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Interview with Palestinian Activist Layan Kayed

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From the Editors

The Fight for Socialism Amid Narrowing Horizons and Increasing Dangers

As we send this issue to the printer, we think capitalism's dangers have never been more apparent. Just as clear to us is that the only sane alternative is socialism. The capitalist system and its failure to deal with the crises of the pandemic, the economy, and climate change are generating growing discontent and opposition.

The COP26 U.N. climate change conference in Glasgow, what some had called the “last chance for the planet,” was a flop. In almost every area, there was a failure to make specific plans. The heads of state and corporate executives meeting there failed to establish enforceable rules to keep the rise in global temperature to 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels. Though the need to reduce carbon fuels was mentioned, no commitment to end their use was adopted. As the young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg predicted, the meeting was a lot of “blah, blah, blah.” At the same time, COP26 made clear there is a global movement against climate change. We need to build that movement if we are to prevent a planetary apocalypse.

Adding to the global challenges, tensions are increasing among the United States, Russia, and China, all of which are nuclear powers. The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has declared that we are 100 seconds from midnight on the Doomsday Clock. So now, as we listen to the ticking, we wonder which will come first: climate catastrophe or nuclear holocaust. We must race to build an international peace movement to save the planet and humanity.

Many thought Trump's eviction from the White House would initiate a return to

“normalcy,” meaning the pre-Trump status quo. As bad as that was—with its grotesque inequality, rampant police brutality, cruel immigration policy, and a host of other social ills, not to mention brutal drone wars—things are getting much worse fast. We see the growth of ultra-rightwing, including neofascist, ideology, threatening rhetoric, and violent behavior at political rallies, school board and city council meetings, and even in state legislatures and Congress. Biden's “Build Back Better” program—a \$3.5 trillion proposal to rebuild and remake U.S. society—was eviscerated by “moderates” in his party, with all but a tiny handful of self-styled progressive Democrats abandoning their putative goal of combining a Green New Deal, Medicare for All, and substantial taxes on the rich with infrastructure. As we go to press, it looks questionable whether it will pass at all. Meanwhile, democracy is being undercut and white supremacy bolstered by GOP gerrymandering and attacks on voter registration.

Unfortunately, the mass social movements that were able to rally hundreds of thousands to the streets before Biden's victory have ebbed. Still, there are some hopeful signs. The contradictions of capitalism have never been clearer to millions of people in this country, especially the young. As Republicans are poised to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, a new abortion rights movement is emerging, one that is far more diverse in race and class than what preceded it. While the now-ultra-Right Republican party is endorsing the violent overthrow of elections, progressives have mobilized to defend voting rights. And though the mass protests of Black Lives Matter have dwindled, police racism and violence could at any moment ignite a new

movement. Nevertheless, the new generation radicalized in the past five years, including a larger number of people who self-identify as socialists than we have seen in our lifetime, has yet to produce the stable organizations needed to win political victories

The working class is awakening, slowly and fitfully. We can see this in strike votes, job resignations, and small but important organizing campaigns. North Carolina's teachers' union now has a social justice leadership and is speedily growing, and Chicago's teachers remain a fighting force. Cultural and knowledge workers, as well as college student workers and adjunct faculty are unionizing rapidly. John Deere workers provided an inspiring example of solidarity by going on strike in large part to prevent a two-tier system; Kaiser workers were willing to strike for the same reason. A slim majority of IATSE members — film and television workers — voted against their new contract, which only passed because the union has an electoral college-style voting system. And there were strikes of school bus drivers in eight states this fall. Resistance has not yet crystallized into open class struggle on a large scale, and unions still represent a small fraction of the working class. But the confluence of the Right's stunning growth and the diminished strength of movements for social justice has highlighted more sharply than ever the responsibility of the Left to support workers' struggles, while recognizing the growth of support for Trump among white workers.

That takes us to *New Politics* and our current issue. We begin with a symposium on the climate crisis. Martin Hart-Landsberg urges us to look at the U.S. government's mobilization for World War II in order to understand the scale of action that would be needed to implementa current-day Green New Deal. Laura Schleifer and Daniel Fischer argue that animal liberation is an essential part of climate justice. And Steve Ongerth makes the case that workplace organizing is critical for addressing the economic harms of climate

change.

Four essays make up our roundtable on the fight for abortion rights. Elizabeth Rapaport reviews the ever-narrowing legal status of abortion since *Roe v. Wade*. Dana Cloud maintains that the crucial battles for abortion rights are in the streets, not in the courtrooms. Marian Jones focuses on the failings of the white-led reproductive rights movement. And Irene Hays argues that “*Roe Is Already Gone*,” as abortion has been out of reach for many Americans for a long time.

In an article that is the first chapter of her new book, Lois Weiner examines the implications of recent developments in work and in neoliberalism for how education activists need to respond. Brian Bean and Shireen Akram-Boshar interview Palestinian activist Layan Kaye on how students and women are organizing against the Israeli occupation. Dan La Botz explores the origins of “campism” on the left, the view that any opponent of the United States is automatically worthy of our support. Michael Pröbsting looks at one such adversary, Russia, and shows that it too is an imperialist power. An article by Frieda Afary and a talk by Kobra Sultani examine the situation of women in Afghanistan. And Phil Gasper interviews one of the leading authorities on the politics of sports, Dave Zirin.

In our review essays, Sue Ferguson examines *Patriarchy of the Wage: Notes on Marx, Gender, and Feminism*, a new book by Sylvia Federici, one of the founders of the Wages for Housework campaign, and David Finkel provides a critique of Sue Linfield's book on Zionism and the Left. Javier Sethness and Scott Remer offer analyses of Erich Fromm, an important theorist from the Frankfurt School. And we have shorter reviews by Brian Kwoba on the Black American radical Hubert Harrison, Lillian Cicerchia on *social reproduction*, Suddhabrata Deb Roy on dialectics, and Kevin B. Anderson on Marx's last years.

We hope that these analyses and reports make some small contribution toward the fight for a socialist future.

Introduction to Articles on the Climate Crisis

IN AUGUST 2021, THE Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)—the UN-sponsored body that brings together the world's leading climate scientists—issued its latest report on what is happening to the world's climate. We have known for decades that increased emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases have already led to a dangerous increase in the average surface temperature of the planet, which is now more than 1° Celsius hotter than in the pre-industrial period. Even that amount of global warming has already had severe consequences in terms of more extreme weather events, unprecedented heat waves and forest fires, the melting of the polar ice caps and rising sea levels, the large-scale disruption of ecosystems and rapidly increasing rate of extinction, and other dire consequences. The new report confirmed in meticulous detail that humanity is facing an existential crisis, since if current trends continue, the conditions for the physical survival of human society will be undermined. Atmospheric levels of carbon dioxide were at 280 parts per million (ppm) before the industrial revolution. Today they have reached 415 ppm. If emissions continue at their current level, atmospheric carbon dioxide will climb to 560 ppm by the end of the century, resulting in a temperature increase of 3°C, far above the 1.5° that governments around the world have agreed is the maximum increase to prevent the consequences spiraling out of control. If emissions increase, climate catastrophe will arrive even sooner.

The one ray of hope in the IPCC report is that the increase in global temperature can still be held to 1.5°C if we rapidly reduce fossil

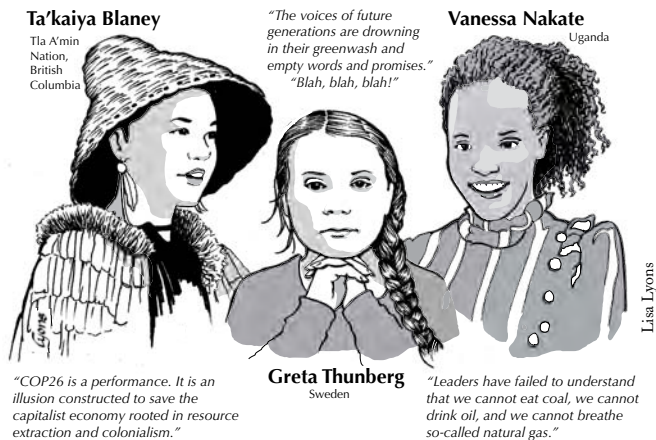
fuel use. That reduction would require implementing an immediate transition from the use of coal, natural gas, and oil to renewable energy sources (in particular, solar and wind power) that would have to begin immediately and be completed no later than 2050. This should have been the agenda at the COP26 climate negotiations in Glasgow, Scotland, this past November. But while the assembled political leaders paid lip service to the severity of the crisis, the agreements they reached fell far short of what needs to be done. The pledges made by the world's leading economies to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions are not nearly sufficient, and with past behavior as a guide to what will happen in the future, we know that even these inadequate pledges will not be met. Perhaps nothing better illustrates the irrationality of capitalism than its failure to produce serious solutions to the imminent danger of climate disaster.

The articles in this section examine different aspects of the climate crisis. In his essay, Martin Hart-Landsberg takes up the question of how a rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy could take place. He draws parallels with the very different transition that took place in the U.S. economy at the beginning of World War II. While this transition was to a massive increase in military production, Hart-Landsberg argues that there are valuable lessons to be learned. This history certainly demonstrates that even a huge economy like the United States can be fundamentally restructured in a very short period of time. The mechanisms that were used to bring this transition about may provide ideas about how a Green New Deal that

shifts the economy to the use of sustainable energy sources could be implemented.

In their contribution, Laura Schleifer and Daniel Fischer focus on the question of animal agriculture, which is itself a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. While individual lifestyle changes will not solve the climate crisis, there is little doubt that creating a just and sustainable economy will require significant changes in how people in the world's richest countries live, including major changes in diet. Meat consumption on the level that currently takes place in the United States and similar countries is unsustainable. There are also strong health and ethical arguments for reducing or eliminating such consumption and radically changing the way in which humans treat the rest of the living world.

But how can the changes that we need come about while they are opposed by the fossil-fuel industry, agribusiness, and other powerful capitalist interests? Radical change has always required powerful movements from below. While the COP26 talks did not produce significant solutions from world leaders, it did provide an opportunity for activists from around the world to continue building a grassroots network committed to radical change. On November 6 in Glasgow, a coalition of environmental organizations led a march of over 100,000 people, demanding system change, not climate change. It will require an even bigger movement to force governments to move in the direction that



is needed. This will require large-scale disruptive actions—including school walkouts, civil disobedience, and mass strikes—that will make the cost of continuing business as usual higher than the cost of agreeing to change. Youth activists around the world, such as Ta'kaiya Blaney, Vanessa Nakate, and Greta Thunberg, have played an outstanding role in building such a movement. It will also need the strength of organized labor if it is to succeed. The protest in Glasgow was led by Scottish union members. In his contribution to this section, Steve Ongerth examines the possibility of building a green union movement that will play a leading role in fighting climate change.

The fight against climate change ultimately requires not just changing a few policies, but taking on and transforming the entire economic system, replacing capitalism with a sustainable ecosocialist future. The articles in this section only take on some of the many questions that this raises, questions to which we will surely return in future issues of *New Politics*.

PHIL GASPER

The Planning and Politics of Transformation

World War II Lessons for a Green New Deal

MARTIN HART-LANDSBERG

MANY ACTIVISTS IN THE United States support a Green New Deal transformation of the economy in order to tackle the escalating global climate crisis and the country's worsening economic and social problems. At present, the Green New Deal remains a big tent idea, with advocates continuing to debate what it should include and even its ultimate aims.

The Green Party has promoted its eco-socialist Green New Deal since 2006, but it was the 2018 mass actions by new climate groups such as Extinction Rebellion and the Sunrise Movement, and then the 2019 introduction of a Green New Deal congressional resolution by Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Edward Markey that helped popularize the idea. While there are similarities, there are also important differences between the Green Party's Green New Deal and the Ocasio-Cortez/Markey Green New Deal, including the speed of change, the role of public ownership, and the use of fracking and nuclear power for energy generation.¹

More generally, there are also differences among supporters of a Green New Deal-style transformation over whether the needed government investments and proposed social policies should be financed by raising taxes, slashing the military budget, borrowing, or money creation. There are also environmentalists who oppose the notion of sustained but sustainable growth explicitly embraced by many Green New Deal supporters and argue instead for a policy of degrowth, or a "Green New Deal without growth."²

These arguments are important, representing different political sensibilities and visions, and need to be taken seriously. But what has largely escaped discussion is any detailed consideration of the actual process of economic transformation required to advance a Green New Deal program. And that is concerning because the process will be far from easy.

It is easy to provide examples of some of the challenges that await us. All Green New Deal proposals call for a sharp decrease in fossil fuel production, which will dramatically raise fossil fuel prices. The higher cost of fossil fuels will significantly raise the cost of business for many industries, especially air travel, tourism, and the aerospace and automobile industries, triggering significant declines in demand and reductions in their output and employment. We will need to develop a mechanism that allows us to humanely and efficiently repurpose the newly surplus facili-

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ties and provide alternative employment for released workers.

New industries, especially those involved in the production of renewable energy, will have to be rapidly developed. We will need to create agencies capable of deciding the speed of their expansion as well as who will own the new facilities, how they will be financed, and how best to ensure that the materials they require will be produced in sufficient quantities and made available at the appropriate time. We will also have to develop mechanisms for deciding where the new industries will be located and how to develop the social infrastructure to house and care for the required workforce.

We will also need to ensure the rapid and smooth expansion of facilities capable of producing mass transit vehicles and a revitalized national rail system. We will need to organize the retrofitting of existing buildings, both office and residential, as well as the training of workers and the production of required equipment and materials. The development of a new universal health care system will also require the planning and construction of new clinics and the development of new technologies and health practices. In sum, a system-wide transformation involves a lot of moving parts that have to be managed and coordinated.

One productive way for us to sharpen our thinking about these challenges is to study the World War II-era mobilization process. Then, the U.S. government, facing remarkably similar challenges to the ones we are likely to confront, successfully converted the U.S. economy from civilian to military production in a period of only three years.

The U.S. wartime experience cannot provide a ready-made blueprint for the economic conversion we seek, but there is much we can learn, both positive and negative, from it. In what follows, I first highlight some of the key lessons and then conclude with a brief discussion of the relevance of the World War II experience to our current efforts to

transform the U.S. economy.

A Rapid, System-Wide Conversion of the U.S. Economy Is Possible

The primary driver of the wartime conversion was the enormous increase in military spending over the years 1940-1943. Military spending grew by an incredible 269.3 percent in 1941, 259.7 percent in 1942, and 99.5 percent in 1943. As a consequence, military spending as a share of GDP rose from 1.6 percent in 1940 to 32.2 percent in 1943. That last year, federal spending hit a record high of 46.6 percent of GDP and remained at over 41 percent of GDP in each of the following two years.³

The results were equally impressive: The combined output of the war-related manufacturing, mining, and construction industries doubled between 1939 and 1944.⁴ In 1943 and 1944 alone, the United States was responsible for approximately 40 percent of all the munitions produced during World War II.

This record has led many to call what was accomplished a “production miracle.” However, a more complete assessment of the period tells a different story. For example, there is little difference between the years 1921-1924 and 1941-1944 in either the growth of industrial production or the growth in real gross nonfarm product.⁵

Paul A.C. Koistinen casts further doubt on production-miracle claims, pointing out that

When placed in the proper context, the American production record does not appear exceptional, unless the characterization applies to all other belligerents. Gauged by the percentage distribution of the world's manufacturing production for the period 1926-1929, the United States in the peak year 1944 was producing munitions at almost exactly the level it should have been. Great Britain is modestly high, Canada low, Germany high, Japan very high, and the Soviet Union spectacularly high.⁶

The explanation for these two significantly different views of the U.S. war experience is that the transformation involved far more than the increase in military spending. There was also the curtailment or outright suppression of the production of many industries, the rationing of limited supplies of many goods, and the development and production of entirely new goods and services. For example, civilian automobile production was stopped, tires and food were rationed, and synthetic rubber was created and produced in significant amounts. Between 1940 and 1944, the total production of non-war goods and services actually fell by some 9 percent, from \$180 billion to \$164 billion (in 1950 dollars).

In other words, the tremendous gains in U.S. military production were achieved, and in a relatively short period of time, not because of some impossible-to-repeat production miracle, but because a government-directed mobilization succeeded in fully employing the country's resources while shifting their use from civilian to military purposes.

State Capacities and Action Matter

The economy's successful transformation demonstrates the critical importance of state planning, public financing and ownership, and state direction of economic activity. Mobilization officials faced two major tasks. The first was to quickly expand the economy's capacity to produce the weapons and supplies required by the military. The second was to manage the scarcities of critical materials and components caused by the rapid pace of the mobilization.

The first task was made significantly more difficult by a lack of corporate support. Most corporations were reluctant to undertake the massive expansion in plants and equipment required to achieve the desired boost in military production. In fact, private investment actually fell in value over the years 1941-1943. It was the federal government, using a variety of new policy initiatives, that

provided the solution.

One of the most important initiatives was the creation of the Defense Production Corporation (DPC). In May 1940, Congress passed a series of amendments that allowed the still operating depression-era Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) to create new subsidiaries "with such powers as it may deem necessary to aid the Government of the United States in its national defense program." The DPC was one of those new subsidiaries.

Since the RFC had independent borrowing authority, the DPC was able to finance directly the expansion of facilities deemed critical to the military buildup without needing congressional approval. The DPC kept ownership of the new facilities it financed but planned the construction with, and then leased the new facilities for a minimal fee to, predetermined contractors who would operate them. The DPC eventually financed and owned some one-third of all the plants and equipment built during the war.

By its termination at the end of June 1945, the DPC

owned approximately 96 percent of the capacity of the synthetic-rubber industry, 90 percent of magnesium metal, 71 percent of aircraft and aircraft engines, and 58 percent of the aluminum metal industry. It also had sizeable investments in iron and steel, aviation gasoline, ordnance, machinery and machine tools, transportation, radio, and other more miscellaneous facilities.⁷

The DPC supported facilities expansion in other ways too. Responding to concerns of shortages in machine tools and the industry's reluctance to boost capacity to produce them, the DPC began a machine-tools pool program. The DPC gave machine-tool producers a 30 percent advance to begin production. If the producers found a private buyer, they returned the advance. If they found no buyer, the DPC would pay them full price and put the machine tool in storage for later sale. This

program proved remarkably successful in boosting machine-tool production and, with machine tools readily available, speeding up weapons production.⁸

The second task, the timely delivery of scarce materials to military and essential civilian producers, was accomplished thanks to the efforts of the War Production Board (WPB), the country's primary wartime mobilization agency. In late 1942, after considerable experimentation, it launched its Controlled Materials Plan (CMP). The plan required key claimants, such as the Army, the Navy, and the Maritime Commission, to provide detailed descriptions of their projected programs and the quantities of essential controlled metals required to realize them, with a monthly production schedule for the upcoming year. The WPB industry divisions responsible for these metals would then estimate their projected supply and decide the amount of each metal to be allocated to each claimant following WPB policy directives. The claimants would then adjust their programs accordingly and assign their metal shares to their prime contractors, who were then responsible for assigning supplies to their subcontractors.

When, over time, a shortage of components replaced the shortage of metals as the most serious bottleneck to military production, the WPB introduced another program. The newly established Production Executive Committee created a list of 34 critical components. One of its subcommittees, working in concert with the CMP process, would then arrange for essential manufacturers to receive all their required scarce materials and components.

Flexibility Is Important

Flexibility in both planning structures and mobilization policies was critical to the success of the conversion. President Roosevelt began the mobilization process in May 1940, with an executive order reactivating the World War I-era National Defense Advisory

Commission (NDAC). In December 1940, he replaced the NDAC with the Office of Production Management (OPM). Then, in August 1941, he created the Supply Priorities and Allocation Board (SPAB) and placed it over the OPM with the charge of developing a long-term mobilization strategy and overseeing OPM's work. And finally, again using an executive order, he established the WPB in January 1942, replacing both the OPM and the SPAB.

All three agencies, the NDAC, OPM, and WPB, relied heavily on divisions overseeing industrial sections to carry out their responsibilities. The NDAC had seven divisions: Industrial Production, Industrial Materials, Labor, Price Stabilization, Farm Products, Transportation, and Consumer Protection. The first two were the most important.

The Industrial Production Division had eight sections, the most important being aircraft; ammunition and light ordnance; and tanks, trucks, and tractors. The Industrial Materials Division had three subdivisions, each with its own sections: the mining and minerals products subdivision had sections for iron and steel, copper, aluminum, and tin; the agricultural and forest products subdivision had sections for textiles, leather, paper, rubber, and the like; and the chemical and allied products division had sections for petroleum, nitrogen, and others.

Each division, subdivision, and section had an appointed head, and each section head had an industry advisory committee to assist them. The divisions, subdivisions, and sections were responsible, as appropriate, for assessing the industrial capacities of their respective industries to meet present and projected military needs, facilitating military procurement activity, and assisting with plant expansion plans and the priority distribution and allocation of scarce goods.

When Roosevelt felt that an existing mobilization agency was not up to the task of furthering the war effort, he replaced it.

Accordingly, each new mobilization agency had a more centralized decision-making structure, broader responsibilities, and greater authority over private business decisions than its predecessor.

Thus, the OPM, reflecting a different stage in the mobilization, was more narrowly focused on production and had only four divisions: Production, Purchases, Priorities, and Labor. Later, in recognition of the spillover effects of military production on civilian production, the Civilian Supply Division was added and given responsibility for all industries producing 50 percent or less for the defense program.

The WPB had six divisions: Production, Materials, Industry Operations, Purchases, Civilian Supply, and Labor. The newly created Division of Industry Operations included all non-munitions-producing industries and had responsibility for promoting the conversion of industries to military production and for maximizing the flow of materials, equipment, and workers to essential producers.

Conversion Means Conflict

Powerful corporations and the military opposed policies that threatened their interests even when those policies benefited the war effort. Corporations producing goods of direct importance to the military often refused to undertake needed investments. Corporations producing for the civilian market routinely ignored agency requests that they curtail or convert their production to economize on the nonmilitary use of scarce materials.

By late 1940, this corporate resistance had begun to cause shortages, especially of strategic materials. Aluminum was one of those materials and Alcoa, the only major producer of the metal, aggressively resisted expanding its production capacity even though a lack of aluminum was causing delays in military aircraft production. A similar situation existed with steel; steel executives argued that there was no need for capacity expansion even as

critical activities such as ship building and railroad car manufacturing ground to a halt because of a lack of supply.⁹

This growing shortage problem, and its threat to the military buildup, could have been minimized if large producers of consumer durables had been willing to either reduce their

What has escaped discussion is any detailed consideration of the actual process of economic transformation required to advance a Green New Deal program.

production or convert to military production. But almost all of them rebuffed NDAC entreaties. They were enjoying substantial profits for the first time in years and were unwilling to abandon their civilian markets.

The industry that drew the most criticism because of its heavy resource use was the automobile industry. In 1939, the automobile industry “absorbed 18 percent of total national steel output, 80 percent of rubber, 34 percent of lead, nearly 10-14 percent of copper, tin, and aluminum, and 90 percent of gasoline. Throughout 1940 and 1941, automobile production went up, taking proportionately even more materials and products indispensable for defense preparation.”¹⁰

In some cases, this corporate opposition to policies that threatened their profits lasted deep into the war years, with some firms objecting not only to undertaking their own expansion but to any government-financed expansion as well, out of fear of postwar overproduction or loss of market share. This stance is captured in the following exchange between Senator E. H. Moore of Oklahoma and Interior Secretary and Petroleum Administrator for War Harold L. Ickes at a February

1943 congressional hearing over the construction of a federally financed petroleum pipeline from Texas to the East Coast:

Secretary Ickes. I would like to say one thing, however. I think there are certain gentlemen in the oil industry who are thinking of the competitive position after the war.

The Chair. That is what we are afraid of, Mr. Secretary.

Secretary Ickes. That's all right. I am not doing that kind of thinking.

The Chair. I know you are not.

Secretary Ickes. I am thinking of how best to win this war with the least possible amount of casualties and in the quickest time.

Senator Moore. Regardless, Mr. Secretary, of what the effect would be after the war? Are you not concerned with that?

Secretary Ickes. Absolutely.

Senator Moore. Are you not concerned with the economic situation with regard to existing conditions after the war?

Secretary Ickes. Terribly. But there won't be any economic situation to worry about if we don't win the war.

Senator Moore. We are going to win the war.

Secretary Ickes. We haven't won it yet.

Senator Moore. Can't we also, while we are winning the war, look beyond the war to see what the situation will be with reference to ...

Secretary Ickes (interposing). That is what the automobile industry tried to do, Senator. It wouldn't convert because it was more interested in what would happen after the war. That is what the steel industry did, Senator, when it said we didn't need any more steel capacity, and we are paying the price now. If decisions are left with me, it is only fair to

say that I will not take into account any postwar factor—but it can be taken out of my hands if those considerations are paid attention to.¹¹

Military procurement agencies, determined to maintain their independence, also greatly hindered government efforts to ensure a timely flow of resources to essential producers by actively opposing any meaningful oversight or regulation of their activities. Most importantly, the procurement agencies refused to adjust their demand for goods and services to the productive capacity of the economy. Demanding more than the economy could produce meant that shortages, dislocations, and stockpiling were unavoidable. The Joint Chiefs of Staff actually ignored several WPB requests to form a joint planning committee.

