looking for a U.S. publisher, this "secret international" came to my aid, with letters of support. Dwight Macdonald, who with his wife Nancy,* had worked tirelessly to rescue Serge from Vichy France, replied: "I can't think of anyone else who has written about the revolutionary movement in this century with Serge's combination of moral insight and intellectual richness." Irving Howe, whose YPSL reading list first pointed me to Serge replied: "To me he has seemed a model of the independent intellectual in Europe between the wars: leftist but not dogmatic, political, yet deeply involved with issues of cultural life, and a novelist of very considerable powers." The urbane Henri Peyre, my old French professor from Yale, replied offhandedly: "Victor Serge is as worthy of a study by a scholar interested in ideas as is Proudhon, Georges Sorel or Charles Péguy. And he certainly counts also as a novelist — to me, far more than most of the 18th century novels

*Nancy Macdonald was business manager of *Partisan Review* and founder of Spanish Refugee Aid Committee.

**NYRB* Press will be reprinting *Midnight* in 2014. Writers & Readers Coop, while it lasted, was the originator of the *Marx for Beginners* comics series and other wonderful books. It was founded by Glenn Thompson, a black American living in London, his wife Sian from Wales, Richard and Lise Appignanesi from Canada, and the English novelist art critic John Berger.

which have been ridiculously overrated lately, and more than Robbe-Grillet and his vapid, skilled fiction and, may I confess, more than Beckett."

Erich Fromm, who had known Serge in the Forties through psychoanalytical circles in Mexico (and whom our student socialist club had to Yale in 1961) replied: "I believe indeed that to rescue the humanist tradition of the last decades is of the utmost importance, and that Victor Serge is one of the outstanding personalities representing the socialist aspect of humanism." The journalist I.F. Stone from whom I had "borrowed" my first Serge book wrote:

> Victor Serge died in exile and obscurity, apparently no more than a splinter of a splinter in the Marxist movement. But with the passage of the years, he looms up as one of the great moral figures of our time, an artist of such integrity and a revolutionary of such purity as to overshadow those who achieved fame and power. His failure was his success. I know of no participant in Russia's revolution and Spain's agonies who more deserves the attention of our concerned youth.

Bertram D. Wolf, whose *Three Who Made a Revolution* had inspired me as a teenager, wrote "Serge's writing was simple, vivid, strong, written with an insider's knowledge, the insights of a passionate yet detached observer and participant, and the skill of a poet and novelist." For Trotsky biographer Isaac Deutcher: "*The Case of Comrade Tulayev* is by far the best novel about the period of the purges — far richer artistically and more truthful historically than Koestler's famous book."

These endorsements, which date from 1964, confirmed my judgment that Serge was indeed a major figure in both literature and socialist thought. The Doubleday project was successful, and my 1960s translations of *Men in Prison, Birth of Our Power,* and *Conquered City* were reprinted in Britain by Gollanz and then Penguin in Britain. In the Eighties the Writers & Readers Publishing Coop in London bought the rights to the trilogy and commissioned me to translate into English a fourth Serge novel, *Midnight in the Century*.* My latest Serge translation of the posthumous novel *Unforgiving Years,* commissioned by NYRB Classics, came out in 2008.

With the publication of the unexpurgated *Memoirs*, and on behalf of all of Serge's translators, it was a keen pleasure (and revolutionary duty) to welcome new readers into an English-language section of this invisible international.

NOTES

1. Serge, *Carnets,* Agone, Marseille, 2012
2. Serge's daughter Jeanine Kibalchick (1935-2012)
3. Allusion to Serge's 1931 novel, *Birth of Our Power.*
4. *NYRB* Classics, 2008, Preface by Susan Sontag.
5. Born on the winds of the New Left 60s, Oxford's truncated *Memoirs of a Revolutionary* quickly became a minor classic, reprinted in the 80s by the radical Writers & Readers Publishing Cooperative and again in 2002 by Iowa University Press.
6. See www.Vlady.org
7. Peter Sedgwick analyzed this incident in detail in "Victor Serge and Gaullism," appended to the original 1963 Oxford *Memoirs* on which we have in part based our summary.
8. The topic of Serge's novel occupies two thirds of the original typescript letter, a photocopy which was made available to me in 1990 by Florence Malraux, the writer's daughter.
9. 'Europe's Anti-Red Trend Inspiring Strange Tie-Ups.' Subtitle : "New Coalitions Courting Leftist Support to Bring Workers Into Pale" by C.L. Sulzberger, *NYT* February 14, 1948.
10. Serge Archive, Yale University Library.
11. Quoted from Ian Birchall, "Letters from Victor Serge to René Lefeuvre," *Revolutionary History*, *Volume 8 No 3* (2002).
12. "Marxism in Our Time" by Victor Serge, *Partisan Review Vol. 5, No. 3*. Aug.-Sept. 1938, pp. 26-32.
13. See "Opposition Within the Opposition Victor Serge and Leon Trotsky — Relations 1936-1940" in *Beware of Vegetarian Sharks* by Richard Greeman.
14. Cf. "Orphan of History" by James Hoberman, *NYRB*, Oct. 22, 2010.

Zündende Funke: The Spark Lights Up in Action

Rosa Luxemburg's Philosophy of Praxis

MICHAEL LÖWY

THERE SEEMS TO EXIST a secret complicity between the rediscovery of Rosa Luxemburg and rebellious times. The last period when her life and writings raised much interest was in the 1960s and 70s, during the "street-fighting years" (Tariq Ali's expression). Could the recent publication of several of her works, in many parts of the world, be the sign of a new "critical" epoch? In the English speaking world, the good news is the project of publishing *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg* in fourteen volumes, five of which only with her correspondence.

One of the reasons for this interest may be the fact that she was able, as few other Marxists of the 20th century, to unite democracy and revolution. This is not without relation to what I would call Rosa Luxemburg's philosophy of praxis, which she once summarized with Goethe's famous dictum *Anfang war die Tat* — Action is at the beginning of all. This is the red thread that runs throughout her political writings. As we will try to show, it directly shapes her views on the relationship between consciousness and struggle, on the undecided historical future — "socialism or barbarism" — and on revolutionary democracy. Her main inspiration is Marx himself, and in particular his *Theses on Feuerbach* (1845).

When Friedrich Engels posthumously published, in 1888, Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* he commented: this is "the first document where the brilliant kernel of a new world-view is written down." Indeed, one can consider this short and dense piece as Marx's first attempt at a dialectical *Aufhebung* — negation/conservation/supersession — of previous materialism and idealism, and the beginning of a new theory, which one could designate — to use Gramsci's formula — as philosophy of praxis. While the French materialists of the XVIIIth century insisted on the need to first transform the material circumstances in order to change the individual human beings, the German idealists believed that, thanks to a change in consciousness among the individuals, society would be transformed. Against these two one-sided views, which led to a political dead end — and the search for a "Great Educator" or a Supreme Savior — Marx asserted, in Thesis III: "The coincidence of the change in the circumstances and of human activity can only be rationally conceived and understood as subversive practice (*umwälzende Praxis*)"[1]. In other words: in revolutionary practice, in the emancipating collective action, the historical subject — the subaltern classes — transform at the same time the material conditions and their own consciousness. This means that revolutionary self-emancipation is the only way for liberation: it is only by its own praxis, by its experience in action, that the oppressed can change their consciousness, at

MICHAEL LÖWY, *born in Brazil, has lived in Paris since 1969. At present, emeritus research director in social sciences at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). Last publication in English:* The Theory of Revolution in the Young Marx *(Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2005).*

the same time as they subvert the power of the ruling classes. One can follow this idea, like a red thread, throughout Marx's political writings, from the *German Ideology* (1846) and the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) to the *Inaugural Address of the First International* (1864): "the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves."

Few Marxists of the 20th century were nearer to the spirit of Marx's philosophy of praxis than Rosa Luxemburg. Sure, she didn't write philosophical texts, but she was able to interpret Marxist theory in an original and creative way. The revolutionary philosophy of praxis is a sort of electric current that runs through her work and life. However, her thinking was far from being static: it was a reflection in movement, which was enriched by historical experience. We will try to grasp her intellectual evolution through some examples.

It is only by its own praxis, by its experience in action, that the oppressed can change their consciousness, at the same time as they subvert the power of the ruling classes.

One could say that her writings are tensioned by two opposite poles: I) historical determinism, the inevitability of the final collapse of capitalism; II) voluntarism, the decisive role of emancipative action. This applies particularly to her first writings, before 1914, *Reform or Revolution?* (1899), the book through which she became known in the German and International labor movement, is a good example of this ambivalence. Against Bernstein's revisionism, she insisted that the evolution of capitalism leads necessarily to the collapse (*Zusammenbruch*) of the system, and that this collapse is the historical road leading to the accomplishment of socialism. We have here, in last analysis, a socialist variant of the ideology of inevitable progress that dominated Western culture since the Enlightenment. What saves her argument from fatalistic economism is the revolutionary pedagogy of action: "it is only through long and stubborn struggles that the proletariat will conquer the degree of political maturity that will permit it to achieve the definitive victory of revolution." [2]

Such a dialectical view of education by the struggle is also one of the main weapons of her polemic with Lenin on the organizational issues of Russian Social-democracy (1904): "The proletarian army is recruited and becomes aware of its objectives in the course of the struggle itself. The activity of the party organization, the growth of the proletarian's awareness of the aims of the struggle and the struggle itself, are not different things separated chronologically and mechanically. They are different aspects of the same process."[3]

Of course, acknowledges Rosa Luxemburg, the class may err, but, in the last analysis "the errors committed by a truly revolutionary workers' movement are historically infinitely more fruitful and more precious than the infallibility of the best 'Central Committee.'" The self-emancipation of the oppressed requires the self-transformation of the revolutionary class by its own practical experience; this experience produces not only consciousness — a classic topic of Marxism — but also will:

> The historical/universal (*Weltgeschichtlich*) proletarian for the first time since civilized society exists, the masses of the people can impose their will (*Willen*), consciously and against all ruling classes (…) Now, the masses cannot conquer and reinforce this will otherwise than in the daily struggle with the established order, i.e., in the limits of this order.[4]

One could compare Lenin's vision with

Luxemburg's through the following image: for Vladimir Ilyitch, editor of the newspaper *Iskra*, the revolutionary spark is brought by the organized political vanguard, from outside the proletarian spontaneous struggles; for the Jewish/Polish revolutionary, the spark of revolutionary consciousness lights up in the struggle, in mass action. It is true that her conception of the party as the organic expression of the class corresponds more to the situation in Germany than to that in Russia or Poland, where there existed already several parties that claimed to represent the socialist program.

The revolutionary events of 1905 in Russia will strongly reinforce Rosa Luxemburg's conviction that the rise of class-consciousness among working masses results less from the pedagogical activity — *Aufklärung* is the term she uses — of the party than from the direct and autonomous experience of the toilers:

> The sudden general proletarian uprising in January, provoked by the events in St. Petersburg, was, in its outside action, a revolutionary political act, a declaration of war to absolutism. But this first general and direct class struggle had an even more powerful effect on the inside, by waking up, for the first time, as through an electric shock (*einen elektrischen Schlag*), the class feelings and consciousness among millions and millions of individuals (…). It is by the proletariat that absolutism in Russia will be overthrown. But the proletarian needs for this task a high degree of political education, class-consciousness and organization. He cannot learn all this in pamphlets and tracts, his education will be achieved in the living political school, in the struggle and by the struggle, in the course of the advancing revolution.[5]

The polemical reference to "pamphlets and tracts" seems to underestimate the importance of revolutionary theory in the process; on the other hand, Rosa Luxemburg's political activity, which consisted, to a large extent, in writing articles and brochures — not to speak of her substantial theoretical works in the field of political economy — bears witness, without any doubt, to the decisive significance which she attributed to theoretical work and political polemics in the process of preparing the revolution.

In this celebrated pamphlet from 1906 on the mass strike, she still uses some classical determinist arguments: revolution will take place "according to the necessity of a natural law." But her concrete vision of the revolutionary process has a quite different emphasis: no revolution without revolutionary consciousness — something that can only become generalized in the course of a "practical" movement: the "massive" transformation of the oppressed into historical subjects can take place only through the revolutionary struggle itself. The category of praxis — which is, for her as for Marx, the dialectical unity between the objective and the subjective, the mediation through which the class in itself becomes class for itself — permits her to overcome the paralyzing and metaphysical dilemma of German Social-democracy, between Bernstein's abstract Kantian moralism and Kautsky's economistic mechanism: while the first asserted that the "subjective," moral and spiritual, change of the individuals is the condition for the accomplishment of social justice, the second believed that the objective economic evolution would "inevitably" lead to socialism. In fact, Rosa Luxemburg was opposed not only to the neo-Kantian revisionists, but also, increasingly after 1905, to the strategy of passive "attentism" defended by the so-called "orthodox center" of the Party.

Thanks to this dialectical conception of praxis she was also able to supersede the traditional dualism enshrined in the SPD's *Erfurt* Program, between reforms, or the "minimum program," and revolution, or "the final aim." By the strategy of mass strike in Germany that she proposes in 1906 — against the trade-union bureaucracy — and in 1910 — against Karl Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg points to a method able to transform economic struggles or the fight for universal suffrage into a general revolutionary movement.

Unlike Lenin, who distinguishes "trade-unionist consciousness," from "social-democratic (i.e. socialist) consciousness", she suggests a distinction between the latent theoretical consciousness, characteristic of the labor movement during the periods of bourgeois parliamentarian hegemony, and the practical and active consciousness, which emerges in the course of the revolutionary process, when the masses themselves — and not only the Party's parliamentarians and leaders — appear in the political scene ; it is thanks to this practical-active consciousness that the less organized and politically more backward layers of the class can become, in a period of revolutionary struggle, the most radical elements. From these premises follows her critique of the exaggerated estimations of the role of organization in class struggle — usually complemented by an underestimation of the un-organized proletariat — forgetting the pedagogic role of revolutionary struggle: "Six months of revolution make more for the education of these unusually un-organized masses than ten years of public meetings and tract distribution."[6]

Was therefore Rosa Luxemburg a partisan of spontaneousness? Not quite…in the pamphlet we are discussing — "General Strike, Party and Trade-unions" (1906) — she insists, referring herself to Germany, that the task of the "most enlightened vanguard" is not to wait "with fatalism," that the spontaneous popular movement "falls from heaven." On the contrary, the function of this vanguard is precisely to "forestall (*Vorauseilen*) the course of events to try to precipitate it." She believes that the socialist party should take the political direction of the mass strike, which consists in "providing the German proletariat in the coming period of struggles with tactics and aims"; she goes as far as to proclaim that the socialist organization is "the vanguard of all the working masses" and that the "labor movement takes its strength, its unity its political consciousness from this same organization."[7]

This "vanguardist" approach is even more obvious if one considers her Polish organization, the SDKPiL: this clandestine and revolutionary party resembled much more the Bolshevik Party than the German SPD .… Another aspect, usually ignored, should also be taken into account: Rosa Luxemburg's attitude towards the International — particularly after 1914 — that she conceived as a centralized and disciplined world party. For instance, in the "Outlines on the Tasks of the International Social-Democracy," which she annexed to the Junius brochure (1916) she writes:

> 3. The center (*Schwergewicht*) of the class organization of the proletariat lies in the International. The International decides in times of peace on the tactic of the national sections on issues such as militarism, the colonial policy, the commercial policy, the First May celebrations, and on the whole tactic in a situation of war.
>
> 4. The duty to implement the decisions of the International has priority over all other organizational duties. National sections that act against those decisions put themselves outside of the International.[8]

By an irony of history one will find, in a letter concerning this document, addressed by Karl Liebknecht to his friend and comrade, similar criticisms as those directed by her ten years earlier than Lenin: she had, in his viewpoint, an excessively "centralist-mechanical" conception of the International, with "too much 'discipline,' too little spontaneity," and considering the masses "too much as instruments of action, not as bearers of will; as instruments of actions wished and decided by the International, not as wished and decided by themselves ."[9]

Parallel to this activist voluntarism, the optimistic (economic) determinism of the

Zusammenbruch theory, the inevitable crumbling down of capitalism, victim of its own contradictions, doesn't disappear from her writings; quite the contrary: it is a central argument in her great economic work, *The Accumulation of Capital* (1911). It is only after the catastrophe of 1914 — the Great World War and the support of Socialist Parties, in Germany and in most other European countries, to "national defense" — that this traditional vision, shared by the whole socialist movement since the end of the 19th century, will be challenged. The key document of this change is her pamphlet "The crisis of Social-Democracy" written in prison in 1915 and published in Switzerland in January, 1916 with the pseudonym Junius. This document, known as the Junius brochure, is, thanks to the image "socialism or barbarism," a turning point in the history of Marxist thought.

Curiously, her argument begins with a reference to the "unchanging laws of history"; for sure, she acknowledges that proletarian action "contributes to determine history," but she seems to believe that it is only an issue of accelerating or retarding the historical process. So far, nothing new! But in the following lines she compares the victory of the proletariat with "a jump that takes humanity from the animal realm to the kingdom of freedom," adding that this jump will not be possible if "from the material premises accumulated by the evolution doesn't jump the incendiary spark (*zündende Funke*) of the conscious will of the great popular mass." One finds here the famous *Iskra*, the spark of revolutionary zeal that is able to explode the dry powder of the material conditions. But what is it that generates this *zündende Funke*? It is only through "a long series of confrontations" that "the international proletariat can achieve its education under the leadership of social-democracy and try to take in its hand its own history."[10] In other words: it is the practical experience that lights up the spark of revolutionary consciousness among the oppressed and exploited.

By introducing in the next page the expression socialism or barbarism, Junius refers to the authority of Engels, in a writing published "forty years ago" — doubtless a reference to the *Anti-Dühring* (1878): "Friedrich Engels said once: 'bourgeois society is confronted with a dilemma: either passage to socialism or regression to barbarism.'"[11] In fact, what Engels writes is quite different: "The productive forces generated by the modern capitalist mode of production, as well as the system of goods distribution which it created, entered in open contradiction with the mode of production itself, and this to such a degree that a radical change of the mode of production and distribution becomes necessary, if one doesn't wish to see the whole modern society perish."[12]

> In fact, it is Rosa Luxemburg who invented, in the strong sense of the word, the expression "socialism or barbarism."

ENGELS' ARGUMENT — essentially economic and not political, unlike Junius' — is rather rhetorical, a sort of demonstration by the absurd of the necessity of socialism, if one wants to avoid the "perishing" of modern society — a vague formulation whose meaning is not very obvious. In fact, it is Rosa Luxemburg who invented, in the strong sense of the word, the expression "socialism or barbarism," which will have such a large impact on leftist thought during the 20th century. If she quotes Engels, it is probably in order to try to give more legitimacy to her quite heterodox thesis. Obviously, it is the World War, and the capitulation of the international labor movement in August, 1914, that stimulated this new approach.

In the following paragraphs Junius will develop her innovative standpoint: "We are confronted today with this choice: either the triumph of imperialism and the decadence of all civilization, and, as by consequence, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a great cemetery; or the victory of socialism, i.e. the conscious struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism and its method of action: war. This is a dilemma for the world history: an either-or still undecided, in a balance whose pans tremble and hesitate, waiting for the decision of the conscious proletariat."[13]

One can discuss on the meaning of the concept of "barbarism": it seems to refer to a modern, "civilized" barbarism, as Junius suggests by writing: "This World War — that is a regression (*Rückfall*) to barbarism" (but in this case the comparison with ancient Rome is not very pertinent); in that sense the Junius brochure revealed itself to be prophetic: German fascism, the supreme manifestation of a modern barbarism, was able to triumph thanks to the defeat of socialism in 1918-23. However, the most important word in the formula "socialism or barbarism" is the term *or*: this means the recognition that history is an open process, that the future is not yet decided — by the "laws" of history or of economy — but depends, in last analysis, on "subjective" factors: consciousness, decision, will, initiative, action, revolutionary praxis. It is true that one can find in the Junius brochure — as well as in her later writings — references to the inevitable collapse of capitalism, thanks to the

Rosa Luxemburg speaking at a Spartacus League rally "dialectics of history," as well as to the "historical necessity of socialism."[14] But in last analysis, the thesis "socialism or barbarism" laid the ground for a different conception of the "dialectics of history," distinct from economic determinism and the Enlightenment ideology of inevitable Progress.

We find again Rosa Luxemburg's philosophy of praxis at the heart of the 1918 essay on the Russian Revolution — another key text written behind the prison bars. The essential message of this document is well known: on one side, support for the Bolsheviks and their leaders, Lenin and Trotsky, who saved the honor of international socialism, by daring to initiate the October Revolution; on the other hand, a series of critiques, some of which — on the agrarian and the national question — are quite problematic, while others — the chapter on democracy — appear as prophetic. What worried the Jewish/Polish/German revolutionary was above all the suppression, by the Bolsheviks, of the democratic freedoms — freedom of press, of association, of assembly — which are precisely the guarantee for the political activity of the working masses; without those freedoms "the domination of the large popular layers is perfectly unthinkable." The gigantic tasks of the transition to socialism, "to which the Bolsheviks embarked with courage and determination," cannot be accomplished unless "the masses receive a very intensive political education and accumulate experiences," which is not possible without democratic freedoms. The construction of a new society is a virgin land which raises a "thousand problems"; now, "only the experience permits to correct and to open new roads." Socialism is a historical product "generated (*geboren*) by the school itself of experience": all the popular masses (*Volksmassen*) must participate in this experience, otherwise "socialism is decreed, bestowed (*oktroyiert*) by a handful of intellectuals assembled around a green table." There will inevitably be errors in the process of transition, but the only remedy to them is revolutionary practice:

> revolution itself and its renewal principle, the intellectual life, the activity and self-responsibility (*Selbstverantwortung*) of the masses that it stimulates, in one word, the revolution under the form of the largest political freedom is the only sun that saves and purifies.[15]

This argument is much more important than the one about the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, which became the main focus of the "Leninist" objections to her criticism. Luxemburg's main point was that without democratic freedoms, the popular self-education by experience, the self-emancipation of the oppressed, and the exercise of power itself by the laboring classes are impossible. It should be said however that there is a certain tension in this essay on the Russian Revolution between her commitment to democracy and her categorical refusal — in the name of internationalism — of the right of nations to self-determination. After all, the possibility for a national community to choose its own destiny, to decide between unity, federation, or separation is also a basic democratic right.

György Lukacs, in his important essay "Rosa Luxemburg Marxist" (January, 1921) — integrated in his book *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) — shows, with great acumen, how, thanks to the dialectical unity between theory and praxis — first formulated by Marx in his *Theses on Feuerbach* — she was able to overcome the "dilemma of powerlessness (*Ohnmacht*)" of the social-democratic movements,

> the dilemma between the fatalism of pure laws and the ethics of pure intentions. What is the meaning of this dialectics? The same way as the proletariat as a class can only conquer and keep its class consciousness, and elevate itself to the level of its — objectively given — historical task, through combat and action, the party and the individual militants cannot really appropriate themselves of their theory if they are not able to integrate (*hineinzutragen*) this

unity in their praxis.[16]

It is therefore surprising that, just one year later, he wrote another essay — which will also become part of the volume *History and Class Consciousness* — under the title "Critical comments on Rosa Luxemburg's critique of the Russian revolution," which rejects out of hand all her arguments about the Bolsheviks' policies. According to Lukacs, she "represents herself the proletarian revolution under the structural form of the bourgeois revolutions" — a very unlikely accusation.[17] How to explain the difference, in tone and content, between the essay of January, 1921 and the one of January, 1922? A sudden conversion to orthodox Leninism? Perhaps, but another explanation could be to relate Lukacs' attitude to the debates inside the German Communist Party, to which he was very near in those years. In March, 1921 there took place an adventurous Communist attempt at uprising, which Lukacs supported with enthusiasm (but not so Lenin…). Paul Levi, at that time one of the main leaders of the KPD, publicly opposed the "March, 1921 Action"; excluded by the Party he decided to publish, in 1922, Rosa Luxemburg's notes on the Russian revolution, which her friend had confided to him in 1918. Lukacs' polemics with this document is also, indirectly, a settling of accounts with Paul Levi.

The truth of the matter is that the chapter on democracy in Rosa Luxemburg's essay on the Russian Revolution is one of the most important documents of Marxism, Communism, Critical Theory and revolutionary thinking in the 20th century. It is difficult to imagine a refoundation of socialism in the 21st century without taking into account the arguments developed in those feverish pages. The most lucid representatives of Leninism and Trotskyism such as Ernest Mandel or Daniel Bensaïd recognized that her critique of Bolshevism in 1918, concerning the issue of the democratic freedoms, was perfectly legitimate and justified.

The *zündende Funke*, Rosa Luxemburg's burning spark, shone one last time in December, 1918, in her speech at the Founding Conference of the KPD (*Spartakus Bund*) — the new German Communist Party (Spartacus League). It is true that one still finds in this document references to the "law of the objective and necessary development of the socialist revolution," but in reality she is speaking here of "the bitter experience" which the labor movement has to go through in order to find the revolutionary road. The last words of this memorable conference are directly inspired by the viewpoint of the oppressed self-emancipative praxis:

> It is by exercising power that the masses learn to exercise power. There is no other way to teach them. Happily enough, we have left behind the time where one was supposed to teach socialism to the proletariat. This time apparently is not yet gone by for the Marxists of Kautsky's school. Educate the proletarian masses, that meant for them: to make speeches, distribute tracts and pamphlets. No, the socialist school of the proletarians has no need of all that. Their education takes place when they seize action (*zur Tat greifen*).