Dwight D. Eisenhower provides a good sense of what was at stake:

As money began to pour into the treasury, contracts began to flood out of the military purchasing bureaus—over \$100 billion worth in the first six months of 1942, a stupefying sum that exceeded the value of the entire nation's output in 1941. ... Military orders became hunting licenses, unleashing a jostling frenzy of competition for materials and labor in the jungle of the marketplace. Contractors ran riot in a cutthroat scramble for scarce resources.¹²

It took until late 1942 for the WPB to win what became known as the "feasibility dispute," after which the military's procurement agencies grudgingly took the economy's ability to produce into account when making their procurement demands.

Class Matters

Leading corporations and their executives took advantage of every opportunity to shape the wartime mobilization process and strengthen their postwar political and economic power. Many of the appointed section heads responsible for implementing

mobilization policies were so-called “dollar-a-year” staff, who remained employed by the very firms they were supposed to oversee. And most of these section heads relied on trade association officials as well as industry advisory committees to help them with their work. In some cases, trade association officials themselves served as section heads of the industries they were hired to represent. These appointments gave leading corporations an important voice in decisions involving the speed and location of new investments, the timing and process of industry conversions, procurement contract terms and procedures, the use of small businesses as subcontractors, the designation of goods as scarce and thus subject to regulation, the role of unions in shop-floor production decisions, and labor allocation policies.

NDAC officials initially welcomed the participation of dollar-a-year people on the grounds that business executives knew best how to organize and maximize production. However, they soon often found these executives speaking out against agency policies in defense of corporate interests. In response, the

Although World War II cannot serve as a model for a Green New Deal transformation, it does provide lessons. Most important is that a system-wide transformation is possible to achieve, and in a timely manner.

OPM created a Legal Division and empowered it to write and implement regulations designed to limit their number and power, but to little avail. As the agency’s responsibilities grew, so did the number of dollar-a-year staff working for it.

Little changed under the WPB. In fact,

between January and December 1942, their number grew from 310 to a wartime high of 805, driven in large part by the explosion in the number of industry advisory committees.¹³ The WPB’s continued dependence on these nominally-paid business executives was a constant source of concern in Congress.

Corporate leaders also never lost sight of what was to them the bigger picture, the postwar balance of class power. Thus, from the very beginning of the wartime mobilization, they actively worked to win popular identification of democracy with corporate freedom of action and totalitarianism with government planning and direction of economic activity.

As J.W. Mason illustrates,

Already by 1941, government enterprise was, according to a Chamber of Commerce publication, “the ghost that stalks at every business conference.” J. Howard Pew of Sun Oil declared that if the United States abandoned private ownership and “supinely reli[es] on government control and operation, then Hitlerism wins even though Hitler himself be defeated.” Even the largest recipients of military contracts regarded the wartime state with hostility. GM [chair] Alfred Sloan—referring to the danger of government enterprises operating after war—wondered if it is “not as essential to win the peace, in an economic sense, as it is to win the war, in a military sense,” while GE’s Philip Reed vowed to “oppose any project or program that will weaken” free enterprise.¹⁴

Throughout the war, business leaders and associations “flooded the public sphere with descriptions of the mobilization effort in which for-profit companies figured as the heroic engineers of a production ‘miracle.’” For example, Boeing spent nearly a million dollars a year on print advertising in 1943-1945, almost as much as it set aside for research and development.

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) was one of the most active promoters of the idea that it was business,

not government, that was winning the war against state totalitarianism. It did so by funding a steady stream of films, books, tours, and speeches. Mark R. Wilson describes one of its initiatives:

One of the NAM's major public-relations projects for 1942, which built upon its efforts in radio and print media, was its "Production for Victory" tour, designed to show that "industry is making the utmost contributions toward victory." Starting the first week in May, the NAM paid for twenty newspaper reporters to take a twenty-four-day, fifteen-state trip during which they visited sixty-four major defense plants run by fifty-eight private companies. For most of May, newspapers across the country ran daily articles related to the tour, written by the papers' own reporters or by one of the wire services. The articles' headlines included "Army Gets Rubber Thanks to Akron," "General Motors Plants Turning Out Huge Volume of War Goods," "Baldwin Ups Tank Output," and "American Industry Overcomes a Start of 7 Years by Axis."¹⁵

The companies and reporters rarely mentioned that almost all of these new plants were actually financed, built, and owned by the government, or that it was thanks to government planning efforts that these companies received needed materials on a timely basis and had well-trained and highly motivated workers. Perhaps not surprisingly, government and union efforts to challenge the corporate story were never as well funded, sustained, or shaped by as clear a class perspective.¹⁶ As a consequence, they were far less effective.

Final Thoughts

Although the World War II-era economic transformation cannot and should not serve as a model for a Green New Deal transformation of the U.S. economy, it does provide lessons that deserve to be taken seriously. Among the most important is that a rapid system-wide

transformation, such as required for a Green New Deal, is possible to achieve, and in a timely manner. It will take the development of new state capacities and flexible policies. And we should be prepared, from the beginning, that our own efforts to create a more socially just and environmentally sustainable economy will be met by sophisticated opposition from powerful corporations and their allies.

The conversion history also points to some of our biggest challenges. Germany's military victories in Europe as well as Japan's direct attack on the United States encouraged popular support for state action to convert the economy from civilian to military production. In sharp contrast, widespread support for state action to combat climate change or restrict corporate freedom of action does not yet exist. Even now, there are many who deny the reality of climate change. There is also widespread doubt about the ability of government to solve problems. This means we have big work ahead to create the political conditions supportive of decisive action to transform our economy.

Perhaps equally daunting, we have no simple equivalent to the military during World War II to drive a Green New Deal transformation. The wartime mobilization was designed to meet the needs of the military. Thus, the mobilization agencies generally treated military procurement demands as marching orders. In contrast, a Green New Deal transformation will involve changes to many parts of our economy, and our interest in a grassroots democratic restructuring process means there needs to be popular involvement in shaping the transformation of each part, as well as the connections between them. Thus, we face the difficult task of creating the organizational relationships and networks required to bring together leading community representatives and to produce, through conversation and negotiation, a broad roadmap of the process of transformation we collectively seek.

And finally, we must confront a corporate sector that is far more powerful and popular

now than it was during the period of the war. Thanks to the current freedom corporations enjoy to shift production and finance globally, they have a variety of ways to blunt or undermine state efforts to direct their activities.

In sum, achieving a Green New Deal transformation will be far from easy. It will require developing a broad-based effort to educate people about how capitalism is driving our interrelated ecological and economic crises, building a political movement for system-wide change anchored by a new ecological understanding and vision, and creating the state- and community-based representative institutions needed to initiate and direct the desired Green New Deal transformation.

It is that last task that makes a careful consideration of the World War II-era conversion so valuable. By studying how that rapid economy-wide transformation was organized and managed, we are able to gain important insights into, and the ability to prepare for, some of the challenges and choices that await us on the road to the new economy we so badly need.

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Animal Liberation Is Climate Justice

Struggles and Strategies from Below

LAURA SCHLEIFER AND DANIEL FISCHER

TWENTY TWENTY-ONE WAS THE Year of the Flood(s)—and droughts, fires, famines, and plague. Floods swelled from Chinese subways to Alpine villages; fires raged from the Canadian-U.S. Pacific Northwest to Greece and Turkey; Madagascar suffered drought-induced famine; locusts ravaged crops from East Africa to India to the Arabian Peninsula; flesh-eating bacteria spawned in the Atlantic; the coronavirus killed millions; and right-wingers began begrudgingly acknowledging the eco-apocalypse, shifting from climate change denialism to increasingly Malthusian, eco-fascistic narratives.¹

Meanwhile, world leaders discussed how to save capitalism from global warming. The much-hyped 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) regurgitated reformist policies that aimed to preserve the very system causing this catastrophe. Its accomplishments included pledges to reduce coal usage and end global deforestation by 2030, and a recommitment to limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. This target (let alone 1

degree, as scientist James Hansen advocates) seems purely aspirational considering our current trajectory toward 3 degrees or higher. Moreover, these voluntary measures may never even materialize at all.

It's particularly difficult to take such pledges seriously when the discussion at COP26 barely touched on a leading cause of global warming, deforestation, species extinction, water depletion, ocean "dead zones" and plastics, soil erosion, air pollution, world hunger, antibiotic resistance, and infectious diseases—including, most likely, COVID-19.² The delegates chowed on meat, fish, and dairy-based meals, which comprised 60 percent of the conference's menu, ignoring these meals' high carbon footprint. To quote Carl Le Blanc of the Phoenix-based nonprofit Climate Healers: "The cow in the room is being ignored at this COP. Animal agriculture has been taken off the agenda and put on the menu."³

In accounting for climate change, a focus on cows is essential for several reasons. First, farmed animals—mainly cows raised for beef and dairy—produce roughly one-third of the world's methane emissions. Despite being shorter lived than carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane is the more potent greenhouse gas by far—by a factor of eighty to one hundred. Second, land used by the cattle industry has a staggering opportunity cost. Scientists found this year that if the world abolished animal agriculture and restored the liberated land to forest and wild grassland, the flora and soil could sequester 772 billion tons of CO₂.

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Although the UN released a special report two years ago stressing that one of the most effective ways to mitigate warming is a plant-based diet,⁴ not one day of COP26 was devoted to the issue, in stark contrast to the time dedicated to energy, transport, and finance. Even as protests outside the conference called attention to this issue, the delegates inside ignored it.

One reason cited for the omission was that addressing animal agriculture would unfairly target historically oppressed communities, continuing the Global North's legacy of dominating and controlling those they've colonized.⁵ While this may seem motivated by the noble impulse to be "sensitive" to colonial dynamics, the knowledge that these same imperialist nations' delegates also removed from the conference's concluding agreement the so-called Loss and Damages Finance Facility,⁶ which mandated compensation for poorer countries for climate damages, should put any uncertainty about their true motives to rest. This is just one manifestation of how the call for sensitivity toward oppressed groups is exploited by those most responsible for current crises in order to avoid making transformative changes within their own societies.⁷

Unfortunately, the Western left bears some responsibility for this manipulative usage of political correctness, due both to its collective failure to reject the neoliberal exploitation of identity politics, and to its constant smearing of veganism and animal liberation as "middle class and white."⁸ While it's certainly true that vegan and animal advocacy are often conducted in colonial, Eurocentric ways, that does not mean there are no liberatory ways of advancing these goals, or that no marginalized individuals do this type of work themselves. Around the world, Indigenous, colonized, and working-class people engage in praxis that recognizes how the fates of other species enmesh with our own, and that our collective survival depends upon the liberation of humans and other species alike.

Animal Agribusiness as Colonial Force

"We demand that the copious lands in the hands of ranchers ... be turned over to our communities, which totally lack land," declared Mexico's Zapatista National Liberation Army in early 1994.⁹ Although rarely framed as such, this Indigenous peasants' revolt largely centered on a struggle to reclaim land from the commercial cattle industry. Opponents of veganism insist that abstention from animal products would be "colonial" and wipe out many traditional Indigenous cultural practices. While this can be true in cases where white, settler, and/or non-Indigenous vegans attempt to tell Indigenous people what to do, the opposite is *staggeringly* true: Animal agriculture is one of the greatest drivers of colonization in human history.¹⁰

This is due to the enormous amount of land and resources required for animal farming compared to plant farming. Currently, 26 percent of earth's ice-free surface is used for ranching. Additionally, one third of all crops, including 80 percent of global soy production, is used for livestock feed. Of the world's agricultural land, nearly 80 percent is used for animal agriculture rather than for growing crops for direct human consumption. Since raising animals is so resource intensive, cultures that consume meat- and dairy-heavy diets need much more land and water than others. In the pre-colonial Americas, most people did not practice animal agriculture,¹¹ but lived mostly on plants, supplemented by hunting and fishing. The animals typically found on U.S. farms—cows, pigs, chickens, sheep, and goats—were transported from Europe by colonizers desiring meat and dairy, and later, profits, as they began exporting animal products back to Europe. Colonial expansion in the Americas increasingly became a lopsided "conflict" between "cowboys" seeking more land for cattle ranching and "Indians."¹²

Today, animal agriculture still drives colonization. In Central and South America,

cattle ranching and livestock feed production join extraction and logging industries as primary land thieves. For example, invasions by ranchers are resisted by Nukanchiruna, Chaibajú, and Uaima communities in Colombia and by Mayangna, Miskito, and Kriol communities in Nicaragua. In addition to stealing land, ranching pollutes local water supplies and causes global warming-induced droughts that force Indigenous people off their land. When Indigenous people have attempted to resist this land-grabbing, they have often been attacked and murdered by the land thieves. Last year, the watchdog group Global Witness documented the murder of 227 environmental campaigners, one-third of whom were Indigenous.¹³ Numerous attacks stemmed from commercial agriculture, including ranching. The Business and Human Rights Resource Centre documented 604 “business-related human rights issues in 2020,” finding “the most dangerous sectors were agribusiness and mining.”¹⁴

Animal agribusiness also drives world hunger, as food that could be fed to humans directly is used for livestock feed. While many might claim famine is not about lack of food, but rather lack of distribution under capitalism, it’s worth asking why people who were food sovereign prior to being ejected from their land (often by animal agribusiness) are now dependent on “distribution” for their survival. As climate change intensifies, actual food shortages, as opposed to manufactured scarcity, are becoming more of a reality. The organization A Well-Fed World addresses this issue by combining vegan food distribution to the world’s poorest with education for wealthier nations on how animal consumption there drives food insecurity elsewhere.

Those living in capitalist/colonizer societies of settler heritage should consider the impact their own lifestyles are having on Indigenous communities. If the world went vegan, it would free up a land mass the size of the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, China, and Australia

combined,¹⁵ enabling its return to Indigenous peoples to sustainably inhabit and restore. Land could also be freed up for reparations to Black Americans, whose enslaved ancestors were promised, but have yet to receive, forty acres each. This would empower the creation of more Black autonomous communities like Mississippi’s Cooperation Jackson. There is much potential for collaboration between veganism as a liberatory praxis and #Land-Back and reparations movements—a mission currently being explored by initiatives like Black Vegfest’s liberation farm project, which teaches Black people organic, veganic farming and helps them reconnect with the land and their own history from a Black liberationist and animal liberationist perspective.

Animal Liberation from Agribusiness and Fishing Workers

Last year, an industry usually hidden from “polite” society suddenly began entering public consciousness—the animal killing industrial complex. It began with the emergence of a bona fide global plague. Although the origins of COVID-19 are still a matter of debate, Michael Worobey’s analysis in November’s *Science* locates the first known human infection in a marine animal vendor in a quasi-slaughterhouse called a wet market. The virus then spread rampantly through slaughterhouses worldwide.

Soon, slaughterhouses began shutting down as tens of thousands of workers fell ill and hundreds died. Farmers lamented having to kill “their” animals—which seemed strange, considering the animals would’ve been killed anyway, until one realized such “dirty work” is not usually done by farmers but rather outsourced to society’s most disenfranchised: the undocumented immigrants, enslaved prisoners, ex-convicts, and other profoundly indigent people staffing slaughterhouses.

This raised questions about why the meatpacking industry was such a hotbed of COVID spread. Was it the freezing tem-

peratures needed to preserve carcasses? The workers' inability to cover their faces when coughing/sneezing due to disassembly lines moving so fast? Their generally weakened immune systems, given their long hours and unhealthy environment? While many commentators rushed to say there was little to no risk of catching COVID from "meat," live animals don't enter slaughterhouses as "meat," and they breathe just like humans do. Moreover, it's telling that other factory settings did not experience similar outbreaks, whereas mink farms did. Additionally, infectious diseases have a long history of being formed and spread through animal agriculture.¹⁶ Thus, the high rates of COVID in slaughterhouses hardly seem coincidental.

Even before COVID, slaughterhouse work was extremely dangerous. Because so many workers lack legal rights, either because they are undocumented or have felony convictions, labor abuse is rampant. Musculoskeletal damage from repetitive motion and injuries caused by exhaustion while handling sharp equipment, slipping and falling on entrails, and so on are widespread. Due to high consumer demand for animal products, lines move so quickly that workers must wear diapers to avoid bathroom breaks and go long periods without rest, food, or water—all of which increase their risk of injury due to fatigue and dehydration. Fearing deportation or re-criminalization, workers rarely report violations; and to avoid legal repercussions, companies rarely send them for proper medical treatment when sick or injured. Sexual abuse is pervasive. Due to high employee turnover rates caused by deportation, injuries, sickness, or simply returning to their countries of origin, employers regard workers as disposable, just like the animals they slaughter.

While some of these dangers resemble the occupational hazards of other agricultural jobs, slaughterhouse workers also suffer mental health effects from killing sentient beings. In addition to the trauma of working under such brutal conditions, they also

endure PITS—Perpetrator-Induced Traumatic Stress. Much like soldiers, executioners, and others tasked with inflicting systemic violence, slaughterhouse workers suffer high rates of addiction, anxiety, depression, and suicide. Families and communities suffer too, as workers then release their trauma through displaced violence, leading to abnormally high rates of domestic violence and other forms of violent crime in those areas.¹⁷

Commercial fishing, the world's top killer of wildlife and an inhibitor of oceans' carbon sequestration, relies heavily on slave labor, with up to a quarter of fishing boats carrying captive workers. Fishing workers often face physical and sexual abuse and filthy living conditions, unable to escape while at sea for months on end. Fish farm workers endure high disease rates and hazards like drowning, bites, and electrocution, plus long hours, low pay, and frequent sexual harassment. On top of having a much-higher carbon footprint than plant-based farming, fish farming often blocks access to coasts and is connected to violence against local communities.¹⁸

As leftists, our solidarity with these individuals is imperative. Many might consider the "solution" to be greater legal workers' rights and industry regulation, rather than the more radical goal of industry eradication. However, there is no way to regulate away the central trauma induced by forcing a subjugated class to kill thinking, feeling beings who don't want to die. Additionally, consumer demand for animal products endangers workers by forcing them to work at such high speeds. In another tragic irony, many workers exploited or enslaved by animal-exploitation industries globally may have been forced into that situation through displacement caused by the world's biggest land appropriator—animal agriculture.

What would leftist solidarity with animal agriculture workers look like? The organization Food Empowerment Project is one example. Founded by Xicana animal rights advocate Lauren Ornelas, it promotes vegan-

ism while also materially supporting workers in *all* food-producing industries. Through its comprehensive approach to food-related ethical issues, it includes animal liberation as one part of a broader goal of total liberation.

Additionally, solidarity with slaughterhouse workers would entail active support for workers' strikes, and efforts to create opportunities to help them escape that industry altogether, including the creation of jobs that help rather than harm animals, such as running a sanctuary or restoring habitats. Leftists and animal liberationists should also amplify the voices of former slaughterhouse workers exposing the horrors of that industry and its victimization of humans and nonhumans, such as Susana Soto, a Mexican immigrant who quit her slaughterhouse job after realizing the connection between the way her employer was beating his wife and the violence his business was inflicting on chickens, and now is a vegan animal rights activist.¹⁹ We can also build mutual aid networks to sustain slaughterhouse workers attempting to exit that industry and organize to redirect current tax subsidies funding animal agriculture to fund plant agriculture instead. Toward the bigger goal of bringing down this industry and catalyzing a large-scale transition to plant-based food systems, slaughterhouse workers themselves also have the power to block supply chains through mass organized refusal to work. After all, slaughterhouses and meat packing facilities comprise a small bottleneck for industrial animal agriculture—particularly in the world's top cow slaughterer, Brazil, and top chicken slaughterer, the United States.

When slaughterhouse workers planned strikes last summer, leftists and animal liberationists missed an opportunity to build solidarity with them. And this example is but one episode in a longer history that reveals why animal liberationists should be socialists, and socialists should be vegan. As long as societies rely upon the production of animal "products," they will always require someone

to kill them and thus need an underclass. And as long as an underclass exists, there will always be someone economically desperate enough to do it.

Environmental Racism and Classism

In addition to land theft, labor exploitation, and literal enslavement, animal exploitation industries terrorize marginalized human communities via environmental racism and classism. Because factory farms and slaughterhouses are massive polluters, their surrounding communities are always poor and typically Black and Brown. These communities then suffer the effects of contaminants poisoning the land, water, and air.

In 2020, a study revealed that animal agriculture-induced air pollution causes 12,700 deaths per year in the United States alone.²⁰ One danger is ammonia-spiked fecal matter particles, which lodge themselves in lungs, leading to eventual death. The Natural Resources Defense Council states: "People living near or working at factory farms inhale hundreds of gases formed as manure decomposes. For instance, one gas released by lagoons, hydrogen sulfide, is dangerous even at low levels. Its irreversible effects include seizures, comas and even death."²¹ In North Carolina, the nation's second-largest pig producer, five hundred residents successfully sued the industry for irreparable damage to their health, as well as for lowering their home values (an outcome that also worsened the legacy of redlining).²² In addition, hospitals located near these facilities report 30 percent more deaths among patients with kidney disease, 50 percent more deaths among patients with anemia, and 130 percent more deaths among patients with sepsis than in other locations. Rates of child asthma, low birth-weight babies, and infant mortality were also much higher in these communities.²³

Animal agriculture is also a major cause of global freshwater pollution.²⁴ In the United States alone, animal agriculture produces one

billion tons of phosphorus- and nitrogen-rich waste annually, contaminating 145,000 miles of rivers and streams, nearly one million acres of lakes, reservoirs, and ponds, and over three thousand square miles of bays and estuaries. This impacts low-income communities, such as Casco, Wisconsin, which found its drinking water supply to be contaminated by nearby dairy farms. “Blue baby syndrome,” which causes infant fatality, is rampant in these areas, as are miscarriages and disease outbreaks due to bacteria- and virus-infested drinking water.²⁵

This pollution has far-reaching effects. For instance, chemical and manure runoff from Midwestern U.S. farms floats down the Mississippi River and dumps into the Gulf of Mexico, where it creates the world’s second biggest ocean dead zone. This affects both the local ecosystem and the local population, contaminating drinking water, causing toxic algae blooms, and deoxygenation that leads to mass die-offs of marine wildlife.²⁶

Additionally, water depletion is exacerbated by droughts resulting from climate change, which is also connected to animal agriculture.²⁷

Animal Liberation from the Majority World

Far from being predominantly a marker of “first world” or “white” privilege, vegetarianism and veganism are growing fastest in the Global South. Nigeria, Pakistan, and Indonesia saw the largest increase in vegetarianism from 2016 to 2017. Bangladesh ranks as having the lowest per capita meat consumption globally, followed by India, Burundi, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, and other countries in the Global South. According to a 2016 global survey by Nielsen, the population of Africa and the Middle East is 16 percent vegetarian and 6 percent vegan, making it the second most vegetarian region after East Asia, which is 19 percent vegetarian and 9 percent vegan. North America and Europe are last

in both categories, with only 5 to 6 percent vegetarianism and 2 percent veganism. Even within these continents, poorer²⁸ and more melanated communities are most likely to lean plant-based. In the United States, African Americans are about three times as likely as white residents to be vegetarian, and more than twice as likely to be vegan.²⁹

These trends make sense given the roots of the philosophy of animal liberation in the majority world. Widely influential ideas of nonviolence toward living beings emerged in ancient Indian and other Asian religions millennia ago. Additionally, Syrian poet Al-Ma’arri was an early advocate of veganism a thousand years ago. These legacies continue in contemporary Asia. China has the largest population of vegans on earth, which is growing exponentially, and the country has pledged to reduce meat consumption by 50 percent by 2030.³⁰ Chinese youth are also increasingly active in animal rights activism,³¹ as are Koreans³² and other East Asians.

Traditional African diets were mainly plant based, and a growing movement reinvigorates those culinary traditions. Nicola Kagoro, a Zimbabwean chef, told the *Guardian*, “I particularly think it’s important to spread veganism around Africa because it originated in Africa. Our ancestors didn’t eat as much meat. It is through colonization that we learned these crazy meat-eating practices.” Today’s vegan food movement largely began with Jamaica’s 1930s Rastafarian diet. Their plant-based lifestyle, as journalist Paige Curtis explains, “is part of a broader belief in Black sovereignty, health, and ecological harmony.”³³ Additionally, African climate justice activists like Indigenous Guinean vegan Abdourahamane Ly and Nigerian journalist Joshua Borokinni are connecting animal liberation to ecology and decolonization, while organizations like Liberian Animal Welfare and Conservation Society and Uganda’s Lead Vegan orphanage combine youth programs with vegan education and animal rescue. In Rwanda, former poachers now lead gorilla

protection efforts and community renewal projects, while Zimbabwe's all-female anti-poaching unit Akashinga prevents poaching through community support rather than punishment.

In Western Asia, Turkey's vegan movement is flourishing, an extension of the Istanbul culture of collectively caring for street dogs and cats. The animal liberation network Haytap has unified animal rights groups, some of which, like Yod, have also been building alliances with feminist, ecological, and other liberatory movements³⁴ since the 2013 Gezi Park protests. Additionally, many Indigenous Kurdish guerillas, particularly among the women in YJA-Star, have stopped eating meat. Spokesperson Evren Kocabiçak explains this reflects a "social ecological consciousness" that considers "the culture of hunting as one of the factors that create war and violence." Kocabiçak emphasizes an aspiration to "live without causing any harm to the environment we live in, all while maintaining friendship with the animals."³⁵ Elsewhere in the region, Lebanese vegan YouTuber Seb Alex joined local Beirut vegans following the 2020 explosions to provide vegan food aid and animal rescue to human and nonhuman area residents whose lives and homes were shattered, and opened the Lebanese Vegan Social Club, the first vegan advocacy and animal rights center in that part of the world.