Here Rosa Luxemburg will quote Goethe's famous phrase *Am Anfang war die Tat!* (At the beginning of everything was not the Verb but Action!) In her own words : "At the beginning was Action, this is our motto; and action, is when the workers' and soldiers' councils feel called to become the only public power in the country and learn to be it."[18] A few days later, Rosa Luxemburg was murdered by the Freikorps — right-wing paramilitary bands — mobilized by the social-democratic government, under the direct initiative of Minister Gustav Noske, against the Berlin workers' uprising.

Rosa Luxemburg was not an infallible leader; she made mistakes, as every human being and every political militant, and her ideas do not make up a closed theoretical system, a dogmatic doctrine that could be applied at all places and all times. But without doubt her thinking is a precious toolbox to try to dismantle the capitalist machinery and to search for radical alternatives. Her conception of socialism at the same time revolutionary and democratic — in irreconcilable opposition with capitalism and imperialist expansion — founded on the self-emancipative praxis of the workers, on the self-education by experience and by action of the great popular masses, is still extraordinarily relevant. Socialism in the 21st century cannot make it without the light of this blazing spark.

NOTES

1. Marx, *Thesen über Feuerbach* , in Marx, Engels, *Die deutsche Ideologie,* Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1960, 584.

2. Rosa Luxemburg, *Reforme ou Révolution?* 1899 in *Œuvres*, I, Paris, Maspero, 1969, 79.

3. Rosa Luxemburg, *Selected Political Writings,* edited and introduced by Robert Looker, tr. William D.Graf (London, Jonathan Cape) 98.

4. Cf. Rosa Luxemburg, *Organisationsfragen der russischen Sozialdemokratie* (1904), in *Die Russische Revolution,* Hrsg. Ossip K. Flechtheim, Frankfurt, Europäische Verlaganstalt, 1963, 27-28, 42, 44.

5. R. Luxemburg, *Massenstreik, Partei und Gewerkschaften* in *Gewerkschaftskampf und Massenstreik*, Eingeleitet und Bearbeitet von Paul Frölich, Berlin, Vereinigung Internationaler Verlagsanstalten, Berlin, 1928, 426-427.. This book contains not only the well known 1906 brochure on the mass strike, but various other articles by Rosa Luxemburg on the same topic. It was compiled and prefaced by her gifted disciple and biographer Paul Frölich, who was excluded from the German Communist Party in the 1920's. I found the book at a second hand bookshop in Tel-Aviv ; the copy had a seal: *Kibutz Ein Harod, Hasifria Hamerkazit, Haseminarion Harayoni* (Central Library, Seminar of Ideas). The owner of the book was probably a Leftist German Jew who emigrated to Palestine after 1933, and gave it to the library of the kibbutz which he or she joined. For some years, there were lively ideological debates in a seminar of the kibbutz, and Rosa Luxemburg was probably one of the references. After the death of the older kibbutzniks, since the new generation doesn't read German — and probably has less interest in Marxist theory — the librarian sold to a used-books shop his stock of works in Marx's language… Part of the history of the Israeli Left is summarized in this seal.

6. *I bid,* 455-457.

7. *Ibid.* 147, 150.

8. R.Luxemburg, *Anhang : Leitsätze über die Aufgaben der Internatgionale Sozialdemokratie* , in *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie von Junius*, Bern, Unionsdruckerei, 1916, 97

9. See K. Liebknecht, "A Rosa Luxemburg: *Remarques à propos de son projet de thèses pour le groupe* 'Internationale,'" in *Partisans,* no. 45, January 1969, 113.

10. Rosa Luxemburg, *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie von Junius*, Bern, *Unionsdruckerei*, 1916, p.11. This copy of the original edition of the book belonged to my teacher and PhD director Lucien Goldmann, and was generously given to me, after his untimely death, by his wife, Annie Goldmann. Lucien Goldmann belonged in his youth to the Left Zionist movement *Hashomer Hatzair*, before joining the Rumanian Communist Youth, from which he was soon excluded for "Trotskyist tendencies." After settling in France, he became a leading scholar in Marxist sociology of culture.

11. Rosa Luxemburg, *Die Krise der Sozialdemokratie*, 11..

12. Engels, *Anti-Dühring,* Paris, Ed. Sociales, 1950, 189, emphasis mine — ML..

13. *Ibid.,* 68.

14. See Isabel Loureiro, *Rosa Luxemburg. Os dilemas da açâo revolucionaria,* S.Paulo, Unesp, 1995, 123.

15. *Die Russische Revolution*, Frankfurt, Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1963, 73-76.

16. G. Lukacs, *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (1923), Nwied, Luchterhand, 1968, 212, 216.

17. *Ibid.* 460.

18. Rosa Luxemburg, "*Rede zum Programm der KPD (Spartakusbund)*", *Ausgewählten Reden und Schriften,* Berlin, Dietz Verlag, 1953, Band II, p. 687. The copy which I'm using here has a curious history. It is a selection of writings by Rosa Luxemburg published by the *Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institut beim ZK der SED* , with a preface by Wilhelm Pieck, the Stalinist leader of the GDR, followed by introductions of Lenin and Stalin, emphasizing the various "errors" of the Jewish/Polish/German revolutionary. I bought this copy in a used bookshop in Tel-Aviv, and discovered that it had a handwritten dedication with the following words: "Sorry, we couldn't find an edition of R.L. Works without this superfluous 'introduction.' With kindest regards, Tamara and Isaac. Throttle Green, 25 August 1957." Obviously, the authors of the inscription were Tamara and Isaac Deutscher. I couldn't find the name of the recipient, but it is interesting that Rosa Luxemburg was the link between the Deutschers — quintessential "non-Jewish Jews" — and their Israeli correspondent. The reasons why the book ended in the shop are probably similar to those of the Frölich collection mentioned above.

Globalization and Migration

A Human Rights Approach

David Bacon

We need an immigration policy based on human, civil, and labor rights, which looks at the reasons why people come to the United States and how we can end the criminalization of their status and work. While proposals from Congress and the administration have started the debate over the need for change in our immigration policy, they are not only too limited and ignore the global nature of migration, but they will actually make the problem of criminalization much worse. We need a better alternative.

This alternative should start by looking at the roots of migration — the reasons why people come to the United States in the first place. Movement and migration is a human right. But we live in a world in which a lot of migration isn't voluntary, but is forced by poverty and so-called economic reforms.

Our trade policy, and the economic measures we impose on countries like Mexico, El Salvador, or the Philippines make poverty worse. When people get poorer and their wages go down, it creates opportunities for U.S. corporate investment. This is what drives our trade policy. But the human cost is very high.

In El Salvador today, the U.S. Embassy is telling the government to sell off its water, hospitals, schools, and highways to give U.S. investors a chance to make money. This policy is enabled by the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), whose purpose was increasing opportunities in El Salvador for U.S. investors. It was imposed on the people of that country in the face of fierce popular opposition.

Alex Gomez, a leader of Salvadoran public sector unions, came to San Francisco in February to explain what the consequences of this latest free trade initiative will be. He says if these public resources are privatized, tens of thousands of workers will lose their jobs, and their unions will be destroyed. They will then have to leave the country to survive. According to Gomez, four million have already left El Salvador. Two million have come to the United States not because they love it here, but because they can't survive any longer at home. These migrants come without papers, because there are no visas for two million people from this small country.

The North American Free Trade Agreement did even more damage than CAFTA. It let U.S. corporations dump corn in Mexico, to take over the market there with exports from the United States. Today one company, Smithfield Foods, sells almost a third of all the pork consumed by Mexicans. Because of this dumping and the market takeover, prices dropped so low that millions of Mexican farmers couldn't survive. They too had to leave home.

Mexico used to be self-sufficient in corn and

David Bacon *is a California writer and documentary photographer. He was a union organizer for two decades. He edited the* California AFL-CIO News *and the* Contra Costa CLC Labor News*. His books include* Illegal People — How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants *(2008),* The Children of NAFTA *(2004) and* Communities Without Borders *(2006) His new book, coming out later this year, is called* The Right to Stay Home*, and is about the alternatives to displacing communities in countries like Mexico, and criminalizing the migrants.*

meat production. Corn cultivation started there in Oaxaca many centuries ago. Now Mexico is a net corn and meat importer from the United States.

During the years NAFTA has been in effect, the number of people in the United States born in Mexico went from 4.5 million to 12.67 million. Today about 11 percent of all Mexicans live in this country. About 5.7 million of those who came were able to get some kind of visa, but another 7 million couldn't. There just aren't that many visas. But they came anyway because they had very little choice, if they wanted to survive or their families to prosper.

Our immigration laws turn these people into criminals. They say that if migrants without papers work here it's a crime. But how can people survive here if they don't work? We need a different kind of immigration policy - that stops putting such pressure on people to leave, and that doesn't treat them as criminals if they do.

What Would It Look Like?

First, we should tell the truth, as the labor-supported TRADE Act would have us do, which was introduced into Congress by Mike Michaud from Maine. We should hold hearings as the bill says, about the effects of NAFTA and CAFTA, and collect evidence about the way those agreements have displaced people in the United States and other countries as well.

Then we need to renegotiate those existing agreements to eliminate the causes of displacement. If we provide compensation to communities that have suffered the effects of free trade and corporate economic reforms, intended to benefit U.S. investors, it would be more than simple justice. It might give people more resources and more of a future at home.

It makes no sense to negotiate new trade agreements that displace even more people or lower living standards. The Obama administration has negotiated three so far with Peru, Panama and South Korea. It is now negotiating a new one — the Trans Pacific Partnership. These are all pro-corporate, people-displacing agreements. We should prohibit these and any new ones like them. Instead, we need to make sure all future trade treaties require adequate farm prices and income in farming communities, promote unions and high wages, and don't require the privatization of public services.

When employer sanctions are used to make workers vulnerable to pressure, to break unions or to force people into guest worker programs, their real effect is to force people into low wage jobs with no rights.

Increasingly these international agreements, like Mode 4 of the World Trade Organization, treat displaced migrants as a cheap and vulnerable labor force. Our trade negotiators call for regulating their flow with guest worker programs. This is exactly the wrong direction. We should ban the inclusion of guest workers in any future trade agreement or treaty instead.

When diplomacy doesn't work, U.S. military intervention and aid programs are to support trade agreements, structural adjustment policies or market economic reforms. This has been the U.S. policy in Honduras and Haiti, for instance. This also must stop. If the U.S. Embassy is putting pressure on countries like El Salvador to adopt measures that benefit corporate investors at the expense of workers and farmers, the Ambassador should be recalled and the interference halted..

Finally, we should ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families. This international agreement would give us an alternative framework for recognizing the rights of displaced migrants, and the responsibility of both sending and receiving countries for their protection. The failure of successive U.S. administrations to even present this agreement to Congress for ratification highlights the unpleasant truth about the real effect of our immigration policy. When millions of migrants arrive here, they are criminalized because they lack immigration status, especially when they go to work.

Labor and civil rights advocates often fondly remember the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act because it included an amnesty, signed by President Ronald Reagan, which gave legal status relatively quickly to almost four million people. But the law also contained employer sanctions for the first time, which we often forget. That provision says that employers will be fined and punished if they hire undocumented workers. This provision was promoted by those who said that if work became illegal, then undocumented migration would end. This clearly failed, since the number increased many-fold in the years that followed. Compared to the pressure to leave home, criminalizing work was not a deterrent to those who sought employment here so that their families at home could survive. This provision sounded like a law against employers, but it was not. It became an anti-worker law. No boss ever went to jail for violating it. The fines were not great. When the government agents seek to enforce it, employers who cooperate with them are forgiven. But over the last four years alone, tens of thousands of workers have been fired for not having papers. The true objects of punishment under this law have always been workers, not employers.

Now Congress is talking about a new reform, and we have to use this opportunity to push to repeal this law. Some think that since a new legalization will hopefully give many undocumented workers legal status, sanction won't really affect anyone anymore. But even the most positive predictions about a new legalization still assume that millions of people will not qualify because of stringent qualifications, high fees, and decades-long waiting periods. Those people will still be subject to the sanctions law. And the day after a new reform passes millions more people will come to the United States because of the same pressures that caused past waves of migration. This is especially true if a new immigration reform ignores the need to renegotiate trade agreements and eliminate the huge displacement of people.

These future migrants are not strangers. They are the husbands and wives, parents, and cousins of people already here — people who are already part of our communities. They come from the same towns, and are linked to neighborhoods here in the United States by the ties that have been created by migration, work and family. They will work in our workplaces, participate in our organizing drives, and belong to our unions. We need to keep the sanctions law from being applied to them, making it a crime for them to work. Unfortunately, however, Congress members aren't talking about getting rid of sanctions. In fact, they and the administration want to make the current application even worse.

So let's do a reality check. Let's tell the truth about how this law has been used.

One method for enforcing sanctions happens when an employer uses it to screen people it is going to hire, using an error-filled government database called E-Verify. Congress and the administration are calling to make it mandatory for all employers to use this database, and refuse to hire anyone who it flags as undocumented. For people who are currently working now and have no papers, what it means is that if they lose their jobs, it will be harder to find others. That will make people fear taking any action that offends their boss, like joining a union or complaining about illegal conditions. That's good for the boss, but bad for the workers.

Employers today not only use this database to screen new hires — they also use it to re-verify the immigration status of people who are already working. This is a violation of the law. Once it accepts the form filled out by a job seeker (called the I-9), along with their ID, the employer can't reverify it all over again at some point in the future. But they do. Sometimes it's convenient to get rid of workers who have accumulated benefits and raises over years of service, and replace them with new hires at lower wages.

Re-verification just happened, for instance, to three workers who belong to the International Longshore and Warehouse Union at Waste Management, Inc. in San Leandro, California. The union has gone to the Oakland City Council to protest these illegal firings, because WMI operates under a city garbage contract.

Employers sometimes announce they intend to begin using the E-Verify database when their workers start to organize. That's what managers announced at the Mi Pueblo supermarkets in northern California. There E-Verify checks are being used to terrorize workers to keep them from supporting a union, Local 5 of the United Food and Commercial Workers.

Another method for enforcing sanctions against workers is even more widespread. Immigration agents, working for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), go into the personnel records of an employer. They then compare the information given by workers on the I-9 form to the E-Verify database, looking for workers who don't have legal immigration status. ICE then makes a list of those workers and sends it to the company, telling the employer to fire them. This is what happened at Pacific Steel Castings in Berkeley, California, last year. Two hundred and fourteen workers were fired as a result. Some had worked in the foundry for over 20 years. Many lost their homes, and their children's dreams of going to college were destroyed.

Over the last four years, hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs in these enforcement actions, called I-9 audits. Almost five hundred janitors in San Francisco, and over a thousand in Minneapolis. Thousands of workers doing some of the hardest work imaginable in meatpacking plants around the country. Farm workers. Construction workers. But the employers were all given reduced fines, and many immunity from punishment entirely, if they cooperated in firing their own workers.

If unions and communities mount a fight that exposes the terrible human cost of these firings, it is possible to stop them. The young Dreamers showed that this is possible. These courageous young people convinced the administration to stop deporting students brought to the United States without papers as children. They forced the administration to change the way it enforces immigration law. It can be done for workers too, if there's a fight.

But we must also change the sanctions law. Otherwise, our experience over the 25 years since it passed shows that immigration authorities will simply find another method for making working a crime for people who don't have papers.

The other unpleasant truth about sanctions is that they are linked to the growth of guest worker programs. One of the main purposes of making it a crime to work without papers is to force people to come to the United States with visas that tie them to their employers and recruiters. These workers are often more vulnerable than the undocumented, since they get deported if they lose their jobs or get fired. Guest worker programs have been called Close to Slavery by the Southern Poverty Law Center and others who have documented their extreme exploitation. The sanctions law functions as a way to pressure people into choosing that path to come here to work.

When employer sanctions are used to make workers vulnerable to pressure, to break unions or to force people into guest worker programs, their real effect is to force people into low wage jobs with no rights. This is a subsidy for employers, and brings down wages for everyone. The sanctions law makes it harder for all workers to organize to improve conditions. This doesn't just affect the workers who have no papers themselves. When it becomes harder for one group to organize, other workers have a harder time organizing too.

Some Washington lobbyists accept as a fact of life that the sanctions law will continue, or even worse, that E-Verify will become a mandatory national program for all employers. But for unions and workers who have had to deal with its effects, it would be much better to immediately repeal it, and dismantle the E-Verify database.

The use of the sanctions law against workers and unions is what led the California Labor Federation to call for its repeal as early as 1994, a position it continued to adopt in successive conventions. Other unions joined it including the garment unions and service employees. Finally labor councils in California and then around the country passed resolutions making the same call, and sent them to the historic AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles in 1999. This led to an historic debate and the adoption of a new, pro-immigrant policy. Delegates at that convention believed that enforcing immigration law in the workplace has to end, because its real effect is to make workers vulnerable to employers, and to make it harder for all workers to organize to improve conditions.

In addition to repealing the national sanctions law, we should also prohibit states from enacting copycat measures. These laws have passed not just in Arizona or Alabama or Mississippi. California passed a state employer sanctions law before the federal law took effect in 1986.

What would really help workers to raise wages and improve conditions is much stricter enforcement of worker protection and anti-discrimination laws, for everyone. Funding used for immigration enforcement on the job should be given instead to the Department of Labor, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the National Labor Relations Board, and other labor law enforcement agencies. It will be a good day for all workers when ICE agents become wage and hour inspectors.

Threats by employers who use immigration status to keep workers from organizing unions or protesting illegal conditions should be a crime. That makes it necessary to overturn two Supreme Court decisions, Hoffman and Sure-Tan. In these cases the court said that if workers are fired for union activity and have no papers, the boss doesn't have to rehire them or pay them lost wages, because the sanctions law makes it illegal to employ them to begin with. But when there's no punishment for violating labor rights, workers have no rights. This also hurts other workers in the same workplace who want to organize a union, since it makes the undocumented so vulnerable. Instead, we should increase workplace rights by prohibiting immigration enforcement during labor disputes or against workers who complain about illegal conditions.

To ensure that in the workplace all have the same rights we also have to eliminate the way undocumented people get ripped off by funds like Social Security and unemployment. All workers contribute to the Social Security fund, but because undocumented people are working under bad numbers, they pay in but can never collect the benefits. This will come back to haunt us when those workers need disability payments or get too old to work — something that happens to us all. This is the reason we set up the Social Security system to begin with — because we don't want old people eating dog food, regardless of where they were born.

Instead today the Social Security number has become much more a means to check immigration status, harming workers instead of providing them the benefits that were its original and true purpose. There is a simple solution to this problem as well. Social Security numbers should be made available for everyone, regardless of immigration status. Everyone should pay into the system and everyone should have a right to the benefits those payments create. By the same token all workers should be able to receive unemployment benefits regardless of status, since they and their employers pay into the funds.

In the end, we need an immigration policy that brings people together, instead of pitting workers against each other, as our current system does. During a time of economic crisis especially we need to reduce job competition, rather than stoking fears. In 2005 Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of Houston made an innovative proposal that would have set up job creation and training programs for unemployed workers at the same time that it would have given legal status to workers without papers. This proposal put unemployed workers and immigrants on the same side, giving them both something to fight for whether they were out of work, or working without immigration status.

This proposal, and the others made here, are part of the Dignity Campaign, a plan for immigration reform based on human, civil and labor rights. In the last three years, local unions and labor councils in San Francisco, Silicon Valley and Alameda County adopted resolutions supporting the Dignity Campaign, arguing that trade policy is linked to the increasing vulnerability of immigrant workers because of the sanctions law and guest worker programs. The Labor Council for Latin American Advancement adopted a similar resolution.

An immigration policy that benefits migrants, their home communities, and working people here in the United States has to have a long-term perspective. Instead of just trying to please interest groups well represented in Congress, we need to ask, where are we going? What will actually solve the problems that we experience on our jobs and in our homes with current laws and policies?

We need a system that produces security, not insecurity. We need a commitment to equality and equal status — getting rid of color and national lines instead of making them deeper. We need to make it easier for workers to organize, by getting rid of what makes people vulnerable — to end job competition we need full employment, and to gain organizing rights we need labor law enforcement together with eliminating sanctions and firings. It's not likely that many corporations will support such a program, so the politicians who represent us have to choose whose side they're on.

Working people in Mexico, El Salvador, the Philippines, the United States and other countries need the same things. Secure jobs at a living wage. Rights in our workplaces and communities. The freedom to travel and seek a future for our families, and the ability to stay home and have a decent future there too. The borders between our countries, then, should be common grounds that unite us, not lines that divide us.

HUAC and the Red Trilogy of World War II

The North Star, Mission to Moscow, Ballad of Russia

DAN GEORGAKAS

ONE OF THE CONCERNS that supposedly brought the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) to Hollywood was that the Communist Party-U.S.A. had quietly infiltrated the film industry. Members of the CP and fellow travelers were charged with having surreptitiously inserted ideological messages into mainstream American cinema. Screenwriters were considered particularly culpable. Among the primary HUAC concerns was what it considered grossly flattering and inaccurate depictions of the Soviet Union. Three films cited as prime examples were *Song of Russia* (1944), *Mission to Moscow* (1943), and The *North Star* (1943). The first two had been made by major studios, Warner Brothers and MGM, and the third by Samuel Goldwyn, an important independent producer who released this particular film through RKO. All three films had considerable artistic input from persons known to be affiliated in some way with the Communist movement.

HUAC was absolutely correct in its assertion that these films totally distorted Soviet realities. The Hollywood dream factories had indeed turned black into white. The process that produced that result, however, was not the leftist conspiracy HUAC charged was at play. Nonetheless, the hows and whys of the making of this red trilogy offer valuable insights into the role of the Communist left in the studio system of the 1940s.

Anyone even slightly knowledgeable about that period of filmmaking understands that the studio chiefs controlled the making of films from start to finish in a process that usually involved years, not months or weeks. The producers approved each film project, hired the artistic personnel, approved original and revised scripts, watched daily takes, supervised editing, and decided on the final cut. Nothing appeared on screen without their knowledge.* Unless we assume the producers were incredibly stupid or naïve (they were neither), then some other factor must account for the content of the red trilogy.

That other factor is that the films were conceived shortly after America entered World War II, a period when the Soviet Union was the only major force offering military resistance to the *Wehrmacht*. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, all of American industry had enlisted in the win-the-war effort. The Hollywood studios were no exception. Even before America entered the war, the Roosevelt administration had urged Hollywood to prepare the American public for

DAN GEORGAKAS *is on the editorial board of* Cineaste *film quarterly and has taught film courses at New York University, Columbia, Queens College, and the University of Massachusetts: Amherst.*

*A famous exception to that rule came in a comedy titled *No Time to Marry* (1938). Lionel Stander was asked to whistle a tune as he waited for an elevator. He whistled *The Internationale* as a gag, but the director and subsequent editors didn't recognize the tune, and it made its way into the film. Capitalism survived. Stander has the distinction of being twice blacklisted. See his interview in Patrick McGilligan and Paul Buhle (editors), *Tender Comrades,* NY: St. Martins Press, 1997, pp. 607-625.

the coming conflict by producing films that encouraged a sense of national unity and/or built good will for potential military allies. Fostering national unity meant addressing the regional antagonisms, anti-Semitism, and hostility to the foreign born prevalent in considerable portions of the United States. Building support for military allies mainly meant undoing the negative images of the Soviet Union that had been media staples for over twenty years, but Britain also had its share of detractors, largely but not exclusively among Irish-Americans.

Films designed to address such issues soon became standard Hollywood fare. The most overt effort to deal with xenophobia and regionalism involved the war genre. In one film after another, Americans of various backgrounds discovered their joint democratic values as they battled the Nazi or Japanese war machines. The screenwriters for some of the best of these films were leftists. Studio chiefs had selected those writers precisely because their ideological views were perfectly suited to advance equalitarian scenarios of national unity. In response to the charge that liberals were often dupes of the Communists, screenwriter Philip Dunne, one of the most active liberals in Hollywood, noted, "They [Communists], not we, were fellow travelers." Larry Ceplair and Steve England note in their landmark *The Inquisition in Hollywood*, that even "friendly" HUAC witnesses such as writer-producer James McGinnis could find no fault in the content of scripts written by Communists during the war.

Films that dealt with foreign nations were mainly designed to show "their values are just like ours." Perhaps the most successful examples of this genre are pro-British, Oscar-winning films such as *How Green Was My Valley* (1941, 20th Century-Fox), *Mrs. Miniver* (1942, MGM), and *That Hamilton Woman* (1942, United Artists). The red trilogy aimed to generate empathy with the USSR in the way that these and similar films had done for Great Britain.

All three films in the red trilogy have interesting critical and exhibition histories, but that of *The North Star* is unique. The original critical reception for The *North Star* was generally positive, leading to nominations for no less than six Oscars and a good box office. Nine years later (1952), what had been touted as one of the best motion pictures of the year during wartime was cited by HUAC for promoting subversive ideology. Five years after the HUAC hearings, *The North Star* was purchased by National Telefilm Associates, which transformed the pro-Soviet film of 1943 into an anti-Soviet film released as *Armored Attack* (1957). This metamorphosis was accomplished by eliminating much of the original soundtrack, considerable reediting, and the introduction of newsreel footage of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. As images of the invasion of Hungary filled the screen, the dialog in the original version was replaced by a voiceover that warned of a menace in the East that was every bit as evil as the Nazis. *Armored Attack* mainly played in secondary markets but again turned a profit. When the videocassette era came into existence, the box in which *Armored Attack* was sold was covered with swastikas and hammer-and-sickles with the headline: "the battle of the totalitarians." In 1995, thirty-five years after the release of the altered *North Star,* Sander Vanocur hosted a discussion on the History Channel television network that concluded that although *The North Star* had indeed contained fallacious informa-

> Hellman can be taken to task for her simplistic views of Soviet realities. She could not possibly have been uninformed about the criticisms of the Soviet regime.

tion about the Soviets, a number of the film's distortions and many of its artistic shortcomings were the result of a classic Hollywood syndrome: the producer altering the original script.

The Making of *The North Star*

UNLIKE THE STUDIO HEADS whose producers did most of the work on *Mission to Moscow* and *Song of Russia*, Samuel Goldwyn was famed for his hands-on style of producing. Wanting his pro-Soviet film to be what Hollywood called "a quality picture," he budgeted the film for three million dollars, the most he had ever spent on a single film. A Goldwyn trademark was to hire famous writers to write his screenplays. His first choice for *The North Star* was the celebrated playwright Lillian Hellman who had already written or co-written three successful Goldwyn films: *These Three* (1936), *Dead End* (1937), and *The Little Foxes* (1941), films that had brought seven Oscar nominations. Goldwyn was well aware of Hellman's sympathies for the Soviet Union, but he thought that would only act as a positive spur to her creativity. His first choice for director was William Wyler, who had directed the three Hellman-written hit films, but early on in the film development process, Wyler left Hollywood to join the military.

Wyler's replacement, made with Hellman's agreement, was Lewis Milestone, one of whose assets was that he had been born in Odessa, a factor Goldwyn thought would be helpful in making the film look more authentic. The musical score, which Goldwyn intended to be a major element in the film, was assigned to Aaron Copland, whose leftist credentials included many projects associated with *New Masses* magazine and membership in the leftist Composer's Collective. The chief cinematographer was the legendary left-orientated James Wong Howe.

The title for the film is derived from the name of a fictitious collective farm in the Ukraine. Hellman's script sought to show that collective farming was hugely successful and that collective farmers were passionately loyal to socialist ideals. The actual history of collectivism in the Ukraine, however, was decidedly different from Hellman's utopian scenario. The Ukrainian peasantry had resisted collectivization more vigorously than people of any other part of the nation, going so far as to kill most of their animals rather than turning them over to collective ownership. As punishment for this disobedience, when there was a crop failure and a general collapse of agriculture in the region, Stalin refused to send aid, resulting in famine and impoverishment of the area. Some estimates have put the death toll as high as six million. The Ukraine that was attacked by the Nazis in 1941 was still destitute and not at all loyal to the central government. The Ukrainians often welcomed the Nazis as liberators from what was seen as Russian oppression and would not turn against the Nazis until the Nazis began to treat them as an inferior people. In short, Hellman's image of collectivization ignored the brutalities of forced collectivization and the wretched conditions dominant on many collectives. The Nazi persecution of Jews, a key concern of *North Star*, was not a major factor in the Ukrainian reaction to the Nazis as the region had its own well-entrenched anti-Semitic traditions.

The choice of the Ukraine as the setting of *North Star* was not happenstance. Before there was a proposal for a feature film, Soviet officials had been urging Hellman to write a documentary about their national resistance efforts that was set in the Ukraine rather than in some other region. Hellman surely knew about the resistance to collectivization in the 1930s, but how much she knew about actual events in the Ukraine and their contemporary consequences other than what she got from Russian sources is not clear. Worth noting is that non-Soviet sources were not particularly helpful in this regard. Not even the *New York Times*, America's paper of record, had carried accurate accounts of the Ukrainian famine.

Before beginning her script, Hellman created a 250-page research notebook about the war in the USSR. Approximately half of these pages consisted of press reports from Soviet and non-Soviet sources. These included a month's worth of *Pravda* translated word for word. Hellman had commissioned the translation in order to have a feel for how the USSR was dealing with the war day by day. Her sources carried truthful accounts of how the Nazis had taken blood transfusions to be used for their wounded from Russian and Polish children who were then left without care, resulting in the deaths of thousands. Hellman selected this particular Nazi crime as the centerpiece for her story. Other reports told about Russian pilots who crashed their stricken aircraft into lines of enemy tanks exactly as Kolya (Dana Andrews) would do in *The North Star*. The newspapers and other documents also contained details about the scorched earth policy the Soviets had imposed upon themselves.

Hellman's script follows the classic three-act Hollywood formula. In the first act, the socialist nature of Soviet collectives is made explicit and the benefits flowing to all concerned attest to the plan's supposed successes. Further enhancing the collective spirit is that the farm's physician Dr. Kurin (Walter Huston) is a world-famous pathologist who has given up a prestigious position in a major medical institution to work "with his people" at the grass roots level. Lincoln Steffens had famously opined of the USSR, "I have seen the future and it works." Hellman's script reaffirmed that sentiment.

The second act gets underway when Kolya, one of the members of the *North Star* collective, is called to active duty in the Soviet air force. Some friends decide to accompany him to Kiev for a brief vacation. Midway in their journey, the Nazis attack the Soviet Union. Kolya hurries on to his unit while the others, at great physical hardship, secure a wagonload of weapons to take back to their collective.

What Hellman saw as the moral center of the script then begins to unfold with the arrival of a medical unit run by Dr. Harden (Erich von Stroheim). On the road to the collective Harden taunts Nazi officers for what he thinks is their stupid persecution of Jews and brags of being trained by great Jewish doctors. Harden makes clear that he believes that there are indeed *ubermensch* (usually rendered in English as a super man) who are superior to other mortals and justifiably defy the conventions their inferiors live by. Naturally, he considers himself an *ubermensch*.

In the final act, the men of *North Star* literally "ride to the rescue" of their women and children on horseback. Dr. Kurin takes part in the attack by killing Dr. Harden with a pistol shot. The counterattack, carried out with great valor and panache, rids *North Star* of Nazis long enough for the heroic Ukrainians to voluntarily put their homes to the torch in support of the government's call to leave the invaders only scorched earth. All the *North Star* survivors now vow to fight on until victory, whatever the cost.

Hellman had spent six weeks in story conferences with Goldwyn and Milestone before leaving Hollywood with what she thought Goldwyn and Milestone accepted as the final shooting script. Two weeks after her return to New York, however, she got back the first fifty pages. Whole sections of dialog had been rewritten by Milestone, who had managed to ideologically sanitize the first act. A short time later, more pages arrived with changes in the rest of the film. The words socialism and communism, which Hellman had inserted in various conversations were totally eliminated. Collective and USSR were each allowed to be used one time only (when the guerilla fighters take an official oath of national allegiance). The only remaining hint that this might be a socialist state is the occasional use of the word comrade. When National Telefilm Associates bought *The North Star* in 1957 and the film was reedited virtually frame by frame, even "comrade" was excised. One NTA executive lamented, "The only thing we couldn't take out—much to our regret—was Dana Andrews running around in his Soviet uniform."

More than dialog had been changed in the vital first act. Goldwyn believed that the American public had to be warmed up to the collectivists with considerable doses of music. He had transformed the collective farmers into folksy peasants, pure of mind, body, and heart, who romp about like so many Kansas cornhuskers attending a masquerade ball in Eastern European costumes. These simple people love their land, their children, their spouses, and their village in the way peasants of pulp fiction always do. They regale the viewer with what is meant to be profound folk wisdom, observing. for example, that, "The empty white ear rears its head the highest." Their singing, dancing, and story telling in the revised script fill a third of the film.

Mission to Moscow didn't simply remain blind to the crimes of Stalin, it justified them! Moreover, one of the crimes celebrated, the purge trials of 1938, went to the very essence of governance in the USSR.

Goldwyn also decided to move the mortal confrontation between Kurin and Harden to the climatic counterattack of the third act rather than leaving it at the picture's center where Hellman had originally situated it. When Hellman saw a rough cut of the film she was aghast at what had been done. Important dialog and scenes had been cut drastically or totally eliminated to make room for scenes less central to her concerns. She insisted that the key scene between Kurin and Harden had to be reshot, rewrote the film's ending, and generally reshaped the structure to make the relationship between the film's conflicting acts more reasonable.

Despite Hellman's rewrite of the rewrite, the Kurin-Harden dichotomy never materializes as the moral center of the film. Goldwyn's elimination of scenes in midscript that defined Kurin's character sapped the film of its moral and ideological weight. Putting the Kurin-Harden showdown in the counterattack further obscured the stark contrast of the ideological views they were meant to embody. More generally, Milestone, although well respected for his directing of films such as *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1930), was not up to the challenge of giving life to Hellman's chief characters. The exchanges between the doctors are conversational banter rather than passionate expressions of profoundly contrasting philosophies of life. Even their final confrontation is bungled. Kurin's shooting of Harden's Nazi assistant is so mishandled that it verges on comedy, and the verbal exchange between the doctors before Harden fires a fatal bullet has a schoolyard Dare-You quality. What little energy remains in the doctors' sequences is primarily due to von Stroheim's trademark leers and swagger. The doctors' struggle remains one of good versus evil, but the rewrites reduced it to a simplistic White Hat-Black Hat dichotomy.

Milestone also mishandled the Ukrainian counterattack, opting to shoot it as if it were a U.S. cavalry charge in a routine Western. Considerable suspension of disbelief is needed to believe that the lightly armed Ukrainians on horseback can so easily overcome seasoned Nazi troops inexplicably unable to effectively use the machine guns, tanks, and artillery that would have annihilated any actual attack of this nature. The scorched earth sequence in which the entire set (costing some $260,000) was leveled is far more credible. Enormous quantities of explosives were used and the resulting destruction was so intensive that a number of the actors were mildly injured. One explosive charge that went awry burned the roof of the sound stage and created fires in numerous surrounding structures.

Bellowing smoke from the burning *North Star* set hovered over Hollywood for several hours.

Hellman would forever hold Goldwyn responsible for debasing her script and would berate Milestone for what she considered his horrendous misdirection of vital scenes. She had sought to make a film with the same high purpose and quality as her *Watch on the Rhine* (1943). Instead she had gotten a weird genre sandwich whose various parts were grotesquely mismatched. But much as Hellman berated both Goldwyn and Milestone in various press interviews, she was not totally negative about the film. She said she felt the film had said some true things about the Nazis and had been useful in promoting the united front. She did not ask for her name to be removed from the script credits. Nor did she turn down her Oscar nomination for best screenplay.

Unlike Hellman, Sam Goldwyn was delighted with the final version of *The North Star*, a joy greatly enhanced by the film's six Oscar nominations, and a healthy box office. He insisted that *The North Star* was devoid of propaganda, blithely informing a *New York Sun* reporter, "The first reels are gay and happy. They show the villagers' life and the villagers are a musical people who like to dance….Much of this story could have been told in pantomime. It has as much action as any Western. Perhaps that is why children like it, although it is a picture planned for adults."

Critical response also was generally positive. Despite complaints that the collective farm was too idealized, most reviewers considered the film entertaining and informative. Many echoed the sentiments of *New York Post* reviewer Archer Winston, who wrote, "This reviewer is ashamed to admit that he was unable to see any propaganda in *The North Star*, and it was not for lack of looking." Some papers such as the *Dallas Morning News* actually berated Hollywood for being so slow in getting pictures of this kind to the screen. Nearly thirty years later, writing about a screening of *The North Star* at a revival house, noted critic Andrew Sarris expressed similar sentiments: "Seen today, *The North Star* seems like a relatively conventional example of the resistance movie, though a little more bloodthirsty than most." The major dissenting voices were in the Hearst press, where writers were on instructions from Hearst himself to pan the film. This directive got to the New York newspapers a bit late, so readers of the morning editions got a positive review while those of the afternoon editions were told the film was "red propaganda."

The USSR was quite pleased with *The North Star* and chose it as one of the five films it bought in 1944 for screening to its own domestic audience. *Song of Russia* and Hellman's *The Little Foxes* also were selected. The five films purchased the previous year included *Mission to Moscow* and Frank Capra's documentary *Battle for Russia*.

Ultimately, the message of *The North Star* is not much different from other wartime films. "Our" side is heroic and democratic; "their" side is fiendish and dictatorial. The distortions about happy Russian peasants, particularly in the Ukraine, are absurd, but no more so than the happy Chinese loyal to the not-so-democratic Chiang Kai-Sheik in films like *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944). Goldwyn was familiar with the film's every detail from start to finish, and the mode of production was like that of all other films in the Goldwyn organization. Rather than an example of Communist infiltration of Hollywood, *The North Star* is an example of how the Hollywood studios served what they thought were the immediate needs of the American government in a time of war.

Hellman can be taken to task for her simplistic views of Soviet realities. She could not possibly have been uninformed about the criticisms of the Soviet regime made by responsible intellectuals even before the infamous purge trials of 1938. On the other hand, Hellman must be credited with trying to offer the American public insights into the fascist mindset. She had sought to dramatize how privileged sectors of society that verbally profess contempt for ignorant authoritarian brutes often serve them just as effectively as the ideologically faithful. Postwar analysis of the Nazi era has stressed the banality of evil and the I-only-obeyed-orders syndrome. Hellman was suggesting that doing nothing against evil means making it much easier for that evil to prevail.

Song of Russia

Louis Mayer chose his production team for *Song of Russia* in the same manner he chose production teams for his other films. Joe Pasternak had just produced *Thousands Cheer* (1943) for MGM, a wartime musical that was commercially successful. Paul Jarrico and Richard Collins had written the script. Mayer thought the same trio would be well suited to creating a musical romance set in Russia. He was well aware of the leftist orientation of both Collins and Jarrico, but he thought that would make them all the more enthusiastic for the project in much the manner Goldwyn had thought Hellman's politics made her ideal for *The North Star*. Moreover, director Gregory Ratoff and Pasternak, neither of whom was a radical, would certainly be able to steer the film free of unwanted ideological comment.

The story line of *Song of Russia* is simple. John Meredith (Robert Taylor), an American conductor who is a specialist in the music of Tchaikovsky, is on a concert tour of the USSR on the eve of World War II. He soon meets Nadya Stepanova (Susan Peters), a wholesome young woman pianist of peasant origins who is from a small village. They fall in love in scenes that show a prosperous and happy Russia with values virtually indistinguishable from those of Main Street U.S.A. The two lovers constantly observe how similar their two nations really are. The distortions of Soviet daily life in these

seemingly apolitical scenes are numerous.

John and Nadya eventually go to her village, which is incredibly prosperous, modern, and joyful. After some superficial concerns about whether two people from different cultures, however similar in values, can be happy, they decide to marry. This marriage features gross misrepresentations of the USSR that are not found in either *The North Star* or *Mission to Moscow*. Namely, the wedding is not a civil ceremony but a traditional ritual in a twin-domed Russian Orthodox Church. The elaborate Orthodox services are followed by a feast that even includes chocolate cake. Viewers are left with the impression that the Russian Orthodox Church functions as freely as any church in America. No mention is made that the state religion of the USSR was atheism and that there had been a vigorous atheistic campaign in the 1930s that included a fierce persecution of many religious leaders and the wholesale destruction of churches or conversion of church buildings to secular uses.

The marital bliss of the loving couple is cut short by the German invasion of the USSR. Nadya decides to stay in the village to fight while John leaves to finish his concert tour, persuaded that the Russian love of music must be nurtured even in this terrible time. As the Nazis swiftly advance through Russia, John and the viewer become aware of the terrible suffering war brings to the Russian people. In due course John makes his way back to Nadya's village, which has been reduced to rubble. Many are dead, but Nadya has survived. Even as John and Nadya embrace, the strafing of a Nazi aircraft kills yet another young boy. An Orthodox priest is soon seen making the sign of the cross over the corpse.

John wants to stay in the village and fight at the side of his wife, but a village elder tells him, "You must go back to your country and tell them what you have seen….That is the greatest thing you can do." He informs Nadya she must go with her husband to tell the Americans that the Germans will never conquer Russia. Later as John and Nadya are about to perform in a Tchaikovsky program at a concert hall in New York, we again hear the elder as a voiceover, "We feel you fighting side by side with us, all soldiers in the same army, fighting to bring new light to our children, for that great day when the whole world will ring with a new song of freedom; for you will bring our countries close together, in the fight for all humanity."

These final scenes of *Song of Russia* underscore that the film's purpose was not celebration of the Soviet Union but to rally American aid for a beleaguered ally. When the necessity to build support for aid to the Soviet Union became a national priority, the available story options were limited. The producers felt commonalities, not differences, needed to be stressed. Any criticism, however valid, had to be avoided as any criticism might harm the wobbly alliance. Such is the nature of any film made in the midst of a war, especially when the outcome of the war remains uncertain.

Mission to Moscow

OF THE THREE FILMS in the red trilogy, *Mission to Moscow* is justly the most infamous and the most problematic. Unlike the two films already discussed, *Mission* didn't simply remain blind to the crimes of Stalin, it justified them! Moreover, one of the crimes celebrated, the purge trials of 1938, went to the very essence of governance in the USSR. Even if one had believed that a Soviet alliance was essential for winning the war, there was no need to spotlight the purges in a feature film, much less support the absurd charge that the purged Bolsheviks were actually paid agents of the German and Japanese governments. The scenes in which *Mission to Moscow* affirm that the charges were true would seem to confirm the HUAC suspicion that filmmakers involved with the Communist Party had succeeded in inserting explicitly Stalinist propaganda into a film from a major studio. A look at the production history of the film, however, shows that is not a valid conclusion.

Mission to Moscow was based on a book of the same title written by Joseph Davies, the American Ambassador to the USSR from 1936-1938. In his book, Davies argued that an alliance with the USSR was essential for what seemed an inevitable conflict with Nazi Germany. Selections from the book appeared as a lead article in the *New York Times Magazine* just a week after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The book hit the stands two weeks later. Despite its hefty length of 638 pages, *Mission to Moscow* sold some 700,000 copies in hardcover and soon became one of the first titles to be issued in the new paperback formats that cost twenty-five cents each, making the book very affordable to the general public. *Mission to Moscow* eventually would be translated into 13 foreign languages, including Braille editions in two languages.

The same studio chiefs responsible for the propagandistic pro-Soviet films of the mid-1940s would be responsible for the propagandistic anti-Communist films of the 1950s.

Jack Warner decided a film version of the book could serve as a Warner Brothers contribution to the war effort and perhaps turn a handsome profit. He was sure the Roosevelt administration strongly approved of the book's sentiments and signed a contract with Davies in July of 1941. Most unusual for the time was the provision in the contract that Davies would have final approval of the script. Warner erroneously thought this was merely a formality and that like other authors, Davies would just sign off on the professional script the Warners organization would generate. Such was not the case. For openers, Davies insisted that Erskine Caldwell, the left-oriented author of novels like *Tobacco Road*, be assigned to write the script even though Caldwell had little experience as a scriptwriter. The resulting script, which followed the book closely, was so poor that a year later Davies agreed to pass the project on to future blacklistee Howard Koch, who would soon win an Oscar as co-scripter of *Casablanca* (1943). Koch began rewrites in late August of 1942.

The general line of the film follows Davies in his duties in the USSR where he gathers great respect for Russia's industrial potential. He even has a meeting with Stalin himself. He then returns to the United States where he vigorously debates isolationists and passionately pleads for an alliance with the Soviet Union. Much of the film involves alternating shots of Davies talking with various officials with shots of Soviet industry and later of the Soviet Union at war. Like Caldwell, Koch followed the book closely. He just wrote better dialog and knew how to put the narrative into a cinematic format.

The scenes regarding the Purge trials were not central to the film's purpose of building support for aid to the USSR. Producer Robert Buckner was against including the trials at all and, in any case, thought it was a huge error to present the accused as truly guilty. He reports that it was Davies who insisted on featuring the trial and endorsing the verdict. What seems an absurd judgment today had a certain logic. Davies feared that if the United States did not give full support to Stalin, there might be a second Hitler-Stalin Pact or at least some accommodation that would put the United States at great military disadvantage. He fully understood that the Bolsheviks purged by Stalin were indeed a domestic political opposition, but he could conceive of how these seasoned Bolsheviks disgruntled with Stalin's leadership might see cooperating with the Germans as the only means of overthrowing him. Under those circumstances, they might agree to take the USSR out of the war in the same manner Lenin had taken Russia out of World War I. Given that possibility, if Stalin wanted to present his political foes as paid agents of a foreign power, Davies was willing to accommodate him. Warners, in turn, was contractually compelled to accommodate Davies. A scene of a supposed meeting between Trotsky and Hitler is reported to have been deleted only at the last minute.

The positive portrait of Stalin followed similar logic. The somewhat megalomaniacal Davies seems to have been genuinely impressed with Stalin at their sole meeting, but the hagiographic portrait in the film of Stalin as wise old Uncle Joe sucking on a pipe is not unlike the hagiography of Churchill in the same film or the presentation of Roosevelt only as a voice. Such honorific treatments of political leaders were standard in the Hollywood biopix tradition. Far more serious was the statement at the end of the film that Finland had not been invaded by the Soviet Union. Such a denial was not critical to the narrative, but Davies insisted it was necessary. Rather than being influenced by members of the CPUSA on such matters, Davies took the extraordinary liberty of actually showing the script to Soviet Ambassador Maxim Litvinov. An example of just how controlling Davies had become over the script was that only two weeks before its scheduled release, he insisted on having a new scene added that showed his wife and Mrs. Molotov shopping together in a cosmetic shop. Davies also dictated some of the dialog spoken by Churchill.

Given the veto power Davies had over the script, the contributions of Howard Koch and director Michael Curtiz had minimal effect on the content of the script. Ronald and Allis Radosh, authors of *Red Star Over Hollywood*, contend a major, hidden influence on the film was the leftist Jay Leyda, whose is credited as the film's technical advisor. Thom Anderson, famed for the meticulous scholarship he brings to his film writing, has pointed out that the three changes they credit to Leyda are not in the final cut. He further notes that the attention of the Radoshes to detail leaves much to be desired as they thought the renowned Walter Huston, the star of the film, had played Stalin! Huston had played Davies and is in almost every scene with dialog.

Koch and Buckner have both denied that Leyda had any influence on the script's content. His major task was to select the Soviet newsreel footage to be incorporated into the narrative. Even this contribution was far from absolute as Leyda was excluded from the final editing choices that were made by the usual collaboration of director, producer, and editor. Casting further doubt on Leyda having a hand in the decision regarding the trial or the depiction of Stalin is that Leyda was generally thought to be sympathetic to the views of Leon Trotsky. Leyda had worked with Sergei Eisenstein on films made in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, but Eisenstein can hardly be counted a supporter of Stalin.

Immediately upon its release, *Mission to Moscow* was assailed as a gross distortion of reality in a statement initiated by prominent intellectuals such as John Dewey, Alfred Kazin, Edmund Wilson, Dwight Macdonald, A. Philip Randolph, Norman Thomas, and James T. Farrell. Non-political reviewers were equally negative. Their general assessment was that the acting was wooden, the individual scenes overly clogged with boring talking heads, and the quasi-documentary style unconvincing. Although Warner Brothers spent an extraordinary half million dollars on publicity for the film, *Mission to Moscow* was a box office flop that would never recover its costs. Years later, at the HUAC hearings, a defensive Jack Warner would argue that the film had not been made with profit in mind but as a contribution to the war effort. He testified that, "The picture was made when our country was fighting for its existence, with Russia as one of our allies…. If making *Mission to Moscow* was subversive activity, then the American Liberty ships that carried food and guns to the Russian sites, and the American vessels which conveyed them were likewise engaged in subversive activities."

Not Guilty As Charged

THE MAJOR CHARGE brought against the films of the red trilogy was that they were evidence of a Communist conspiracy aimed at subverting America's entertainment industry. The production history of the films shows this is not true. Communists did not initiate any of the projects, and Communists did not control the final content of any of the films. The films were originated by Hollywood studio bosses in response to the American government's call to construct favorable public opinion on behalf of giving military assistance to the Soviet Union. Driving the content of the films and giving them unique urgency was that these particular films were conceived at a time when the Nazis were winning the war. German divisions were on the outskirts of Moscow and Leningrad and the decisive Battle of Stalingrad had not yet taken place. The films advanced rather than opposed the war policy of the American government

When the studio chiefs chose key personnel for the making of the three films, they consciously opted for screenwriters associated with the Communist movement. They could do this without any ideological qualms as the screenwriters would be working within the structures that applied to all studio productions. The studio chiefs knew the reds were stalwart opponents of fascism and were acutely aware of the terrible human and material costs of the war in the USSR. Moreover, the reds were quite happy to advance a positive view of a Soviet Union where they thought the virtues of a planned economy were now evident. Further fueling their political view was the belief that the joint war effort could pave the way for harmonious post-war relations between the United States and the USSR. Like their coworkers, the reds thought that if supporting the USSR at this crucial historical moment meant overlooking various problems, they should do so. They felt this was no different than refraining at this particular historical moment from putting a cinematic spotlight on racism in the United States or the evils of the colonial empires run by allies such as Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

The genuine political problem raised by the red trilogy is not a question of subversion but the nature of films consciously conceived as propaganda on behalf of a problematic ally. How much behavior that would be criticized in peacetime is it proper to overlook in the midst of war? What are the long-term consequences for all involved of falsifying reality as was done regarding freedom of religion, the Ukrainian famine, forced collectivization, the purge trials, and the realities of daily life in the USSR? Those are basic issues for anyone involved in mass media. Genuine art always speaks truth to power however inconvenient the time and place. Propaganda always serves existing power. Not coincidently, the same studio chiefs responsible for the propagandistic pro-Soviet films of the mid-1940s would be responsible for the propagandistic anti-Communist films of the 1950s. Each time they felt they were serving national policy. Filmmakers unwilling or unable to totally remold their political perspectives in that manner would be forbidden to work in Hollywood until yet another new political wind took hold.