In the Holy Land, despite Israel's so-called vegan-washing efforts to portray itself as a "vegan nation,"³⁶ Palestinian Israelis (aka Israeli Arabs) are twice as likely to be vegan as Israeli Jews, although the Jewish vegan population overlaps considerably with the country's anti-apartheid movement, such as the animal rights organization One Struggle, which morphed into Anarchists Against the Wall in 2003. In the occupied West Bank, the Palestinian Animal League rescues and treats animals while promoting veganism and opposing Zionism. The West Bank is also home to the Daily Hugz sanctuary and

the Bethlehem Animal and Environment Association animal shelter. Gaza's Sulala Animal Rescue works to save animals injured or rendered homeless by Israeli bombings, while Plant the Land provides vegan food aid and plants food to develop Palestinian food sovereignty in resistance to Israeli sanctions. Vegans for BDS works to build vegan support for the Palestinian-led Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

In 2021, Cuban animal rights groups successfully pushed that government to implement an animal protection law.³⁷ Cuba's queer, feminist, Afro-Cuban hip-hop group Krudas Cubensi has been advocating for veganism as part of a holistic approach to liberation. Some Xicanx and Caribbean activists are combining food justice work in North America with Latin American and Caribbean outreach; Boricuan ("Puerto Rican") activist Michelle Carrera started Chilis on Wheels as a vegan food justice initiative for New York City homeless populations, and expanded to Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria in 2017. Others, like Colombian activist Fernando Cuenca, became animal liberationists after experiencing war and connecting that to the violence on our plates.

The international peasant network La Via Campesina, which includes pastoralists, says that "we urgently need to reduce meat consumption." Of course, pastoral communities require a just transition away from their current livelihoods, perhaps in the form of the "conservation basic income" advocated by environmental sociologist Bram Büscher and anthropologist Robert Fletcher, or what ecologist Spencer Roberts calls "a Green New Deal of careers in public service for rural folk, including not only building housing, health care, education, and clean energy infrastructure, but also reseeded endangered flora, reintroducing endemic grazers, and regenerating wildlife habitat on formerly farmed land."³⁸

Globally, Indigenous people increasingly reject animal exploitation. For examples, we can look to the Maori vegan movement in

Aotearoa (aka New Zealand); Indigenous decolonial species liberationists like queer Nahuatl activist Wotko Tristan and the queer vegan Xicanx collective Mariposas Rebeldes; Wiradjuri performer and activist Carolyn Ienna; animal activists from Canada's Kwe, Anishanaabe, and Ceg-A-Kin Nakoda Nations; and Mi'kmaw scholar Margaret Robinson. According to Robinson, even non-vegan Indigenous people often share much common ground with vegans and animal liberationists due to traditional aboriginal ways of seeing animals and nature as subjects, rather than as objects and commodities.³⁹

Finally, Black veganism is its own dynamic movement.⁴⁰ Examining interconnections between racial justice, animal liberation, and plant-based living from a perspective that considers racialized health disparities, environmental racism, Black criminalization, and subjugation through racialized "animalization," Black veganism is both scholarly inquiry and liberatory praxis. Its roots originated in the civil rights and Black Power movements, from civil rights activists Dick Gregory and Coretta Scott King and Dexter King, to Black feminist and abolitionist scholar Angela Davis, who argues "there is a connection between our treatment of animals and of people at the bottom of the hierarchy." Contemporary Black vegans fight racial health disparities by empowering Black communities with veganism, as explored in documentaries like *The Invisible Vegan* and *They're Trying to Kill Us*. Some, like agroecologist Eugene Cooke, promote food justice through urban farming, while others, like Thrive Baltimore founder and Afro-Vegan Society Executive Director Brenda Sanders, focus on making veganism accessible to entire low-income Black communities. New York City also hosts an annual Black Vegfest, thanks to *Brotha Vegan* author Omowale Adewale. Additionally, critical theorists like Christopher Sebastian, A. Breeze Harper, Che Gossett, Christopher Carter, Syl Ko, and Black Vegans Rock founder

Aph Ko, as well as those in the broader racial justice movement like Benedicte Boisseron, Joshua Bennett, and Zakkiyah Iman Jackson, deconstruct "human" identity under white supremacy and explore animal subjugation's ties to racial subjugation.

In recognizing the ties between their own liberation struggles and the struggle for all life on earth, these activists and organizations are building a powerful foundation for many human, animal, and ecological justice movements to come together into one mass, multidimensional movement for collective liberation from below. It is here that the solution to our current existential crises lies—not in the false manipulations and machinations from above.

Animal Liberation from Youth

Demonstrating that children need to be conditioned to see animals as food, a survey found that over 80 percent of U.S. children aged four to seven considered cows and pigs "not okay to eat."⁴¹ Although they ate hamburgers and bacon, the overwhelming majority did not know these were made from animals.

Young peoples' turn toward plant-based diets is evident in the trajectories of Climate Strike organizers Greta Thunberg in Sweden and Vanessa Nakate in Uganda. Thunberg keeps a vegan diet and suggests the world must move in that direction as well. Nakate "has recently edged towards vegetarianism, an unusual choice in Uganda," reports the *Financial Times*. Nakate tells them she would like to have a vegetarian wedding and that she is conscious of "the impact of meat and dairy products." Another climate justice activist, *TedX* speaker and Genesis for Animals founder Genesis Butler, 13, went vegan at age six after watching her mother breastfeeding her sister and realizing cow's milk is stolen breast milk meant for calves.

Clearly, youth are propelling the current shift toward vegan diets. Veganism increased in the UK by 360 percent from 2006 to 2016,

and in the United States sixfold from 2015 to 2018.⁴² Some 70 percent of the world population reports they are reducing or avoiding meat consumption. Data analyst Fiona Dyer told *Forbes* that younger generations, particularly millennials, are driving this trend. Building on that momentum, the U.S. organization Raven Corps is building a national network of youth activists aged 15 to 22 that includes veganism/animal liberation in their overall approach to social justice.

Animal Liberation from Animals

Finally, an approach to animal liberation that is truly “from below” would recognize animals’ key role in struggling for their *own* freedom and well-being. Animals themselves are joining the struggle, as documented in Jason Hribal’s *Fear of the Animal Planet* and Sarat Colling’s *Animal Resistance in the Global Capitalist Era*. Pigs escape farms, elephants revolt against captors, and runaway cows learn to survive in the wild. One example involves a goat named Fred who escaped from a New Jersey auction house in 2017. Remaining on the run, he returned over a year later. A few hours after police received a report that he was in the area, about 75 goats and sheep mysteriously escaped. All signs indicate Fred was their liberator. Soon after police corralled sixty of the animals back into the facility, Fred returned once again and banged his head against the gate, trying to reopen it. Even the auction house manager proclaimed, “I think he’s the culprit. He must have banged that fence and let [the animals] out last night. I’m almost positive.” Other stories, like the veterinarian’s account of a cow who took extreme measures to save her calf from the dairy industry,⁴³ the slaughterhouse-bound cow who escaped to a Polish island,⁴⁴ and the brave pregnant sow who escaped slaughter by jumping out of a moving truck⁴⁵ also give a compelling glimpse of nonhuman agency in animals’ own liberation struggle.

Such stories, regularly reported and surely

more frequently occurring, can potentially galvanize popular empathy for and solidarity with animals. Recognizing animals as co-resisters offers humans both moral and practical strength to resist climate change. Ecofeminist scholar and activist pattrice jones powerfully writes, “I do know that we are not alone in the struggle to save the earth. The sooner we see that and act accordingly, the sooner we can begin to end our own awful estrangement and help to heal those we have hurt.”⁴⁶

False Solutions

Unfortunately, some leftists, rather than accepting the necessity of radically challenging the oppression of human and nonhuman beings, insist technological fixes such as so-called regenerative ranching and lab-grown meat will solve animal agriculture-induced problems. Regenerative ranchers claim certain cattle ranching methods will reduce carbon to preindustrial levels. Lab-grown meat enthusiasts, for their part, claim highly expensive factories can grow enough meat from animal cells to replace normal meat production. Essentially, these boosters seek solutions from above—from large ranchers and biotech investors—rather than from below.

The godfather of regenerative ranching, Zimbabwean ecologist Allan Savory, claims his adaptive, knowledge-intensive methods of high-intensity cattle grazing on rotating areas of land can “fight desertification and reverse climate change.” Although his work is supported by some prominent environmentalists, scientists are strongly skeptical. In 2017, the Food Climate and Research Network published a metastudy examining three hundred scientific articles. It found that regenerative ranching has a very limited ability to sequester carbon, and that the benefits are outweighed by the practice’s high levels of methane emissions. Lead author Tara Garnett summarized: “This report concludes that grass-fed livestock are not a climate solution. Grazing livestock are net contributors to the

climate problem, as are all livestock.”

Moreover, although five out of six farms globally are small-scale operations of two hectares or less, comprising only 10 to 25 percent of the world’s farmland, they produce a disproportionate 35 percent of the world’s food, mainly because they focus on crops for human consumption. This means about 75 to 90 percent of the world’s farmland is controlled by larger-scale farming interests. In the United States, a whopping 99 percent of “meat” is factory farm produced. Indeed, factory farming was created because it is *less* resource intensive and polluting than conventional farming.⁴⁷ Thus, replacing it with small-scale ranching would do nothing but make eating animals more expensive, continuing the subjugation and exploitation of other animals—and its attendant violence, suffering, and harm—not to feed the poor, but for the pleasure and profit of the rich.

Lab-grown, or “clean,” “meat” faces ethical, technological, and economic obstacles, making it as unlikely to replace normal meat as “clean” coal is to replace regular coal. Currently, it requires the use of fetal bovine serum, a slaughterhouse by-product for which a pregnant cow is killed; then her fetus is ripped from her womb and bled to death so humans can take the blood.⁴⁸ Such “clean” practices certainly do not challenge the human exploitation of other animals. On a technological level, reporting an array of researchers’ findings, journalist Joe Fassler explains:

For cultured meat to move the needle on climate, a sequence of as-yet-unforeseen breakthroughs will still be necessary. We’ll need to train cells to behave in ways that no cells have behaved before. We’ll need to engineer bioreactors that defy widely accepted principles of chemistry and physics. We’ll need to build an entirely new nutrient supply chain using sustainable agricultural practices, inventing forms of bulk amino acid production that are cheap, precise, and safe. Investors will need to care less about money. Germs will have to more or less behave.⁴⁹

Conclusion: Peace with Life on Earth

Although socialists advocate for transformative change, many sound like COP26 delegates when addressing the issue of how the oppression of nonhumans affects life on earth. How can we advocate for the abolition of private property while treating other sentient beings *as* property? How can we unequivocally oppose exploitation while exploiting the labor and bodies of humans and nonhumans through an industry based on systematic killing? How can we oppose extractive industries while extracting and consuming body parts? How can we overturn the paradigm of domination and systemic violence while participating in a practice based on it?

It’s time the left steps up to the literal and figurative plate. First, we need to stop erasing the suffering and efforts of marginalized people through dismissal of resistance to animal exploitation as “white” and/or “privileged.” As Guinean climate activist Abdourahmane Ly puts it, “Every week you lot come up with some new ‘hot take’ why veganism is racist and colonialist. And every week BIPOC vegans say, ‘Hey, can you not erase us and use us for clout?’ And you say no.”⁵⁰

Second, we need to stop exempting the violence and exploitation we’re committing against our fellow animals from our opposition to oppression. A truly liberatory framework would view these issues holistically, understanding their interrelationship and how colonialism, imperialism, militarism, capitalism, and other oppressive systems impact people, ecosystems, *and* animals. To exclude animals from that analysis is to engage in the very form of compartmentalization that underlies our social and ecological crises. Worse yet, to refuse to address these issues holistically has provided fodder for the capitalist class to continue its path of destruction unabated, endangering the entire fate of life on earth.

To transform our approach, we can begin by transitioning to a vegan lifestyle to the

fullest extent practicable,⁵¹ which, according to an Oxford University study,⁵² is the “single biggest way to reduce our environmental impact” and dramatically reduce the damage done to marginalized people and nonhuman animals. Additionally, leftists have much to teach vegans regarding the importance of taking collective action rather than advocating for individualist or consumerist pseudo solutions. As leftists, we can provide meaningful support for the many initiatives mentioned above, as well as start our own: we can create vegan mutual aid and food justice initiatives, from food distribution to community gardens and food forests; create job opportunities for ex-slaughterhouse workers; teach courses on vegan cooking and human-animal-Earth liberation; work with local schools, hospitals, and restaurants to help them transition to serving plant-based meals; and start animal rescue initiatives, habitat restoration efforts and sanctuaries, involving children to teach the next generation to respect all life.

Another critically needed action is to shift tax subsidies from funding animal exploitation to plant foods.⁵³ Because raising and slaughtering animals is so resource intensive, the actual price of “meat,” milk, and eggs is far costlier than that of growing plants for human consumption, which is why poor countries eat the fewest animals and wealthy countries consume the most. Thus, taxpayer subsidies are poured into the animal exploitation industries to artificially lower costs, making many believe it’s eating *plants* that’s expensive! Outrageously, despite animal agriculture’s role in creating both the ecological crisis and zoonotic diseases like COVID-19, last year the United States allocated record funds to animal agriculture.⁵⁴ Reallocation of that money to plant farming would alleviate problems caused by animal agriculture; benefit public health, especially in low-income areas, by increasing plant food availability and affordability;⁵⁵ economically support transitioning farmers and ranchers; provide jobs for workers that avoid the dan-

gers and horrors of slaughter; free up land; and improve ecological regeneration potential.

Additionally, participation in human liberation movements is crucial to the achievement of both human and animal liberation. Movements for prison abolition, Black Lives Matter, No Human Is Illegal, and #LandBack address the injustices underlying the exploitation and victimization of marginalized communities by these industries, and how their liberation is intertwined with that of nonhumans. Collective liberation depends upon a proliferation of alliances between human, animal, and ecology movements.

We can also learn from Indigenous ways of understanding nature and our role within it. In 2010, about 35,000 international attendees, many from Indigenous nations, gathered in Cochabamba, Bolivia, to participate in the World People’s Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth. Their radical proposals included both a social-systemic transformation beyond capitalism, and the principle that “Every [living] being has the right to well-being and to live free from torture or cruel treatment by human beings.”

By striving for the total liberation of *all* species, we work toward dismantling systems and tools of oppression and creating a sustainable, even regenerative, future. The apparent alternative is increasing suffering, injustice, and ultimately the extinction of life on earth. Which side are you on?

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Precarity and Green Unionism

STEVE ONGERTH

IN A REAL SENSE, UNDER CAPITALISM, *all* workers are precarious, meaning that they can be downsized, replaced, deskilled, outsourced, and so on. It's simply a matter of degree. The latest peak in precarity is "gig work," which has always existed; the names simply keep changing, but the concept is the same.

Unions represent a check against precarity, though this occurs on a graduated scale. The stronger the union, the less the workers' precarity. Union strength manifests in various ways: It can result from a well-organized, international, militant, democratic union (ideal, but rare, with few real-world examples, such as the International Longshore Workers Union and the Industrial Workers of the World,¹ of course). More often than not, union strength is a result of a concentration of elite craft workers in skilled-trades unions. That situation represents a strong guard against precarity, but only for workers in the union, so that solidarity is limited.

Other checks against precarity include high demand for skilled workers in rare supply, high demand for hard-to-replace workers (such as those who require skilled credentials, like teachers or transport workers), or tight labor markets (which exist in our semi-post Covid-19 world due to a combination of factors).

This is nothing more than class struggle 101, as expertly phrased by Karl Marx and others.

There are new forms of precarity emerging due to the climate catastrophe brought on by capitalism. Workers find themselves facing new health and safety hazards and threats to their working environment.

Some examples include:

Increased risk of smoke inhalation due to increased and more severe wildfire activity.

Increased exposure to longer and more severe heat waves, directly resulting from global heating; for example IWW workers at Voodoo Doughnuts in Portland, Oregon, were fired for striking due to extreme heat in June (the National Labor Relations Board ultimately ruled in favor of the workers).²

Loss of work time due to severe snow storms, severe hurricanes, or flooding (and some workers have lost their jobs due to inability to transport themselves to work through such conditions).

Even Covid-19 is essentially related to climate (as Ian Angus et. al. have pointed out in their excellent analyses linking climate and metabolic rift to increased pandemics³), and we know that Covid-19 raised precarity to a whole new, unforeseen scale. The struggles related to Covid have sparked a wave of increased union militancy.

Many workers, even in unionized workplaces, lack climate- or environment-related protections, and only through widespread worker organizing have any basic workplace

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rights related to these hazards emerged. (The good news is that this has helped further erode support for neoliberal capitalism, though much of that dissatisfaction has been channeled into a social-democratic capitalist reformism. It still represents an opportunity for green syndicalists, ecosocialists, and others to organize genuinely revolutionary anti-capitalist alternatives, and the receptiveness to those is increasing.)

A transition to a cleaner energy system is an essential part of averting the worst aspects of climate disaster (though we are in for a world of hurt, even under the best scenarios). This won't be easy or uncomplicated. Skilled union workers in building trades, many of which are heavily intertwined with the extractivist, fossil fuel, and growth-for-growth's-sake supply chains, perceive the needed energy transition as a form of precarity they wish to avoid. This is largely based on exaggerations made by the capitalist class, particularly those directly profiting from the aforementioned supply chains.

It doesn't help matters that the vast majority of the "green" jobs have a higher degree of precarity than those in fossil-fuel-based industries as well as lower standards of working conditions and pay. That is why green unionists, ecosocialists, and climate justice activists alike call for a just transition for the affected workers. One of the key demands of this transition is that these workers are not subjected to greater precarity!

This is what could be called green unionism. Green unionism is an essential strategy for addressing climate catastrophe as well as the ongoing challenge of precarity, a persistent feature of capitalism that the bosses will almost certainly try to continue to implement (often as a form of disaster capitalism) as the climate catastrophe worsens.

Is Green Unionism Even Possible?

It's not unheard of for skilled union workers facing threats of increased precarity to propose radical alternatives to avoid it and at

the same time provide a green transition. As early as 1976, workers who made weapons and instruments of war in the United Kingdom at Lucas Aerospace, when faced with downsizing, proposed making socially useful green technology instead!⁴ Meanwhile, in Australia, the left-communist influenced Builders Labourers Federation engaged in a series of strikes to oppose building developments that they deemed "anti-environmental." This series of strikes became known as the Australian Green Bans.⁵ Almost simultaneously, Italian workers in Porto Marghera proposed even more revolutionary demands: the abolition of all "noxious" (ecologically destructive) work entirely!⁶ Strongly influenced by the ultra-left autonomist Marxist movement of the time, they called for nothing less than the absolute abolition of the entire factory system (as opposed to self-managed creative work, organized by the working class autonomously from capitalism, as a way to run society).

These green syndicalist movements, unfortunately, were isolated and mostly ignored or even denounced by much of the "official" left, including most Communist movements, plus they arose as Keynesian social democracy began to decline in the early 1970s. Lacking both a large enough scale and favorable objective conditions, these movements quickly faded and were largely forgotten by time, especially as neoliberalism was ascendant.

It wasn't until the 1990s that pockets of green unionism arose again, in two particular instances: One was Tony Mazzochi of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (now merged with the United Steelworkers) which represented workers in many "polluting" industries, such as oil refining and nuclear power. Mazzochi argued that "there is a superfund for dirt, therefore, there should be a superfund for workers." It was he who essentially devised the concept of "just transition."

Meanwhile, in northwestern California, a one-time union member turned Earth First! activist (and carpenter), Judi Bari, introduced class-struggle environmentalism into the

budding Earth First! movement. Under her influence, the Earth First! attempts to block—ade clear-cut capitalist timber extraction had a pro-worker component to them.

Both Mazzochi and Bari were organizing against the threat of precarity. However, the times weren't in their favor, being at the height of the neoliberal era, right after the "fall of communism" in 1989.

Ecological and climate conditions have worsened greatly since then, but the strength of grassroots movements has grown substantially and the popular opinion among the working class is much more favorable now to anti-capitalist alternatives. And, ironically, climate catastrophe and Covid-19-induced conditions—which brought on the "Striketober"—have made the proverbial soil much ripper for a growing and deepening green unionism movement. This is manifest in the growing support among unions and union workers for addressing climate change, including support for the concept of a Green New Deal (loaded and complicated though that may be). In fact, support for the Green New Deal consistently polls higher among union workers than it does among the general public, in spite of the alleged (and greatly exaggerated) "opposition" from organized labor. This support includes some workers employed directly in the greenhouse gas emitting industries. For example, some of the strongest support for Robert Pollin's California Climate Jobs Plan, which is essentially a proposal for "shovel ready Green New Deal programs for California," comes from the United Steelworkers (Tony Mazzochi's old union!).⁷

Ultimately, we will need a complex combination of ecosocialism, an overall degrowth to the economy, but a growth of green jobs, especially in the short term. In fact, so many new jobs must be created that the recent "Striketober" could be dwarfed, as the demand for skilled work will increase so much the capitalists will be unable to replace striking workers. And forget about the "robot

apocalypse"; like precarity, automation and deskilling have existed from the beginning of capitalism and are nothing new. Several knowledgeable, veteran class-struggle union members, including Kim Moody, have convincingly shown that the "robot apocalypse" is nothing more than doom porn.⁸ If anything, there are more jobs in existence now than ever before, and that won't change much. What matters is—and you may have guessed it—the degree of precarity the workers in these jobs experience.

None of this should be taken to suggest that we will win the class struggle automatically. Nothing is guaranteed, and we cannot let the capitalist class or random chance carry out our organizing work for us. It is essential that as ecosocialists, climate justice activists, union members, and others, we dedicate our efforts to organizing at the point of production. One way to do this is through what the IWW (inspired by Alice and Staughton Lynd) calls Solidarity Unionism: the winning of gains through workplace organizing whether or not legally represented by a union or covered under a recognized union contract. That is how the labor movement arose in the first place, and there is no reason to think that the requirements are appreciably different now. If the mainstream business-union bureaucrats, such as the leadership of the building trades unions, drag their feet or stand in our way, we must out-organize them, even in spite of them. And if, at any point, unions engage in the sort of aforementioned green syndicalist efforts that arose in the 1970s, we must ensure we, the working class, have their backs.

Climate catastrophe is the ultimate form of precarity. There are no jobs on a doomed planet.

To paraphrase Karl Marx, workers of the world, unite! We have nothing to lose but our very existence!

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CHAMPIONS OF JUSTICE



Dora María Téllez, Nicaraguan Sandinista, who at 22 led the brigade that took the National Palace, then became Minister of Health, and is now in prison for protesting Ortega's betrayal of the Sandinista revolution

"It is not easy to be in the armed struggle either for men or for women, but I think it's less easy for women. I am lucky to have lived through the Sandinista Revolution. That was a great piece of luck, for me and for my generation. I was lucky to have been in those places, doing the things that I have done. When I review the course of my life, I am grateful for the opportunities I have had because it has allowed me to know things, to contribute something. That too is a commitment to fight for Nicaragua."

"You have to ask yourself: 'What world do I want to live in?' And when you know the answer, you have to fight to build it, because otherwise you are going to live in a world that someone decided for you."

"There is no need to be afraid of utopias. The process is essential. Goals are going to change. In the process we are building better responses. The problem is when we adopt the idea 'we can't' and we don't try ... I don't know if I'm going to change the world, but at least I'm going to turn it around a bit."

The Fight to Defend Abortion Rights: A Roundtable

We at *New Politics* have been horrified by the passage of laws in Texas and Mississippi aimed at reversing *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that upheld women's right to choose an abortion. The Texas law bans abortions after a heartbeat can be heard, usually at about six weeks, before most women typically even realize that they are pregnant. The law makes no exceptions for pregnancies resulting from rape or incest, and, instead of calling upon state officials to enforce it, deputizes private citizens to sue anyone who performs or "aids and abets" an abortion, a legal gimmick making it more difficult to declare the law unconstitutional. Mississippi's law prohibits all abortions after 15 weeks, again with no exception for rape and incest. As these laws have come before the Supreme Court, *New Politics* asked several leading reproductive rights theorists and activists to assess where the struggle for abortion rights stands and what needs be done moving forward. Below are contributions from Elizabeth Rapaport, Dana Cloud, Marian Jones, and Irene Hays.

Roe v. Wade in Red and Blue

ELIZABETH RAPAPORT

IT IS A SAFE BET THAT *ROE V. WADE* will not fare well in the Supreme Court's 2021-22 Term. Women all over the country are likely to see the constitutional guarantee of their reproductive freedom recede, but the practical implications will differ greatly depending upon the state in which they live. Women in Texas have already felt the tip of the Supreme Court's spear. They woke up on September 1 to find that their rights under *Roe* expire after six weeks.