A fully footnoted version will be found on our website www.newpol.org.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Left and the Forgotten Partition

Creede Newton

On January 9, 1992, as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia splintered, the Serbian citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) announced the independence of the Republika Srpska (RS). The precipitous announcement of Serbian autonomy could be considered the diplomatic origin of the RS quest to ethnically cleanse Bosnia, thereby making it suitable for inclusion in a Greater Serbia as was the goal of the RS's first president, Radovan Karadžić. This quest would lead to the displacement, both internal and external of 2.2 million Bosnians, the savage massacre at Srebrenica, the crimes against humanity committed at the Omarska concentration camp and a five-year siege that left the multicultural jewel of southeastern Europe, Sarajevo, devastated.

There is one stark difference between what happed in Bosnia and the atrocities perpetrated by Turkey against their Armenian population and Nazi Germany against European Jewry: thanks to modern media, these horrors took place in full view of the international community. From Right to Left, the daily images of destruction were met with staggering cynicism.

Many theories could be put forth to explain this reprehensible inaction. Perhaps some thought that the great gift of the United Kingdom's imperial foreign policy, partition, was the only recourse, and the forced removal of Bosnian Muslims which the conflict entailed was par for the course. Possibly others suffered from the ailment of religious bigotry; the implications of the blind eye turned towards the ethnic cleansing of a Muslim population by Christian Europeans cannot be ignored.

What can be said without an ounce of doubt is that both the international community at large and the international Left failed to stand with their Bosnian comrades before and during the war; there was almost total disregard of alarming news emanating from the beautiful Balkan state, and internationalists continued to fail Bosnia and Herzegovina. This, coupled with Dayton Peace Accords' (DPA) codification of religious and ethnic divisions and the successful ethnic partition of BiH as a result of the war, the dissolution of BiH is within the realm of possibility.

The Dayton Peace Accords: Division Enshrined

The Dayton Peace Accords, (DPA), signed December 14, 1995, was momentous in bringing an end to a conflict that led to the death of over 100,000 people and the rape of somewhere between 20,000 and 50,000 women. It was heralded as a great achievement of diplomacy and the international community, though truthfully, the leaders of Croatia, BiH and the then existent Federal Republic of Yugoslavia—Franjo Tudjman, Alija Izetbegović, and Slobodan Milošević—had been lured to the negotiating table by NATO's arsenal to settle the difficult question of which ethnic group would control what part of the contested country as well as the fate of a besieged Sarajevo.

Creede Newton *is a freelance journalist writing about Spain, the Balkans, and Israel-Palestine. His work has appeared in* New Politics, Waging Nonviolence, Fair Observer, In These Times, *and the* Alternative Information Center, *among others.*

The percentage of control came down to 51-49 in favor of the Bosniak-Croat Federation (FBiH). The government created in order to handle the deep ethnic divisions between the two entities is incredibly complicated. The FBiH is divided into ten cantons; five of which have a Bosniak majority, three a Bosniak-Croat majority and two are ethnically mixed. When the national government is counted, there are a total of eleven governments in one half of the nation-state. The RS, on the other hand, has a centralized government with 63 municipalities. There is only one area, the Brćko District, which is a part of both entities.

Both the international community at large and the international Left failed to stand with their Bosnian comrades before and during the war.

The two entities that comprise the state of BiH are theoretically equal and both fall under the purview of the Office of the High Commissioner (OHC), the unelected representative of the international community and overseer of the implementation of the DPA. The High Commissioner (HC) was vested with considerable power; he has the ability to remove public officials from office and implement policies should there be a stalemate between the entities. BiH is essentially a representative democracy headed by an unelected official.

In the almost 18 years since the signing of the DPA, its shortcomings have steadily become more apparent with each passing year. Annex IV of the agreement serves as the constitution of BiH and has left the nation hobbled. The main point of concern, though certainly not the sole point, is its de facto ethno-religious definition of citizenship based; a "citizenship of each Entity, to be regulated by each Entity." Annex IV was, after all, adopted by three political parties who deemed themselves the representatives of three embattled ethnicities—Croats, Bosniaks and Serbs.

This was the greatest failing of the international community. The DPA effectively constructed a nation whose halves would be constantly pitted against one another, a nation constantly in danger of renewed conflict that stands on the crutch of international diplomatic and economic intervention. As the international community's interest in and financial support of BiH has waned, politicians have begun to employ ultra-nationalist rhetoric and alarmist tones in order to kick the crutch out from under the nation— all for the sake of votes. By far the most striking examples of this tactic come from the president of the RS, Milorad Dodik.

Dodik's Rhetoric: Secession and Dissolution

In 2012, the international peace envoy to Bosnia-Herzegovina submitted an alarming report to the United Nations Security Council concerning the increasing threat to the nation's territorial sovereignty. The cause? An increase in secessionist rhetoric by Bosnian-Serb officials. Valentin Inzko, the current High Representative, named President Dodik as "the most frequent, although certainly not the sole, proponent of [Bosnian] state dissolution."

Dodik was once viewed as a moderator, a man capable of fostering a peaceful coexistence in his fiercely divided nation. Now he is seen as a scaremongering roadblock to a sustainable political future for Bosnia. With the support of Bosniak and Croat parties, as well as backing from the United States and other Western powers, Dodik rose to importance in RS shortly after the signing of the DPA in 1996 and served as president since 2006. Since then, not only has he regularly predicted the collapse of Bosnia-

Herzegovina, he threatens to cause it, as was the case in 2008 when he threatened to declare independence from BiH should Kosovo declare its own independence from Serbia.

While this threat of illegal secession was contingent on another political event, the vast majority of the secession threats are arbitrary and opportunistic. The nearly one-half of Bosnia and Herzegovina's total area that the Republik Srpska covers is a huge bargaining chip. In April 2012, Dodik told B92 News that it "is historically inevitable for Bosnia-Herzegovina to one day dissolve into its constituent parts, because not even the massive international intervention managed to secure it as a state," before further asserting his connection to Serbia by saying that the "RS is [his] state," that he loves "Serbia more" and sees it as his country "more than Bosnia-Herzegovina."

Denial of Crimes of War

While the near constant threats of secession have become banal, Dodik exploits the podium of the presidency affords to frequently cast a veil over the crimes of war, an act that should never become commonplace. In 2009, he tried to clear the Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) of several profane acts. To begin with, Dodik denied that the mortar attack of Tuzla, which killed 71 civilians, had ever taken place. This denial does more than just cleanse the hands of the VRS; it implies that the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina wrongly convicted an innocent Serb, Officer Novak Djukić, of a nonexistent war crime. In doing so, he challenges the legitimacy of the highest court of his land.

He then called into question the veracity of the internationally accepted accounts of the Markale massacres. The first of these took place on February 5, 1994. A single mortar shell claimed the lives of 68 people and wounded another 144 after falling on the crowded central market of Sarajevo. Immediately after the shelling, UN rescue workers and foreign journalists rushed to the scene, resulting in thorough documentation of the tragedy. The second came six months later, August 28, 1995. On this occasion, five shells were fired but casualties were fewer—34 dead and 78 wounded. This event would lead to NATO bombing VRS positions in the beautiful hills surrounding the Bosnian capital.

Harrowing images of both slaughters were broadcast internationally and still today can be found with great ease. Even the scars left by the mortar remain; they have been filled with blood red resin and are known as "Sarajevo roses"—sobering reminders of the abject suffering the people of Sarajevo so recently experienced.

Two men were convicted of these crimes. In 2003, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) found Stanislav Galić guilty of five counts of murder and inhumane acts, including the first bombing of the market in Sarajevo, as crimes against humanity and delivered a sentence of 20 years. In 2007, the ICTY convicted General Dragomir Milošević of a host of crimes, including the second Markale bombing. In its public judgment, the ICTY found his crimes innumerable, saying that General Milošević left "no safe place" in Sarajevo, subjecting the entire civilian population to "countless acts of violence." He was sentenced to 33 years in prison.

Maybe his most worrisome denial took place in 2010. On a televised debate with Serbian politician Cedomir Jovanovic, Dodik denied that genocide was committed at Srebrenica. "I deem that the qualification of genocide is untenable, I believe it didn't happen," Dodik was quoted as saying in 2010, before continuing on to compare the future dissolution of BiH to the separation of Czechoslovakia. The ICTY ruled that the murder of somewhere between 7,000 and 8,000 (the exact number is unknown) Bosnian Muslims at the hands of VRS troops was a genocidal act and, due to widespread denials, the court conducted a campaign to dispel the myth that genocide did not take place.

His constant public denials of court decisions regarding the actions of the VRS, especially those of the ICTY, reveal Dodik as a man bent on delegitimizing intra- and international organizations, isolating the people of the RS, and leaving them under his guidance. The open placement of the press, economy, and international organizations firmly under the boot of his heel only serve to strengthen this fact.

Free Market Cronyism

Before 2012, the foundation of Dodik's Serbian exceptionalist rhetoric was the economy. He constantly touted the western RS, dominated by Dodik's party, the *Savez nezavisnih socijaldemokrata* or Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), as the stronger economical half, thus muting the opposition. He would then flaunt the entire RS as the stronger economical half of Bosnia-Herzegovina, usually in the interest of promoting the country's fissure.

This is no longer the case. Since 2012, the RS economy has suffered a painful recession. An estimated 150,000 of the 1.4 million residents of the Republic are unemployed. Strikes are widespread as are accusations of corruption. Dodik privatized vast state-owned enterprises and promised widespread investments from the profits. As is often the case, the money lasted long enough to enforce pro-privatization rhetoric but not quite so long as to enact lasting change. Only one permanent investment has materialized: an impressive government compound in Banja Luka with a price tag of approximately $140 million, though its projected cost was a mere $14 million.

In 2008, Transparency International (TI),

a leading anti-corruption institute, announced it would be closing its office in Banja Luka out of concern for the lives of its staff. Tension arose between the RS and TI after the group began investigating the dubious circumstances of the aforementioned privatizations of state-run industries.

Due to its inflated final cost, it should come as no surprise that TI accused the government of misappropriating state funds in the construction of the abovementioned government complex in Banja Luka. Moreover, the building was erected through the use of land swaps and government takeovers of private loans, a convenient pivot on the issue of privatization.

The construction of RS highways is another sordid industry. Strabag, the largest Austrian construction company, won a contract to construct a large highway bypass for the RS. The project was not advertised, thereby making competitive bidding impossible. TI raised concerns that the RS was trying to eliminate the issuance of tenders, a staple of "transparent" privatization, so that buyers could be directly chosen by the government.

Dodik himself was responsible for negotiating many of the privatization deals such as the sale of an oil refinery in Brod to the Russian company Zarubezneft, the largest purchaser of Iraqi oil under the heinously corrupt Oil-for-Food program. He is also known to award large construction contracts to companies headed by close friends from his home village, Laktasi. Such nepotism is inexcusable, and the above examples do not come close to exhausting the wealth of corruption of which Dodik and his government are suspected.

Collaborationist Media

According to Srdjan Blagovcanin, the executive director of TI in BiH, the organization was told that it would "suffer the consequences if [they] did not stop investigating privatization and business deals in Republika Srpska," and was subsequently offered bribes in the form of "large donations" if they would investigate FBiH. After this refusal, several Bosnian Serb media sources known for their vehement support of Dodik began a smear campaign against TI. Several "protected witnesses" were reported to have proffered evidence alleging that two representatives of TI had been racketeering local businessmen. According to pro-Dodik media, the Prosecutor's Office of BiH was investigating the allegations. The Prosecutor's Office disagreed; they never received any information regarding these charges.

Research of Markin Communications shows that if media support of Dodik were measured in monetary value, it would equal $87,428.38 a month in unsolicited advertising space within BiH. In spite of this, he routinely abuses the press. Dodik told Radio Free Europe that there is an international plan that funneled $10 million in order to remove him from power and "empty the Republika Srpska." He maintains that the money is being delivered to the opposition, nongovernmental organizations and the media. In early January he told B92 that journalists working for Radio Televizija Bijeljina, the most popular television channel in the RS, "play the decadent role of mercenaries" and act as "an information center for foreigners in the Republika Srpska."

The president has taken steps to combat this plan. In a leaked memorandum from 2010, Dodik called for a total boycott of state-owned Federal Television News Station due to its "biased and distorted" reporting. Reporters without borders condemned the call as "absolutely outrageous" and considering "the financial importance of state advertising and the economic problems that all the media are suffering, the economic retaliation envisage by Prime Minister Dodik constitutes a major act of blackmail." He also forced Beta News correspondent Ljiljana Kovačević to leave a news conference after publicly berating her. This was not their first confrontation; the relationship was strained in 2009 after Kovačević released a report about misappropriation of public funds in the construction of the previously mentioned government complex.

What is the Role of the International Left?

THESE ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS, coupled with his discrediting of national, international, and nongovernmental organizations, have led to a civil landscape wrought by fear and exploitation. In June 2012, an underreported wave of protests against government corruption was taking place in Banja Luka. Their original intent was to demonstrate dissatisfaction with the destruction of a local park for the sake of another construction project with an inflated budget, but the protests, which were planned through social media, transformed into something larger: an outlet for popular grievances.

The people of the RS are tired of fraudulent construction ventures destroying their parks and consuming their tax dollars, the fearful political climate furthered by the collaborationist media and the divisions between themselves and their comrades in the FBiH being dug ever deeper for political gain. The protestors began to distribute fliers that boldly declared "When fear disappears, tyrants, dictators, autocrats, and false authorities start to fall." According to eyewitness accounts, the demonstrators were professors, doctors, artists, students and labor workers. When people from such disparate social origins ban together to demonstrate in the interest of social justice, no matter the location, the Left ought to be there in presence and spirit.

Trotsky once remarked that all true internationalists could fit into one stagecoach. In the years following the disappearance of the Spirit of '67, this was mostly true. The Internationalist movement today, however, seems to be reinvigorated. Organizations like the Internationalist Movement for a Just World and the International Solidarity Movement are fostering leftist ideals—nonviolent resistance, social justice for the oppressed, workers' rights and anti-interventionist solutions to impending conflicts—with the help of people from across the globe.

It is in the interest of the Left, after all, to spread its ideals. The proselytization of social justice not only exposes the inherent flaws of exploitative "free-market" privatization while liberating individuals suffering from oppressive policies, it wins followers. When those disillusioned with a mainstream American progressive movement that seems content to satiate itself with scraps dropped from the Republican table are able to look to those fighting for complete social and economic equality not only in the United States, but in every nation, the international movement will grow. In doing so, it is possible that a portion of the left-leaning Americans who did not vote in the last election could be mobilized and the United States could take a legitimate turn.

Albert Camus wrote that national society "can be preserved only by opening it up to a universal perspective." Without a strong civil society, the voices of Bosnians fighting for functional, transparent democracy (and Cypriots fighting austerity, Latin Americans fighting an oligarchic financial elite, and Palestinians fighting near-total oppression) will never be heard. President Dodik has exerted himself greatly in limiting a universal, international perspective on the events taking place in the RS, and through his efforts much of the news concerning governmental malfeasance does not get the chance even to fall on deaf ears. This cannot continue. Networks of solidarity must be built and, through these networks, lines of communication can be opened. Our comrades in the Balkans are calling. Internationalists must be the ones to answer.

The Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers, 1933

HERMAN BENSON

THE HIGH POINT OF SOCIAL RADICALISM in America was the Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers for Economic Reconstruction in Washington, DC on May 6 and 7, 1933. Delegates came from around the country in response to the call from a few hundred prominent established leaders of unions, farmers' organizations, cooperatives, the Socialist Party, student groups, organizations of the unemployed. Signers of the call came from thirty-one states and the District of Columbia. Every organization invited to attend was asked to send two representatives. In response, over 4,000 delegates rallied to the nation's Capitol.

A defiant declaration by one union leader, entitled "Labor on the March," introduced the official call:

> We shall fight with every legitimate weapon at our command. We are in earnest. We shall want every friend and every right-thinking American to help. But we do not intend to forewarn the money-fat enemies of America who, through one device or another, have wrung from the people such a proportion of the fruit of their toil that they are stranded in a motionless sea of unemployment.... Here we take a stand and here we fight, such a battle as no labor movement has ever fought before. We fight a battle ...that shall take from the pillaging band of exploiters the weapons with which they have stricken down our millions. We prefer the council table, but we do not shun the battlefield. I am ready to lead the hosts of labor into a battle which we are determined to carry to the last possible ounce of our strength, not for the sake of conquest but for the sake of justice. The die is cast for the battle out of which labor expects a new America.

The author of those ringing words? William Green, President, American Federation of Labor.

After more than three years of deep depression, the delegates confronted a capitalist system in collapse. Unemployment was estimated at 25 percent, although no one was actually counting; long charity-financed breadlines snaked the streets; evicted tenants saw their possessions piled on sidewalks; destitute farmers poured gallons of milk onto the roads in a desperate "National Farmers Holiday" movement; no safety net, no unemployment insurance; no security—social or otherwise.

And they came to Washington not merely to protest injustice but to create a continuing new national organization to battle for justice. The very title of their conference revealed the scope of their intentions. Continental Congress! The first Continental Congress of 1775 prepared the way for revolution against England. The Continental Congress of 1933 would prepare the way for a new social system. For the labor movement, this was a momentous event in history. For our country, it was a fork in the road never taken, a significant what-might-have-been but for....

I can remember only a single inadequate and derogatory reference to this moving, this emotional event: David Shannon, in his book

HERMAN BENSON *was a founder of the Association for Union Democracy and its former executive director. In the 1950s, he was labor editor of* Labor Action*, published by the Workers Party and Independent Socialist League.*

on the Socialist Party, shrugged it off as a "gimmick." How do I know what really happened? That it was more than an imaginative dream? Because I was there. At 17, I was a delegate from the Student Forum, a club established by members of the Young Peoples Socialist League at CCNY, one loosely affiliated to the League for Industrial Democracy. My mind was jogged when I ran across a copy of the official conference minutes among old misfiled papers. This account is based upon those minutes, only slightly seasoned by memory. All quotations are from those minutes.

At the Congress, a resolution, brief and to the point, called for the "public ownership and operation" of all the main industries administered. At that moment, everyone was happy to bash the capitalist system

It is impossible for me to do justice to what was so noteworthy an event in labor history. I have no access to research facilities. Surely documents, personal memos, releases, and news accounts are buried in the archives of universities. Mine are at Wayne University. My intention here is to rescue the bare facts from oblivion in the hope others, more qualified than I, can carry the story further. This was no media gimmick. Nothing that I write here can reproduce the excitement, the enthusiasm, and the sense that something momentous was in the making.

Four speakers opened the sessions with rousing speeches that set the tone.

First came Emil Rieve, International President of the Hosiery Workers, who served as Conference chairman. Taking as his theme the Declaration of Independence, he declared:

> The author of the Declaration of Independence .... set forth that when any government failed to achieve such life and liberty, it was the right of the people to alter or abolish it.... At the present time, no less than 36 state constitutions declare, in some form or other, that it is the right of the people to abolish or alter their government when they deem it necessary....some states go so far as to place a direct responsibility on the people to rid themselves of injustice....Today, with over 15 million unemployed, and a third of our population dependent upon them...our method of government is not providing security, nor does this government even see to it that at least no one starves to death for want of a job....

Rieve was followed by John A. Simpson, president of the National Farmers Union:

> I want in the beginning to divide this country into two classes. In one group there are the 120 million common people whom I call the debtor class. They are worth all the way from nothing to a little less than nothing. In the other group are the 10 thousand ultra rich whom I call the creditor class. They are worth all the way from a few millions of dollars to a few billions of dollars. I am not making this division to create class hatred. I do not want you to hate an Andy Mellon, a Henry Ford, but I do want you to hate, with an undying hatred, a system that makes it possible for one man to accumulate two billion dollars of wealth in a lifetime....Let us go out from this convention fully determined to do everything possible to take control of this country of ours from the grasping, selfish hands of the 10 thousand ultra rich and place it in the hands of the 120 million common people.

Next came Norman Thomas, who had just received 884,781 recorded votes —- and probably more actual votes — as the Socialist candidate for president a few months earlier in 1932.

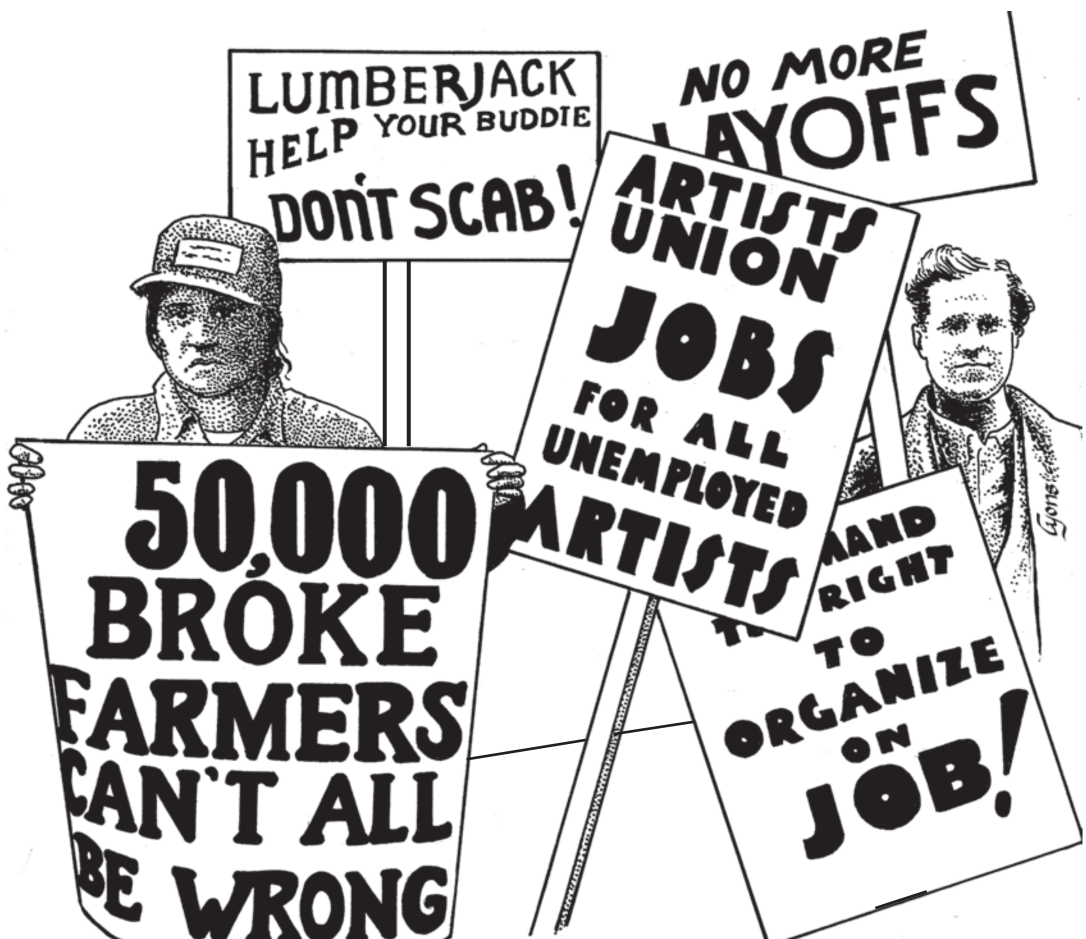
Leaders of the Socialist Party and the heads of sympathizing union leaders, like Emil Rieve, played a dominant role in the Congress but the response to the call came from a far wider audience. The radical talk may seem odd today, but it was common coin in those desperate days of deep depression, mass unemployment, and suffering. As late as 1936, an impressive group of prominent intellectuals signed a statement endorsing Thomas for President, one that used some of that same language.

From Thomas's opening speech, we read:

> There never has been a congress like this in Washington….We seek no impossible balance between exploiter and exploited, worker and shirker, master and slave. We have come in the spirit in which our ancestors built this nation to write a new Declaration of Independence against evil infinitely worse than they suffered at the hands of a British monarch, and to organize for the struggle from which we shall not rest until we have made that declaration effective for ourselves and our children…. Within a few weeks, we have seen Germany go the way of Italy or worse…..There is no magic in America or in us to prevent our drift to a similar Fascism….
>
> What shall we do in this crisis? That is for this conference to decide, not for this speaker to dictate. I do not assume that there is complete agreement among us…. Yet, we shall fail unless we recognize that there can be no rest in our crusade short of a federation of cooperative commonwealths of mankind….