In September we witnessed the Court's cavalier refusal to allow abortion providers to

bring an emergency challenge to the Texas law that bans abortion after six weeks of gestation. That law is commonly known as "SB8," shorthand for "Texas Senate Bill 8." The SB8 case before the Supreme Court is *Whole Woman's Health v. Jackson*. In that case, Texas providers asked the Court to stay the ban—delay its going into effect—until they had a chance to challenge it in federal court. Were it not for some shocking features of SB8 and its treatment in the Supreme Court this fall, all eyes would be on an abortion case the Court is hearing in December. In that case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the Court will consider the constitutionality of a Mississippi law banning abortion after 15 weeks. *Dobbs* is the case where legal observers anticipated the abortion action would be this Term. It could be the occasion for the demise

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of *Roe*. There are now six justices who believe that *Roe* was wrongly decided. At least three, Thomas, Alito, and Gorsuch, are ready to overturn *Roe*. By the end of this Term, we will know whether Roberts, Kavanaugh, and Barrett will join them or adhere to a more gradual path of destruction.

Roe v. Wade was decided half a century ago, in 1973. History provides some context needed to understand the Texas and Mississippi challenges to *Roe* and what the loss of *Roe* would mean.

Casey v. Planned Parenthood “Saved” *Roe* in 1992

In 1992 the Court also boasted six Republican appointees; reproductive rights advocates anticipated that *Roe* would go. But three of the six “saved” *Roe* by opting to cut back the constitutional right to abortion rather than stifle it. *Roe* had declared a right to choose abortion until the end of the second trimester of pregnancy. During the second trimester, *Roe* allowed states to regulate abortion in the interests of women’s health. In the third trimester, states were allowed to ban abortion unless the health or life of the pregnant woman was at risk. *Casey* scrapped the trimester framework. It delineated “viability,” that is, when a fetus can be sustained in life outside the womb, as the endpoint of the right to choose. Viability occurs at 24–28 weeks. But the shortening of the span of time to be covered by the right in *Roe* was not *Casey*’s only innovation. *Casey* also allows states to regulate throughout the *entire* course of a pregnancy, provided regulation does not *unduly burden* the “essential right” in *Roe*. Regulation can be in favor of fetal life or to protect the health of the pregnant woman. *Casey* ended a 20-year era in which the Constitution underwrote uniform protection of reproductive rights in every state in the country until the end of the second trimester. Since *Casey*, women in what we have learned to call Red and Blue states live under different reproductive rights

regimes.

In Blue states, abortion law follows the *Roe* trimester pattern. Blue states have made state funds available to aid poor women who want abortions. Congress has forbidden the use of federal funds for abortion since 1980 under numerous iterations of the “Hyde Amendment.” Red states have passed hundreds of laws restricting abortion, taking advantage of every inch *Casey* allows and pushing beyond to test its limits in the courts. These restrictions come in two flavors. One type drives home to women that their reproductive freedom is not immune to patriarchal surveillance and disruption; examples include mandatory counseling and waiting periods. Red states also generate a stream of laws that raise the cost of abortion by requiring abortion providers to maintain all sorts of medically unnecessary “safeguards” in the way of equipment, medical qualifications, and hospital affiliations. Raising the cost of providing abortion services has helped to shrink the number of abortion providers and clinics in Red states. The brutal fact is that there are reproductive health deserts in Red states, and public funding is unavailable.

What Happens if *Roe* Is Overturned in this Supreme Court Term?

If the Supreme Court overturns *Roe*, the authority to regulate abortion will once again reside entirely with the states, as it did before *Roe*. If in this Term the Court merely blesses Mississippi’s 15-week ban, women in Red states will soon have a 15-week version of *Roe* (or whatever other down-sized time span the Court decides to leave intact). Red-state legislatures will rush to enact commensurate bans. Women in Blue states will continue to enjoy full *Roe*-level protection as a matter of state law. The conservative domination of the Supreme Court means that that the divide between Red and Blue state abortion regimes will accelerate and expand.

The Texas and Mississippi Abortion Bans in the Supreme Court this Term

On September 1 the Court refused to halt the implementation of the Texas six-week ban. In a bland one-paragraph order devoted to an esoteric issue of court procedure, and avoiding any discussion of constitutional reproductive rights, the majority declined to stay SB8. The ruling deprived Texas women of the protection of *Roe* and *Casey* without a legal airing of the patent violation of their constitutional rights. Any court challenge would have to come after the ban went into effect.

Red state statutes aimed at carving back *Roe* are a dime a dozen. But SB8 is not a run-of-the-mill statute. The SB8 innovation is that it accords no enforcement power to officials of the state of Texas. The law relies upon private individuals to sue anyone who performs an abortion or who “aids or abets” performance after a fetal heartbeat is detectable, normally six weeks. Successful plaintiffs receive *at least* \$10,000 and legal costs. The Supreme Court’s majority mused that the novel enforcement method raised “complex and novel antecedent procedural questions.” They concluded that the petitioning abortion providers had not shown that Texas state officials were responsible for any legally cognizable harm within the purview of the federal courts.

What was obscure to the majority seemed clear enough to the four dissenters. Chief Justice Roberts saw the use of private plaintiffs as a method to “insulate” Texas from responsibility for the ban and avoid constitutional test of the law in federal courts. Justice Breyer had no trouble discerning immediate and serious injuries that warranted a stay: Women will be unable to get abortions. Clinics will be forced to close because they cannot withstand the threat of myriad suits inspired by the law. Justice Kagan was blunt. By failing to stay the ban, she wrote, the “Court . . . rewards Texas’s scheme to insulate its law from judicial review

by deputizing private parties to carry out unconstitutional restrictions on the State’s behalf.” Justice Sotomayor was unsparing: “The Texas Legislature has deputized . . . citizens as bounty hunters, offering them cash prizes for civilly prosecuting their neighbors’ medical procedures.”

It was soon clear that the Supreme Court had stubbed its toes on abortion politics in issuing the September 1 order. The majority may have supposed that their robes and the arcane nature of the order would discourage the intense scrutiny that greeted the most consequential evisceration of reproductive rights in 50 years. But a storm of media attention tracked the mayhem in Texas. Women in the vast and second-most populous state in the country were fleeing to neighboring states, trying with varying success to have abortions before the six-week deadline, and girding to have babies by order of the Texas Legislature. Red state legislatures rushed to enact copycat bans. The anti-abortion movement was thrilled by this confirmation that *Roe* was “disfavored” by the Supreme Court. But the overall tenor of public reaction reflected shock and dismay. The justices were reminded that most Americans favor legal abortion.¹ A question of fairness hovered over the reaction: Women had had the protection of *Roe* and *Casey* for 50 years. Did the Court not owe them a full and forthright accounting before it swept those rights away? The newest justice, Amy Coney Barrett, felt moved to give a public address reassuring the country that the justices were not “partisan hacks.”²

To make matters worse, the Court’s willingness to tolerate Texas’s slick private enforcement gambit was criticized, if not ridiculed, by lawyers on both left and right. They pointed out that the same ploy could be used to evade the power of the Supreme Court to protect constitutional rights it favored, such as religious liberty and Second Amendment rights. Blue and Red state legislatures could use the same device to dispose of other constitutional protections. The Court looked

slapdash, as if in an improvident hurry to dismember *Roe*. By late October, the Court wanted a do-over to stem the slide in its prestige and counter the optics of shoddy legal craft.

Legal experts were surprised again when late in October the Court took up the Texas abortion ban a second time. The case was hastily scheduled for hearing on November 1. This time the justices allowed full briefing and oral argument. But their review of SB8 was limited to the legitimacy of delegating enforcement to the general public. Oral argument revealed that at least two of the justices in the majority the first time around, Kavanaugh and Barrett, were critical of the SB8 private-enforcement scheme. The Court stuck to the enforcement question. It will eventually issue an opinion on whether Texas and other states can use SB8-style enforcement tactics. The Court has not blocked SB8.

The justices were not ready to take up *Roe* and reproductive rights—or to admit that by allowing Texas to unleash SB8 it already had.

Which brings us back to *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, the Mississippi 15-week ban case. The Supreme Court heard oral argument in *Dobbs* on December 1. Oral argument solidified the expectation that *Roe* will not survive intact. The decision will be handed down by early summer.

NOTES

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The Abortion Crisis and the Legacy of Activism

DANA CLOUD

BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 1, 2021, the state of Texas enacted the most aggressive challenge to *Roe v. Wade* since the decision was handed down by a Court packed with justices nominated by Republican presidents (Majority, Republican nominees in bold: **Blackman/Nixon, Brennan/Eisenhower,**

Burger/Nixon, Douglas/FDR, Marshall/Johnson, Powell/Nixon, Stewart/Eisenhower; dissenting, Rehnquist/Nixon, **White/Kennedy**).

That *Roe* came from a mostly Republican-appointed Court is important when one considers the argument that the pro-choice movement can rely (only) on Democratic politicians and that electing Democrats is vital to the preservation of abortion rights. While it is true that Democrats are more likely to nominate pro-abortion justices, relying on the electoral process to protect abortion justice is untenable. The record of Supreme

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Court decisions also shows how even a conservative Court is affected by pressure from below. In this light, it is notable that President Joe Biden and other Democrats are urging the reversal of the 1976 Hyde Amendment, which prohibited the federal government from providing funds for women receiving public assistance to get an abortion. This shift in the stance of the party comes in the wake of social movements demanding race and gender justice.

The history of the erosion of *Roe v. Wade* is marked by misguided and failed movement reliance on electoral politics and legalistic strategy. Since 1973, a number of states have enacted abortion restrictions that have been upheld by the Supreme Court. These restrictions include parental consent laws and spousal notification and consent laws. Restrictions on providers of and facilities for abortion have made abortion virtually unobtainable in the vast majority of counties in the United States, barring many young or indigent pregnant persons who cannot afford to travel from accessing this vital service. Increasing term restrictions on abortion means that women, who, under *Roe*, could seek abortion in the second or third trimester in case of threat to fetal or maternal health, must carry unwanted pregnancies to term at the risk of death.

Restrictions on abortion especially target young people, oppressed minorities, immigrants, and the poor—those who are most vulnerable and who urgently need control over their reproductive lives.

The new Texas law goes much farther in restricting reproductive freedom. It bans most abortions after six weeks of pregnancy, a point at which most people do not even



Long Beach Rally for abortion justice, Dec. 1, 2021.

Dana Cloud

know that they are pregnant. It does not make exceptions in the case of rape or incest. The most chilling aspect of this law is that it empowers vigilantes to sue their neighbors, family members, doctors, and anyone else who supports a woman seeking abortion, making abortion incredibly dangerous not only to people seeking one but also to the already fragile and meager infrastructure making access to abortion possible.

The criminalization of abortion in Texas, and looming threats to access in 26 other states, harken back ominously to pre-*Roe* times, when abortion was a crime. Historian Leslie Reagan's essential book *When Abortion Was a Crime* (University of California Press, 1996) documents how thousands of women filled septic wards in hospitals following infections caused by illegal abortions they were forced to seek. Police interrogated women who lay dying about the circumstances of their abortions, intending to arrest and prosecute the doctors and laypeople who attempted to provide abortions, along with anyone else who supported the desperate women.

These women sought abortions whether or not they were legal. Criminalization does

not prevent abortion—it only makes it life-threatening.

Reagan has spoken up about the Texas law. In an op-ed in the *Washington Post*, she explained the situation that women found themselves in before *Roe*:

Law enforcement used horrifying and invasive methods to obtain evidence of criminal abortion from women, including incarceration and bodily invasion. At times, women were held in jail as hostile witnesses, then forced to testify against their abortion provider at trial.

In 1947, for example, Chicago police captured eight women outside the building of a midwife-abortionist, put them in police cars and drove them to a medical office for internal pelvic examinations by a doctor searching for evidence of an abortion in progress. The state claimed that the police “escorted” the women, who “consented” to the exams and volunteered to testify. But there was nothing voluntary about the women’s role in this investigation; it was entirely coercive. Police had cursed at them, threatened to call a paddy wagon if they resisted and manhandled them into police cars.

Coroners and prosecutors questioned women’s families and associates, exposing their most intimate experiences, sometimes to partners or family members who could inflict shame and mental or even physical harm if they disapproved.

Even if women never faced criminal sanction, therefore, law enforcement routinely punished them in gendered ways, through public humiliation and threats, for seeking abortion. This public naming and shaming warned all women of the danger of being caught by the police.

Today, Reagan concludes, women and their families again face invasive, humiliating, and dangerous restrictions on abortion, now defined explicitly, once again, as a crime.

How did we get to this terrifying point? One reason for the steady erosion of the right to abortion, and now its outright criminaliza-

tion in Texas, is the increasing and unwarranted faith of mainstream pro-choice organizations (such as National Abortion Rights Action League and Planned Parenthood) in electoral politics, trusting that elected Democrats will nominate and support pro-choice judges (even as Hillary Clinton protested that abortion should be “safe, legal, and rare”). Both history and personal experience put the lie to these claims.

In 2013, I was part of the historic demonstration and occupation of the Texas Capitol by thousands of abortion rights activists, people of all genders, sexual orientations, ages, races, and backgrounds. The occupation was triggered by a filibuster by Texas State Senator Wendy Davis against draconian anti-abortion legislation set to pass during the summer session.

Demonstrators crammed the rotunda, meeting rooms, and all of the circular decks below the dome, most wearing the color orange and carrying signs reading, “We Won’t Go Back!” and “Stop the War on Women!” The Legislature was running out of time to pass their bill under a law that said votes had to take place before midnight. The roar of the crowd into the evening was deafening as the demonstrators, denounced by conservatives as an “unruly mob,” chanted and sang without pause. As midnight approached, demonstrators crammed against the doors of the legislative chamber and roared. The clock struck midnight—in one reporter’s words, the crowd had “shouted the bill to death.”

My own experience in that demonstration was one of deep empowerment. Acoustic science and common sense tell us that sound is a wave that exerts physical pressure. In a literally hair-raising moment, I could feel the force of the voices of everyone around me as a compelling pressure toward unity and power. When the bill died, there was mass revelry and intense political conversation about the ways forward. The bill was to be taken up again in a few days, in a second emergency legislative session where it would surely pass



Texas Capitol protest, Jun. 26, 2013.

Meanwhile, in the wake of two years of mass protest, the Mexican Supreme Court decriminalized abortion in September 2021. The effects of that ruling are still uneven across the diverse states of Mexico, but people there are still fighting. The irony of this victory alongside the horror unfolding next door in Texas is not lost on us.

Today, we use the language of “abortion justice” to capture the full meaning of reproductive freedom and the oppressive interests behind denying it. We emphasize the disparate impacts of criminalization—not only of abortion, but of existence—on people of color

and the poor. We emphasize now that it is not only women whose reproductive agency we champion. Diversely gendered bodies are capable of pregnancy and childbirth, and kinship is expressed well beyond the norms of private familialism. The recognition of the intersections of gender identity and expression, sexuality, race, nation, and class in our shared fight against the policing of our bodies gives us the power of solidarity. It connects our fight for abortion justice to the broader fight against capitalism and for a world in which all of our bodies are free.

The “Big Pink Elephant in the Room”

How Major Reproductive Rights Groups Prevent Us from Winning

MARIAN JONES

THE PASSING OF SB8, DUBBED the Texas bill, and the Alabama ban before it, are significant because the anti-abortion movement has gotten increasingly aggressive—and successful. This latest attack on reproductive health care is nothing new. Since 2010, several hardline Republicans in red-state legislatures have pushed strong “pro-life” legislation in hopes of overturning or amending *Roe v. Wade*. “Heartbeat” acts have been passed in Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, and Ohio. A second-trimester ban has been passed in Utah and Arkansas.¹ *The Hill* predicts that the Supreme Court will overturn *Roe v. Wade* in 2022.²

In the face of such a horrific bill, reproductive rights organizations failed to mount an effective counteroffensive. In my opinion, the shortcomings of the reproductive rights movement are related to racism within the major reproductive rights groups, which resulted in critical problems, such as allowing the repeal of the Hyde Amendment to fall by the wayside, the nonprofit-industrial complex—which negatively impacts independent clinics that perform almost all abortions, and the siloing of small independent clinics. These missteps are reversible, but whether or not the political will exists is debatable. For the pro-choice movement to endure and become

bigger and more powerful, we must reevaluate and work outside the system. Change is going to have to come from the grassroots.

ACCORDING TO ABORTION organizer Jenny Brown, low-wage, jobless, and uninsured people have more abortions than those with wealth or good health insurance.³ Because birth control is expensive and requires regular clinic or doctor visits, low-income persons who cannot afford it or cannot take time off work are more likely to have unintended births. Brown claims that Black women had double the rate of abortion as white women. Since Black women encounter discrimination at work, they are

Independent clinics perform the vast majority of abortions.

less likely to have adequate medical coverage, making it even more difficult for them to get reliable contraceptives.

Yet, to its own detriment, the reproductive rights movement is not being led by these, the most oppressed in the movement. Women of color in the movement face marginalization, hostility, and tokenism. Workers of color at key reproductive rights groups have spoken out against racism, in interviews, internal meetings, and social media, reports *Buzzfeed News*.⁴ These are progressive organizations

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that espouse diversity yet inwardly marginalize Black personnel. While reproductive rights are a key concern for people of color, the movement's leaders are primarily white. *Buzzfeed News* cites significant turnover

Reproductive justice includes comprehensive sex education, prevention of domestic violence, affordable and reliable contraception, fertility treatments, accessible child care options, and safe pregnancies and postpartum care.

rates among personnel of color and alleges they are routinely subjected to microaggressions such as tokenization and other types of discrimination. Workers at four Planned Parenthood affiliates alleged discrimination in the form of being disciplined and dismissed by their bosses whereas their non-Black peers were not.

White supremacy also manifests in the battle over the Hyde Amendment. Since 1976, the Hyde Amendment has prohibited the use of federal funds to pay for abortion procedures for anyone on Medicaid, Medicare, or the Children's Health Insurance Program. It hampers reproductive services for many working-class and poor women, and it disproportionately harms women of color. Because the abortion rights movement failed to battle and defeat Hyde, the discriminatory effects of his legislation continue to damage women.⁵

According to Amy Littlefield writing for *Lux Magazine*, Planned Parenthood, like many other large nonprofits, has begun to resemble the business sector.⁶ Littlefield writes, "Nonprofits of any stripe are beholden

to wealthy donors who want to fund marquee projects with trackable outcomes rather than invest in unglamorous line items ... that build sustainable organizations."

The abortion movement's NGOization and white leadership have made major nonprofits moderate and corporatist. This is because funders and foundations have links to the centrist Democratic Party. Both Obama and Biden had a majority in both chambers but failed or refused to enact legislation enshrining the legal right to abortion. Moreover, Nancy Pelosi said Democrats don't have to be pro-choice,⁷ and Biden reiterated his support for the Hyde Amendment during a presidential debate.⁸ Democrats blame the undemocratic filibuster, as well as West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin and Arizona Senator Kyrsten Sinema. Yet, they choose not to protect abortion rights even though they can, since it would enrage the ruling class. (In *Birth Strike*, Jenny Brown argues that the elite opposes both abortion and birth control since their power is dependent on high birth rates, surplus labor, and keeping wages down.⁹)

The movement for reproductive justice, on the other hand, is smaller and less well-funded. Reproductive justice is an interdisciplinary concept and practice pioneered in 1994 by women of color who have suffered from reproductive injustice. They founded the group SisterSong, which says reproductive justice is the ability to choose whether to have a child as well as the freedom to raise that child in a safe environment.¹⁰ Reproductive justice includes comprehensive sex education in schools, prevention of domestic violence, affordable and reliable contraception, fertility treatments, accessible child care options, safe pregnancies and postpartum care, and other support services for low-income families.¹¹ Reproductive justice organizations are already working relentlessly to solve these and other challenges, doing the critical work we need to have real reproductive justice in this country, but they are hampered by a lack of the high-powered donors that major

reproductive rights groups have. The focus put on organizations like Planned Parenthood results in public money and donations getting diverted from independent clinics or reproductive rights groups with less influence.

Consider the grassroots organization Jane's Due Process in Texas, which assists teens seeking safe abortions. Apparently, you can still get an abortion in Texas, but you have to go to a judge and acquire court authorization. Jane's guides patients through the process, provides a free attorney, covers any abortion-related costs, and offers emotional support.¹²

When Alabama adopted a nearly total abortion ban in the summer of 2019, celebrities and liberal donors poured money into Planned Parenthood, even though independent clinics perform the vast majority of abortions. Planned Parenthood did not provide abortions in Alabama at the time. (They stopped performing abortions in Alabama in March 2017. Planned Parenthood regional affiliate president Staci Fox told the *New York Times* that the organization planned to resume services late last year, which they did.¹³) Autonomous clinics are mainly inconspicuous and unable to garner funds like Planned Parenthood.

Only about 4 percent of all abortions are conducted in hospitals, and 1 percent, in doctors' offices; the majority of abortions are performed in private clinics. Furthermore, clinics unaffiliated with Planned Parenthood perform about 60 percent of all abortions in the United States, according to groups who track the figures.¹⁴ Such clinics have no political influence or lobbying abilities.

According to Pamela Merritt, co-founder of Reproaction, a reproductive rights group, Planned Parenthood's judicial priorities are similar to those of a lobby for a for-profit corporation such as McDonald's, which is concentrated on maintaining the company's own survival.¹⁵ She went on to say that activists refer to the group as "the big pink elephant in the room" because of its unchecked influ-

ence and its fundraising ability.

In her book *Family Values: Between Neoliberalism and the New Social Conservatism*, Melinda Cooper details why feminists had to open their own abortion clinics.¹⁶ In the late 1960s, militants with the Chicago Women's Liberation Union learned how to perform abortions, and by the time of the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, they were purportedly doing up to fifty procedures each week. Deinstitutionalization was strongly pushed among feminist groups that questioned the epistemic power of professional medical elites to pathologize non-normative behavior. So, feminists began creating their own self-governed institutions outside of the medical establishment.

However, this isolation has now led to a

To its own detriment, the
reproductive rights movement
is not being led by the most
oppressed in the movement.

weakening of abortion clinics. As argued by Anne Rumberger in *Jacobin*,¹⁷ there were several compelling reasons for the independent clinic model in the years that followed *Roe*, including "the massive increase in demand that hospitals were not incentivized to meet." But this puts those clinics at risk of physical and financial harm while also perpetuating prejudices associated with this common procedure.

The issues are complicated, and no one knows how to answer the question, "How do we start winning again?" The elimination of the Hyde Amendment should be a central demand. This issue emphasizes the difference between liberal feminism and

socialist-feminist abortion policy. The former stresses the rule of law and individual liberty, which are vital but insufficient. After initially focusing on free abortion on demand, the latter expanded to include child care, jobs that pay a living wage, an end to sterilization abuse, health care, and other necessities that allow women to make an informed and uncoerced decision about whether or not to have a child and raise them.

We can no longer wait for organizations such as Planned Parenthood to acknowledge the impact of white supremacy in their organizations, the importance of private clinics, and the faults of the nonprofit-industrial complex and to embrace a larger vision of what reproductive rights and justice entail. Instead, we must continue building our own radical movements and radical organizations armed with the correct analysis of what went wrong.

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Roe Is Already Gone

We Have to Keep Moving Forward

IRENE HAYS

ABORTION RIGHTS ACTIVISTS ON the radical left may feel like the Trojan Priestess Cassandra right now: cursed with prophecies that no one believes. For decades, we've been organizing speak-outs and clinic defenses. We've been trying to "lay the groundwork" for a movement independent from the Democrats, knowing (and arguing) that the Dems cannot and will not save abortion rights. We've argued against the mainstream pro-choice strategy: Vote for the right people and trust the experts.

Even as we stare down the barrel of a Mississippi law that could effectively criminalize abortion in 26 states (see coverage of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* at scotusblog.com), pro-choice liberals continue to insist that we *really just need to elect the right people to be our champions*. Democrats, they mean. But Nancy Pelosi already said that abortion is a "fading issue" in the Democratic Party. Bill Clinton said abortion should be "rare." Hillary Clinton called abortion "tragic." Obama invited voters to reach across the aisle to reduce the number of abortions. There are Democrats for Life at congressional and state levels—in fact, there are more than 100 anti-choice Democrats at the state level. The Democrats are not our champions.

Fearing the "Fall of *Roe*" is the siren song that lures activists onto the rocky coast of the Democratic Party, steering energy away from protest and speak-outs and into lobbying and electoral campaigns. But pouring money,

time, and hope into support of Democratic politicians has done nothing to stop the Fall of *Roe*.

In fact, the impending Fall of *Roe* is, at this point, more theoretical than actual for millions of people. For people on Medicaid who can't borrow the money, *Roe* is already gone. For people who live too far from a clinic in a state without public transit, *Roe* is gone. For people who will lose their jobs for

The symbol of illegal abortion
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taking too much time off to meet onerous compulsory counseling requirements, there is no *Roe*. For minors who fail to convince a judge that they are mature enough to get an abortion, the Supreme Court cannot change their fate. For the past few decades, targeted restrictions on abortion providers have shut down hundreds of clinics. Abortion has been inaccessible and unaffordable for millions of people, rendering *Roe* practically moot.

Yes, we need to rally and push to save the constitutional legalization of abortion. The Supreme Court might be inspired to stay in step with public opinion. The constitutional protection is worth fighting for. However, the Supreme Court does not have to listen. This is why many people, reasonably, look to those who *are* elected. But electing the "right people" has not been enough, and it

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will never be enough. This liberal refrain has proven ineffective—as I said above, we’ve all but already lost *Roe*.