U.S. Senator Lynn J Frazier of North Dakota followed to say that

> The capitalistic system with its selfish greed for financial gain has resulted in the massing of



> enormous wealth which has been concentrated into fewer and fewer hands….That system has been the cause of bankrupting the nation…. There must be a change. Capitalistic control must be broken. Excess profits and the vast amassing of wealth must be controlled and can be by a proper system of taxation.

When it was announced that the Cairo Hotel discriminated against colored delegates, A. Philip Randolph, for the conference, organized a withdrawal of all delegates from the hotel and a mass protest demonstration on the outside.

SUNDAY, MAY 7, 1933, the second of the two-day assemblage, received committee reports, adopted resolutions, established a continuing national organization, and laid plans for the coming battles. The tenor of the times, already reflected in the opening addresses, was repeated in resolutions reported out by the committees and adopted by the delegates. Among them:

• Increased taxation on the wealthy, all income over $25,000 a year to "be recaptured by the government," a capital levy on wealth.

• Government takeover of banks "to finance farmers and small homeowners instead of stock exchange gamblers and gamblers in commodities."

• Cooperation "with militant farmers now subject to martial law by offering them legal and financial aid."

Later, A.C.Townley, representative of the Farm Holiday movement, spoke of farmers on "strike,"— they would be dumping milk on the road —. Delegates responded with a six-minute ovation when he said,

> …We fight not against starving unemployed but against this gambler's system of distribution which takes away their jobs no matter how much they produce…. You can strike, too, you can enter into a league with the farmers so you can eat while you strike….

In the anti-war mood of the times, the convention repudiated the "tyranny of the U.S. Marines and the harsher tyranny of U.S. financiers and industrialists." It denounced imperialism and arms production.

Among other resolutions proposed by committee and adopted by the delegates:

• For civil liberties, the end of restrictions on immigration, for justice to the Scottsboro boys, for equal rights for Negroes.

• A resolution calling for the recognition of the Soviet Union and hailing it as a socialist government was rejected 900 to 734 but a simple resolution for recognition, but without implying praise of its regime, was adopted.

• A resolution for the formation of a new "united political party" was rejected on the ambiguous ground that the Congress had been convened to formulate an economic program not to consider forming a political party. But an ambitious plan was adopted for the formation of "a permanent national organization to be known as the Continental Congress of Farmer and Workers…. to fulfill the plans here adopted, including the exploration of the best methods of economic and independent political action by the producing classes for the achievement of the cooperative commonwealth."

• A national committee of 26 was established, representative of all the participating organizations. Unions, political groups, and farmers' organizations were each assigned five members. Conveners were appointed for 40 states and the District of Columbia to set up a system of state and local organizations to "stimulate and coordinate united mass action for the aims of the Congress," in particular for: demonstrations for "the aims of the Congress"; relief to the unemployed; support to "workers in industrial struggles"; against evictions; support to farmers "against speculators, bankers, mortgage holders, unfair taxation." The affiliated sections were to develop a labor culture program of study groups, sports groups, singing societies, women and children clubs, art and dramatic groups. They would each form a youth section.

IT WAS AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAM, in many ways an impossible program, born out of desperation, hope and enthusiasm. But they seemed determined to make the try. In hindsight, for us today, their aspirations may seem like the imaginative creation of radical, utopian dreamers. But the key initiators and participants were no eccentrics. Many were socialists, yes; but down to earth and practical. Among them, Darlington Hoopes, David Saposs, Dan Hoan, Katherine Pollak, Julius Gerber, Powers Hapgood, Jasper McLevy, Sidney Hillman, A. Philip Randolph, Henry Linville, James H. Maurer, David Dubinski, Leo Krzycki, Clinton Golden, Robert Morss Lovett, Emil Rieve, James O'Neal, Paul Blanshard, Harry Laidler, Edward Levinson, Jacob Panken, B.C Vladeck, LouisWaldman, and of course the avatar of practical idealism, NormanThomas.

Over 200 union officers, community leaders, farmers' representatives and others from 35 states had signed the Continental Congress call. In response, 4,390 delegates registered, representing the following organizations:

Political 1,497
Coop and educational 442
Farmers 193
Unions 535
Student and youth 401
Unemployed 742
Labor fraternal 580

They left Washington inspired and keyed for major battle.. And yet, within a few months, it was all gone and soon forgotten. In those few months, the movement was bypassed and coopted by Roosevelt and the New Deal.

Looking back, a passing hint of what was to come can be detected in Norman Thomas's opening address: "There are things that have been done in Washington in these last crowded weeks of which most of us would approve." FDR had been elected in November but didn't take office until March, just two months before the conference opened, and no one knew how he would go, no one could anticipate the explosive New Deal.

Of course, the New Deal could never satisfy the socialist aspirations of Norman Thomas. At the Congress, a resolution, brief and to the point, called for the "public ownership and operation" of all the main industries administered by boards of directors on which workers, consumers, and technicians were fully represented." It was apparently adopted routinely without debate. Such was the mood of these delegates. At that moment, everyone was happy to bash the capitalist system

But the report of the committee on Unemployment and Economic Insecurity and the resolution adopted by the delegates went on at length. In detail, and down to earth, it spelled out what they demanded:

Three billion in cash relief
Bonus to unemployed veterans
Five-day week, six-hour day without pay reduction
Six billion in public works
Unemployment insurance, old age insurance, sickness insurance
Abolition of child labor
Reduction in interest and principal on home mortgage
Government take over of banks
Inflation to begin by inflating wages

Roosevelt's New Deal soon convinced them that the country was going their way. It offered enough to convince them that they might satisfy their most pressing needs by working with the new regime, not against it. It offered enough to wean the unions and their leaders away from the diehards of the Socialist Party. And so the burgeoning movement, with all its radical implications, disappeared into the New Deal. Nevertheless, in those two 1933 days in Washington, the Continental Congress of Workers and Farmers demonstrated that, at that moment, those who sought social justice in this country were poised to take a new political road.

BACK OF THE BOOK

No Movement, No Justice!

KENZO SHIBATA

> The Future of Our Schools: Teachers Unions and Social Justice
> LOIS WEINER
> Chicago: Haymarket, 2012, 220 pp., $16

MOST OF THE CURRENT LITERATURE on the international education crisis gives little to no big-picture context for planning a fight back. Given the parochial view of most popular education authors, many earnest, well-intentioned proposals for fight back are written within parameters the ruling class tolerates.

As someone who spends an inordinate — if not just plain unhealthy — amount of time on the Internet, not a day goes by I am not presented with an online petition to "Dump [Secretary of Education Arne] Duncan'" or asked to sign on a letter to President Obama pleading with him to stop the "Race to the Top" program. Each of these tactics assumes that if only the political class knew what was going on in inner-city classrooms, it would abandon the neoliberal plan to privatize education.

When public school advocates allow education profiteers, politicians, and the corporate media to limit the scope of the debate, they throw out strategies and tactics that would fix root causes of the problems in education. This unwillingness to challenge the status quo keeps in place structural inadequacies of the very institutions that are charged with organizing the working class against the corporate attack on our schools.

Teacher, professor, former union officer, and lifelong education activist Lois Weiner in her book *The Future of Our Schools: Teachers Unions and Social Justice* gives whole-picture context and concrete prescriptions for restructuring our unions and our society to take back the commons and fight poverty — the biggest hindrance to educational achievement. Weiner turns "reformer" logic on its head and explains that poverty must be addressed to fix schools. Weiner advocates for social movement unionism, a model that broadens the scope of unions

KENZO SHIBATA *taught high school English in the Chicago Public Schools for nearly a decade. A founding member of CORE: The Caucus of Rank-and-File Educators, he is the social media coordinator for the Chicago Teachers Union whose writing can be seen in* Salon, Huffington Post, Gapers Block, Beachwood Reporter, AREA-Chicago, Alter-Net, In These Times, Substance News, *and* Jacobin Magazine. *He is currently co-authoring a book on union reform movements.*

and provides a foil to myopic business unionism.

Weiner does not criticize business unionism merely through a Left critical lens, but demonstrates the material failings of the model. Weiner, through historical and organizational analysis, explains, "[t]he insider knowledge and cozy relationships union officials have with politicians cannot protect teachers' livelihoods and public education." Business unionism is the model where members elect leadership, the leadership hires staff, and a wall is built between members and the union bureaucracy. Members pay dues and use the union like an insurance agency. Union members are pushed out of the education body politic. This is the model preferred by top-down union officers and by the politicians with whom they negotiate as it limits job actions.

Prior to and in the early stages of what Weiner calls the "neoliberal project" these handshake agreements produced contracts with which members were comfortable. This was an era of fairly stable wages, but allowed for a membership to become more complacent and more reliant on officers, who grew much closer to management. Management and union leadership under this model were the elites who existed above the members they manage or serve.

Weiner writes that this reliance has left teachers unable to fight against the onslaught of privatization, which is the key aspect of the neoliberal project. "Teachers unions have been incapable of stopping these school closings because the business union model assumes that power consists of union officers' expertise to win concessions." In a contract fight, bosses are legally obligated to come to an agreement with their workers. Workers have leverage of a work stoppage — or least the threat thereof. Management's back is against the wall to bring students back in school.

There is no leverage to fight school closings, a tactic used to replace unionized public neighborhood schools with privately run, publicly funded charter schools. Districts through their relationships with state legislators have been able to narrow the scope by which teachers can strike to merely wages and benefits. Urban districts concurrently push for school closings along with austerity contracts.

This scenario has allowed the public image of teachers unions to be diminished as being "only concerned with wages and benefits" and made teachers' strikes largely unpopular with the public, or at least that is the narrative painted by the corporate media.

> The ruling class paints a narrative that poverty can be fixed by the acumen of teachers; therefore a poor economy is the fault of teachers, not the leaders who hold the purse strings of our collective wealth.

Weiner offers a concrete example of how the ruling class has pitted teachers unions against the public in the second part of the book, where she reprints her review of the book *The Newark Teachers Strikes: Hopes on the Line*. Weiner uses this review to tell the story of the Newark Teachers Union, which struggled with its own identity, and was forced into conflict with the poor African-American communities its workers served. Weiner writes that the second strike tore a rift through the two sides that still exists today. Recently, the Newark teachers unions accepted a merit pay proposal in its contract at the behest of Democratic Party shooting star and social media darling Mayor Cory Booker.

Weiner offers a new form of unionism as an alternative to business unionism, which she calls "social movement unionism." Weiner contrasts social movement unionism with the more popular term "social justice unionism" in that social movement unionism addresses the structural failings of even well intentioned unions operating on a program of social justice. She writes, "[Social movement unionism] addresses the need for transformation of the unions internally, especially the need for union democracy. Union democracy is a thorny issue for radicals, especially those who assume leadership in moribund organizations. 'Social justice' unionism addresses the positions the union takes on various political, social, and economic issues."

A social justice union can still be a top-down union business union that will put on airs with social justice rhetoric. Under this model, union leadership does not amplify the voice of its members; it becomes the voice of the members. To motivate members around an issue that has been chosen by leadership, there's a mad scramble for "buy-in" or at least a media strategy that drowns out the voices of dissent within the union from the public.

When tea-party types criticize union leaders as being totalitarian, using Stalinist imagery to sully social justice causes to the public, there lies a kernel of truth. Unions may be championing redistributive justice, but many are silencing members in the process. The ersatz Andrew Breitbarts of the world make a living off finding dissent within unions and making YouTube films to demonstrate redistributionist policies as being one-in-the-same as totalitarianism.

Weiner acknowledges the difficulty in running a truly democratic organization. She uses the Chicago Teachers Union's new militant leadership led by the rank-and-file caucus CORE as an example of new hope in the face of the neoliberal project. During the 2012 Chicago Teachers Strike, teachers were pressured by the media and politicians to act quickly and ratify a new deal one week into the strike. After the plan was presented to membership, its school-based representatives voted to move the vote two more days to give school workers time to read the agreement before voting. It was a risk as even national media led by simpering neoliberal technocrat bloggers pontificated that the strike could ruin children's lives.

Since the teachers are limited to striking over wages and benefits, this would be an easy argument to make, but anyone who took a moment to put his or her spreadsheets down would see that teachers, inspired by the social movement unionism of the CTU leadership, were using the spotlight to address issues of education justice like class size and lack of resources.

THE BOOK IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS. The first part sets context for the assault on education and the failings of teachers unions to fight back. The second part is comprised of articles Weiner wrote for *New Politics* on education that provide historical analysis to the state of education and the structural failings of many teachers unions. In the first part, Weiner provides a discussion of the definition of teachers, which is a topic missing from much of the current literature on the subject. Weiner describes what makes the "heart of teaching" -- which is crucial to constructing arguments for public education. She defines teachers as both idea workers and as caretakers. The gendered nature of carework carries the baggage of institutional sexism against female workers. In the chapter on the Newark Teachers Union, Weiner delves deeply into this concept. Carework is often not considered to be part of the workers' struggle in that it is often associated with what is expected of women in the home. Weiner does not let the Left off the hook: she mentions that teachers unions also have paid little attention to issues of gender (or even class).

The notion that teaching is "women's work" and an extension of women's instinct as caretakers has been deleterious to women, teaching and the labor movement. This notion further institutionalized sexism and allows that sexism to create poor working conditions for teachers regardless of gender. Had teachers unions employed a social movement model, teachers unions could have worked as champions of the women's liberation movement. The case could have been made that carework is real work and that teachers should not accept poor working conditions as part of their "care." The notion that teachers are not workers because they are motivated by intrinsic maternalism has allowed for the common practice of externalizing the cost of classroom supplies to teachers. This led to a decrease in real wages. This also allows management to push a lean production model in the schools, forcing more and more work on teachers.

One of the best features of Weiner's book is that she provides concrete examples for unionists to transform their unions into social movement unions. She advocates unions taking on issues that may not be bread-and-butter contract clauses, but would receive popular support from membership, like single-payer healthcare. Members who may not have been interested in organizing for their union may be more willing to organize around issues they are passionate about, which brings more people into the larger body politic of the union.

Weiner urges would-be union reformers to look beyond local issues and be active in their national unions. Weiner breaks down the power structure of both the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA). Both unions are structured in very different ways; however she describes both as top-down and in her words in need of "democratization." She dissects the anatomy of the AFT through an analysis of its conventions under the rule of AFT President Albert Shanker. Weiner very succinctly uses the same framework to analyze the political program of the AFT and its relationship to members. She describes how this plays out internationally through the AFT and the NEA's involvement in the Education International, an international confederation of teachers unions.

Weiner writes about the shift in education historian Diane Ravitch. She acknowledges the about-face that Ravitch, once a proponent of neoliberal education reform has made; but offers analysis as to why Ravitch does not offer alternatives to the neoliberal plan. Weiner gives credit to Ravitch for being an intellectual who is genuinely interested in education. She contrasts her with the neoconservatives who forge ahead with neoliberal reforms in the face of mounting evidence that prove that they are not only ineffective, but also dangerous. Weiner describes how Ravitch's faith in capitalism has narrowed her worldview. Ravitch can only see the failings of the school system beginning as far as the neoliberal reforms started taking form. A broader critique of the U.S. school system would lead one to see how the social inequalities of society have led to the problems in the schools.

Weiner's distinction is important because the ruling class paints a narrative that poverty can be fixed by the acumen of teachers; therefore a poor economy is the fault of teachers, not the leaders who hold the purse strings of our collective wealth. The view that education problems are the fault of bad education policy and not bad economic policy obscures problems of inequality from the conversation, allowing the one-percent to continue accumulating wealth at the expense of the poor and working class while blaming the poor and working classes for their own problems.

Another common argument thrown at public education advocates by the so-called reformers is that they do not offer solutions and we use poverty as an excuse. Weiner shows how poverty is not an excuse, but it's certainly a major factor for educational failings. She does not place all of the blame on poverty, citing that had teachers unions been structured democratically involving the community, there would have been mechanisms to fix the problems of poverty. Teachers must not only find better practices in the classroom, but must also be in the streets fighting for economic justice for their students.

At just over 208 pages, Weiner's book does not tell the whole story, but tells much more of the story than books two or three times its length. I would recommend this book to a wide audience. The first part of the book has popular appeal and I would not hesitate to recommend it to people of all political worldviews. The second half of the book, the compilation of Weiner's *New Politics* education articles gives great Left political analyses. Overall, this book is highly recommended for anyone interested in learning about the fight to save public education.

Marxist Political Economy in a Contemporary Vein

GEORGE FISH

An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital
MICHAEL HEINRICH
translated by Alexander Locascio
Monthly Review Press, 2012, 240 pp., $15.95

The Value of Radical Theory: An Anarchist Introduction to Marx's Critique of Political Economy
WAYNE PRICE
AK Press, 2013, 189 pp., $12.95

THE CONTINUING WORLD RECESSION that has now dragged on since late 2007, with no sign of abating, has renewed interest in Marx's critique of capitalism. So much so that even respectably "mainstream" TIME.com now writes:

> Karl Marx was supposed to be dead and buried. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and China's Great Leap Forward into capitalism, communism faded into the quaint backdrop of James Bond movies or the deviant mantra of Kim Jong Un….
>
> Or so we thought. With the global economy in a protracted crisis, and workers around the world burdened by joblessness, debt and stagnant incomes, Marx's biting critique of capitalism—that the system is inherently unjust and self-destructive—cannot be so easily dismissed….
>
> A growing dossier of evidence suggests that he may have been right. It is sadly all too easy to find statistics that show the rich are getting richer while the middle class and poor are not….*

Similarly, Nouriel Roubini, professor of economics at New York University's Stern School of Business, writes presciently in his and *New York Times* economics writer Stephen Mihm's *Crisis Economics: A Crash Course in the Future of Finance* (Penguin Press, 2010), p. 37:

GEORGE FISH *is an anti-authoritarian socialist writer living in Indianapolis, Indiana, whose work has appeared in several left publications. He has also published extensively on blues and other pop music, has published poetry, and does Lenny Bruce/George Carlin-style stand-up comedy. He may be reached at georgefish666@yahoo.com.*

*Michael Schuman, "Marx's Revenge: How Class Struggle Is Shaping the World," TIME.com, March 25, 2013, http://business.time.com/2013/03/25/marxs-revenge-how-class-struggle-is-shaping-the-world/

> Toward the end of 2008 the pandemic worsened, and the history of long-forgotten crises became increasingly relevant for explaining what was happening. So did the writings of economists who had languished in obscurity for many years. John Maynard Keynes came back into vogue, as did Joseph Schumpeter, Hyman Minsky, Irving Fisher, and even Karl Marx. Their sudden reappearance was significant, if portentous: all had made their mark studying how capitalism would collapse in crisis. They may have drawn wildly different conclusions as to why and how, much less what to do about it, but the fact that their names were uttered with a quiet respect was a sign that a sea change was at hand. Economists who had preached the virtues of deregulation, the efficiencies of markets, and the benefits of financial innovation suddenly seemed outdated compared with these more unconventional thinkers.

Other "mainstream" economists have echoed the same sentiments, notably Nobel Prize-winners Paul Krugman and Joseph Stiglitz, former Clinton Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, and think-tank writers Dean Baker and Jared Bernstein. Clearly those voices of long-dead economists — from the only recently non-respectable Keynes to the always pariah-in-the-house Marx — are not only not silenced, they are laughing most uproariously from their premature graves! This makes the arrival of these two new radical studies of Marx's political economy—Michael Heinrich's *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital* and Wayne Price's *The Value of Radical Theory: An Anarchist Introduction to Marx's Critique of Political Economy*—even more timely and relevant. For presented here most appropriately are two new clear, original, and readily-understood explications of Marx's economic theories and predictions that both illuminate the strengths, as well as inadvertently express the weaknesses, of Marx's economic thought, prognosis and analysis.

Let's be clear about it, as great a thinker as Karl Marx was, he was not an infallible prophet in the Old Testament/Talmudic tradition, and it is a great disservice to this profound yet fallible human, Karl Marx , to regard him as such and hang onto his every word as though it had been extra-worldly revealed. Unfortunately, this has been far too common on the left.

Of especial originality here is Wayne Price's short volume, aptly subtitled *An Anarchist Introduction to Marx's Critique of Political Economy*, in which Price acknowledges that only Marxist economic theory is a "developed, alternate theory" in counterpoise to free-market and Keynesian economics, both of which "exist to justify capitalism and advise the government on how to manage the capitalist economy….[N]o one developed an overall analysis of how capitalism worked as an economic system as thoroughly as Marx." Price writes that although he does "not accept the total worldview developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels," he thinks "much of their analysis is accurate." (p. 1) Thus does *The Value of Radical Theory* become another useful volume for carrying on the anarchist-socialist dialogue. We will return more fully to Price's volume later.

German economist Michael Heinrich's *An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital* is what its title says it is: a nicely-structured, concise, relatively short introduction and summary of the whole three volumes of Marx's seminal *Capital* in its entirety that leaves out nothing essential. Further, while the author himself cautions that his slim volume is not a substitute for reading the whole of *Capital* itself, it will make the undertaking easier and clearer; so in this regard, Heinrich's work is itself a valuable contribution to the literature on Marxist economics, and something to be very grateful for also now being available in English.

Even though Heinrich does not simply restate Marx, but makes some original contributions of his own, the principal trouble I have here with Heinrich's exposition is that it too often merely re-explains Marx's concepts and categories of analysis uncritically, when in fact a critique of Marxist economics is itself needed, a necessary follow-up to what Marx intended to do with "bourgeois political economy."

For me, Marx himself was a social scientist as well as a critic of the social science of his time (which was in the time of Marx's writing primarily political economy, the archaic term for economics, and philosophical reflections on such); and despite his myriad and often overlooked insights, Marx also had significant shortcomings, as did all the classical economists (the most seminal of whom in Marx's day had been Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill, along with decidedly lesser lights who were important then, such as the "deservedly obscure" Nassau Senior). Marx himself was grappling with new material and new ways of analysis within an intellectual framework that was itself inadequate and confused—after all, economics as we understand it today didn't really begin until the 18th Century with the publication of *Wealth of Nations*, and was still in its infancy when Marx wrote *Capital* in the mid-19th Century—prior to the marginalist revolution of the 1870s, which marks the beginning of modern economics as such. So, basic limitations of elucidation and analysis in Marx's works themselves are perfectly understandable, though the common practice, continued by Heinrich, is to carry over root-and-branch what Marx wrote as infallible categories. But this is a disservice to Marx himself.

> Marx's work is a totality that encompasses and subsumes within it a number of separate disciplines—economics, sociology, philosophy, cultural criticism, history—across many writings of vastly different natures.

This encapsulates my objection to Heinrich's discussion of value, commodity and the labor theory of value in the first three chapters, which carries over uncritically Marx's arguments from the beginning of the first volume of *Capital*, which must appear to a contemporary reader, especially one versed in modern economics, as a philosophical mish-mash laden with Hegelianisms. Marx's problems lie in his supposedly "lifting the veil" off of the commodity as such, making it "transparent," i.e., exposing the social relations of production that lie within. But this seems from the beginning to confuse sociology with economics as such—which is to say, the two social sciences are distinct, and sociology is the province of human social relationships, while economics is more confined to the inputs and outputs of production and distribution of commodities, which are themselves "transparently" only objects and services produced not for direct use, but indirectly for use through purchase in the marketplace. This also has bearing on Marx's discussion of "fetishism," which, in part, can also be looked upon as a confusion of social relationships with economic inputs as such; much as the incorporation of capital, land and labor in the production of steel, and the social relations embodied in the production of steel, do not enter into how the engineer uses the steel to construct a bridge. This explication of the social relations of production, which Marx discusses economically throughout *Capital*, and philosophically in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, is what made Marx so important as a pioneer of sociology as such, and recognized so by his contemporaries and critics; for more on this seminal role see the discussion in Karl Marx: *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, edited and translated by T.B. Bottomore (McGraw-Hill, 1964), pp. 1-48. Karl Polyani's important study of the early history of capitalism, *The Great Transformation* (Beacon Press, 1957), sees the rise of the "market economy" as lying particularly in the creation of "artificial" markets in land and labor, heretofore considered inalienable, i.e., not subject to buying and selling. Polanyi's seminal radical text is further background reading and exposition of what is initially found in Marx.

Marx's work is a totality that encompasses and subsumes within it a number of separate disciplines—economics, sociology, philosophy, cultural criticism, history—across many writings of vastly different natures; so it is difficult to separate out one Marx from the other, e.g., look at Marx as an economist without also looking at him as simultaneously a sociologist, historian, philosopher, and critic. But Marx, writing only as a classical economist in *Capital,* doesn't deal—as a modern, i.e., clearer, economist would—with prices as such, which are measurable and established; but instead deals with values, which are not (a holdover from classical economics, which was, importantly, economics still in its infancy). His explication of the Labor Theory of Value also suffers from logical flaws in its expounding (an extensive critique and elegant disproof of the Labor Theory of Value that requires only high school algebra to grasp is found in Scott Gordon, *History and Philosophy of Social Science* (Routledge, 1991), pp. 171-4.)

Further, as Heinrich points out later (p. 148), Marx's solution to the Transformation Problem, i.e., the transformation of values into prices of production, is unsuccessful. Heinrich also shows that the "Law" of the "Tendency of the Rate of Profit to Fall" is not necessarily so, but is dependent on actual costs of constant and variable capital (pp. 151-4). This argument is further developed and advanced in a new article by Heinrich on Marx's post-*Capital* economic studies, "Crisis Theory, the Law of the Tendency of the Profit Rate to Fall, and Marx's Studies in the 1870s," *Monthly Review*, April 2013.