We have to change course, and there’s no better time than right now. We have to get abortion out of single-issue politics. Instead, we must embrace the framework of reproductive justice that women of color created and strengthened over decades. Abortion is a critical component of a reproductive justice strategy, but it is only a single component. Reproductive justice is defined by Sister-Song Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective as “the human right to maintain personal bodily autonomy, have children, not have children, and parent the children we have in safe and sustainable communities.”

Reproductive justice embraces abortion, adoption, socialized child care, sex worker protections, free contraception, and comprehensive sex education. A “safe and sustainable community” has healthy food, clean water, police-free schools, and free and accessible health care for all kinds of people, including every gender-affirming procedure and treatment. A safe community never deports undocumented people. A sustainable community has no jails. We must set our sights on this future. In doing so, we reject the notion that any of these issues detract from the fight for abortion rights. Abortion rights are weakened by political siloing, just as clinics are more vulnerable siloed away from hospitals and medical centers.

Great, so we’ve determined that we need to fight for ... everything. Where do we start?

Most importantly, reproductive justice is an explicitly anti-racist and anti-oppressive framework. Reproductive justice activists center and uplift the voices, experiences, and leadership of people of color.

Given the impending criminalization of abortion, our strategy is two-pronged: legislation and mutual aid.

1. We need unapologetically pro-abortion legislative campaigns in every state with restrictions and especially in states with pre-*Roe* bans. Hear me out. I still don’t trust the Democrats. If (when) *Roe* falls, the question will be left to the states. But the question has already been left to the states through targeted regulation of abortion providers and Medicaid exclusions. This is not about elections, lobbying, begging, or waiting. We need state-by-state grassroots campaigns to strike bans on abortions. Here in Wisconsin, we have an 1849 law making abortion a felony. We’re organizing a campaign called Strike the Ban. Our campaign focuses on movement-building, direct action, community participation, and clear pro-abortion messaging. Our most popular sticker (which we give to anyone who wants to put them up around town) says, “ABORTION FOREVER. Strike the Ban!”

2. We need to help each other now—organizing rides for people to clinics, providing child care (low-cost or crowd-funded) to patients during their appointments, raising money to pay for abortions—especially for people in the states that will ban abortion. Where abortion will remain legal, we need to push for increased access to telemedicine. We must also learn to manage our own abortions. Terminating pregnancies is as old as pregnancy itself, and abortion is safer than ever. We must help each other in the months and years ahead.

The symbol of illegal abortion is no longer a coat hanger, but handcuffs. So, while abortion itself is safer than ever, people who are disproportionately targeted and swept up into the mass incarceration complex (for instance, Black and Brown people, transgender people, undocumented people) are at greater risk of punishment from seeking and securing abortion. On this point we must be clear: The laws are the danger, not abortion itself.

Abortion is normal. Abortion is safe. Abortion forever!

Education Reforms and Capitalism's Changes to Work

Lessons for the Left

LOIS WEINER

IN THIS ARTICLE, WHICH IS THE FIRST chapter of my new book, I examine what has occurred in and to education and teachers' work since publication of *The Future of Our Schools: Teachers Unions and Social Justice* (Haymarket, 2012).¹ I had intended to revise that book in 2017, in response to Trump's election, but the pandemic changed my plan. Seeing the media whip up public hysteria about teachers and teachers unions; investigating information technology's changes to work and education; examining reports of world financial organizations; and looking at how the neoliberal narrative had changed in response to new social movements, in particular Black Lives Matter, I concluded we faced a significant shift: Capitalism had been altering work and education in ways most opponents of its reforms, myself included, had missed.

In a nutshell, the ruling class used the pandemic to accelerate and intensify changes so substantial that what has occurred should be understood as a new iteration of the neoliberal project in education. The process, underway for several years, reflects and reinforces changes in work and the global economy. Public education is being reconfigured with "new models of curriculum provi-

sion based on digital resource banks created by a variety of commercial organizations, politically-connected entrepreneurs, teacher-creators, public and charitable institutions, ... increased commercial penetration into state schooling through a mixed economy of new providers and public/private partnerships," creating a new infrastructure of education that is intended to persist well beyond the pandemic.²

I make the case that we arrive late in contesting this new project, outlining its origins and social, political, and economic ramifications, and I explain that we have time, still, to resist successfully. The popular slogan "When we fight, we win" inspires militancy, the bottom line for victory. We also need to fight *smart* to win, which requires examining the new project, our victories, and our mistakes with all the objectivity we can muster. Our opponents bring to bear almost unimaginable wealth, power over governments, control of media, and armies. We bring the power of our numbers and ideas and the passion and courage of multigenerational, multiracial movements that are defending our planet, our livelihoods, social justice, democracy, and the peaceful future humanity deserves.

To protect education as a public good, we need to ground our analysis and strategies in forthright acknowledgment that the system was, from its inception, structurally and ideologically flawed. There is no "golden age" to which we can return. Struggles contesting the shortcomings in public schools that are

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rooted in historic injustices can guide our vision about the schools we want and in turn inform further resistance. Fighting smart also requires marshaling all of our resources, which includes the left and potential allies in the labor movement, beyond those involved personally in education.

This new iteration of the neoliberal project has already manifested itself globally in teachers' work and public education, from preschool through mass public higher education. No student is too young or too old for education to be "data-driven," with metrics for teaching and learning decided far from classrooms. As my analysis of global education reform has been dismissed as a "conspiracy theory" by some opponents of privatization, I note that conspiracies are, by definition, secret. This project's aims and methods are public, articulated in reports of world financial institutions, in particular the World Bank's *World Development Reports* of the past five years, as well as in materials produced by think tanks and foundations funded by billionaires, primarily those whose wealth is based on

Margaret Haley described the reciprocity of teachers' work with labor struggles and the urgency of recognizing how both relate to the fate of democracy.

finance and information technology. Often the project's aims are couched in rhetoric that makes the ideas seem unobjectionable and their financial and political backing irrelevant. For instance, the self-identified think tank for the "New Democrats," the Clinton wing of the Democratic Party, with offices in Washington DC and Brussels, has named itself the Progressive Policy Institute (PPI) and identifies its goals as "radically

pragmatic." One ominous indication of our opponents' sense of their strength is that they explicitly name their ideological and political commitments: A blog in February 2020 proudly explained that the PPI now formally sponsors "the neoliberal project," embracing ideas and activities ongoing since 2017.³

Education and Teachers' Work: Why Do They Matter?

Examining teachers' work and labor activism, as well as educational research that looks at education's functioning under capitalism, can inform struggles against capitalism, encompassing forms of social oppression that have been "baked into" its development.⁴ Teachers' location and function as "idea workers" who do "women's work," in the last standing sector of public service that has not yet been fully privatized, one that is still understood as legitimately subject to democratic control, makes their work unique and their activism especially generative of lessons for labor. Because teachers' work takes place at the juncture of capitalism's economic, social, political, and cultural processes, looking closely at what occurs in teachers unions can illuminate how to better negotiate tensions and develop synergies that address labor's responsibility to defend the dignity of work and workers' economic self-interest, as well as its political and economic responsibilities and capacity to advance goals of movements for social justice, democracy, and peace.

School reforms initiated by those with the most power and money reflect how they want society to look, just as do struggles that contest their vision and plans. Yet what occurs in classrooms is not the only, nor arguably the most influential, education that occurs in capitalism. Social movements teach by exposing harmful cultural and ideological assumptions; as John Dewey observed, learning occurs in families, and parents can be thought of as our first teachers; popular culture influences the way we speak, dress, eat, and think; we learn

about class relations—class struggle—in the workplace.⁵ While education does not take place only in schools, they are sites of intense political controversy concerning explicit requirements about what to teach as well as the “hidden curriculum.” “Government schools,” as the far-right labels public education, are still a space for democratic struggle, seen in contestations about requirements for ethnic studies, the rights of transgender young people in physical accommodations, and opposition to standardized testing, before and during the pandemic. On the other side, the right has used its wealth and power to attack academic freedom in higher education and in pre-K-12 education and to criminalize teaching about climate change and systemic racism. The frenzied caricature of critical race theory, used to turn back gains by the powerful movement for racial equality, shows that schooling is a site of ideological struggle about political and social challenges to the status quo.

The less publicized struggles over how and whether students should be placed in “ability groups” or “school tracks” reveal the deep, historic contradictions of capitalist society’s claims to be meritocratic and democratic. Standardized measurements of “ability,” far from being objective, reflect and reinforce social inequalities rooted in social class, family history of formal education, gender, supposed mastery of English, physical disabilities, and how U.S. society constructs “race.”⁶ The way we think about and measure “ability” exposes not only how schools synchronize education to the economy but also how categories of student “ability” relate to war and foreign policy. “Learning disabilities,” for example, developed as a classification of “ability” in the context of the Russians’ launch of Sputnik. Bipartisan horror that the United States was losing the Cold War because of its inferior schools drove policies to make children master more advanced material at younger ages. The assumption that Black people and immigrants couldn’t handle more challenging academic work due to biological or cultural deficits,

embedded in mass public education from its creation, rationalized school “failure” of students from these groups. But when white children, mostly boys, couldn’t handle schooling’s new academic demands, a medicalized explanation for their problem mastering school work emerged—learning disabilities.⁷

Educational research clarifies our challenge, which is not *whether* schools disrupt or reproduce unequal social relations but *how*

Education workers who are labor activists often have at least three jobs: their work in the school, their labor activity, and union reform.

they do so and *for whom*, by mapping how these conditions relate to inequalities outside the school walls. The significant impact of Black educational researchers, whose presence reflects the long-standing respect for teachers and teaching in the Black community from slavery onward, itself refutes the persistent canard that academic success is a function of biology or culture.⁸ This body of educational research also challenges deterministic analyses on the left contending schools reproduce a status quo of inequality uniformly, as was the intention in creating mass public education.

One contribution I hope this forthcoming book makes is to push analysts of labor economy to take into account how social oppression, including gender and sexuality, configure work and the workplace. The best example of the left’s lacunae in this regard is its failure to recognize that teaching is real work and that teachers are workers.⁹ So much still written by the left about labor and unions perpetuates a historically inaccurate nostalgia for a working class of heterosexual,

cis-gender, white men. The mischaracterization of teachers' work reflects the bromance that obscures complexities about how and why workers organize on the job and undercuts our seeing and learning from contemporary struggles. We can take pride in, and learn from, the history of Black women, working as teachers, excluded from white professional associations and segregated teachers unions, who formed independent associations as teachers to protect their working conditions and conditions for Black students. Moreover, analysis of who comprises the working class that marginalizes teachers simultaneously obscures workers' struggles powered by resistance to discrimination in the workplace. Gay women who fought their exclusion from the overwhelmingly white, male building trades unions, and gay militants in the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union, fought for their rights alongside campaigns against exclusionary racial policies in their unions, connecting both to red-baiting. They have much to teach us about building solidarity from below.¹⁰

Recovering Lost Time and Territory

While we focused on resisting Trump's and the GOP's horrifying advocacy of racial superiority, theocracy, subversion of women's rights, anti-immigrant sentiment, dehumanization of people with disabilities, anti-labor positions, and more, policies that signaled and comprised the new iteration of the neoliberal project in education were underway. Resisting the DeVos/Trump/GOP expansion of policies prominent in the bipartisan project enacted under Bush and Obama, in particular standardized testing, charter schools, and vouchers, as well as the GOP's neo-conservative additions, like funding for religious schools, occupied the movement's resources and attention. During this time, education activists overlooked the significance of the Senate's unanimous approval of Trump's nominee for assistant secretary of education for career, technical, and adult education,

Scott Stump. Every GOP and Democratic Senator voting on Stump's nomination—even Sanders—cast an approving ballot.¹¹ Stump's background in workforce development and education in community colleges using online learning reflects the World Bank's push that workers' access to online learning through digital platforms is essential to reduce poverty. An underlying assumption, unchallenged by those who advance this project, including the two U.S. teacher federations, the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) and NEA (National Education Association), is that powerful elites and the politicians they control have the right to determine the future of education.

The breathtaking scope of change being planned and enacted in teachers' work and new forms of privatization are occurring on a scale hard to grasp, let alone resist. Mining student data yields enormous profits, and school districts have few, if any, safeguards to keep student data private. Data collected on students isn't anonymous, as platforms and software companies claim, because tech companies can and do re-personalize it. Student and teacher privacy rights are easily voided when software for remote learning contains video. Teachers and students are subjected to surveillance of their physical presence and behavior. One of the most chilling aspects of the new project is how it extends corporate control and profit throughout the entire range of social services.¹² A virtually unrecognized paradox of teachers unions demanding remote learning to keep children, families, communities, and school workers safe (as they had to do) is that teachers have been training their replacement, AI, with each key stroke of online assignments. One immediate and straightforward ask of teachers unions is for school districts to address the dangers that the National Educational Policy Center, or NEPC, has identified in "personalized learning," digital platforms, and proprietary software. While understanding the life-and-death imperatives that drove teacher union

demands for remote learning, we also need to explore why they missed this big picture.

Another more complicated, worrisome issue is the extent to which the ruling class has—again—successfully obscured its aims with rhetorical and financial support for social justice struggles, especially anti-racism. The extent of nonprofit, foundation, university, and liberal think tank entanglement in education-based anti-racist organizations funded by Silicon Valley and Wall Street is itself a topic for a book.¹³ Often truly progressive organizing by NGOs contradicts their funders' aims. For example, cutting-edge organizing against ed-tech surveillance that reinforces the school-to-prison pipeline is being done by the Alliance for Educational Justice. This authentically grassroots group is funded by the Democracy Alliance (DA), which includes Mary Kay Henry, president of the Service Employees International Union; a coterie of wealthy liberals, many of them ed-tech entrepreneurs; and the Center for American Progress (CAP), a think tank bankrolled by supporters of the Clinton wing of the Democratic Party. DA members pay annual dues of \$30,000 and are required to contribute a total of at least \$200,000 a year to recommended groups. Although DA steers money to “pillars of the political left such as the conservative media watchdog Media Matters,” it also donates big money to CAP and the data firm Catalyst, run by Clinton allies. CAP explicitly supports most aspects of the Bush, Clinton, and Obama educational reforms, including expansion of charter schools.¹⁴

The breathtaking shift in media treatment of teachers—pervasive claims that fighting the dangers of in-person learning undercut the well-being of low-income children, families, and communities—reproduces the narrative we have heard under Democratic and Republican administrations since Bush. The vicious onslaught in the media and among politicians occurs now for the same reason it was orchestrated 15 years ago:

Teachers organized as workers are a powerful force, and their unions are a stable, potentially formidable foe. Hence the narrative about selfish teachers is a backhanded compliment to us—a response to victories in teachers' labor activism in the past decade, in “blue cities” and “red state” walkouts, as well as gains in educating teachers and parents about the purposes of and harm done by standardized

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testing under No Child Left Behind.

Activists have changed teachers unions, generating enthusiasm and excitement about possibilities for labor to challenge the status quo. The movement has demonstrated that teachers are a force with which powerful elites must reckon and that “business unionism” is not the only or best way to defend teachers as workers and public education as a system. Teacher union activists have shown we can both protect education workers' dignity and many of the needs of the communities and children we serve. The burgeoning support for teacher unionism that advances social justice as a core principle has made both NEA and AFT alter their rhetoric and, in some cases, their policies. The movement's exciting growth has shown what teachers' labor activism can accomplish.¹⁵

When Mary Compton and I edited *The Global Assault on Teaching, Teachers, and Their Unions* (Palgrave, 2008), we addressed a burgeoning young movement, which has flourished in ways we could not predict. I assume readers have a general familiarity

with the ideas Mary and I laid out, which I don't summarize in this book.¹⁶ Mary and I decided not to name capitalism because we wanted our arguments to be persuasive to education activists who did not self-identify as anti-capitalist. But a new generation has been radicalized in the United States, and talk of capitalism—and socialism—is now widespread among opponents of the status quo. Thus, this new book names capitalism and explores the implications of understanding it as a social system.

Education workers who are labor activists often have at least three jobs: their work in the school, their labor activity, and union reform. Participation in movements for social justice and family responsibilities make their schedules impossibly taxing. To address this reality, I again write informally, in first person, minimizing jargon. I make statements that are bolder than I would in an academic article because I try to duplicate what readers say was most useful in my earlier work: creation of a narrative that expressed ideas they intuited and felt and yet couldn't synthesize.

Our challenge is not whether
schools disrupt or reproduce
unequal social relations but how
they do so and for whom.

To make this book more useful as research, I include extensive narrative endnotes, a format I have learned was used by the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in its pamphlets for workers. (Reading the text straight through, without looking at the end notes, may help you to more easily follow the thread of the argument.) Whenever possible I cite references that are open-access, often with pdfs on Google Scholar. The notes are suggestive, not comprehensive, and I apologize to the many

scholars and activists who have informed my thinking, in publications and private conversations, but whom I don't cite. I continue to learn so much from education workers and the scholar-activists supporting the movement, and I acknowledge that debt and thank you.

Using an idea from a young comrade more knowledgeable than I about synergies between print publication and social media and the changing left landscape, I am publishing this book by an untraditional method. Organizations and publications sympathetic to the book's purpose will publish the chapters serially. The left website *Tempest* will publish the second chapter online. An online public event will follow publication of each chapter, in sessions that I hope will model what we know from educational research about encouraging construction of knowledge to support organizing and political education.¹⁷

In concluding this first chapter, I note parallels between the system of mass public education when it was newly created a century ago, as a response to social upheaval during the industrial revolution, and our challenge today.¹⁸ Though her language differs from mine, Margaret Haley, a socialist and suffragist, and founding organizer of the first U.S. teachers union affiliated with organized labor, sums up many of this book's premises. Haley organized a union of elementary school teachers—all women—in Chicago, the first in the AFT, which is why the Chicago Teachers Union is Local 1. In what is probably her most famous speech, "Why Teachers Should Organize," which she gave in 1904 to the NEA, at that time a professional organization of school administrators, she articulates her vision as a teacher and union organizer of why teachers' work is unique:

If there is one body of public servants of whom the public has a right to expect the mental and moral equipment to face the labor question and other issues vitally affecting the welfare of society and urgently pressing for a rational and scientific solution, it is the public school

teachers whose special contribution to society is their own power to think, the moral courage to follow their convictions, and the training of citizens to think and to express thought in free and intelligent action.

Haley then described the reciprocity of teachers' work with labor struggles and the urgency of recognizing how both relate to the fate of democracy:

How shall the public school and the industrial workers in their struggle to secure the rights of humanity through a more just and equitable distribution of the products of their labor, meet their mutual responsibility to each other and to society? ... The essential thing is that the public school teachers recognize the fact that their struggle to maintain the efficiency of the schools through better conditions for themselves is a part of the same great struggle which the manual workers—often misunderstood and unaided—have been making for humanity through their efforts to secure living conditions for themselves and their children; and that [behind] the unfavorable conditions of both is a common cause.

The “common cause” of attacks on public education, teaching, and conditions of work is capitalism, which subordinates workers' rights to profit. And, as she observes at the end of her speech, the struggle for control over work and uses of technology cannot be separated from the fight for democracy, at the workplace and in society:

Two ideals are struggling for supremacy in American life today: one, the industrial ideal dominating through the supremacy of commercialism, which subordinates the worker to the product and the machine; the other, the ideal of democracy, the ideal of the educators, which places humanity above all machines and demands that all activity shall be the expression of life. If this ideal of the educators cannot be carried over into the industrial field then the ideal of industrialism will be carried over into the school. Those

two ideals can no more continue to exist in American life than our nation could have continued half slave and half free. If the school cannot bring joy to the work of the world, the joy must go out of its own life, and work in the school, as in the industrial field, will become drudgery.

For much of my life, Haley's assumptions that teachers are workers and analysis of their work is central to understanding what occurs in capitalism have been marginal in the academy and the left.¹⁹ We owe a debt to Haley and to the movement that has demonstrated her ideas are as relevant today as they were a century ago.

In the next chapter, I explore how understanding capitalism as a social system helps to clarify linkages between social movements fighting for justice, equality, democracy, and peace and labor's responsibilities to those struggles. I take a deep dive into material about alterations that information technology has made to knowledge and cultural work and combine insights from this body of work to theories of social reproduction. *New Politics* will host a webinar shortly after publication of this first chapter. Details to be announced.

NOTES

1. On methodology: The findings supporting claims in this book come from a meta-analysis of relevant scholarship. My assumptions are explicit and frame my questions, while being kept separate from my analysis, which I strive to make objective. I read, synthesize, and apply scholarship from several disciplines, looking for overlaps, omissions, and contradictions. After doing a preliminary dive into material to crystallize a hypothesis, I try to locate relevant material research that supports, complicates, and contradicts the patterns I've identified. My ideas come from published scholarship as well as webinars, podcasts, and conversations with activists. The advantage of the meta-analysis is that it enables one to examine a huge scope of material, making connections that are missed in the silo-ization of disciplinary knowledge, academic departments, and the tendency toward single-issue-ism of social movements. A disadvantage of this methodology is that I may connect the dots incorrectly, so the pattern and picture aren't accurate. To address this limitation, I use an iterative process,

revising ideas against new material I read, looking especially for empirical evidence or theories that contradict my hypothesis or conclusions.

2. Ben Williamson and Anna Hogan, *Commercialisation and Privatisation in/of Education in the Context of Covid-19* (Education International, July 2020), 28, issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/2020_eiresearch_gr_commercialisation_privatisation?fr=sZDJkYjE1ODAM2MTQ. This report documents the global nature of the project and its acceleration during the pandemic. In “Pearson 2025: Transforming teaching and privatising education data” (2019), Sam Sellar and Anna Hogan describe why privatization of data is a source of huge profits and detail Pearson’s global ambitions: issuu.com/educationinternational/docs/2019_ei_gr_essay_pearson2025_eng_24.

3. www.progressivepolicy.org/blogs/a-new-chapter-the-neoliberal-project-joins-ppi/. The PPI created a Center for New Liberalism six months after The Neoliberal Project: www.centerfornew-liberalism.org/. The Neoliberal Project boasts that it has “40 chapters around the world, a podcast listened to over 300,000 times and a social media reach of over 15 million impressions a month.”

4. Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis’s *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life* (1976) made the important case about schooling’s function in reproducing capitalist economic relations. Yet it flattened processes educational researchers have found when looking inside schools. Consider Jean Anyon’s work, written at about the same time, “Social class and school knowledge” in *Curriculum inquiry* (11, no. 1, 1981), 3–42; and “Social class and the hidden curriculum of work” in the *Journal of Education* (reprinted in *Childhood socialization* (Routledge, 2017), 369–94. Anyon used Bowles and Gintis but also Bourdieu and provided empirical evidence of how social reproduction occurs in classrooms. Pauline Lipman’s research about Chicago is a more contemporary corrective to Bowles and Gintis, critically examining school reforms under neoliberalism from the micro (how schools are organized, funded, and closed) to the macro (capitalism globally), integrating race and social class. Her book *The new political economy of urban education: Neoliberalism, race, and the right to the city* (Routledge, 2013) is a classic worth reading. However, a strong article, available online, that sets out her ideas is “Contesting the city: Neoliberal urbanism and the cultural politics of education reform in Chicago,” *Discourse: Studies in the cultural politics of education* (32.2, 2011), 217–34.

5. Powerful transmission of values and beliefs occurs outside of schools, and my focus on schools should not be construed as diminishing influences of other

ways we learn about who we are—or should be—as a society. Religious institutions, media, and popular culture shape our views of ourselves and the world, as the body of research produced in critical cultural studies has documented and explained.

6. School desegregation often identified Hispanics as white, creating from the start “majority minority” schools that were classified as desegregated. I learned a great deal from Reynaldo A. Contreras and Leonard A. Valverde, “The impact of Brown on the education of Latinos,” *The Journal of Negro Education* (63.3, 1994), 470–81, about the history of school segregation of Latinos and their resistance. There is too much valuable research about how construction of race as a Black/white binary affected education of Hispanics for me to discuss. However, one aspect of debates about bilingual education that has been ignored is how many Hispanic immigrants speak an indigenous language as their first language and Spanish as their second, an important issue in learning another language. Angela Valenzuela’s work about the ways in which teaching English language learners can be additive or subtractive complements other work that exposes how “deficit paradigms” drive school reforms that claim to promote equal educational opportunity. A book chapter summarizing Valenzuela’s ideas is available in pdf: “Subtractive schooling, caring relations, and social capital in the schooling of U.S.-Mexican youth,” *Beyond Silenced Voices: Class, Race, and Gender in United States Schools* (SUNY Press, 2005), 83–94.

7. See Wayne Au’s “Meritocracy 2.0: High-stakes, standardized testing as a racial project of neoliberal multiculturalism,” *Educational Policy* (30.1, 2016), 39–62 (available on Researchgate) to understand why education activists were aghast when *Jacobin* printed an article defending use of the SATs for college admission. Left readers are probably aware that countless studies have shown the ways “gifted and talented” programs sift students based on social class and parents’ level of formal education, as well as parent networks. They may be interested in research about reforming schools to provide all students, including those considered “at risk” of school failure, code for low-income children of color, to the kinds of curriculum and teaching reserved for “gifted and talented” students. See Henry Levin and Wendy S. Hopfenberg, *Accelerated Schools for At-Risk Students* (Consortium for Policy Research in Education, 1988). Christine Sleeter contextualizes emergence of “learning disabilities” in “Why is there learning disabilities? A critical analysis of the birth of the field in its social context,” *Disability Studies Quarterly* (30.2, 2010), available in a pdf online: pdfs.semanticscholar.org/bead/8e04f9d94

743aef50687327df3c28041bf02.pdf. Early, deep links between the military, education reform, and technology, are explored in Douglas D. Noble's pioneering work, *The classroom arsenal: Military research, information technology and public education*, originally published in 1991, reissued by Routledge, 2017. It is available only in book form, to my knowledge. Kenneth Saltman and David A. Gabbard look at newer connections between militarization of school life and corporatization post-9/11 in *Education as enforcement: The militarization and corporatization of schools* (Routledge, 2003). The introduction is available here: ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/clotic/article/download/191910/188871<https://ojs.library.ubc.ca/index.php/clotic/article/download/191910/188871>.