Heinrich falls into an unnecessary slighting of marginalism and an unfounded allegation of it being a "non-monetary" theory; but these issues are thoroughly discussed in an important reprint of three crucial discussions of Marxism and marginalism*: Karl Marx and the Close of His System*, *Böhm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx*, edited by Paul Sweezy (Orion Editions, 1984), which brings together 19th century economist Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk's appreciative yet critical examination of Marx's value theory, *Karl Marx and the Close of His System*; Austrian Marxist Rudolph Hilferding's unsuccessful defense of Marx's value theory, "Böhm-Bawerk's Criticism of Marx"; and von Bortkiewicz's critique of Marx's transformation of values into prices. This collection of classic papers on Marxist value theory and its marginalist critique is an essential supplement to any reading of Marx in a contemporary economic vein.

Wayne Price also carries over uncritically Marx's categories, though is more circumspect than Heinrich in seeing them as "tendencies" rather than immutable laws as such (see pp. 43-55).

But Marx's explication and analysis of capitalism and its inherent instability does not rely on these dubious philosophical considerations. The strength of Marx's critique of capitalism's instability lies elsewhere, and it is his insights here that overshadow the erroneous concerns that have been such a matter of contention among Marxists. Indeed, to a modern reader versed in economics, much of Marx's critique reads quite straightforward as a continuation of Economics 101, 201 and 301, albeit with its expression couched in idiosyncratic and *sui generis* language. (See especially in terms of this Heinrich's chapter 8, "Interest, Credit, and 'Fictitious Capital.'") It is here that we find the heart of Marx's criticism, that scathing critique that we noted at the beginning of this review that's an extension of the basic teaching of economics itself without the self-adjusting gloss of "market equilibrium," and which is conceded even now by the "mainstream." All this is ably expounded for the general reader extensively in Heinrich's *Introduction* and, more compactly, in Price's *Value of Radical Theory*, for which their development of analyses strictly within the limited framework provided by Marx's writings themselves turns out to be a double-edged sword.

We've dealt at length above with both Heinrich's and Price's hewing closely to the orthodox Marxist framework; let us now turn to what they both contribute to the analysis that's original. Here Heinrich and Price part company distinctly, with Heinrich being more of an "inevitablist" while Price is more the advocate of political action within the anarchist framework to achieve that final overthrow of the capitalist system. Heinrich contributes valuably to the political discussion by noting that there's nothing inevitable either to workers' class consciousness or to the proletariat assuming its role as the gravedigger of capitalism, particularly within an advanced capitalist economy. He leaves the reader to draw the conclusion that capitalism, as irrational and destructive a system as it is, could still continue lurching on indefinitely from one crisis to the next without serious challenge to its existence.

Price, more the political activist, sees a need for direct appeals for socialism to make it happen, and eschews simply waiting for those "inevitable forces" engendered under capitalism to lead ineluctably toward its abolition and replacement by a socialist system. He is for the direct raising of socialist demands among the populace and organizing them in struggle. Further, for Price, the ethical dimensions involved in fighting for and achieving socialism and non-exploitation cannot be left out, cannot be assumed away as not needed, or as merely "moralistic" baggage, due to the "inevitability" of socialism triumphing no matter what the workers think at any one moment (or even over an extended length of time). There is an interesting parallel here, I think, between his "voluntarism" and that of the Leninist "vanguard party," though, of course, Price vigorously opposes the centralization, party discipline, and top-down rule of such a party. But yes, his call for emphasizing the moral dimension of socialism, in advocating for socialism as ethical, just and desirable in and of itself, and not simply inevitable, does have political merit, as well as potential for gathering listeners to the socialist message who might otherwise not be inclined to listen. And moral fervor is a good thing also—it's a significant part of what led many of us socialists to become — and remain — socialists in the first place!

Socialism, for Price the anarchist, means a federation of self-determining decentralized communes that may follow very different means to achieve the non-exploitative society; in this he criticizes the authoritarianism and centralization he sees inherent in Marxist political systems—certainly Stalin's, of course, but Price sees Stalinism as already latent in the authoritarian reign of Lenin and Trotsky; and in particular, he follows Italian anarchist Errico Maletesta's notion of federated, pluralistic local and regional communes that would try a number of means to reach the desired end of free, non-exploitative, decentralized communities, the exposition of which he includes as an appendix. This delineates one significant difference between Price and Heinrich that relates directly to economics: Price is far more macroeconomic than Heinrich, analyzing capitalism particularly as a global system; while Heinrich is more microeconomic, focusing much more on the individual capitalist firm as representing the "average firm" that is confronted, willy-nilly, with forces beyond its control to which it can only react. Heinrich's lone foray here into a more global and macroeconomic analysis—a critique of Lenin's *Imperialism* as "problematic" (p. 215)—is itself problematic.

Three final observations. Paul Krugman, the foremost exponent of Keynesian fiscal policy for dealing with the unemployment crisis endemic in the present recession, advances ably and amply the persuasive power of sweet reasonableness in advocating for increased government spending to put the unemployed back to work in his latest book, the best-selling *End This Depression Now!* (W.W. Norton, 2013). He demonstrates most convincingly here that austerity will only make the recession worse, but finds himself, in the end, confounded by the "irrationality" of both capitalists and politicians in the face of this sweet reason. While skirting the issue that's raised by Marx, that of a system that perpetually generates crises, Krugman convincingly argues that Keynesian economics gives policymakers the tools to tame such crises, much as a lion tamer is able to tame this man-eating cat to docilely sit on a stool.

And indeed, from the standpoint of economic rationality, a full employment economy would benefit capitalists as well as workers, by turning the unemployed into consumers able to buy the capitalists' goods. But as Krugman notes (pp. 94-5, 206), economist Michal Kalecki, a Polish-born Marxist who independently developed and amplified much that would later be called Keynesian economics, thought the capitalists themselves were driven to oppose a full-employment economy, despite its evident advantages, because it would give workers "undue" power vis-à-vis capital. This point, that for the capitalist class employment must hinge first of all on "sound finance" and "restoring business confidence," is further amplified in an article in the April 2013 *Monthly Review* by John Bellamy Foster, "Marx, Kalecki, and Socialist Strategy." Hence, according to Foster, Kalecki, and Krugman—as well as Marx—business can indeed hold government hostage.

But our left today is also allowing this business hostage-taking by not mobilizing the working class, the unions. and the unemployed to fight openly for full employment; and thus plays directly into the hands of the Obama "moderates," the Tea Party and Republican right, and the business interests who do not want full employment even though they themselves would benefit by the increased consumer spending power of the previously unemployed, but would rather have recession, austerity and restoration of "business confidence" instead. Yet the attitude of too much of the left seems to be that it can do nothing except call for socialism, because the capitalist fix is already in, and the capitalists themselves are immobile, immune to pressure for change and reform, indeed, to anything that falls short of overthrowing capitalism itself—which is certainly not borne out by history. (There's the other left, of course, as exemplified by DSA, the Communist Party and CCDS—which holds that any decisive break with the Obama Administration and the Democratic Party from the left, as opposed to merely expressing unease and dissent from within the fold and calling for more "progressive" measures, would be "unrealistic.")

I consider such abdication on the unemployment issue by the left, in both its "revolutionary" and "reformist" wings, to be unconscionable. This despite the "revolutionaries'" ability to assert, as basis for this abdication, formal conformity with the notion advanced by Marx and sustained by Krugman that the capitalist class can't only just generate economic crises by "business as usual...." It can also, as Krugman and other have pointedly noted, compound them by its own class irrationality and obeisance to what Keynes archly called "defunct economists." But the logic of capital need not also be the de facto logic of the left. Further, borrowing from Price above, we may also pointedly note the moral dimension involved, as well as pragmatic considerations. Directly put, abdication by the left on the unemployment issue is to consign millions to crumbs allegedly because only a half-loaf at most (such as the New Deal or a Scandinavian welfare state) is available through concerted struggle and mobilization for vital reforms, but never the full loaf achievable only through socialism. But especially in the United States, as well as in Europe and elsewhere, socialism is not realistically on the agenda—thus making the socialist full loaf only a pie in the sky for millions, with all the appeal of that "bowl of warm spit" that FDR's first Vice President, John Nance Garner, attributed to his office. Surely this is one significant way in which our contemporary socialists (already stymied by the historical anomaly of the working masses not turning decisively to the left during this recession) readily turn people off to socialism, not move them toward socialism!

Another question raised is why economists such as Krugman, Stiglitz, Reich, Dean Baker, and Jared Bernstein remain pro-capitalist Keynesians and don't become socialists. One reason is that which the left itself has avoided discussing ever since the fall of "actually existing socialism" in the late 1980s and early 1990s: namely, that socialism as tried to date has been largely unsuccessful, has either been incomplete, only partial, welfare states that have stayed within the bounds set by the capitalists; or else Stalinist dictatorial states that have themselves been notable economic failures (as well as political fiascoes). Perhaps there is some partial hope for the present in the Bolivarian experiments in Latin America; but as with the unemployment issue, the problem lay not so much with Marxist analysis as it does with the shortsightedness and inability of socialists and socialist movements themselves.

That said, it is good to see the revival of interest in Marx and Marxism, something certainly the publication of these two books under review can only significantly advance. Marx was a giant, a giant as relevant for our times as well as in the past, but he does not stand alone—he must be supplemented and complemented, our understanding of him refreshed anew by volumes such as Heinrich's and Price's, as well as by a non-Talmudic reading of him in the first place. While it is always good to begin with Marx in our investigations into social relationships and their workings, it is simply not enough to end there.

From a Dream to a Nightmare

The Irish Green Party in Government

LILY MURPHY

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO MARK the beginning of a new era in Irish politics. The Green Party entered into a coalition government with Fianna Fail in 2007 bringing with it the ideas of a new greener economy and all the hopes and aspirations of environmentalists, but instead their time in power turned out like a comedic tragedy.

Without Power or Glory,
The Greens in Government
DAN BOYLE
Dublin: New Island Press, 2012
280 pp., $22.40

One person near the epicenter of that government is the author of *Without Power Or Glory, The Greens In Government*. Dan Boyle was a senator for the Green Party in the Irish senate during those short yet turbulent years that his

LILY MURPHY *is 24 years old and comes from Cork city, Ireland, the district that Boyle represented in Parliament. She graduated from University College Cork and is currently part of the lost generation of Irish youth. She is a frequent contributor to* New Politics. *Email:lilymurphycork@gmail.com*

party was in government, and through this book he attempts to piece together what went wrong and how it all ended so brutally.

Unlike long established parties like Labour (1912), Fine Gael (1922), Sinn Fein (1905) and Fianna Fail (1926), the Irish Green Party was founded in 1981. It was a political party unaffected by civil war politics and infused with fresh ideas for a new generation. It took time for the Greens to evolve into a parliamentary party; in its infant years they represented the voice of the protester and the young radical, but in 2002 during the boom of the Celtic tiger era they won six seats in Dail Eireann including the author Dan Boyle, who represented the Cork South Central constituency. By 2006, the 25th anniversary of the party, Boyle informs us that the Greens were moving in the direction of carving out a governmental image. "Election efforts were ongoing to change the party from one of protest and opposition to a party of government." (16)

By spring 2007 morale within the party was at its highest as all eyes were on taking advantage of Prime Minster Bertie Ahern's lurking problems at the Mahon tribunal where he tried in vain to explain his corrupt dealings while the public was also growing somewhat tired of Fianna Fail which had been in power since 1997. In the general election of 2007 the Green Party won six seats again; this time Boyle lost his and blames it on the fact that during his last tenure as Member of Parliament he foolishly ignored local issues to concentrate on national ones.

Fianna Fail had lost some seats and needed a coalition partner to strengthen it into a government position once again. Negotiations took place between the Green Party and Fianna Fail who looked upon the Greens as perfect partners to prop them up in government. Boyle paints the negotiations episode as a drawn out to and fro-ing between the age-old party of DeValera and the relatively young party of the environmentally aware. "Fianna Fail were the big boys, the practiced survivors and that we were there half under sufferance." (41)

The results of the negotiations were two ministerial portfolios for the Green Party along with Boyle being awarded a seat in the senate in exchange for supporting Fianna Fail in government. The two ministerial positions were of the utmost importance to the Green Party, two highly valued portfolios in their eyes: Minister for the environment, heritage, and local government and Minister for communications, energy, and natural resources.

Reading the chapter on the negotiations leaves the reader feeling a sense that the almost vulnerable Green Party had made a deal with the devil.

Before the newly formed government could take its place, the outgoing administration had some things to tie up, such as the outgoing minister for the environment Dick Roche of Fianna Fail who on his last day in power signed an order for the building of a motorway over an ancient and important Celtic burial chamber at Tara. For years previous the Green Party had been opposed to the motorway being built over the heritage site, but now they were in government with the same party, which agreed to the construction of what would become the M3 motorway. The Greens found out on their very first day in government how naïve they had been, as Boyle states, "on our first day in government we were undermined." (63)

Boyle goes on to tell what was obviously well known among the public and that was how Fianna Fail just wanted to use the Green Party to its own advantage, in other words eat them up and spit them out. "Fianna Fail's strategy was to put the Greens in a box and keep them there." (64) The feeling of putting the Greens in a corner permeates this book, and it was a fact well known to everyone at the time except, it seems, to the Greens.

This book is supposed to be an insider's account of those turbulent last years of the Celtic tiger and the start of the economic depression, yet Boyle comes across at some points as being an outsider looking in, and it was, I suppose, how the Green Party as a whole felt during those boom-to-bust years.

Honesty is the main tool in this account and Boyle uses it perhaps not to its fullest but enough just to paint a picture of the frustration felt within the Green Party. In 2008 the turning point came when Bertie Ahern announced his resignation as prime minister just as the economy was heading for an almighty crash. "While Bertie was answering corruption claims at the Mahon tribunal and announcing his resignation in May 2008, which was a long goodbye including addressing the joint houses of congress in Washington, the economy was imploding but all eyes were on Bertie." (87)

The IMF episode signals the end game for the Green Party in government.

Bertie Ahern had been head of government since 1997 during a time when Ireland's economy prospered and peace was slowly falling on the North, yet Boyle holds no punches as he tells it the way many people now concede the whole Bertie show to be. He calls Bertie Ahern's economic policies reckless and the boom superficial, one, which was allowed to grow out of control. Something we all know now but didn't want to believe back then!

While an economic crash was occurring across the world throughout 2008, in Ireland it was being wholly ignored until September of that year. "The Lehmann Brothers' collapse made everyone sit up and take notice, the globalised nature of the Irish economy meant attracting a cold in the U.S. meant that pneumonia would follow in Ireland." (88)

The IMF episode signals the end game for the Green Party in government. Boyle sketches a tragically comic weekend in November, 2010 when it all came to a head. As the G20 summit was taking place in Seoul on the weekend of the 13th and 14th, BBC and Reuters were reporting on an IMF intervention in Ireland. During that weekend domestic news scurried away from reporting any such IMF invite to Ireland while government ministers either went to ground or flatly denied any such talk of the International Monetary Fund coming to take over Irish financial affairs. It took another week before the government eventually confirmed what was widely known around the world.

The comedy of the whole situation continued for another year or so after when the Green Party phoned the prime minister, Brian Cowen, who had taken over from Bertie Ahern, informing him of their decision to pull out of government some 45 minutes before attending a press conference to announce their decision to the public. At the press conference one member of the Green Party who couldn't find a minder for his toddler had to take her along with him to the event. It summed up the whole situation which was a short yet bizarre and almost always chaotic time in government for the Green Party.

Those days in late 2010 and early 2011 were crazy days. The public was unsure whether the IMF was coming or not, and even some government ministers were unsure also. No one seemed to have been in control of the situation which was spiraling out of control at a rapid pace. Until the Green Party eventually decided to pull out of government and a general election was called for in spring, 2011 did things finally start to calm down, but by then the damage was done and it was a damage which still seems unfixable. The stand out memory I have from those days was the amount of global media camped outside government buildings reporting on the manic last days of a manic government.

Boyle somehow maintains a level head

while describing such insane days and weeks but each titled chapter has the word "end" included, a nod to the fact that perhaps the Green Party's involvement in government was doomed right from the start.

While the Green Party was in government it cannot be argued that a new sense of going back to the land took over society. "Grow your own" became buzzwords while many urban dwellers began investing in chicken coops and chickens. Allotments came back to life and farmers' markets took a big chunk from supermarket profits. The fact that the Green Party were in government at a time of resurgence in old ways and organic methods is no coincidence, but the fact that a recession was setting in must also be taken into context.

Before reading this book I always harbored some sort of pity for the Green Party as I had thought they were too naïve and vulnerable to be in government with Fianna Fail. After reading this book my thoughts remain the same.

Boyle closes his account stating that it is necessary to have a Green Party in Ireland and that "the journey continues." (247) But will it be a realistic future for the Irish Green Party? It is a question that may remain unanswered for some years yet.

Drone Dread

LAURIE CALHOUN

I ADMIRE MEDEA BENJAMIN, co-founder of the activist group CODE PINK, which has staged anti-war protests and promoted victims' rights all over the world. Her recently published book, *Drone Warfare: Killing by Remote Control*, focuses specifically on the relatively new phenomenon in military history of weaponized unmanned aerial vehicles or UAVs, the most common of which is the Predator drone. Having conducted a thorough—and dangerous—fact-finding mission to learn how U.S. military practices affect civilians on the ground, Benjamin explores a wide range of ethical and legal issues raised by the use of such machines to execute summarily without trial persons suspected of crimes or complicity in crimes. The picture is not a pretty one, but it's a story which every taxpaying American needs to read, since the fact that the administration ignores or perfunctorily dismisses the reality at the receiving end of U.S. missiles does not thereby render it fiction.

Drone Warfare:
Killing by Remote Control
MEDEA BENJAMIN
NYC: 2012, OR Books, 242 pp., $24.95

More than a decade has elapsed since the first American was killed in a drone strike abroad on November 3, 2002, in Yemen. At the time of that strike, it was apparently unrecognized that one of its victims was a U.S. citizen, Ahmed Hijazi, who was traveling with the target, Abu Ali al-Harithi, suspected of having masterminded the October, 2000 attack on the USS Cole. By November, 2011,

LAURIE CALHOUN *is the author of* War and Delusion: A Critical Examination *(N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). We plan to review it in the next issue of* New Politics.

the U.S. government had crossed over the line demarcating foreign enemies from U.S. citizens by knowingly and deliberately targeting and assassinating Anwar al-Awlaki, whose name was on the U.S. hit list, and Samir Khan, who was with the target at the time of the strike. Two weeks later, the son of Anwar al-Awlaki, also a

What was the new president's solution to all of the Bush-era indiscretions? A new doctrine, the Obama doctrine: *Kill-don't-capture.* No more embarrassing problems of innocent persons detained for years without being charged with a crime.

U.S. citizen, was killed in a strike intended to take out another target. The slaughter of the sixteen-year-old son of al-Awlaki, Benjamin rightly observes, was a public relations disaster of epic proportion, offering further proof to the minds of burgeoning terrorists the world over that the U.S. Empire is truly evil and must be stopped at all costs.

Many Americans appear nonetheless to support the use of drones to "neutralize" enemies abroad, having bought into the prevailing rationalization that the use of this precision technology spares the lives of U.S. troops and minimizes collateral damage, making war somehow cleaner and more clinical. Some supporters of the drone program, in an unexpected albeit arguably confused expression of cosmopolitanism, have even denied that U.S. citizenship is relevant to whether a suspect may be stripped of his life without being so much as charged with a crime, much less tried before being effectively sentenced to death. Or, rather, we might say that the process has been streamlined, with the executive branch of the U.S. government now serving as the police, the judge, the jury, and the executioner.

Back in the twentieth century, targeted assassination of enemies was widely considered, if not exactly taboo, at least unmentionable. A radical change in official policy—from opposition to full-fledged support of the practice of summary execution—arose out of what was claimed to be a just war waged in response to the mass killings of September 11, 2001. In the process, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), an institution established for the purpose of ascertaining and analyzing facts so that the president could make informed policy decisions, has become the primary executor of the drone program, killing rather than extracting information from persons suspected of wrongdoing. The CIA covertly assassinated perceived enemies in the twentieth century, too, especially during the Cold War, but today such practices are no longer hidden from public view.[1] Instead, they are vaunted.

Benjamin incisively illuminates what to many war opponents has been the inscrutable and perplexing proliferation of the drone assassination program under President Obama. In 2008, the antiwar bloc mobilized like never before in a show of enthusiastic support for Obama's consistent and persistent denunciation on the campaign trail of many of the misguided Bush administration initiatives. From the violation of *habeas corpus*, to the practice of "extraordinary rendition," to the use of "enhanced interrogation techniques," and the very existence of the prison at Guantánamo Bay, the "peace candidate" made it clear that the objectionable Bush policies would not stand in an Obama administration. What was the new president's solution to all of the Bush-era indiscretions? asks Benjamin wryly. A new doctrine, the Obama doctrine: *Kill-don't-capture*. No more embarrassing problems of innocent persons detained for years without being charged with a crime. No more accusations by meddlesome attorneys of human rights abuses. Obama's much more swift version of justice has been summarily to execute anyone suspected of terrorist activities, broadly construed. Clean and clinical, yes, in some sense.

Civil libertarians, allies of Benjamin on this front, are understandably troubled by the U.S. government's adoption of a practice—the summary execution without trial of suspects—once the standard operating procedure only of tyrants. If a democratic government is by, for, and of the people, then how can it be used to strip those very people of their most fundamental rights? The answer appears to be that some people are more equal than others, but we cannot be sure, since who is and is not fair game for summary execution is essentially decreed by anonymous analysts at the culmination of secret proceedings carried out behind closed doors and not subject to judicial review. The problems with the drone program, however, far transcend the vexing execution of innocent persons erroneously believed to be guilty, what has been one of the primary grounds for the abolition of capital punishment in most civilized nations of the world.

On June 29, 2011, the head of Obama's drone program, John Brennan (who has since been appointed the director of the CIA), publicly stated that there had been no civilian casualties from the use of drones during the previous year. Zero. Benjamin, who has traveled to sites where drone strikes have been carried out to speak with survivors about the after-effects of this new form of warfare, reveals the truth: thousands of innocent people have been annihilated or maimed, and many more have stood helplessly by as their friends, family members, and homes have been erased from the face of the earth. Because the collateral damage of drone strikes is not even acknowledged by the U.S. administration, the survivors have received no compensation for their losses, and some have been reduced to refugees. Benjamin also reports on the harmful impact on the psychological state of the persons forced to live with the constant humming of drones above their heads, never knowing whether this omnipresent threat of death might target them next—or one of their neighbors, with the very same effect.

One of the less-acknowledged consequences of the drone program has been the moral turmoil generated in target-studded communities as a result of the means by which "actionable intelligence" is obtained. Benjamin explains how immediately subsequent to a strike (invariably painted as a victory by the U.S. media), local terrorist groups mobilize to identify the persons who provided the information used to locate and ultimately effect the deaths of their comrades. Destitute people who have accepted irresistible bribes for providing "actionable intelligence" are rounded up and executed, often on videotape, to deter further "traitors" from collaborating with the enemy. As a result of this situation, ordinary people inhabiting forsaken places such as the northwestern territories of Pakistan labor under a constant state of fear. From the sky, they fear death by drone; on the ground, they fear death by local terrorist groups in response to drone strikes.

If there were no chance that drones would be coming their way soon, Americans might blithely brush all of these negative consequences aside, as they do with "collateral damage" more generally. Benjamin's presentation of the psychological effects on the persons currently being terrorized in Pakistan and elsewhere forces the U.S. citizens paying for drones to imagine what it would be like to have to face such dangers themselves on a day-to-day basis. Of the many different arguments presented by Benjamin, the most persuasive to average Americans is bound to be the specter of such drones operating in their own neighborhoods, hovering over their very own homes. The facts that Obama has intentionally assassinated U.S. citizens using drones and that this swiftly proliferating technology will be used more and more domestically as a result of the drone industry boom (well documented by Benjamin) raise immediate questions about both privacy and due process in critical minds. A second line of reasoning, a version of "we reap what we sow," is that other nations may opt to emulate the U.S. government and use the new technology to target their designated enemies—wherever they may reside. Together these concerns point to the need to rein in drones through regulation.

THROUGHOUT *DRONE WARFARE,* Benjamin demonstrates her understanding of the perspectives of those who support the use of drones. However, because she repeatedly characterizes drone killings as *murder*, the persons in most need of reconsidering their views may close the book before reaching its most persuasive arguments. Benjamin's operative assumption is in no way unsound: that the pre-meditated, intentional destruction of human life is murder. What her adversaries deny is that any malicious intent is involved when a drone operator targets a person thousands of miles away. Clearly death by drone is not a crime of passion. Is it an act of murder, or is it a "smarter" way to execute war in the twenty-first century?

Benjamin correctly observes that the Bush administration was quick—and wrong—to characterize the crimes of September 11, 2001, as acts of war, and the rest is history. She is also right that the loss of human life incurred by the decision to pursue the perpetrators of those crimes as warriors rather than criminals is inexcusable. Despite the considerable toll of innocent lives in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and beyond, supporters of the U.S. "war on terror" continue to fall prey to the fallacious line of reasoning according to which the absence of further terrorist attacks on U.S. soil since 9/11 evidences the efficacy of the government's various anti-terror initiatives. Obama was elected in 2008 as the anti-Bush peace candidate, but in 2012, many voters appear to have supported him because he had succeeded in hunting down and killing Osama bin Laden, a mission in which drones, used for surveillance in that case, played a key role.