8. Alas, much scholarship by researchers of color that has informed my thinking is only available to those with access to university research libraries. One such author is Michèle Foster, whose early empirical work on the experiences of Black teachers, and how they and parents understand good teaching, still resonates. The "Brown Lectures" of the American Educational Research Association, which are available as webcasts, are useful snapshots of some of the best critical research on race and racism in education. The lectures skew older because the Brown Lecture recognizes lifetime achievement. Critical race theory also includes scholarship on indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities, in particular this nation's largest group of English-language learners - Hispanics. Lectures by Vanessa Siddle Walker, Prudence Carter, James Anderson, Richard Milner, Luis Moll, and Gloria Ladson Billings are here: www.aera.net/Events-Meetings/Annual-Brown-Lecture-in-Education-Research/Past-Brown-Lectures#2011.

9. One of the most comprehensive examinations of teaching as work was conducted by a collective of radical teachers, the Boston Women Teachers' Group, in the late 1970s. See Sara Freedman, Jane Jackson, and Katherine Boles, *The Effects of the Institutional Structure of Schools on Teachers* (1982). Studies by Sari Biklen, Sandra Acker, Raewyn Connell, and Diane Reay are important exceptions to the tendency of feminist scholarship to ignore teachers' work as a labor process. In "Class work: Mothers' involvement in their children's primary schooling" (1998), Reay skewers romanticized notions of "partnership" between mothers and teachers, examining racial and class stratification as reflected in mothers' material and cultural resources. Reay, along with a few others, mostly British, Australian, and Canadian feminist researchers in education, anticipate new work in social reproduction by explaining that labor-market definitions of

work and social class that are static neglect the key role of women in class formation. As Reay puts it, "Individuals do not occupy a location, they act in situations" (Reay, 23). Chloe Asselin and I analyze evidence about the absence of attention to teachers' work and unions across the academy in "Learning from Lacunae in Research: Making Sense of Teachers' Labor Activism," available open access from Hipatia Press. In "Research on Teachers' Labor Activism and Teachers Unions: Implications for Educational Policy, Scholarship, and Activism," Chloe Asselin, Leah Z. Owens, Erin Dyke, Keith E. Benson, and I explore theories that explain social oppression in capitalism understood as a social system. We draw on research on four topics: Black teachers organizations; social movement unionism outside the United States; gender and sexuality; and the "red state" teacher walkouts, applying various theories that explain social oppression. The manuscript, which has been solicited for a publication of the American Educational Research Association, is a work in progress, available on Academia. We invite comments.

10. See Miriam Frank's article "Hard Hats and Homophobia" in *New Labor Forum* (Spring/Summer 2001), available from JSTOR. "We Took Care of Each Other" by Jonathan Kissam, June 23, 2021, at labornotes.org.

11. Stump's history, summarized in his official biography (www2.ed.gov/news/staff/bios/stump.html), illustrates one of the ideological tenets of the new iteration of the neoliberal project in education, "workforce development" through online programs, because education can and should mitigate the contour of the labor market. I explore how Sanders' program for education reflected this dangerous idea in my *Jacobin* article (June 2019). I explore the rationale more fully, analyzing the role of the AFT and NEA, in Chapter 2, forthcoming in *Tempest*.

12. NEPC's materials, available from its website (nepc.colorado.edu) include useful advice on adopting software and digital platforms as well as close examinations of how ed-tech is privatizing education. One especially useful report by Faith Boninger, Alex Molnar, and Michael K. Barbour (2020) is on Summit Learning: "Big Claims, Little Evidence, Lots of Money: The Reality Behind the Summit Learning Program and the Push to Adopt Digital Personalized Learning Platforms." Summit is used very widely, including by school districts in which social justice reformers lead their locals. See also "Investing for 'impact' or investing for profit? Social impact bonds, Pay for Success, and the next wave of privatization of social services." An NEPC interview with Ben Williamson explains why the looming use of AI in teaching should concern us

all: nepc.colorado.edu/index.php/publications/podcast-saldana-williamson.

13. The easiest way to find these interlocks is to use “Little Sis” (the opposite of Big Brother), a project of the Public Accountability Initiative. However, in doing research for this chapter I saw the need for information to be updated. I hope readers will volunteer time, money, or both. More about Little Sis here: littlesis.org/about.

14. See Neil Campbell’s lament that teacher walk-outs have linked poor pay and teaching conditions to public money being siphoned off to charter schools: americanprogress.org/article/teacher-strikes-charter-schools-unions/.

15. The left and educational researchers have responded to teachers’ militancy and the burgeoning of “social justice unionism” in teacher union reform efforts with a valuable uptick of research, from which we have much to learn. I try to build on what I’ve read, watched, and heard in popular publications of the left and in educational and labor studies journals to make connections as yet unmade. I wish space and time allowed me to synthesize what we can learn from this new body of knowledge but my focus—and contribution—is explaining the terrain of our battlefield, to conceptualize how teachers’ activism as workers illuminates what’s needed to build more dynamic yet stable movements, including labor, to challenge capitalism’s ideological dominance and the social, political, and economic status quo.

16. Mary created and maintained a website (www.teachersolidarity.com) until her death a few years ago. Though new material is not being added, the site remains as an archive of research and news reports about global struggles to defend public education and teaching. She would have contributed knowledge and insights to this book about the global context, in particular what is happening in the global South, that I cannot. However, I do examine the role of Education International, the international confederation of teachers unions, in another chapter.

17. Later in the book, I suggest how to tap what we know from teaching, an under-utilized resource on the left. One example is how we organize discussions, or rather, depend on lecture and serial comments in which speakers do not engage with each other’s ideas. Much of what we know about

supporting use of language to deepen learning and democratize access to creating shared understandings was produced by critical researchers who investigated how to alter classroom environments to make learning both richer and more democratic. The classic work is Courtney Cazden’s *Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning* (1988). Not coincidentally, Cazden and a group of like-minded scholars were pioneers in examining alterations made by the use of computers in classrooms, questioning who decides on their use. See Sarah Michaels, Courtney Cazden, and Bertram Bruce, “Whose Computer Is it, Anyway? Schools Embrace Computers Without Knowing Why.” Originally published in “Science for the People” in a special section in 1985 on computers in education, this article is now available open-access in pdf in several places.

18. Although historians of education have written so much that illuminates aspects of how public education became what it is, I think David Tyack’s “The One Best System” (1974) is unsurpassed as a readable, comprehensive, compelling history. It is still in print, available for purchase.

19. Haley’s speech, “Why Teachers Should Organize,” was published in the *Journal of Education* and is available at JSTOR open access. My analysis of Haley’s speech, “Teachers, Unions, and School Reform: Examining Margaret Haley’s Vision,” published in *Educational Foundations* (1996) is now available on Academia. When I submitted the article on Haley’s speech to an educational journal, one of the editors, a prominent radical education activist and critical scholar, wrote to me privately that it was clear teachers unions had no progressive potential. The quote from Dennis Carlson that opens the 1996 article describes and explains the anti-teacher union sentiment that permeated much educational research. An absolutely essential corrective to my piece as well as much scholarship on the early days of teachers unionism is Kate Rousmaniere’s article “White Silence: A Racial Biography of Margaret Haley,” *Equity and excellence in education* (34.2, 2001), 7–15. Rousmaniere describes what Haley and the union she organized failed to see or address: segregation of the Chicago schools and its teaching force, which resulted in an intensified exploitation of Black teachers. Unfortunately, to my knowledge Rousmaniere’s article has not (yet) been made open-access.

We Who Are in Prison Escape Every Day

Students and Women Organizing Against Israeli Occupation

AN INTERVIEW WITH LAYAN KAYED

OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS, there has been an intensification of Israeli repression aimed at Palestinian student activists. Many students at Birzeit University outside Ramallah in the West Bank have been arrested for organizing on campus, accused of absurd infractions like selling falafel at student fairs and organizing book sales. Layan Kayed, a leftist student activist at Birzeit, was arrested last year and spent 15 months in jail. In this interview she talks with Brian Bean and Shireen Akram-Boshar about the long history of Palestinian student activism, why this has become such a target for Israel, the gendered dimension of Israeli incarceration and violence, and the harrowing details of her arrest and organizing behind bars.

Brian Bean and Shireen Akram-Boshar: *In June of last year you were kidnapped at an Israeli military checkpoint by Israeli security forces, arrested, and tried under the occupation's sham military courts. In your 15-month imprisonment,*

BRIAN BEAN is a Chicago-based socialist activist, writer, and speaker originally from North Carolina. They are one of the founding editors of Rampant magazine and a member of the Tempest socialist collective. Their work has been published in Jacobin, Socialist Worker, Red Flag, International Viewpoint, New Politics, and elsewhere.

SHIREEN AKRAM-BOSHAR is a socialist activist and writer who focuses on revolution and anti-imperialism in the Middle East and North Africa.

you experienced the egregious conditions that face Palestinian political prisoners, especially women prisoners. Can you talk about that experience and what it says about the barbarity of the occupation and the gendered dimensions of Israeli imprisonment of Palestinians?

Layan Kayed: The Israeli roadblocks scattered across the West Bank are used as an easy and inexpensive way to carry out arrests. Instead of mobilizing large forces of the Israeli army to storm a Palestinian town, subjecting itself to people's resistance like stone throwing, this allows them to simply activate one of their many existing checkpoints, or install a new one (a flying checkpoint) on your daily route, after a quick monitoring of your smart devices and personal calls. This has transformed the West Bank into a big trap. I was arrested at one of the checkpoints that separates my home from Birzeit University while I was in the family car with my mother on my way to the university to accept my [Bachelor of Arts] certificate.

After my arrest, I was left outdoors at the Zaatara Israeli military checkpoint for eleven hours, handcuffed and shackled.

I was then transferred to Hasharon ("the crossing" in Hebrew) Prison and placed in a section dedicated to isolating Israeli criminal prisoners. During this time, I was moved between two solitary confinement cells. One never received any sunshine and was fully monitored by security cameras around the clock. In this "crossing" I was subjected to sexual insults, constant swearing, and verbal

abuse from the Israeli male criminal inmates, under the watch of the Israeli guards who did not intervene. Instead, some of the guards who spoke Arabic came to tell me that I should pay more attention to my “honor” (code for my virginity), in a manipulative attempt to make me feel that this situation is an issue of my “reputation.” These are the same guards who routinely invade our privacy as women political prisoners and check our cells every half an hour while we sleep at night, and enter them without notification or permission to perform searches and other invading practices.

This was not the only time the jailors tried to use the concept of “honor.” In one of the interrogation sessions, while charging me with “organizing camps” for the members of Al Qutub, the student arm of the PFLP (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine), the detective asked me, “What will people say about you when they know you were organizing mixed camps for both genders?”

Many of my female comrades were also subjected to similar attempts by the detectives to pressure them and extort them, using the concept of social disgraces and making them feel that the Palestinian society that they fight for will renounce them for their clothing choices or nose piercings. They also attempt to deceive us into thinking that the other Palestinian prisoners are also going to reject us, saying things like, “These political prisoners will force you into hijab and praying.”

The colonizer-as-jailor always tries to make us believe that the enemy is our own society, not the Zionist colonization that is stealing our land.

After 17 days of isolation in Hasharon Prison, I was still in the same clothes. My clothes had started to loosen up due to the inedible and filthy prison food. I was later transferred in “al Bosta” to Al Damon prison. “Al Bosta” is the vehicle used to transfer political prisoners to their trial sessions and to hospitals; it is a small van that contains very

tight cells painted in grey or black, with metal seats. It has one miniature window, which is covered in steel and perforated with small holes. We were handcuffed and thrown into these tight cells for the duration of the trip. Trips like these sometimes take more than 20 hours. The driver often deliberately drives recklessly, making constant sudden turns and stops to purposely injure us

Of the other women imprisoned, a number were arrested as minors and were given long sentences. These women lived their childhood and youth in prison. They have managed to complete their general school certificate [roughly equivalent to a U.S. high school diploma] and are now enrolled in university from prison. The majority of them were shot and injured during their arrest, denied proper medical care as a part of the prison’s deliberate medical neglect. This is a form of daily torture; those who are severely sick are transferred to a Ramle prison, lacking life’s minimum necessities and often shackled to their beds. The medical care offered is extremely poor and has led to the death of several prisoners, many of whose bodies are still being held by Israel.

bb/SA-B: The pretext of your arrest was your involvement in student politics at Birzeit University (in the West Bank), where you are a student. Why were you targeted? What is the context for the increasing Israeli repression of Palestinian student activity and the violations of the basic semblance of political free expression, association, and organization of student union that it represents? Why does student politics make Israel feel so threatened?

LK: The Palestinian student movement has always been a lever for the Palestinian national struggle. Historically, the General Union of Palestinian Students was the nucleus of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Student organizations inside the occupied territories were in turn an essential and active component of both the First and Second Intifadas.

However, there are two dangerous turns that affected the student movement:

First, with the signing of the Oslo Accords there was a major shift in the work of the committees in the occupied territories. The newly formed Palestinian Authority—with its political and social project—tried to transform these popular structures into civil society institutions within a state-building project, as opposed to a liberation project, which created real challenges for continuing grassroots mobilization.

Second, the internal Palestinian division between Fatah and Hamas—the Palestinian Authority and its ruling party, Fatah, took control of the West Bank, while Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip—has further hindered freedom and democracy, which by nature affected universities.

Birzeit University is the only Palestinian university that still holds student council elections every year, which means its student movement is politically active. Moreover, its proximity to Ramallah, the administrative capital of the Palestinian Authority, gives it a central political influence, all the while preserving the campus as a safe space of political freedom for parties, particularly as the spaces for political freedom have shrunk in the West Bank.

All these factors pushed the student movement to resist the expected outcomes of political life under the Oslo authority and go beyond the “new Palestinian” project, with its core idea of individual salvation. The student movement also resisted the colonizer’s desire for stability in the West Bank by not becoming a dead political front. It also managed to rise above, to a lesser extent, Palestinian internal political divisions.

The student movement has been able to build a common base of political resistance against colonialism, derived from the shared belief in the rights of the Palestinian people as an indigenous colonized people. Therefore, Birzeit University has witnessed a continuous movement represented by sit-ins

and protests that focus on contact points with the Israeli occupier.¹ It links the university to the key Palestinian issues, including that of the martyrs, political prisoners, and the fight against settlements. Through it all, Birzeit University’s political arena has been able to build a model for progressive Palestinian groups that are educated and involved in politics and resistance.

Birzeit University is famous for its voluntary work committees. For example, thousands of students annually volunteer to harvest olives on endangered lands threatened with confiscation.

Birzeit University students have also paid the ultimate price for their political activity, including recently the martyr Fadi Wahsha, who was martyred in the events of Saif al-Quds.²

All of these manifestations threaten the project of a “stable West Bank” under occupation, and this is why we face the constant threat to the student movement. The colonizer wants to ensure that this model of resistance is not generalized widely among Palestinians and works to break the current activist students from carrying on the struggle beyond their university years.

For Israeli colonialism, mass arrests are not enough; they have stormed the university campus a number of times, carried out arrests from inside the buildings’ corridors and in front of the student council building, and arrested the head of the student council, Omar Kiswani, on March 7, 2018, by undercover forces. Israel also issues ban orders for student activists from entering the campus.

Intimidation is also carried out through official summons and threatening calls, not only to student activists but to the general body of students, in order to demoralize them from joining the student movement.

Most importantly, Israeli colonialism is increasing pressure on the university—citing the presence of the student movement—by launching a campaign targeting benefactor countries and institutions with the goal of

defunding Birzeit University.

bb/SA-B: *While Israel has arrested student activists of various stripes, Al Qutub (the Progressive Democratic Student Pole)—the leftist student group you are involved in—is prohibited as an “unlawful association” by the Israeli occupation, despite having no history of involvement in military activity. Can you talk about the activities and politics of the left in the student movement?*

LK: We at Al Qutub adopt the political vision of the PFLP and its main slogan, “liberating the land and the people.” Our union vision, however, was inspired by the slogan of the General Union of Tunisian Students: “A popular university, democratic education, and national/patriotic culture.”

A Popular University

The struggle for a popular university is divided into two parts. The first has a political aspect related to the Palestinian Authority’s (PA) annual budget. We mobilize to increase the budget for higher education, which usually does not exceed 2 percent of the general budget, while more than 40 percent of the PA’s budget is allocated to the security sector. Ironically, all of these “security” agencies align themselves with the Israeli aggression during any raids of Palestinian cities and in arresting whomever they want. This lavish spending is only observed in the suppression of peaceful Palestinian marches demanding freedom and democracy, like those recently held in the West Bank on the heels of the horrific killing of the activist Nizar Banat. I was in prison at that time, but many of my comrades told me about a list circulated to all PA security agencies, containing the names of our comrades, with the order to beat them even if on the university campus.

The struggle in its second part is one we have inside the university itself.

We fight against the privatization of university facilities. Every year, the university

campus witnesses strikes and sit-ins organized by the student movement and the workers union to push back against privatization. Al Qutub organizes around establishing alternative models, like an alternative cafeteria and an alternative printing shop that sells photocopied books—which the university does not provide despite their inaccessible high prices.

Al Qutub also works to end the class discrimination policies at the university and for universal free education. We seek to pressure the university to decline any kind of conditional financial grants from international or local funders, against external dictates to educational programs, and to reject naming buildings after Palestinian capitalists and to name them instead after fellow students who were martyred.

Democratic Education

At Al Qutub, we strive to achieve a democratic education and fight for the democracy of the educational institution. We fight for its democracy by presenting university decisions for discussion and then bringing them to a vote by students and their representatives in the student council, opening a dialogue between the university administration and students about university policies and directions and participating in university decision-making.

The democracy we speak of cannot exist without establishing the independence of the democratic process, its independence from all sorts of interventions, from PA security agencies as well as from the reactionary tribal and regional structures. Democracy is impossible without ensuring the freedom of unionization and political expression of Palestinians. In addition to Israeli repression, the PA routinely arrests student activists. Several years ago we discovered that we could not print a single paper in any printing shops in Ramallah due to orders from the security agencies. And for years now, many of us, and our parents, have been summoned for a “cup of coffee,” the

intelligence services' code for interrogation, as part of their intimidation tactics.

The democracy we believe in is not separate from social justice or gender equality. Democracy must first work according to these values and strive to achieve them.

National/Patriotic Culture

We set out to see education as a liberating process. For us it is not just about the quality of education and the university's position within international rankings but rather whether we can use our academic knowledge to change our reality and assist in our liberation from colonialism.

Currently, all our colleges have adopted international curricula without answering the questions of our Palestinian reality and our liberation project.

Therefore, we fought to institute a course on "the Palestinian cause" as a university requirement, after it was removed in 1993 following the Oslo Accords. It was reinstituted, as a result of our struggle, in 2013. Likewise, we mobilized to start a course centered on political prisoners, which was recently approved.

Our struggle is not limited to the university curricula. We also face a constant struggle to keep the university and its campus as an independent national center. We fought against hosting institutions and companies that acknowledge Israel or have links with it. The same goes for representatives of imperialist countries or Arab reactionaries. We increasingly find ourselves radicalized, for example, on employment day, an event by the university. We resorted to smashing the booths of some companies like Rawabi, Asal, and Axlet.³

Outside the university, we are part of the Palestinian national liberation project, and part of a progressive social movement, fighting and demonstrating in the center of the cities, demanding the PA to lift the sanctions on Gaza, retribution for Nizar Banat, and rejecting the trial of the martyr Basil al-Araj.⁴

We are always present in every clash with the colonizer, on all contact points in front of the Ofer military court and in the Beit El settlement with the other students of our university, our movement, and our unions.

bb/SA-B: *The organizing of Palestinian political prisoners has always had a special position in the national liberation struggle. This dynamic was expressed again by the inspiring prison break from Gilboa Prison over the summer and the launch of a new prisoners' hunger strike in mid-September. In this history, the organizing of women prisoners is often not talked about. Can you talk about women organizing behind bars?*

LK: Imprisonment is an intensification of the reality of oppression and colonization, its power relations, and reveals what is out of sight.

In prison, just as in life, you get used to oppression, despite its bitterness, and occasionally you forget the possibility of another world, one that is shaped by the will of resistance.

In those times, only the will of the powerful seems to exist.

On June 9 this year, we were woken up by the jailers at five in the morning for the "head-count," but this was not the count's usual time. After a while, we realized that six prisoners had escaped. The female prisoners began circulating the news through closed doors. I was the one standing by the door at the time, so I conveyed the news to my comrades in the room, who were drowsy and said they must be Israeli criminal prisoners. I don't know where that reaction came from, the strange conviction that they weren't political prisoners like us who managed to escape.

But those who managed to escape were indeed political prisoners like us from our own, from the villages and towns we know well. The Israeli media began to blame the prison administration, which "gives the prisoners enough freedom, enabling them to escape" and started talking about the crumbs of life we had as "privileges from the prison

administration.”

As for us, these events helped us realize that life in prison deserves nothing but escape and that this reality must be overcome and resisted, but most crucially, that we are still able to resist.

We who are in prison escape every day, perhaps not by digging a tunnel, but by reshaping the prison, the prison that the enemy designed as a coffin for us, we turn it into a place of life and change.

Political prisoners do not consider themselves isolated from the Palestinian people's struggle, and they do not wait for support from outside, as much as they exchange support and backing from broader Palestinian society.

Political prisoners have always played an important role in the Palestinian cause. They have undertaken many initiatives to end the political division and worked to educate generations of young men and women who were imprisoned and produced many important writings, academic and otherwise. They offered hope, with every escape and act of defiance.

Palestinian women prisoners have been a component of the Palestinian political movement, from the beginning of the contemporary resistance. Women political prisoners have participated in the general hunger strikes. The most recent of these was the strike of Islamic Jihad prisoners in rejection of the measures taken against them after the escape of the six prisoners. Three female prisoners went on this hunger strike. Women prisoners also went on individual strikes in rejection of the administrative detention policy, the last of which was the now-liberated prisoner Heba Al-Labadi.

Life inside the women's prison is organized and managed by the women political prisoners themselves. There is a library committee, for example, as one of the prison rooms was converted into a library. There is a cultural committee, which issues a magazine for the writings of female prisoners and pre-

pares courses, like languages courses, as well as organizing cultural events and competitions. There is a special committee for the management of the canteen, which studies the needs of the women's section and purchases the required items from the shared general account, which everyone contributes to.

We have a representative and a deputy representative in charge of conveying our demands and rights in front of the prison administration. There are also a number of women prisoners deputized to distribute food and clean the facilities we use. Moreover, there is a special education committee, where female prisoners learn and earn their secondary school degree inside the prison. Recently we started providing university education in the prison. These structures are flexible.

The experience of the women prisoners is slightly different from that of the men, due to the comparatively small number of women prisoners. Most of the women were liberated in prisoner exchange deals with Israel, which in a way disrupted the accumulated experience of organizing within. The most recent Gilad Shalit exchange did not include Palestinian women prisoners from cities occupied in 1948, so Lina Al-Jarbouni remained alone in prison.⁵ Through her, and those who were re-arrested later, some of this accumulated experience and structure was transferred to the new generation of female prisoners. This loss of accumulated organizing experience meant that we lost many previously earned rights, most notably the means of communication among the women prisoners; this was increasingly felt during the complete ban on visitation under the pretext of Covid.

There is an important dimension to the women's struggle in prisoners in that it presents a challenge to the social system and showcases models of feminist resistance, parallel with the national struggle.

bb/SA-B: On October 22, Israel declared six more Palestinian human rights organizations as terrorist organizations. This includes some of the

oldest Palestinian human rights organizations (Al-Haq) and notably Addameer Prison Support, which provides a large section of the legal support that Palestinians like yourself utilize when under threat of apartheid military courts. What is the significance of this increased repression, and what challenges does it raise?

LK: The essence of the Zionist existence is the colonial settlement-substitution project. This project is based on the mass extermination and expulsion of the indigenous people. The Zionist project sees Palestinians only as an enemy, whose existence must be eliminated, their ability to resist—in all its forms—paralyzed, until they completely disappear. For the origin myth of their colonial project of “a land without a people” to be consistent with itself, any other narrative must be erased, you as a colonized must be killed silently, as if you had never been. Therefore documenting their crimes becomes a crime, and defending a detainee is something that condemns the defenders.

In 2016, the Zionist Knesset passed a law to “combat terrorism” that set the precedent for the current repression.⁶ The danger of this law isn’t just the criminalization of these organizations by classification of being “terrorist,” nor is it even the ease with which public and student institutions have been criminalized. Rather, its true danger is reflected in the attempt to separate these organizations from their popular incubator on one hand and isolate them from the world and international organizations.