It seems to be a matter of common sense to military supporters that if "we are at war," and if there are technologies which, all other things being equal, will save soldiers' lives, then naturally they should be used. The strongest part of Benjamin's critique is her presentation of plenty of evidence that drones do not in fact limit the awfulness of war. Through her careful documentation of the effects of the escalated drone killing program in Pakistan, and a similarly disturbing use by the Israeli government of drones in Gaza Strip, Benjamin succeeds in illustrating that the use of drones has altered the initial conflict. All other things are not equal, first, because the drone program has stoked the fires of terrorist groups, directly causing the number of enemy sympathizers to swell. Second, the very nature of the technology itself increases a leader's propensity to deploy deadly force, since there are fewer repercussions for the citizens back home paying for the war, and therefore little or no political downside to the practice. This is how and why President Obama succeeded in effecting regime change in Libya without first going to Congress for the approval of a new war, as is required by the U.S. Constitution. Drones have generated what might be termed an "actionable ambiguity" for the executive branch. The ever-expanding assassination program has been rationalized as a part of the "war on terror," but drones can also be deployed without first putting boots on the ground, and this has permitted the President to sidestep congressional approval, and to cast the net of "wartime" assassination well beyond Afghanistan and Iraq.

Benjamin thoroughly unravels the faulty "all other things being equal" logic underlying support of the drone program, exposing many of the most common misconceptions, including that using drones spares our own soldiers. Their job may sound like playing a video game, but the persons effectively enlisted to serve as executioners at a distance often have difficulties reconciling what they do at the office with what they do when they return home, interacting with their family after having spent the work day destroying other families abroad. One unfortunate omission from Benjamin's otherwise excellent account of the effects upon those who kill by remote control—and witness the consequences of their actions in high-definition technicolor—is any discussion of the increasingly common practice of medicating soldiers with a variety of chemical substances known to lower the threshold to violence. It is arguable that, through the prescription of mind-altering drugs to active-duty soldiers, some troops are being shaped into functional sociopaths.[2]

When Benjamin conjures up apocalyptic scenarios of robot-controlled drones with the capacity to do the whole job—from target selection to execution—the cogency of her account wanes a bit, and some of her concerns will strike pro-technology readers as Luddite. If human error is an ineradicable given, then how, exactly, are robots supposed to be worse than flesh-and-blood operators? Benjamin acknowledges that her adversaries can turn her concern about drone operator PTSD on its head, maintaining that the use of fully robotized drones would circumvent even psychological effects to the soldiers taken completely "out of the loop" of killing. In one disturbing example, drone operator Matt Martin had already pushed the launch button when a couple of children rode up to the target on bicycles. The soldier watched in horror as the children were obliterated, as it was impossible to stop the missile once set in motion. Such examples, of drone operators who have had to live with the knowledge that they killed innocent civilians, would seem to be grist for the robo-drone advocate's mill.

THE QUESTION REMAINS: is assassination by drone morally distinct from other forms of killing in warfare? Benjamin rehearses many of the standard anti-war arguments, applying them specifically to the case of drones, but she does not succeed in showing that death by drone is inherently more evil than death by any other modern implement of homicide. In fact, some proponents of the drone program may even consider such killing to be more humane, because the victims do not hear the missile coming before it destroys them.

The drone program has stoked the fires of terrorist groups, directly causing the number of enemy sympathizers to swell.

Some among those who oppose specifically the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to kill people in lands far away point to what they take to be an essential difference between the two types of killing: if human pilots are on board, and they are being targeted from the ground, then they can construe their own acts as forms of self-defense. Drone killings are obviously not acts of legitimate self-defense, for the people who sit in offices in Nevada and take out targets by remote control are not in any danger and therefore are not defending their own lives by doing so. There is no imminent threat whatsoever involved when an unarmed suspect located thousands of miles away is "stopped" in his home (in some cases surrounded by his family) by a missile traveling faster than the speed of sound. This is assassination, *tout court*.

However, the pilots flying thousands of miles away to lands where their planes are targeted by the enemy on the ground only find themselves in a situation comprehensible as "self-defense" because they have followed the orders of their leaders to place themselves in harm's way. Were the pilots to refuse to fly to the enemy land, then no self-defense scenario could be said to arise. The moral problem, then, is not with the use of drones, in particular, but with the just war paradigm which has been assumed now for centuries to serve as a sound basis for wars fought abroad—whether by soldiers or drones. Modern wars fought abroad are never wars of self-defense, no matter how they are carried out. The use of drones merely represents the most extreme logical implication of the blithe acceptance by war supporters and the populace more generally that somehow traveling to another part of the world to kill people designated as the enemy is perfectly permissible.

When Benjamin cites the concerns of just war theorists, pointing out that religious thinkers and ethicists have criticized the use of weaponized drones for their failure to satisfy the requirements of *jus in bello* (for the proper conduct of a war), she falls into an all-too-familiar trap. It is unclear whether Benjamin accepts just war theory and, as an anti-war activist, simply denies that its conditions are ever met in the modern world. In any case, anyone who already accepts the practice of military intervention abroad, including the bombing of territories inhabited by innocent civilians (such as children), will likely find the case against the use of weaponized drones, in particular, rather weak. The fundamental problem with this approach is that there is widespread disagreement among just war theorists themselves about how to interpret the "requirements" of *jus in bello*. Adducing the scruples of some of these theorists against the use of drones in particular does not help Benjamin's case, because for every card-carrying just war theorist who opposes targeted killing by drones, there will be another who is a supporter of the practice. Drones are in no way precluded at the outset by just war theory because it is the prerogative of legitimate authorities themselves to determine which means to deploy in prosecuting what they take to be "just" wars.[3]

IN HER DISCUSSION of the economics of drone warfare, Benjamin reviews Eisenhower's famous warnings about the diversion of public funds from positive domestic programs to the production of the means for fighting wars abroad. Taxpayers foot the bill, but in the drone age, many companies are also implicated through contributing parts and labor. With the recent privatization of many different aspects of the military, and the use of contractors specifically in the targeted assassination program, all hope of oversight appears to elude the grasp of the very people for whom drones are said to be deployed. These concerns, carefully documented by Benjamin, would seem to apply equally well to all manned weapons systems and so do not, on their face, single out drones in particular.

However, another common misconception, that drone warfare is more economical than manned warfare, is fully debunked by Benjamin. Doing the math, she reveals that the cost of "taking out" a single hit-list terrorist by drone is staggeringly high. Inured as military supporters are to the Pentagon's economic excesses, they may facilely deflect such arguments, citing again the absence of attacks on U.S. soil since September 11, 2001. What advocates of the drone program have not correctly calculated—and what Benjamin amply displays—are the effects of enraging countless persons abroad left bereft of their loved ones. It goes without saying that each time innocent children are stripped of their lives, their parents and other family members may become sympathetic to groups such as al Qaeda and the Taliban who decry U.S. war crimes. Eventually, sooner or later, even those who support the summary execution of suspects will have to face the fact: it is mathematically impossible to kill all of the people who rise up against U.S. policy, because each new drone strike generates new enemy sympathizers and future terrorists, who have been formed and are galvanized to act by their direct witness of U.S. war crimes.

Just as it is a mistake to assume that people harboring anti-American sentiments—which were formed and stoked by U.S. military policies—cannot be reasoned with, it is a strategic mistake to begin a dialogue about the use of this technology by characterizing death by drone as

What advocates of the drone program have not correctly calculated—and what Benjamin amply displays—are the effects of enraging countless persons abroad left bereft of their loved ones.

"murder." However, Benjamin has opted in this well-researched and passionate work to focus on mobilizing those who already intuitively grasp that there is something awry with the drone program. The final chapters of *Drone Warfare* discuss how earlier movements—against the use of landmines and cluster bombs—were successful. The appendix lists an abundance of resources for those who wish to become involved in the anti-drone movement.

Drone advocates enthusiastically support the use of this technology because they accept any means—smart bombs are another example—said to limit the awfulness of war. In *Drone Warfare*, Benjamin has succeeded in undermining the "all other things being equal logic" underlying popular support of the drone program. She effectively argues that a persistent failure to confront the facts about summary execution by drone has not only moral but also strategic implications, demonstrating yet again that anti-war activists are anything but naïve. The solution to the problem of terrorism is emphatically not to turn Pakistan into a parking lot, razing the northwest provinces followed by every successive place to which the hydra-like enemy decides to relocate. There would be no end to such a process, and erecting drone control bases in every country on the map will not solve but only exacerbate the problem. Medea Benjamin deserves praise not only for her courageous activism, but also for her fact-filled and vividly written contribution to the drone debate.

NOTES

1. See Tim Weiner's *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), for a thorough account of the CIA's twentieth-century activities. Weiner's account is based on thousands of recently disclosed, formerly classified documents.

2. I examine the medication of both veterans and active-duty soldiers, which serves to quell potential anti-war criticism among troops who have witnessed the reality of war, in "The Silencing of Soldiers," *Independent Review*, 16(2), 2011, 247–270 (www.independent.org/publications/tir/article.asp?a=853).

3. I examine these issues in detail in chapter two of Laurie Calhoun, *War and Delusion: A Critical Examination* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

The Crisis Upside Down

BILL CRANE

Down the Up Escalator: How the 99% Live in the Great Recession
BARBARA GARSON
New York: Doubleday, 2013, 276 pp., $26.95

THE FINANCIAL CRISIS that began in 2008 has accelerated many economic trends already at work in the neoliberal period of capitalist development. Wages continue to decline, the class struggle bursts out in contradictory fits and starts at the same time as the societal value of work, and therefore the people who do it, continues to depreciate.

At the same time, the global crisis of capitalism has found a corresponding crisis of ruling-class ideology. More than ever before, people need something explained to them — most fundamentally, why we are in this predicament. This has led to a renaissance of financially oriented books that seek to explain the economic crisis in the most basic terms. While journalists seek inroads into the rough waters of finance, renowned economists seek a more popular medium as means to acquire a mass audience their profession denies them.

Fundamentally, the role of these books is an expression of the deep mystification of economics. As it is taken for granted that the science of economics is too "complicated" and therefore closed off to the understanding of the public, the burgeoning library of financial journalism offers to patiently explain what's wrong and how it should be fixed.

Most of this outpouring of literature is of course nonsense. One does not have to really know anything about economics to publish a book on the financial crisis.

One example of this trend is a man by the name of Michael Lewis. His most recent book, *Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World* took on the crisis as it expanded from the housing bubble in the United States to the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and "boomeranged" back to the austerity and misery during the first three years of the recession. From Lewis' point of view, the enigma of the crisis has a simple answer: Western society is spending more than it can reasonably afford. The culprits for this are numerous, and they include states, civil society organizations such as the church, and finally the working class, particularly organized labor.

Typically, Lewis finds Greece to be the outstanding example of all this overspending. Though he reserves some ridicule for the politicians, he retains special ire for the Greek working class. "If there were any justice in the world," he writes, "Greek bankers would be marching to protest the morals of the ordinary Greek citizen," which include such offensive things as desperately trying to maintain their plummet-

BILL CRANE *is a socialist activist and writer living in the Washington, DC area. He is a member of the International Socialist Organization and has been active with Occupy Our Homes and the Campaign to End the Death Penalty. He maintains the blog* That Faint Light *with commentary on literature, politics and culture.*

ing wages, benefits, and standard of living in a country whose basic social services are rapidly being shut down. Lewis and those like him don't feel the need to interview the European or American workers they blame for the crisis. That would be demeaning when they could instead learn all they need to know on a glamorous morning run with Arnold Schwarzenegger. In the final pages of his book he announces what really stands in the way of resolving the crisis in the United States: public-sector unions.

Now, however, into the field steps Barbara Garson, a journalist and playwright with a long past in social movements from the 1960s onward. Her book comes as a welcome contribution to the muddled and anti-working class, not to mention anti-democratic, mood of the vast majority of economic and financial journalism. It deserves to be widely read and publicized. The title is *Down the Up Escalator: How the 99% Live in the Great Recession*. In itself, this suggests many themes taken up in the book. Written in the aftermath of the Occupy movement, Garson takes its slogan of "the 99%" as a starting point, documenting the cases of all those screwed over by the recession: the homeless, warehouse workers, urban professionals, and failed bankers and entrepreneurs alike.

The phrase "we are the 99 percent" from the Occupy movement of 2011-12 was, and still is, deeply relevant. It is, however, incredibly contradictory. On the one hand, it expresses the very basic class-based sense of injustice that has always been a part of working-class consciousness. At the same time, the "them" in the conflict was never really meant to include the whole capitalist class, but the small minority of financial profiteers who ran the economy into the ground. The capitalist owners of really productive enterprises were never really included in the formula.

In some ways "we are the 99 percent" is a perfect slogan for the unique politics of the United States, which due to various historical reasons has never had social class as a significant part of the political discourse to the same extent it is in most other countries. To a certain extent Marxists find it contrived to talk about "the working class" in the United States when there is not, except in exceptional circumstances, a stable body that sees itself this way. "The 99 percent" seems to fit better the confused but radical consciousness of many American workers. As I mentioned, one of the compelling reasons for a book like Garson's is that in a society whose basic economic functions remain mysterious to those who are affected by them, we can often better understand and relate to personal stories and anecdotes that show the underlying economic processes better than we can to statistics.

> Might not struggles over housing or savings become just as or more important than the arena of overt workplace struggle in constructing a radical left pole of attraction?

THE PANORAMA of those she interviews is an impressive cross-section of American society. In her book, we find the stories of a black mother who has struggled all her life to hold onto her family and home, only to face losing both, an upwardly mobile Filipino immigrant family that suddenly finds itself "riding the down escalator," a group of suddenly unemployed New York City professionals, a laid-off hedge fund consultant, and everyone above and below them.

The book thus lends itself well to a division based on the struggles to maintain that are central to the lives of the contemporary American worker: sections on "our jobs," "our homes," and "our savings" follow each other in an incredibly detailed treatment that does not lose sight of the totality of American economic life.

The assault on the working class underway is multifaceted and can be seen across these three areas. Therefore no one struggle among these is more important than the others; unfortunately, I can't hope to address each section as it deserves in the space of this review. The section on jobs elicits my interest the most because it tends to show most directly the trends Garson seeks to explain.

Garson describes four scenes in the life of a single man whom she "met forty years ago and caught up with him on three more occasions." The life of this American worker, whom she rechristens Duane, "should have been enough for me to predict the Great Recession." She first encountered Duane as a GI back from Vietnam awaiting his discharge. When she caught up with him again several years later, he had moved home — to Ohio — and found a job in an auto factory, was married and expecting a child. Years later, she encounters Duane again. He has left the auto industry because of layoffs and has become an expert machinist. By the time she looks up Duane again, however, he has already passed away. Constantly staying ahead somehow, Duane got into the software industry and had moved to Arizona before he died, leaving behind a large and loving family and, unfortunately, an even larger mortgage. Duane's life encapsulates many of the socioeconomic trends Garson describes in her book. In one man's life story we get the tale of deindustrialization which causes Duane's several career changes, the financialization of the American economy which affords working-class America a standard of living through credit even as its wages decline, leading finally — in 2007 — to the housing bubble which popped and the extended recession that has followed.

Garson situates her analysis firmly within Marxist economics, which allow us an understanding of what has happened in the lives of Duane and other working-class Americans at the same time their stories contribute to our deeper understanding of what can seem quite abstract at times.

The general process Garson tries to come to terms with is in the title: "down the up escalator." As she writes, during the century and a half from the early years of the republic until the end of the 1960s, American wages rose every single decade. This is probably unique to the history of this country, and it ended during the 1970s.

Since the seventies, American wages have been stagnant or have declined. This is due to many factors that the readers of this journal will no doubt be somewhat familiar with. The point is that at the same time wages fell, productivity continued to increase at the same pace or faster. Duane was one of the lucky few of the American working class who managed to "keep ahead" of the trends of layoffs, offshoring, and deskilling, right up till his death.

Therefore, the American working class has in general been "traveling down the up escalator." Where formerly American workers could expect a higher standard of living than their parents, and their children could expect theirs to be even higher, this is no longer the case, and has not been for four decades now. The impact of this contrast between expectations and reality is almost impossible to overstate.

The impact has, of course, been highly contradictory across the American working class. One example Garson gives is in the second chapter, "Down by the Banks of the Ohio," where she tells a story of class resilience across a generation.

CHUCK AND MICHAEL KENNY (not their real names) are a study in contrasts as a father and son. Where Chuck has a strong work ethic and loyalty, devotion to God and solidly middle-class Republican politics, his son Michael is a liberal agnostic with dreadlocks, and has gone out of the workforce after short-term jobs as a manager at a staffing agency and an XM Radio salesman. He now designs and sells Grateful Dead T-shirts for a living. Chuck has never

been out of work since he was twelve, but at the end of what should be a long and productive career with a peaceful retirement ahead, he finds himself as lower management in a warehouse working over twelve hours a day. Despite this, his superiors are maneuvering to push him out before he can really collect well on his retirement plan and give his job to a younger employee who will merit less in pay and benefits.

One of the great strengths of Garson's journalism is that she allows a man like Chuck, whose life expresses many of the defeats dealt out to American workers in his unrewarded work ethic and right-wing politics, to give voice to the challenges affecting millions of people in his generation. When he says something like "we have not been living paycheck to paycheck since we decided to give God back a tenth of what he has given us" (on the subject of his decision to tithe to his church), we understand just to what extent his faith has given him the strength to endure the many roadblocks he has faced.

Unsurprisingly, Chuck doesn't understand many of the decisions his son Michael has made, either in his lifestyle or his career. To Chuck, someone like Michael would be well advised to take even the most miserable of the career paths available. "You go to work in McDonald's, you apply yourself, you can get into their management program," he says. "[My company] hired several fast-food managers as supervisors because they have experience where it's fast-paced, quick, and very regimented." But his son, who unlike Chuck has grown up accustomed to riding down the up escalator, has chosen not to play. One can hardly fault his choice: his father has worked all his life only to find he has to work longer and longer hours for the same paycheck, and stuck with a disloyal employer who will replace him at the soonest opportunity with someone cheaper.

There is probably a very interesting problem for economic analysis, especially the kind of analysis that seeks to change the world rather than just understanding it, in the different choices made by Chuck and Michael. In a situation in which thousands of working-class men and women like Michael are giving up on a stable occupation to scrape by in the world of temping and self-employment or dependence on family resources, what is the likely impact on class consciousness and class struggle? How do we understand and mobilize a class that is increasingly atomized and whose expectations are going steadily down rather than up?

Some have referred to this process as the "disarticulation" of the working class. The term seeks to describe a situation in which organized labor seems unable to effectively mount the most basic existential defensive struggles (in Wisconsin and Michigan), and the most radical arenas of struggle lack a coherent class base other than that of "the 99 percent." There is no doubt much to be studied here, and it is to Garson's credit that she manages to illustrate it in a work of limited journalistic scope.

Though a clear articulation of the ways forward for struggle are beyond the scope of Garson's book, the wide array of concerns, struggles, and hopes of the people she interviews are something to take into account for those of us who want to change things. Might not struggles over housing or savings become just as or more important than the arena of overt workplace struggle in constructing a radical left pole of attraction?

The stories of Michael, Chuck, Duane, as well as the others who populate her book all illustrate her central point: "how the 99 percent survives the recession." We find that this happens in many different unique ways. Some like Chuck return from work to find comfort in their families and the Church. Some struggle to maintain the little that they have; among those who are successful are Susana, a black matriarch who manages to maintain her home in Brooklyn after the death of her son and lengthy foreclosure proceedings.

Whatever ways these people find to survive are sources of ongoing nourishment and hope against an increasingly hostile world. Small victories that maintain us or set us back a little bit less than before even are something to be grateful for.

Garson has done an excellent job showing how the 99 percent survives during the Great Recession. The question we are left with at the end of her book is how we will do better than survive.

Remake Scarcity or Desire?

PETER BRATSIS

Remaking Scarcity: From Capitalist Inefficiency to Economic Democracy
COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS
forward by Joel Kovel
London: Pluto Press, 2011, 209pp., $28.23

COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS' *REMAKING SCARCITY* is a bold attempt to combine the analysis of the ecological limits of capitalism with the call for "economic democracy." A work that is both topical (with frequent discussion of contemporary developments such as the Arab Spring and the crisis in Greece) and scholarly, the book unfolds as a series of overlapping discussions on four key themes: scarcity, inequality, democracy, and ecological crisis. The main analytical focus on the book, however, is on the question of scarcity and why traditional Marxist and allied notions that scarcity is particular to capitalism are incorrect. Building from his analysis of scarcity, Panayotakis continues to examine the ways that capitalism's lack of democracy exacerbates inequality as well as the global ecological crisis.

In what is an engaging but also, ultimately, frustrating argument, Panayotakis attempts to demonstrate that only through a turn to economic democracy can we address the inequalities and destructive tendencies of capitalism. Although there is little reason to disagree with this normative stand in favor of greater democracy, the analysis leading up to this conclusion contains enough gaps that it raises more questions than it answers. In particular, there are two sets of issues that, in my opinion, are not sufficiently or conclusively analyzed in the book: the question of desire and subjectivity and the question of the efficiency of democracy. Rather than simply give a synopsis of the book, the rest of this review engages with these two issues and highlights what may be substantive issues that need further debate and conceptual development in order to better tie together the question of ecological crisis and democracy.

A central lynchpin in Panayotakis' argument is his rejection of the idea that scarcity is a product of capitalism. In opposition to most Marxists as well as such allied thinkers as Marshall Sahlins, Panayotakis claims that scarcity is, potentially at least, to be found in all societies, not only capitalist societies. In opposition to the well-known arguments of Baran and Sweezy on the need to overcome scarcity, Panyotakis notes: … Is it impossible to imagine that even in a post-capitalist society there would be a greater desire, among people, to travel around the world then would be consistent with the ecological limits we have to respect? Any anti-capitalist from the global North who enjoys flying to Latin America, Africa, Asia, and Europe would

PETER BRATSIS *teaches political science at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, CUNY. He is author of* Everyday LIfe and the State *(Paradigm, 2006), editor, with Stanley Aronowitz, of* Paradigm Lost: State Theory Reconsidered *(Minnesota, 2002) and a founding editor of the journal* Situations: Project of the Radical Imagination.

have to admit that in a post-capitalist society they would have no more right to do that than the billions of people from the global South who would also love to do that but can currently not afford an airplane ticket (29).

If we take it as a given that people will desire more than they have or more than can reasonably be accommodated for all, then economic democracy becomes a necessity, according to the logic of the argument, for dealing with the inherent limits to consumption, how to produce and/or divide up the inherently limited amount of this or that good.

> How can we produce the type of people who value autonomy over comfort and commodious living?

Part of the problem, I believe, is that Panayotakis takes any case of need as a matter of scarcity. Most notably, he cites the need for Sahlins' hunters and gatherers to move around, to be mobile in their search for game, as an example that they also were faced with scarcity. All societies have needs but is it the case that all societies have known scarcity? The point of Sahlins, and many others, is that the question of scarcity is a cultural one. If Sahlins' hunters and gathers, as a society, had all they desired then there is no scarcity as we know it. Having to move, for example, is not a problem if they did not desire to not be mobile. Similarly, if a Manhattan millionaire has an eighteen-foot wide townhome but desires a twenty-five foot wide one, there is scarcity. It may be useful to recall that the notion of scarcity as explicated within liberal thought was a matter of human nature; we always desire to have more than we do, to become better off. Human beings are utility maximizers. Because we all tend to have similar appetites, to desire similar things (traveling by plane or ever wider townhouses), scarcity will be inherent within society. In other words, what Sahlins attempts to overcome is the ahistorical and essentialist understanding of human nature that liberalism has put forward. It is not only Sahlins that deserves mention here, a whole plethora of studies — from Bourdieu's study of honor in Algerian villages to Ranciere's study of 19th century Parisian cobblers to Marcuse's study of one-dimensional man, to, most importantly here, Henri Lefebvre's work on the ways that our bureaucratic societies create needs —have attempted to show the particularity of the ways that needs and desires are produced in bourgeois societies and to contrast that with other possible values and motivations.

Panayotakis basically follows the liberal position that scarcity is inherent to human nature. It is not that he conforms or does not conform to some political principle; it is that he takes the question of desire and subjectivity as fixed, a matter of human nature and individual taste. The desire for more is a given but some people might desire more coffee, some more free time, some faster cars, and so on. Economic democracy would allow us to make decisions about how best to allocate our efforts and resources given what will be, inherently, conflicting and competing demands and preferences upon inherently limited resources.

Although Panayotakis is not unaware of the literature on how needs are produced in capitalist societies, he stops short of highlighting the creation of desire as a fundamental question. Instead, his main category of contention is what he terms "configurations of scarcity," the ways that scarcity is organized in the society. According to Panayotakis, the high degree of inequality that capitalism produces could be overcome through economic democracy, matters of production and consumption being decided collectively. In part, he argues, this would help overturn the consumerist desire in contemporary societies since it is a product of the inequality and alienation of capitalism and will become much less pronounced if people are relieved of this anxiety (49-56). Similarly, the great ecological destruction that modern industry has produced could be overcome by this move to democracy since externality costs would be taken more seriously and could not be displaced onto someone else: people would certainly be less likely to make decisions that destroy their own cities and communities. Human beings, Panayotakis argues, could finally rethink success not in terms of consumption levels but, rather, by forming lasting communal bonds and participating in political life:

> Abandoning consumerism is not a regrettable but necessary sacrifice. It is an opportunity to redefine the "good life" by shifting emphasis from material possessions to the cultivation of human relationships that, as the literature on happiness confirms, is the true key to humanness (111).

How will human beings be transformed from the possessive individualism of liberalism? Simply by transforming the power relations within the workplace? Moreover, is not happiness also the goal of liberalism? Are we keeping the goals but simply modifying some of the means of attaining it? I am reminded of a discussion I had some years ago in one of the reclaimed factories in Buenos Aires. I asked a few of the workers if they preferred not having a boss; the answer was that they would prefer to not have the obligation of having to run the factory. They would greatly prefer to have a boss who would pay them on time and to be saved from all the worries and obligations: working long hours, hosting parties in the factory for extra cash, a constant struggling to find new customers. What did they desire? To be happy? Is happiness a revolutionary or, even, democratic goal? What is missing in the analysis is an understanding of how the liberal subjectivity is created and what a democratic one would look like. How can we produce the type of people who value autonomy over comfort and commodious living? What type of human being do we need to produce so that they can be satisfied in ways that go beyond the market? How can the liberal desire be undone so that people actually want democracy? Similarly, why limit the discussion to matters of "economic" democracy, why should the realm of needs hold pride of place over the political moment?

THIS LEADS US TO THE SECOND ELEMENT of the book that needs explication, economic democracy as a more efficient solution to the problems of production and material needs. For Panayotakis, the virtue of economic democracy is that it is more efficient than market mechanisms. Drawing upon arguments from David Schweickart as well as Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, Panayotakis goes through a long list of reasons on why various possible versions of economic democracy (democratic planning, participatory economies, etc.) are more efficient both in terms of being less wasteful in the use of raw materials as well as in terms of ecological damage and of engendering greater effort and responsibility in workers (114-128). The problem here, not unrelated to the previous point on the production of new subjectivities, is that economic measures are used as a justification for a democratic politics. Democracy is not presented here as a necessary element in the production of autonomous human beings, as the only way a free community can be constituted, but, rather, as something that is good for production. The political moment is reduced to little more than an adjunct to the realm of needs, the production of economic goods.

Taking these questions together, the need for a less economistic understanding of the necessity of democracy and the need for a deeper analysis of how desire and subjectivity are created and what types of desire are appropriate for a democratic society, point to the necessity of going beyond the framework that Panayotakis discusses and engaging with such authors as

Henri Lefebvre, Cornelius Castoriadis, and Herbert Marcuse against the categories of economic man. The promise of democracy and the need for a new type of desire are fundamental questions and cannot be left to those thinkers who remain bound by the categories of political economy. Although Panayotakis succeeds in provoking us to think about the relationship between the ecological question and the necessity of democracy, the book stops short of providing the full range of ideas and arguments necessary to think that connection. We can only look forward to future efforts that extend the problematic that Panayotakis establishes in *Remaking Scarcity* and which lead us closer to understanding why it takes a democratic community to fully address the antinomies of our social and natural worlds.

Ed. note: A rejoinder by the author to this review appears on our website, newpol.org

Boldly Going Nowhere

The 'Lost Decades' of a Moribund Capitalism

Philip Daniel Louro

The Endless Crisis: How Monopoly-Finance Capital Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the U.S.A. to China

John Bellamy Foster and Robert W. McChesney

New York: Monthly Review Press, 2012
227 pp., $17.68

The financial collapse of 2008 was a sudden, shrill alarm that abruptly exposed neo-liberalism to be nothing more than a fool's paradise. For decades, many Americans marched to the hypnotic music of free market fantasy and willfully ignored the low, droning crescendo of social decay. The hypnotic melody of constant growth, full employment, low taxation, and rugged entrepreneurialism muffled the warning sirens that had gone off around them. Bankruptcies had become widespread, infrastructure crumbled, wages were stagnant, access to healthcare was increasingly unaffordable, and an army of unemployed swelled its ranks as jobs slipped away overseas.

Curiously, free-market ideology has defied obsolescence despite all its bubbles bursting and all its sand castles falling into the sea. The music may have stopped playing, but people have not stopped marching to its beat. For many Americans, a swift recovery from the Great Recession is taken for granted: it is not a question of whether it will happen, but when and under which presidency. Coverage in the mainstream media treats the recession as if this downturn is merely a passing storm, and reassures us that these bitter days of stagnation are an abnor-

Philip Daniel Louro *is a socialist writer, activist, and teacher living in northern New Jersey. His work has appeared in several publications, and he has written extensively on worker cooperatives and human ecology. Please address correspondences to lourop@student.wpunj.edu.*

mality. Radicals, on the other hand, are far less naive about capitalism in all respects except for its resilience to total collapse. While the Great Recession triggered a frenzy of debate in radical circles, many economists offered merely a baffled shrug of the shoulders and moved the debate towards austerity.

It is refreshing, therefore, to read such a mature and sobering analysis from John Bellamy Foster and Robert McChesney in their latest work, *The Endless Crisis: How Monopoly-Finance Capital Produces Stagnation and Upheaval from the U.S.A. to China.* The authors argue that the natural state of advanced capitalism is not endless growth punctuated by freak periods of recession. Rather, capitalism has long been mired in a state of stagnant equilibrium punctuated by occasional periods of superficial growth. *The Endless Crisis* breathes new life into the once-prominent analysis of monopoly capitalism and rescues it from the quiet oblivion of discarded academic thought. The book has no interest in being a political pamphlet for social movements or focusing on the sociological ramifications of our moribund economy. Foster and McChesney demonstrate tremendous reserve by not filling the pages with polemical calls to action and discussing thorny questions of political strategy. Rather, the authors issue a wake- up call to the leftist intelligentsia who have largely abandoned the critiques of capitalism and retreated from the field of economics altogether. Marxists have been largely driven out of economics since allowing "capitalism," a term embedded with history and sociological conflict, to be replaced with the sterilized and ahistorical term, "market economy." *The Endless Crisis* is a focused and muscular work that ranks alongside the works of John Kenneth Galbraith, Paul Sweezy, Paul Baran and other great political economists who were unafraid to deliver sobering criticisms of modern capitalism. It is a robustly researched testament to the enduring relevance of Marxist theory in the 21st century.

A fundamental belief of orthodox economists is that growth is not only infinitely possible, but is also the normal state of a market economy unpolluted by government actions, unions, and other coercive non-market actors. Growth is the inevitable product of the invisible hand of the market freed from restraints, and this theory has been aggressively put into action around the world for over three decades. Yet,

The 21st century has seen the slowest growth rates in economies of the United States, Europe, and Japan since the 1930s and shows no sign of improving.

growth rates have been steadily dwindling, or stagnating. The 21st century has seen the slowest growth rates in economies of the United States, Europe, and Japan since the 1930s and shows no sign of improving. Foster and McChesney say that this stagnation is the direct result of monopoly-finance capitalism on an international scale — a system that drives out the insecurities of the perfectly competitive market that economists base their models upon. Low growth is the normal state of advanced economies dominated by large, powerful corporations. Thus, contrary to the optimistic expectations that a swift recovery is just around the corner, the authors believe that world economies are headed for "lost decades" of low growth and stagnation instead. Governments have adopted a creative arsenal of tricks and tools, such as deregulation, privatization, and massive financial bubbles, to rescue our economies from this ugly face of capitalism.

While every bubble bursts, not every illusion shatters along with it. Orthodox economists, whether willingly or unwillingly, adopt ideological blinders by allowing themselves to see only their pristine theories in action and having become enamored by elegant economic models with little relevance to reality. *The Endless Crisis* does not wish to merely douse optimists with a cold, sobering splash of gloom. The authors also deftly revive many influential Marxian concepts that hold up quite well in today's economic arena.

The Endless Crisis marks a departure for both authors from their previous works, respectively. John Bellamy Foster is perhaps best known for his tremendous endeavors in Marxist ecology and environmental destruction, but readers would hardly know that from reading Crisis. The same can be said for Robert McChesney, who is known for his critical evaluations of the media and journalism in the age of unadulterated capitalism. Foster and McChesney demonstrate considerable prowess of economics and the amalgamation of these two authors is seamless. Like Foster's previous work, *The Ecological Rift,* this book is also a collection of material published in the *Monthly Review* and collected into a single volume. Unlike *Rift*, however, *The Endless Crisis* is not beset by irritatingly redundant material and shows a marked improvement in form. Whereas Rift was more ambitious in scope, *The Endless Crisis* is a more focused and concise affair, which works in the authors' favor.

Foster and McChesney sketch broad theories of the economy based upon the principle that the market is dominated by the rules of oligopolistic competition. Orthodox economists stubbornly hold on to the notions from Adam Smith (and other classical economists) that markets are incapable of being coerced by their firms. All firms are subjugated to the market forces regulating prices, supply, demand, etc. According to classical theory, no firm can be powerful enough to twist the "invisible hand of the market" to its advantage.

Foster and McChesney insist that this view has long been dangerously delusional. The authors insist that capitalism since the 20th century has successfully shed this peonage while maintaining the illusion of competition and powerlessness. Small handfuls of large corporations have dominated markets around the world, particularly in first world economies. From a rational choice perspective, oligopoly dictates various forms of collusion between firms to maintain market shares and profit rates. As dominating firms increasingly collude for security, economic growth increasingly suffers from a long-term malaise in growth, profit rates, wages, living conditions, tax revenues, etc. Further, capitalism's ability to produce capital is far greater than its avenues for usage. Capital increasingly needs new places to invest in order to continue growing. Thus, the post-WWII years briefly bucked the stagnation trend as access to new international markets and domestic suburbanization allowed for large absorption of capital.

However, the rub is in the expectations of growth from increasingly irrelevant economic models. "Like first-time parachutists grasping their ripcords," write Foster and McChesney, "most economists cling tightly to the conviction that capitalism's natural state is full employment and rapid growth, so eventually the market will work its magic." Failing to take monopoly capitalism into account, this long-term stagnation collides with unrealistic expectations for exponential growth, thus causing a tremendous amount of finger-pointing (governments, unions, etc.) and attempts to stimulate the economy (deregulation, globalization, and financialization). The result of these stimuli is inevitably bubbles and recessions. The more financial bubbles become embedded into a deregulated society, the worse the aftermath becomes when they inevitably collide with stagnation. "In fact, a dangerous feedback loop between stagnation and financial bubbles has now emerged, reflecting the fact that stagnation and financialization are increasingly interdependent phenomena."

Modern capitalism, despite all its preening and posturing, is a stagnant system tethered to its own ruin. Thus, this crisis of growth is endless.

As found in their previous works, Foster and McChesney give a sweeping, acerbic condemnation of academic complaisance. In the chapter, "The Denial of History" they wag their finger at social scientists for being complacent in society's delusions and destructive habits. "The reason for this, we believe, can be traced to the fact that neoclassical economists and mainstream social science generally have long abandoned any meaningful historical analysis. Their abstract models, geared more toward legitimizing the system than to understanding its laws of motion, have become increasingly otherworldly.... The results therefore are about as relevant to today's reality as the medieval debates on the number of angels that could fit on the end of a pin were to theirs." Today's economists have largely ignored the analyses of John Kenneth Galbraith, Paul Sweezy, and others who saw a system of monopoly capitalism in place. The elegant mathematical models outshined the inconvenient habits of capitalism that radical economists had once brought to the fore. The authors hope to bring this discussion out of the ether and back into university departments, political economy studies, and dinner table discussions.

To its detriment, the authors hardly add any revolutionary new concepts that have not been written in some form elsewhere. If you have read Galbraith or Marx, then you have a fairly good understanding of the book's contents. Whereas Foster's *The Ecological Rift* was bursting with new concepts like "The Treadmill of Production," this new work follows up with significantly fewer original concepts. However one feels about their thesis, one cannot deny that it is remarkably researched. The pages are saturated with statistics and analyses pulled from a wide breadth of economics literature. They redeem the old theories of monopoly capitalism through successful application in 21st century phenomena. With its relentless barrage of statistics and criticisms of academia, *The Endless Crisis* is written more for academics and economics majors. The book does not cater to readers looking for rants, calls to action, or journalistic stories. Indeed, at times, large sections of the book feel like a literature review of political economy. Despite that, it avoids getting bogged down in its technical jargon or incomprehensible language.

> Capitalism's ability to produce capital is far greater than its avenues for usage. Capital increasingly needs new places to invest in order to continue growing.

The Endless Crisis concludes with a large section devoted to the much-hyped exception to global stagnation —the economic wunderkind that is China. The nation is often depicted as both an economic prodigy and a "boogey-man" all at the same time. Here, the authors are clearly nipping their biggest criticism in the bud by demonstrating that China's expansion is the exception that proves the rule. Many mainstream economists have expressed hopes that the Chinese economy may be strong enough to carry the global economy out of stagnation. Here, the authors quickly deflate these high-minded aspirations. China is, after all, part of the global capitalist chain and shows signs of suffering from the same afflictions. At the heart of China's expansion, according to the authors, is a global system of extreme exploitation that makes economic growth possible. "The global labor arbitrage that lies behind this system of extreme exploitation is in fact a system of imperial rent extraction that feeds the profits of global monopoly-finance capital. China's extraordinary growth is thus a product of a global system of exploitation and accumulation, the chief rewards of which have been reaped by firms located in the center of the world economy."

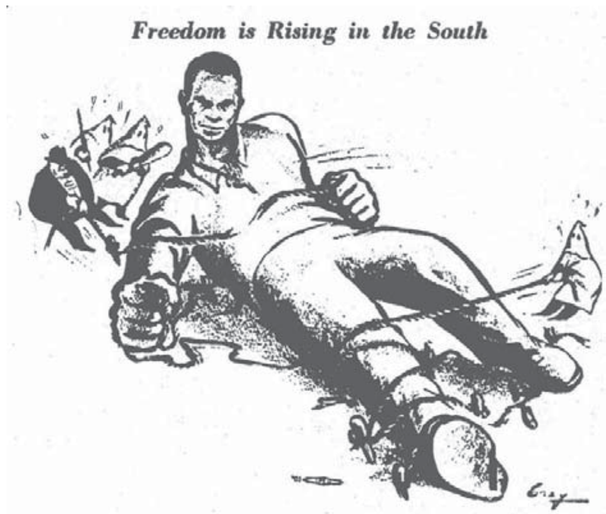
Foster and McChesney successfully employ the familiar Marxian concept of the reserve army of the unemployed. They demonstrate that the global "race to the bottom" in wages contributes towards stagnation globally. In short, the global reserve army is far larger than the employed labor army, thus restraining wages globally. China suffers from irreconcilable contradictions, particularly in its being unable to absorb its "surplus" populations of peasants into its industrialized market economy. However, the enduring legacy of the Chinese Revolution makes its surplus population a unique example. Peasants were given communal rights to land under the revolution, and now must temporarily seek work in terribly abusive sweatshops to supplement their paltry incomes. Many peasants return to their land afterwards, thus forming a perpetually floating agricultural population. China has not, according to the authors, the capacity or desire to absorb this massive population and is contributing to the volatile contradictions that are rising to the surface each day. These final chapters succeed fairly well, and Foster and McChesney do a wonderful job of incorporating the Chinese "Tiger Economy" into Marxist theory.

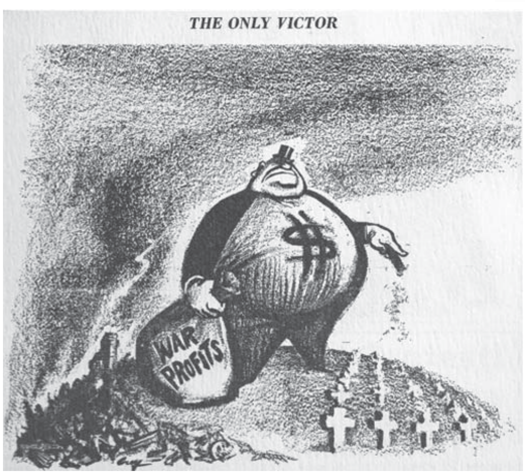
The Endless Crisis is, overall, a short but powerful book and is recommended reading for anyone seeking an honest and holistic evaluation of our perpetual recessions. Each page counts here, as it stacks statistical and analytical bricks on top of each other to build a thesis with a solid foundation. It offers a great application of theory and research, but seems lacking in bringing new and unique analytical concepts into its pages. Its predilection towards a somewhat limited readership thus contributes towards a book that falls just short of greatness. Despite that, *The Endless Crisis* is a truly solid contribution by Foster and McChesney that more than meets the high standard of quality readers have come to expect from them.

Sculptor, Painter, and Cartoonist: Laura Gray

KENT WORCESTER

THE MARXISTS INTERNET ARCHIVE project recently uploaded the complete run of *Labor Action*, published by the Workers Party and its successor, the Independent Socialist League, between 1940 and 1958, as well as the *Militant*, published by the Socialist Workers Party. In the midcentury period these rival leftist newspapers covered many of the same issues, from organized labor and civil rights in the United States to anticolonial struggles around the globe. While the two organizations differed in key respects, their

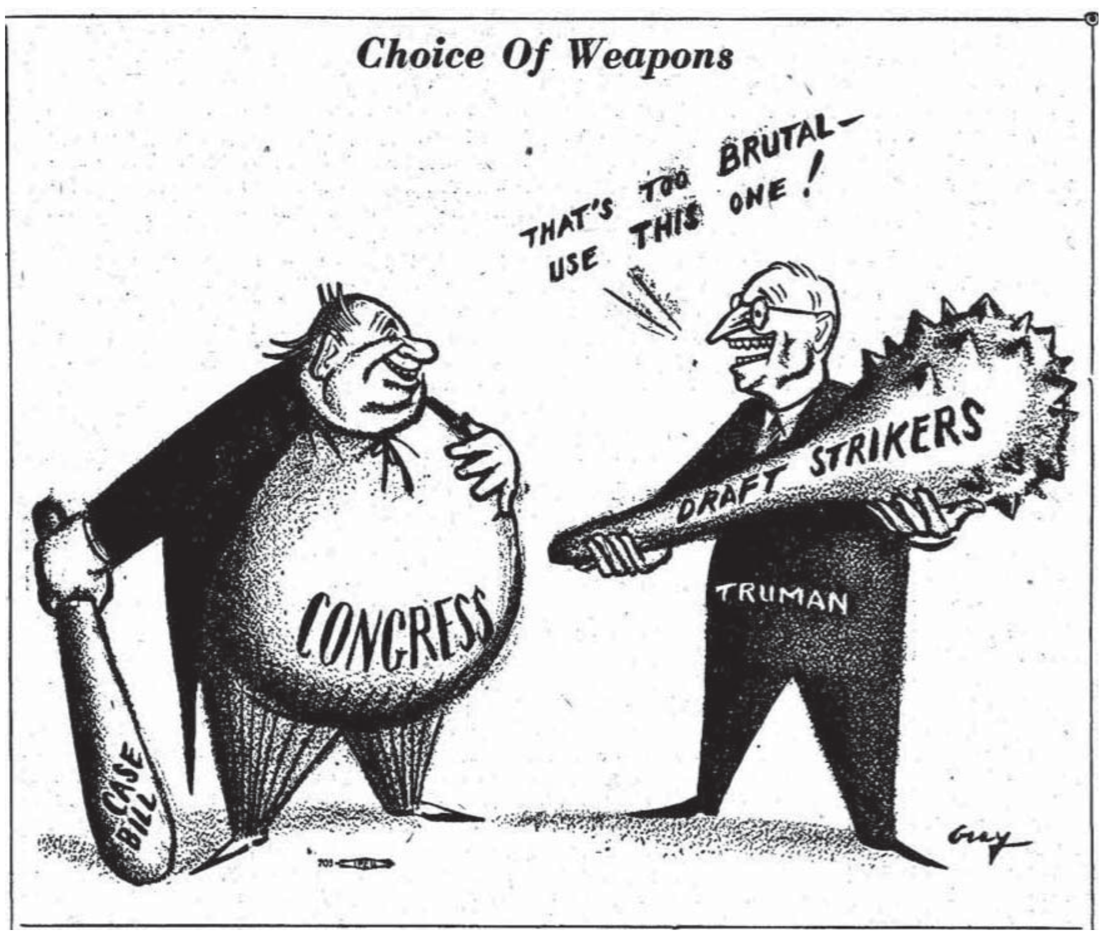




KENT WORCESTER *has co-edited three books on comics:* Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium *(2004),* A Comics Studies Reader *(2009), and* The Superhero Reader *(2013).*

papers overlapped in many ways. From the standpoint of outside observers, at least, the distinction between the two tendencies grew clearer over time, as the WP/ISL moved in the direction of greater heterogeneity, and the SWP became increasingly homogeneous. While the former eventually shattered into a thousand pieces, the latter hardened into a dogmatic sect.

As it happens, *Labor Action* and the *Militant* featured the work of two of the country's best political cartoonists, both of whom were born in 1909. *Labor Action* regularly published cartoons and caricatures penned by Jesse Cohen, who worked under the name Carlo, while the



Militant ran graphics by Laura Slobe, whose party name was Laura Gray. Despite the new wave of public and scholarly interest in the history of comics and cartoons, neither Carlo nor Laura Gray has attracted much attention from historians of the graphic arts. Readers of this magazine might recognize Carlo's work from the short profile we published in issue 37 (Summer 2004); now it's Laura Gray's turn.

Like Jesse Cohen, Laura Slobe attended high school in the 1920s, came of political age during the 1930s, and remained active on the far left after World War II. She was born in Pittsburgh, but grew up in Chicago, where she studied at the Art Institute of Chicago before working for the Works Progress Administration Art Project. As a young, avant-garde artist she concentrated her efforts on painting and sculpture, which remained her lifelong passions. She joined the SWP in 1942, and her first cartoon appeared in the *Militant* two years later. The labor journalist Art Preis later remembered that, "From the first, her work added such a fresh, bright, satirical note to the paper that it was enthusiastically hailed by our readers everywhere." According to another SWP writer, "The cartoon's subject matter was on the agenda of the *Militant*'s staff meetings. After the staff discussed and decided what the topic would be, Gray would go home and start to draw." In addition to serving on the staff of the *Militant*, Gray "worked at a series of jobs to support herself, including painting store mannequins and creating window displays for some of New York's big department stores." She remained the SWP's in-house artist from 1944 until her death in 1958. Tragically, she had contracted tuberculosis in her early twenties, and had a lung removed in 1947. She died after a brief bout with pneumonia.

Despite her fragile health, Laura Gray produced hundreds of editorial cartoons, illustrations, and caricatures for the SWP. As far as I can surmise, her work appeared exclusively in the SWP press. In 1987 the party donated 430 of Gray's original pieces to the Tamiment Library at New York University, where they are still available to researchers. Her work focused

on the major issues of the day, from industrial disputes and civil rights protests to the impact of McCarthyism on U.S. politics and culture. According to the SWP journalist Susan LaMont, her work "reflected a style of political art that was popular in the 1930s. The workers were drawn as strong men in work clothes. The capitalists were fat, cigar-chomping men in bankers' suits, and their wives, diamond-studded and overfed. The Democratic and Republican parties and politicians were depicted as human-like donkeys and elephants — often chewing on cigars themselves — eagerly doing the capitalists' bidding."

While Laura Gray's political graphics took advantage of familiar, well-worn visual tropes, she brought impressive compositional skills to the challenge of encapsulating the party's line on the issues of the day. While her work was usually indignant, her linework was often quite witty and occasionally light-hearted. She also had a real gift for capturing the facial tics of famous personalities. Her approach was almost certainly inspired by various contributors to *The Masses*, including Art Young, Robert Minor, and Boardman Robinson, and her published work also suggested the influence of internationally recognized figures such as Kathe Kollwitz, Anton Refregier, and Ben Shahn. She did not start out as an illustrator, and she probably ended up drawing cartoons because that's what the party needed. As with Carlo, she was an immensely talented artist whose work holds up nicely, despite the passage of time. Readers interested in learning more about Laura Slobe's life and work should consult the relevant PDFs posted on the Marxists Internet Archive, as well as Alan Wald's fascinating essay on "Cannonite Bohemians after World War II," which appeared in *Against the Current* in July/August 2012.

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155 West 72 Street, Rm. 402
New York, NY 10023 USA
Address Service Requested

IN THIS ISSUE

It is police batons and rubber bullets that determine the costs of labor, and not the free market's "invisible hand." The more workers get beaten or killed on the streets, the more they will be scared to make any new demands, and consequently labor costs will stay low.

Vasja Badalic
OUR WORKERS IN BANGLADESH

The drone program has stoked the fires of terrorist groups, directly causing the number of enemy sympathizers to swell.

Laurie Calhoun
DRONE DREAD

Authoritarian regimes driven into a corner usually increase their repression against all kinds of opposition and are also able to shift the costs of sanctions onto the population, as a result of which they can prolong their rule.

Ali Fathollah-Nejad
LONG LIVE THE TYRANT!
THE MYTH OF BENIGN SANCTIONS