The law not only criminalizes members of these targeted organizations, but also anyone who dares to provide services or support, even if merely offering moral support. To even praise one of these organizations or attend an event they organized is enough to get you arrested. The classification of organizations as terrorist makes even spending time in the corridors of your university campus dangerous. Once an Israeli district officer called and threatened a young freshman at Birzeit

University because he had participated in a lottery organized by one of the student groups and had won a laptop.

These laws are an attempt by the colonizer to raise the cost and risk of struggle and of resistance. Now, being arrested for being an activist or a supporter, you can face a travel ban or you may discover that many international organizations will dismiss you if you try to work for them or [you may] get fired if you are already an employee, and many other costs. The sole task is to make the Palestinians ask themselves, what is the great price for a small act of solidarity or for your support to someone else’s act? The occupation once arrested a whole bus carrying male and female students from Birzeit University on their way to visit the family home of the prisoner Montaser Shalabi, after it was demolished by the army. Many of the students were indicted just for visiting the families of prisoners and martyrs.

With the criminalization of institutions, being an employee has become a crime. For example, Shatha Odeh—who is 60 years old—is being prosecuted because she continued to work in the Federation of Health Work Committees despite its closure by Israel.

The second function of this criminalization is to isolate public institutions and frameworks internationally, to cut financial support and sever relations with world institutions. Juani Rechmawi, a Spanish woman married to a Palestinian, was arrested for fundraising for the Health Work Committees Foundation, which was her job description as an employee.

The Zionist state is not satisfied with declaring the institutions and frameworks terrorist. They also arrest their employees or members, raid and seal their offices, confiscate their equipment, are engaging in an international campaign to prevent support and communication, and threaten everyone who might work with or support them that they will pay the price.

In the absence of any international accountability for the Zionist colonizers, and

in light of the blatant support by Western governments—led by the United States—it is easy for our oppressors to label any institution, even if it is a human rights organization with a strong reputation and established international links and relations like Al-Haq, as “terrorist.”

The closure of these institutions creates an absence of organizations responsible for documenting human rights violations and of legally defending Palestinian rights, at the local and international levels. For example, Addameer is the only nongovernmental organization that advocates for prisoners without any financial return. The closure of other nonhuman rights institutions, such as health work committees and agricultural work committees, means effectively undermining structures of steadfastness and resilience for the Palestinian people. These organizations provide crucial tools that enable people to survive under the constant threat of the Israeli army and violent settlers. Their resources are particularly needed because most of the recipients of these services live in Area C, areas threatened by confiscation, theft of land and resources, and other arbitrary measures.

Furthermore, the closure of public structures working on the social level with the Palestinian people, such as the Union of Women's Committees, is an attempt to impose reactionary and disruptive positions on women's social and political resistance.

bb/SA-B: *All of this takes place in the wake of the explosion of the Unity Intifada, the complete bankruptcy of the PA, the continual normalization of Arab states' relations with settler-colonial Israel, and the looming possible annexation of the West Bank by the occupier. What do you see as the current state of the Palestinian struggle? What role do you think the international left and student organizations should play in building solidarity?*

LK: Palestinian fragmentation is not limited to internal political divisions, but extends also to geographic divisions that affect all

segments of the Palestinian people, Gaza, the West Bank, the territories seized by Israel in 1948, and diasporas, in addition to a sharp class division that is the product of “economic peace” projects. Because of these conditions, a true collective and inclusive Palestinian project is absent today, one that is well defined with clear goals and tasks, as it was previously with the PLO.

Moreover, it is clear that after nearly 28 years of Oslo and the Palestinian Authority, even the projects that were meant to turn the Palestinian cause into a managed conflict,

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and prolong it until it is forgotten, failed miserably. In the coming years, the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank will reach the number of the indigenous Palestinian population there. This means that the form of confrontation will differ, and it will turn into a face-to-face confrontation, as we have begun to notice, especially in a city like Jerusalem, this increasing pressure in the West Bank by the occupation projects of land theft and the construction of settlement units, in addition to the violent practices of settlers who continue to encroach on Palestinians' lives and property. But most importantly, by stopping the funding of the Palestinian Authority, the main income source for families in the West Bank, and the new attack on civil society institutions, all these violent practices threaten to make the situation explode at any moment. The Oslo project was meant to maintain the minimum necessities of life in the West Bank to keep people quiet, but this project failed.

Our conflict is an existential struggle; it is impossible to find half-solutions. They want to kill us, and people will not remain silent any longer. They have nothing to lose.

For the Palestinian people as a whole, the events of Saif al-Quds constituted a new awareness, proof that there is a common awareness of the Palestinian people, regardless of the many different contexts. We have proven that we are one people with shared goals that unite us, and that projects of normalization and neutralization have failed.

The need today is to transform this awareness into a working program, into a revitalized Palestinian liberation project and charter. I believe we must reactivate the PLO and its popular frameworks and agree on a liberation program, by integrating all Palestinian frameworks and parties, and reconsidering our existence as a people, as an indigenous anti-colonial liberation movement, necessarily linked to the broader Arab context and to the global struggle of all oppressed peoples of the earth.

At the Arab level, the Arab world is being destroyed, whether through wars, as is happening in Yemen, Iraq, and Syria, or liberal development and economic dependence, as happened in the Gulf States. This makes the normalization process—best exemplified by the Bahrain conference—today an extension of that state of destruction. It helps transform the Zionist entity into a political and economic partner. However, normalization is taking place at the level of governments; the Arab people still see the Zionist entity as an illegitimate one. There is no liberation of Palestine without liberating the region from colonial relations and economic, political, military, and cultural dependency.

The Palestinian issue is not just a local one. As a Palestinian people, we are facing

the Zionist entity, which is organically linked to all imperialist interests in the region and the world. This means that the conflict with the Zionist project is not limited to the land of Palestine.

In addition to boycotting Israel in all respects, economically, academically, and culturally, and launching pressure campaigns on governments and their pro-Israel policies, such as arms sales, trade exchange, or policies that adopt the Israeli discourse, we see that fighting injustice and oppression anywhere is part of our struggle against Israel. It is blatantly clear that Israel is not only the product of imperialist interests and the protector of its influence in the global south, but it also actively contributes to supporting oppression around the world. Israel is a laboratory for weapons, surveillance, and military technologies, which it exports to oppressive governments around the world.

NOTES

1. "Contact points" refers to protests that focus on places where the Israeli occupation is present in the West Bank: road blocks, check points, etc.
2. Saif al-Quds—the "sword of Jerusalem" battle—is a term used to describe the events of Israeli bombardment and Palestinian resistance in May-June 2021, also known as the Unity Intifada.
3. Palestinian companies that have business relationships with Israel.
4. Basil al-Araj was assassinated by Israel in 2017. It is broadly believed that the PA was complicit in his killing. The PA continued to try al-Araj after his death, despite popular outcry.
5. This is in reference to the 2011 prisoner exchange in which roughly 1,000 Palestinian political prisoners were released in exchange for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli Defense Forces soldier who had been captured.
6. This is in reference to the June 2016 "Combating Terrorism Law" that laid out a host of draconian repressions especially targeting Palestinian citizens of Israel under the pretext of "fighting terrorism."

Internationalism, Anti-Imperialism, And the Origins of Campism

DAN LA BOTZ

I began this paper as a contribution to discussions in the Internationalism from Below Group, whose members' criticisms helped to improve it. I finished it with help from the editors of New Politics. Special thanks to Steve Shalom for his comments. I alone, however, am responsible for this version of the essay.

THIS PAPER EXAMINES THE IDEAS of people coming out of the left who call themselves “anti-imperialists,” but who have become defenders of dictatorial governments—some of which call themselves Communist or Socialist—that oppress national minorities, beat down movements for democracy, and crush workers’ struggles for a better life. Those who support these authoritarian governments have been called “tankies,” an allusion to those Communists who supported the Soviet Union’s crushing of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, or “campists,” referring to the notion that the world is fundamentally divided into two camps, one imperialist and the other anti-imperialist. They have also, and more recently, been called “authoritarian leftists” because, though they claim to be on the left, they have become supporters of authoritarian regimes. These people often refer to themselves as “anti-imperialists,” though I would prefer the term “pseudo-anti-imperialist”

because these thinkers and organizations do not in reality consistently oppose all imperialism. I have, however, used the term “campist” here simply because it is shorter and more convenient.

I will try to explain here how “campism” arose and why we socialists should reject it. We socialists are humanists. We believe in and support the fight for humanistic values, that is, for the enhancement of life for all human beings. We want a world free from oppression and exploitation, one in which all human beings can have a voice and a vote about their future. We see civil rights and civil liberties—freedom of religion, assembly, speech, and press, freedom from racial and gender oppression—as essential to the fight for socialism and to the creation of a genuine socialist society.

The Origins of Internationalism and Anti-Imperialism

Internationalism first arose in Europe in the nineteenth century as democrats (supporters of democracy) and socialists (who wanted to replace capitalism with some sort of a cooperative economy) began to support each other’s struggles for those ideals. First this internationalism took the form of support for the rights of peoples to self-determination. For example, many democrats and socialists, Marx and Engels among them, supported the right of Poland—which was periodically erased from the map and absorbed by Prussia, Austria, or Russia—to self-determination and

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an independent state. Similarly, Marx supported the right of Ireland to independence from the British Empire and called upon British workers to support Irish independence. Oppressed peoples also supported each other. In Latin America, Haiti, which in a slave rebellion had won its independence from France, aided Simón Bolívar in the common struggle against European imperialism. Internationalism began as support for peoples who were being oppressed by some other nation or empire. One can see this emergence of democratic internationalism as also the beginning of anti-imperialism, though it did not yet have that name.

When in 1848 a European-wide democratic revolution broke out, accompanied in France by a struggle for socialism, democrats everywhere on the continent united against the monarchs' autocracy and authoritarianism and the privileges of the nobility. Democrats and the small socialist and labor organizations all supported the overthrow of kings and the struggle for republics. In the "Communist Manifesto," which was directed to that revolutionary movement, Marx and Engels proclaimed, "Workers of the World Unite!" They believed that workers and the oppressed could reach across their national borders and join hands in the struggles for national self-determination and for democracy and socialism.

A second manifestation of internationalism arose as workers in one country sought support from workers in others as they fought against their employers. This began in the 1850s and 1860s as a fight against scabbing, to prevent British and Western European workers from crossing borders and breaking strikes in each other's countries. This anti-scabbing movement developed into a campaign for international labor solidarity and led to the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association or the First International, of which Marx was a member of the leadership council. Marx coordinated the work of the International in a variety of

countries, both monarchies and republics, and, as he had in 1848, supported the struggle for socialism in France again at the time of the Paris Commune in 1871.

Marx also believed that the left and the working class could and should take positions regarding issues in other countries. He authored many of the International's demands for improvement of working conditions in various European nations, whatever their form of government. During the U.S. Civil War, Marx led the International to support

During the 1960s the view that Third World peoples' liberation struggles were the vanguard of the world revolutionary movement influenced the far left, Maoists, Trotskyists, and others.

the United States' blockade of Confederate ports to keep cotton from being shipped to England's textile mills. He argued in his famous letter to U.S. President Abraham Lincoln that the working classes of Europe understood that a victory for slavery would be a victory for property and a defeat for working people in general and that therefore the European working class had an interest in the defeat of slavery.

Marx from the beginning opposed Russian imperialism in Eastern Europe and British imperialism in Ireland. He initially believed the spread of capitalism to Asia, Africa, and Latin America was progressive, because it might make possible the development of more productive capitalist economies that could create the abundance that is necessary to establish socialism. But Marx later became critical of European imperialism, identifying with the struggles

of the colonial people.

As one can see, there was a strong connection between working class internationalism and anti-imperialism in Europe. People in one nation coordinated with those in other countries in their fights for higher wages, for land, for the right to vote and run for office, to speak out, to publish, to assemble, protest and petition, as well as in struggles against tyranny or foreign domination. Socialists understood these as one fight against the residues of feudalism and monarchy and a still developing capitalist system.

The Centrality of Democracy

The struggle against monarchical autocracy had already led between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries to a series of republican revolutions in Holland (1556-1648), England (1640), and France (1789), though the republics could not be called democratic, limiting the franchise as they generally did to landowners and the wealthy. Between the French Revolution in 1789 and Napoleon Bonaparte's fall from power, the democratic idea of equality before the law became a European-wide phenomenon. Even before the rise of a socialist movement in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century, the left already existed as a movement fighting to bring democracy, suffrage (at first male suffrage), and civil rights to societies dominated by monarchs or by bourgeois republics that excluded working people from parliament. The alternative to monarchy and bourgeois republics, the critics argued, was the creation of democratic republics where citizens had the right to elect representatives to a parliament, which necessarily entailed the right to advocate for political parties and candidates, accompanied by civil rights: free speech, free press, freedom of assembly.

In England this struggle for democracy took the form in the 1840s of the Chartist movement's fight for workers' right to vote. Marx and Engels supported the Chartists'

fight for democracy, seeing the struggle for democracy as the beginning of the fight for socialism. If workers had the right to vote, they would vote for socialists and socialist policies. Marx's writings on the Paris Commune of 1871 also made it clear that for him democracy was central to the struggle for socialism. Throughout the history of modern socialism, until the rise of Stalinism in the 1920s, the great majority of modern socialists saw democracy and socialism as part of a common struggle, and came to believe that one was impossible without the other. There could be no genuine democracy without socialism, and no socialism without democracy.

Imperialism and the Fight Against It

The word imperialism, from the Latin word *imperium*, meaning "government," referred, of course, to the Roman government that ruled the Roman Empire. The ancient empires—China, Greece, and Rome, the Aztecs and the Inca—had in common several features: military conquest, seizure of territory, political subjugation, and economic exploitation of subject peoples, as well as cultural domination of those subjects. When in modern times new empires arose—Russia, the Ottomans, Spain, Portugal, France and England—it was natural for them to take and for others to give them the same name—empire—since they tended to share those same characteristics. With the rise of industrial capitalism, the early empires of 1500-1750 were transformed in the nineteenth century into capitalist, imperial Great Powers that competed with each other in a struggle for global domination. And then new imperial powers also entered into the picture around the beginning of the twentieth century: Germany, Japan, and the United States.

While in different periods different empires became dominant, with the rise of these modern empires, critics used the concept of imperialism to refer to a struggle among various capitalist powers seeking to

dominate the world. When Rosa Luxemburg, Nikolai Bukharin, and Vladimir Lenin referred to imperialism, it was this that they had in mind: not one Great Power, but the *contest* among the Great Powers. Based on the writings of Rudolf Hilferding, Lenin saw a concentration of capitalism in the hands of high finance and a tendency of imperialism to contribute to capitalism's longevity through the export of capital, which counteracted the long-term tendency of "the increasing organic composition of capital" (a greater involvement of capital than labor in production) and a consequent lowering of profits. In that way, colonies gave empires a longer lease on life.

The revolutionary socialists of the early twentieth century recognized that England, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States (as well as other nations) were imperial powers all struggling for domination of the planet. While England had been the dominant nation, following World War I the United States began to surpass it in economic and military power. Yet the revolutionary socialists of the 1910s and 1920s did not then contemplate supporting Germany or Japan against the United States, nor would they entertain the idea of backing England and France against Germany.

World War II was a continuation of that imperialist struggle. But the rise of Fascism in Italy, Nazism in Germany, and the Japanese military state (the Axis Powers), forced revolutionary socialists, Social Democrats, and Communists to rethink the issues of international alliances. In order to defend the Communist ruling class of his regime and the Soviet Union which it ruled, Stalin signed a pact with Hitler in 1939, but when Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, he entered into an alliance with the Allied Powers: Great Britain, France, and the United States—all of them imperialist powers who were continuing the struggle begun in World War I for control of the planet. Social Democrats, who strove to become managers of capitalist states, also supported the allied

nations. But some revolutionary socialists opposed both war camps, supporting both the European resistance movements and colonial rebellions. Stalin's alliance with the Allies allowed him, following the defeat of the Axis Powers, to sit down with Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt at the end of the Second World War to literally divide up the nations of Europe. The division of the spoils was followed almost immediately by the Cold War, the creation of two camps—capitalist and Communist—and the rise of an alternative Third Camp of the world's workers and oppressed peoples.

The Origins of "Campism" within the Socialist Movement

What we today call "campism" has its origins in the history of the Russian Revolution. The Bolshevik Party, headed by Vladimir Lenin, led a revolution in Russia in October 1917 that thrust power on the *soviets*, councils of workers, soldiers, and peasants. Soviet Russia (later the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or USSR), the first workers' government, won the support of millions of workers around the world. Many working people and leftists came to see the Soviet Union as a place where workers had taken power and were in the process of creating socialism.

At the same time, Soviet Russia experienced a series of civil wars, invasion by more than a dozen foreign powers, enormous destruction of agriculture and industry, and then economic and political isolation because of the failure of the European revolutions, especially in Germany, a revolution that the Bolsheviks had counted on. In these conditions of what the Bolsheviks called "war communism," in the early 1920s workers' power diminished as the *soviets* atrophied and the labor unions weakened. At the same time, the Bolsheviks, now calling themselves the Communist Party, outlawed or otherwise eliminated all other parties. The leadership of the CP also abolished factions, ending any

internal democracy in the Communist state. Soviet Russia became a one-party state.

It was in these circumstances that in the mid-1920s Joseph Stalin led a counter-revolution and by 1929 had virtually achieved dictatorial power. Over the next decade he consolidated the power of his bureaucratic regime, murdered tens of thousands of old Bolsheviks, and through the process of the collectivization of agriculture brought about the deaths of five million peasants, while the industrialization of the country resembled a compressed history of early capitalism, intensely exploiting the working class to build hydroelectric plants, mills, and factories.

The Communist Party had established the Communist or Third International in 1919 to coordinate attempts at workers' revolutions around the world. The Communist International, led by Lenin and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, intervened in many workers' parties and in their struggles

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around the world, attempting to reorganize the former Socialist Parties along Bolshevik lines and encouraging them to establish soviet-style governments. While internationalism was the dominant trend, when the interests of Soviet Russia were at issue, as in the case of Turkey, Lenin and the Russian Communists were willing to sacrifice Turkish Communists in order to preserve a strategic alliance with the Turkish government.

By the time Stalin took command not only of the Soviet Union but also of the Communist International, everything be-

came subordinated to the interests of the new Communist ruling class and the defense and expansion of the Soviet Union. Still, the Russian Revolution enjoyed great esteem, and the Communist parties around the world continued to organize workers to defend the "workers' homeland." When Stalin signed the mutual non-aggression pact with Hitler in August 1939, including the division of Poland and its occupation by German and Soviet troops, Communist Party members in many countries resigned, but the parties stood by the USSR. Similarly, Communists supported the Soviet Union's war against Finland in November 1939. However, with Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941, followed by Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, the Soviet Union and the Allied Powers (Britain, France, and the United States) became at first tacit partners and soon actual allies.

With the end of the war, the Soviet Union's Red Army simultaneously "liberated" the Eastern European countries from the Nazis and subjugated them to the Soviet Union, so that the Communist system and the Soviet empire expanded enormously. For Communists and their fellow travelers, not only the Soviet Union, but now the states of Eastern Europe also became the "workers' homeland," or what the Communists and their fellow travelers called the "socialist camp." Then, between 1949 and 1959, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, and Cuba also became part of this camp. Communists and their fellow travelers, even if they recognized the "crimes of Stalin," saw all of this as an extension of socialism. They supported that enlarged Communist camp against the capitalist camp.

As one can see, through the process that began in the mid-1920s, the notion of international working-class solidarity was replaced by the concept of loyalty to the Soviet Union and then by allegiance to the entire Communist camp. Around the world, Communist support for the Soviet Union as the workers' homeland also came to be

construed as support for the anti-imperialist camp. The Cold War transformed the Soviet Union and the Communist camp in the eyes of many, both supporters and opponents, into the anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist alternative to capitalism. Those Communist campists defended their camp even when Stalin's crimes became widely known, even though millions had been sent to Gulags (concentration camps), even though there were no political or democratic rights in the USSR, even though the Soviet Union had become a major imperial power in Europe. Loyalty to the Communist camp overrode all objections to the situation within the USSR in the minds of its supporters. This was the birth of the first campism.

That loyalty meant that when there was a workers' revolution against Communism in Hungary in 1956, a democratic revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1968, or an enormous workers' rebellion in Poland in 1980, the Communist campists supported the Soviet Union or the other Communist states when they used their tanks to crush those movements. (Thus the term "tankie.")

Maoism and Third Worldism

Contemporary campism, however, probably owes more to Maoism and Third Worldism than to Soviet Communism. The Communist movement began to fracture after World War II: Yugoslavia became an independent Communist state in 1948, while more importantly, in the early 1960s, rivalry broke out between Beijing and Moscow. Communism was no longer one unified world movement. It became polycentric, with rival Communist nations seeking to extend their influence and power.

At the same time, a movement for an end to the empires, for the independence of the colonies, and for freedom for their peoples began just after the war, with some initial support from both the United States¹ and the Soviet Union,² each claiming it was anti-imperialist

and each for its own reasons interested in seeing the dismantlement of the enormous British and French and other European empires.³ As the grip of the empires loosened, dozens of new nations were established and hundreds of millions of people became citizens of the new countries, free from foreign rule. In Asia, the transformation was most dramatic: the Philippines became independent in July 1946; India in August 1947; Indonesia in August 1949; China ending its semi-colonial status in 1949—more than half of the world's people. Between 1957 and 1990, virtually all of the African colonial nations became independent (a few had won nominal independence earlier). Similarly in the Caribbean between the 1950s and the 1980s the former British colonial island nations became independent. A sea change in world history took place: the Third World emerged.

The Third World was a fact, but it also became an ideology. The term and concept of "Third World," which first appeared in print in France in 1952, referred to those nations that were not formally part of the capitalist or Communist spheres, that is, to the two-thirds of humanity living in Asia, Africa, or Latin America who had experienced colonialism or semi-colonialism and whose populations were made up of people of color, most of whom were peasants. This development found expression in the Bandung Conference of 1955 that brought together 29 Asian and African nations, including China, and rejected "imperialism in all of its manifestations," that is the imperialism of both Western capitalist countries and the Soviet Union. Those original 29 nations, joined by the countries of Latin America, and later scores of others, then created the Non-aligned Movement.

Yet it was not exactly non-aligned. It leaned toward Communism. Both the Communist governments of Josip Broz Tito in Yugoslavia and of Fidel Castro in Cuba, came to play a role in the Non-aligned Movement. In 1966, Cuba held a Tricontinental Conference of 80 nations in Havana that once again

attempted to give political form to the Third World. Expressing support for anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, it created the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The Tricontinental criticized U.S. imperialism, but made no mention of Soviet imperialism, given that Cuba was resisting the U.S. blockade and was aligned with the Soviet Union. So gradually the Third World took form politically.

While the United States initially supported the dissolution of the old empires, as the Cold War developed, for political and economic reasons it often supported the European powers in their attempts to maintain control of their colonies (as in Vietnam) or later to exercise neo-colonial control of the new, nominally independent nations (as in Ghana and the Congo). The Soviet Union and China, on the other hand, having no economic interest in the colonies and politically opposed to the capitalist West, generally supported the colonial independence movements, voted with them at the United Nations, and assisted them militarily. (Of course, the Soviet Union would not countenance objections to its absorption of Eastern Europe into its empire between 1945 and 1948, and China objected to any criticism of its takeover of Tibet in 1951.) The point is that the new Third World often had ties to the Communist world, and came to be seen as associated with the struggle for Communism.

Third Worldism became an ideology. It was the idea that these peoples' anti-imperialist, anti-colonial movements would continue the process of socialist revolution that had begun in the Soviet Union, China, or later Cuba. The Third Worldist notion of a world divided into capitalist nations and proletarian-peasant nations got a grip on the minds of many leftists. During the 1960s the view that Third World peoples' liberation struggles were the vanguard of the world revolutionary movement influenced the far left, Maoists, Trotskyists, and others. The popularity of Maoism and Guevarism (after Cuba's Er-

nesto "Che" Guevara) derived in part from this outlook. While the Third Worldist project had clearly failed by the late 1970s, some Third Worldists now transferred their allegiance from revolutionary movements to various governments of the Global South, none of which were socialist and nearly all of which represented a new capitalist class, had authoritarian governments, often personal dictatorships, and were in no way progressive.

Campism Today

The principal event that triggered the rise of contemporary campism was the collapse of the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1992. If one could no longer support the Soviet Communist camp, what force could one support against capitalism? Third Worldist theory provided an answer for some: One could support the poor, dark nations of the Global South struggling against the imperialism of the rich, white nations of the Global North.

In this clearly bifurcated world, the campists argued, one had to be on the side of the governments that rule the proletarian-peasant world, a world of black and brown working people fighting against the capitalist powers of the wealthier white world. The capitalist and imperialist nations of the Global North, including Australia and New Zealand, all white except Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan, exploited and oppressed the peasant-proletarian nations of the Global South, all made up of people of color. The white capitalist powers were by definition imperialist, and the proletarian-peasant nations, made up of people of color, were, the campists argued, inherently anti-imperialist. In this way a nation such as Iran, which had never had a socialist government, or the Assad family dictatorship in Syria, could be enrolled among the anti-imperialist nations. Obviously, this view tended to downplay or totally ignore the class divisions within both the capitalist and the so-called proletarian-peasant worlds. For the campists, the camp

was thus more important than the class.

Many older, former leftists who today are campists adopted this mindset with its origins in Maoist or Third Worldist notions. Some of these political analysts and activists today, who still think of themselves as leftists, tend to subordinate all questions to imperialism, arguing that it is the most important and virtually the central issue. If a state opposes the United States, then it is by definition anti-imperialist, so that its government's own political, economic, and social system is irrelevant to that principal world conflict, which is imperialism. Moreover, whatever the problems of any of the so-called anti-imperialist states, they should not be examined or criticized, because that might weaken support for the anti-imperialist camp and its struggle against the United States and its allies. So, today's campists will not discuss the authoritarian and oppressive political powers or the exploitative economic systems of what they consider to be the "anti-imperialist nations," such as Russia, China, or Cuba, or of Iran or Syria. The campists are even more hostile to the notion that one should examine the class character, governmental system, and economic regimes of beleaguered nations like Venezuela or Nicaragua. To question these governments, they argue, is to aid U.S. imperialism. So traditional Marxism, based on analyzing the political economy, social classes, class struggle and oppression in a country, as well as its international relations, is discarded.

These same people generally also tend to define imperialism to mean only U.S. imperialism, ignoring or pushing aside the practices of other imperialist nations and their acts. Since in the eyes of these activists the United States is the only or by far the dominant imperial power everywhere, they then define nations that are opposed to the United States—such as Russia, China, Iran, or Syria—as anti-imperialist nations. And having defined those nations as anti-imperialist, they often then become apologists for the governments of those nations, even though

they are authoritarian governments ruling capitalist countries. They will even attribute to these nations "socialist" or "democratic" characteristics that their governments do not in fact have.

The logic is something like this: X is an enemy of the United States, therefore X is anti-imperialist, therefore we support it, and since it is anti-imperialist, it must be progressive. It follows that any criticism of country X is reactionary. People who criticize any anti-imperialist nation such as X must be on the side of imperialism. So, for example, since the United States is an imperial power, and China opposes the United States, then China must be progressive (some will even say socialist). So then, the argument goes, those who criticize China for putting some 1.5 million Uyghurs in concentration camps or for its crushing of the democratic movement in Hong Kong, must be allied with the United States government and are objectively pro-imperialist. This is the campist logic.

Campists argue that those who criticize the so-called anti-imperialist nations (Russia, China, etc.) place themselves on the side of U.S. imperialism. Yet capitalist and imperialist parties and governments frequently take different sides and change sides, and their doing so is something over which we on the left can have little if any influence at this time. Trump, for example, seemed to become a supporter of Vladimir Putin, the dictator of Russia, and expressed admiration of Xi Jinping, taking the same position held by some who call themselves anti-imperialists. Yet these same anti-imperialists object when internationalists come to the defense of the Uyghur people of Xinjiang Province, because both the Trump and Biden administrations have said they support the Uyghurs.

The truth is that socialist internationalists who support the Uyghurs do so *despite* the fact that the U.S. government says it supports them. We do so for our own reasons and while continuing to oppose U.S. imperialism. We do so because the Uyghurs, like the Poles

and the Irish in Marx's time, have a right to self-determination, and shouldn't be politically, economically, and culturally subjected to China's authoritarian state and its Han nationalism.

Today if we wish to know if any nation is imperialist, we should see if it engages in any of the five criteria mentioned earlier, that is, military conquest, seizure of territory, political subjugation, economic exploitation, and cultural domination. Certainly, the United States has engaged in all of these, and there is no doubt that it is an imperialist nation. The same can be said of the Western European nations and of Japan. At the same time, China conquered Tibet militarily and then seized its territory, politically subjugated it, and has tried to eradicate its culture, partly through colonization. Today China seizes territory—in this case rights to the sea—by creating small islands in the South China Sea, threatening its neighbors such as the Philippines. In 2014, Russia seized militarily and annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea, the first such development in Europe since World War II.

So then, how did the idea develop among campists that the United States is the only imperialist power? Once again, we can trace this back to Maoism. Maoists argued that in the analysis of any political problem one should locate the "primary contradiction" to which all other issues are subordinate, and fight to overcome that primary contradiction. The campists took up this notion and applied it to world politics arguing that imperialism was the principal issue and that the United States was the dominant power. The struggle then should be against U.S. imperialism and not over issues in those other countries that have to do with democracy, economic reforms, women's rights, or even the struggle for socialism. This idea of the primary contradiction thus tends to eliminate the fight for working class internationalism. Campists argue that one dare not support people fighting for democracy, workers fighting for labor unions,

or women seeking equality in nations like Iran or Syria—even when those people are imprisoned—because that will distract from the primary contradiction, which is the role of those nations as anti-imperialist powers in the struggle against the United States.

The Apparent Coincidence of Capitalist and Socialist Positions

The so-called anti-imperialists who support countries like China, Russia, Syria, and Iran argue that those of us who support democratic or socialist oppositions in those countries are somehow automatically supporting the United States. They argue that our support for democracy necessarily implies support for U.S. sanctions or military intervention, even when we have not supported or have even explicitly opposed such measures.

Consider the incredibly complex case of Syria where in 2011, at the time of the Arab Spring, democratic internationalist socialists supported the initial movement of farmers and then some urban people in their struggles against the dictatorship of Bashar al-Assad. We supported that movement without calling for U.S., European, or Middle Eastern intervention in the country. The democratic forces in Syria attempted to keep the struggle against the Assad regime non-violent so that it could include the largest number of participants. Assad, however, decided to violently repress the opposition, even bombing and virtually destroying Syrian cities, with tens of thousands of lives lost. Then local powers with ambitions to exert regional influence—Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar—further militarized and encouraged the struggle, providing arms to their local allies. While Russia, Iran, and Lebanon's Hezbollah provided arms and military personnel to defend the Assad regime, we international socialists affirmed the right of the Syrian people to get arms to fight wherever they could, just as other nations had done during the anti-colonial movements of the twentieth century.

Assad had in effect declared war on his own people and made it clear that he was willing to turn the provincial cities into rubble littered with corpses in order to keep power. Beginning in 2015 Assad invited Russia to make airstrikes in Syria. Soon, some Syrian oppositionists at home and abroad sought support or even intervention from the U.S. or European governments, a development that we internationalists did *not* support. At the same time, ISIS (or Daesh), another reactionary power, began to assemble and mobilize its own forces there. The United States supported the Syrian Democratic Forces, which became dominated by the great powers. Meanwhile 5.6 million Syrians fled the country, and the possibility of democratic revolution was no longer on the agenda. Subsequently, while allied with Assad, the Russians and the Iranians pursued their own regional imperial interests.

While it is true that both the Western capitalist powers and the socialist internationalist left apparently supported the democratic revolution in Syria, we actually supported different political groups, at different moments, and different forces for different reasons. The capitalist West decided that it wished to replace Assad with a more amenable government — Assadism without Assad — while we internationalists supported the initial uprising from below in its desire to create a democratic government chosen by the people to represent their interests.

Internationalism is the Real Anti-Imperialism

Those who support authoritarian regimes in the name of anti-imperialism not only do a disservice to all of those people who in countries like Russia, China, Iran, Syria, Venezuela, and Nicaragua fight for democracy and in some cases for socialism too, but they also violate fundamental tenets of socialism, and they weaken the actual struggle against U.S. imperialism.

Let's take the case of China. Today China and the United States, while they are economic competitors, are also intimately bound together in the world capitalist and imperialist system. China holds \$1.1 trillion in U.S. debt, while China exports annually \$443.45 billion dollars in products to the United States, and the United States sells

Until the 1920s, great majority
of modern socialists saw
democracy and socialism as
part of a common struggle,
and that one was impossible
without the other.

\$106.4 billion to China. These economic relations represent some of the largest and strongest relationships in the world economy, a system in which both nations play leading roles. It is for this reason that Republicans and Democrats have both vacillated in their attitudes toward China, though President Joseph Biden is now taking a hard line.

Those on the left should recognize that one cannot imagine overthrowing U.S. imperialism without simultaneously destroying the Chinese economic system, since both countries form part and parcel of the same world economic arrangement. Beyond the U.S.-China relationship, in what is really classical imperialism, China has invested trillions in the development of coal and mineral mines, oil and gas, and other resources in countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and its “new silk road” or “China’s Belt and Road Initiative”—highways, railroads, and pipelines—that would connect Europe with China and enhance its links with Africa and Asia. All of this is about expanding Chinese finance, industry, and commerce, that is, the economic underpinnings of Chinese imperialism. As

always in the history of imperialism, one can expect that on these economic foundations China will build a military force to defend them, as we already see in the South China Sea. China's economic imperialism will likely at some point in the not-too-distant future lead to military conflict with the United States or its Asian allies, that could become a nuclear war and destroy the human race.

Let us take another quite different case, Nicaragua. Since at least 2006, Nicaragua has been a dictatorship ruled by Daniel Ortega, a thoroughly capitalist regime, where his Frente Sandinista Party was allied with the Conservative and Liberal Parties. Ortega controls the presidency, the legislature, the Supreme Court, and all of the major news media of the country. His government opposes labor union organization in the maquiladoras, denies women's right to abortion, and jails its political opponents.

One can see that despite its claim to be a socialist government, Nicaragua was a thoroughly capitalist country. And it was repressive. When farmers and environmentalists protested against a proposed transoceanic canal in 2014, they were violently beaten. When in 2018 the elderly and then students protested against a reactionary reform of the pension system, they were beaten, or shot and killed. That led to what became in 2018 a full-scale national rebellion that was met with extreme violence and hundreds of murders at the hands of Ortega's police and thugs. The so-called anti-imperialist left refused to support the democratic movement. It attributed the national uprising to the United States, a government that had been happily working with Ortega for years. Nicaragua received in 2019 some \$44 million in *U.S. government aid*, between \$100 million and nearly \$200 million *from the World Bank* in 2017; the European Union provided \$169 million from 2014–2020; and Ortega collaborated with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, with the

U.S. military Southern Command (receiving U.S. military equipment), and with U.S. immigration policy (stopping migration from or through Nicaragua). The campists complain that Nicaraguans have sometimes turned to the U.S. government for assistance, which is true. Yet the campists ignore the alternative, which is to build a Nicaraguan solidarity movement of the American people (not the U.S. government) and people around the world to support the democratic opposition (as we did when the Nicaraguan people faced the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship).

Anti-imperialism should begin with internationalism, with support for movements of working people around the world. Opposition to imperialism requires strengthening the movements of workers, peasants, the urban poor, as well as the ruined lower-middle classes throughout the world. We should see the struggle against imperialism as based on the many democratic social movements, labor movements, and in some cases socialist movements in myriad countries living under governments that call themselves capitalist or socialist. We as socialists should attempt to support these movements—whether in Argentina or Venezuela, in Iran or Algeria, in Japan or China, in France or the Ukraine, in Germany or Russia—while also helping first in theory and then in practice to bring them together in one international movement for liberation.

NOTES

1. The United States, for example, supported Indonesia in its struggle to end first Japanese and then Dutch rule over the colony.
2. The Soviet Union supported Vietnam's independence movement.
3. Both the United States and the Soviet Union supported the creation of the independent states of Syria and Lebanon in 1944 and the U.S., the USSR and France all supported the creation of Israel, carved out of the British Palestinian mandate.

Russian Imperialism and Its Monopolies

MICHAEL PRÖBSTING

IT IS WIDELY ACCEPTED THAT THE accelerating rivalry between the great powers—the United States, China, the European Union, Russia, and Japan—is a key feature of world politics and will remain so for the foreseeable future. This makes it urgent for progressive forces to have a clear view on the character of the powers involved, which in turn requires a concrete analysis of the political, economic, and military features of these powers that goes beyond a denunciation of the reactionary domestic and foreign policy of their respective governments.¹ Unfortunately, large sectors of the left do not take a principled position of opposition to *all* imperialist powers. Rather, they display some kind of sympathy or even support for China and Russia and recognize only the old Western powers as imperialist.² In the case of China, a number of “communist” intellectuals and well-known journals like *Monthly Review* not only deny the Stalinist-capitalist character of its regime but shamefully glorify it as a kind of “socialism.”³

While such Sino-Stalinophile supporters of the Xi regime would not dare to characterize Putin’s Russia in such rosy terms, they still claim that it is not an imperialist power (and hence, it supposedly is a lesser evil than Western rivals). This is a discussion not just of theoretical interest but also of political

importance, as the shooting incident in the Black Sea between a British naval destroyer and Russian forces, in June of last year, demonstrated.

In order to justify such claims, advocates of this viewpoint often refer to the relative weakness of Russia’s economy compared with the United States or Western Europe. In the following article, I will not deal with all aspects of Russian imperialism but will focus on some features of its economy.⁴ For this purpose, I summarize the findings of a comprehensive study that I published recently.⁵

What Makes an Imperialist Power Imperialist?

From the point of view of the Marxist theory of imperialism, it is wrong to reduce the analysis of an imperialist state to the volume of its capital exports. Certainly this is an important criterion but far from the only one. Historically, some imperialist states have had a strong economy as well as a powerful military, while other, more backward, powers were characterized by Marxists as imperialist *despite* having a relatively small amount of capital exports or no net capital exports at all. Examples of this are Russia before 1917, Italy, Austria-Hungary, and Japan.⁶

Marxist theoreticians such as Lenin were fully aware of the economic weakness of Tsarist Russia. But they approached the question of imperialism not in a mechanistic and economic way, but rather in a dialectical method. Thus, Lenin wrote in 1916,

The last third of the nineteenth century

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saw the transition to the new, imperialist era. Finance capital not of one, but of several, though very few, Great Powers enjoys a monopoly. (In Japan and Russia the monopoly of military power, vast territories, or special facilities for robbing minority nationalities, China, etc., partly supplements, partly takes the place of, the monopoly of modern, up-to-date finance capital.)⁷

The classic Marxist theory of imperialism was never limited to the question of capital exports or to the economic field in general. The imperialist character of a given state is based not on a single criterion (like the

Large sectors of the left do not take a principled position of opposition against all imperialist powers; they recognize only the old Western powers as imperialist.

volume of capital exports) but rather on the *totality of its economic, political, and military features*. Hence, a scientific definition of an imperialist state would be “a capitalist state whose monopolies and state apparatus have a position in the world order where they first and foremost dominate other states and nations. As a result, they gain surplus-profits and other economic, political, and/or military advantages from such a relationship based on super-exploitation and oppression.”

Domestic Monopolies Dominate Russia's Market

In contrast to Germany or Japan, Russia is a superpower in the military but not in the economic field. It is the second-largest military power—only behind the United States. Its total inventory of nuclear warheads is 6,255

(the United States has 5,550), and its share of global arms exports is 20 percent (only behind the United States, which has 37 percent).⁸

However, in terms of monopolies and capital export, Russia does not have a similarly strong position. According to the latest edition of the *Forbes Global 2000* list, Germany has six corporations among the top 100; France, four; Britain, three; and Russia, two.⁹ Other lists rank Russia even lower.

Nevertheless, Russia's imperialist character can be derived not only from its military but also from its economic features. The starting point of the Marxist analysis of imperialism is the domination by monopolies. Various pro-Russian leftists characterize this state as “dependent” or “peripheral” and suggest that Russia is dominated by or is dependent on foreign monopolies (corporations, banks, and so on). This, however, is false. Russia's economy is primarily dominated by Russian monopoly capital. A recently published academic book about Russia's economy arrives at the conclusion that “the proportion of investment in Russian, foreign, and joint venture companies kept the same for the past five years: 86.3%, 7.3%, and 6.4%, respectively.”¹⁰

This is also the case in the banking sector. In fact, the share of foreign capital in Russia's banking sector has declined in the past decade, according to another book published recently:

In October 2018, 150 foreign banks operated in Russia, including 63 foreign-controlled banks with 100% foreign share; 17 foreign-controlled banks with foreign shares of 51–99%; and 70 foreign banks with capital participation of less than 50%. The number of foreign banks has steadily declined from 2014 to 2018, suggesting that foreign investors may be reconsidering their investment plans in Russia. Foreign-controlled banks with foreign shares of 51–99% and foreign banks with capital participation of less than 50% decreased by 63% and 54%, respectively. The foreign banks' share in the total charter capital of the Rus-

sian banking sector declined from 23% in 2014 to 13.44% in October 2018. It should be noted that about 11% of foreign banks are significantly controlled by Russian residents.¹¹

In addition, Russia has no significant debts to foreign imperialist institutions (in contrast to many semi-colonial countries). Its public debt was only 18 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) at the end of 2020. It has steady current-account surpluses, and its international currency reserves were \$596 billion at the end of 2020 (making it the state with the fifth-largest foreign exchange reserve in the world).¹²

It is worth pointing out that Russia's capitalism differs from the Western "model" insofar as the state occupies a crucial position. A considerable number of its monopolies represent a mixture of state-owned and private shares; hence state-capitalism is an essential feature of Russia's economy. (By the way, the same is true to an even larger degree for China.) According to a recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) study, the share of the Russian state in the economy (calculated as GDP) in 2016 was in a range of 30-35

percent. The report continues, "Correcting for the size of the informal sector in value added and employment pushes the Russian state's share significantly up, to almost 40 percent of formal-sector activity, and shy of 50 percent of formal-sector employment."¹³

Russia's Capital Export and the Problem of "Round-Tripping"

Russia's volume of foreign direct investment (FDI) is significant, albeit there exist various problems with official statistics. Let us start the list of the top 15 countries that receive Russian FDI compared to the nations from which FDI in Russia originates. In Table 1, we see the stock of accumulated capital for each of the top 15 countries in each category for the years 2013 and 2018.

As the reader will recognize, this list includes a number of destinations that are well-known as offshore tax havens: Cyprus, the British Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Bermuda, Jersey, and so on. Likewise, the Netherlands is also a tax haven highly appreciated by oligarchs. However, this does not necessarily mean that Russian FDI to such destinations is simply capital flight. As the table shows,

Table 1. Top 15 Host Countries for Russian Outward FDI (OFDI) Stock and Top 15 Sources of Russia's Inward FDI (IFDI) Stock, in 2013 and 2018 (Millions of Dollars)¹⁴

OFDI STOCK FROM RUSSIA				IFDI STOCK IN RUSSIA			
2013		2018		2013		2018	
Cyprus	152,702	Cyprus	172,461	Cyprus	183,276	Cyprus	126,366
BVI*	74,412	Netherlands	40,415	Netherlands	48,948	Netherlands	40,309
Netherlands	45,012	Austria	26,710	Bahamas	31,964	Bahamas	39,031
Austria	25,500	Switzerland	17,760	Bermuda	29,565	Bermuda	29,830
U.S.	20,943	BVI*	11,277	UK	21,759	Luxembourg	19,561
Switzerland	12,096	Bahamas	8806	BVI*	18,925	France	17,291
Germany	9607	Turkey	8229	Germany	18,898	Germany	16,410
UK	7901	Germany	8125	U.S.	17,979	UK	14,933
Bahamas	6416	U.S.	7332	Sweden	16,176	Switzerland	11,029
Ukraine	5968	Spain	6441	France	14,075	BVI*	10,356
Turkey	5277	UK	6378	Luxembourg	12,780	Jersey	9945
Spain	4772	Belarus	3960	Austria	11,816	Ireland	5824
Jersey	4128	Singapore	3471	Switzerland	6040	Austria	5604
Belarus	4089	Kazakhstan	3302	Ireland	5210	Italy	4626
France	3629	Ukraine	3104	Jersey	5013	Sweden	4531

*BVI is British Virgin Islands

there is also a large volume of FDI originating from the very same tax havens. Economists call this “round-tripping.” Russian capitalists “invest” in foreign offshore destinations and, in turn, invest from these destinations in Russia. Hence, round-tripping leads to Russian FDI being overestimated in both directions. A major reason for Russian multinationals to “invest” in such offshore destinations is to minimize taxes.¹⁵ Furthermore, Russian monopolies also use such offshore destination for foreign investments in third countries. As a result, a sizeable proportion of “foreign investment” in Russia is in fact Russian investment (“coming home” under more favorable tax conditions). Furthermore, Russian corporations also undertake foreign investments in other countries from such offshore centers.¹⁶ Obviously, such complications make an estimation of real Russian foreign investment and foreign investment in Russia difficult. Kari Liuhio, a Finnish university professor who has studied this problem in detail, arrives at the conclusion “that one could probably reduce Russia’s official IFDI stock by 40–50 percent, to discover the true size of Russia’s IFDI stock.”¹⁷

The Putin regime tries to reduce the amount of round-tripping capital in order to raise the state’s tax income. While round-tripping still exists, it seems to have been reduced.¹⁸

The vast amount of Russia’s round-tripping foreign investment often has been cited as an example of the weakness of Russia’s capital and as proof of its non-imperialist character. But, as I have explained in other works, Russia is not the only country whose capital is flocking to financial offshore centers. New research strongly confirms this assessment. One study cites a special report on offshore finance by *The Economist* to say that “the world has 50–60 tax havens, which serve as domicile for more than 2m paper companies, along with thousands of banks, funds, and insurers. The report estimates that over 30% of global foreign direct investment is booked through havens.”¹⁹ Another more recently published study estimates that the share of such “Phantom FDI” has increased to 40 percent of all global FDI.²⁰ Such “Phantom FDI” are a feature not only of weak economies of the “Third World” but also of the imperialist states where most of capital

Table 2. Largest Russian Nonfinancial Multinational Enterprises by Foreign Assets, 2017²²

Rank	Company	Industry	Foreign assets (Billions of dollars)	Share of foreign assets in total assets (%)	State ownership (%)
1	Lukoil	Oil and gas	24.3	27	–
2	Gazprom	Oil and gas	19.5	6	50.2
3	Rosneft	Oil and gas	17.6	8	69.5
4	Sovkomflot	Transportation	5.7	78	100.0
5	Severgroup	Conglomerate	5.4	..	–
6	En+	Conglomerate	5.0	23	–
7	Atomenergoprom	Nuclear energy	4.7	9	100.0
8	Evrast	Steel	3.7	36	–
9	Russian Railways	Transportation	3.5	5	100.0
10	TMK	Steel	2.0	36	–
11	Eurochem	Chemicals	1.7	17	–
12	Sistema	Conglomerate	1.5	8	–
13	NLMK	Steel	1.5	14	–
14	Zarubezhneft	Oil and gas	1.2	38	100.0
15	Polymetal	Non-ferrous metals	1.0	32	–
Total or average			105.1	12	

has its home.²¹

Russia's Multinational Corporations

Let us now deal with Russia's leading monopolies that are investing abroad. Table 2 provides a list published by the UN Conference on Trade and Development that shows the 15 largest Russian nonfinancial monopolies ranked by their foreign assets.

There are several noteworthy facts deriving from this table. First, we see that state-owned corporations play a prominent role, but private monopolies dominate the list (9 out of 15). Second, the oil and gas sector and the metal industry play a leading role in Russia's investments abroad. However, Russia's monopolies play a role in a wide range of business sectors, such as machine building, electricity generation, chemicals, foodstuffs, telecommunications, information technology, transportation, banking, and media.²³

Super-Exploitation by Russian Monopolies

Like other imperialist monopolies, Russian capital is investing both in imperialist states and in semi-colonial countries. For reasons mentioned above ("round-tripping"), there are some difficulties in getting an accurate picture of the destinations of Russia's capital export.

The Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)—one of Russia's most prestigious think tanks—has tried to identify the major destinations of Russian capital export. It arrived at the following conclusion concerning foreign investment in Eurasian countries outside the semi-colonial Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). "[A]t the end of 2016, the main destinations in non-CIS Eurasia were Italy, Germany, Great Britain, Turkey, Switzerland, Iraq, and Bulgaria. This database shows minor Russian FDI stock in Cyprus. Likewise, real Russian FDI presence is much smaller in Luxembourg, Spain, Ireland, Latvia, and

the Netherlands than officially registered."²⁴

Russian monopolies also play an important role in the Eurasian countries, albeit

A considerable number of Russia's monopolies represent a mixture of state-owned and private shares; hence state-capitalism is an essential feature of Russia's economy

more in some than in others. Two Russian economists provide the following assessment:

In 2014, Russian OFDI to the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU [a Russia-dominated Eastern version of the European Union]) was close to \$15.4 billion, which is equivalent to 4.0 percent of the total Russian OFDI. Both figures nearly doubled in two years (2012-14) after the creation of the Customs Union between Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. This modest share could be twice as high, after the subtraction of FDI turnover from the total figures. ... The role of Russian investments varies by country. For Belarus, Russia is the country of origin for 57 percent of FDI inward stock, while Cyprus and similar territories are responsible for less than 15 percent of that stock. For Armenia, Russian FDI [is] also significant (35 percent of the total inward stock). For Kazakhstan, the situation is opposite: Russia-originating FDI adds up to only 2.5 percent of total inward stock. However, the Netherlands' share is more than 40 percent. Many Russian companies are registered in the Netherlands, or arrange [to have affiliates there] to conduct business abroad. Due to this, revealing the initial origin of Dutch FDI to Kazakhstan could increase the share of Russian FDI several fold. Russian investments in Kyrgyzstan

are minor, both in absolute and relative terms.²⁵

Table 3. Foreign Citizens from CIS Countries Living in the Russian Federation, 2019²⁹

<i>Country</i>	<i>Number</i>
Azerbaijan	650,495
Armenia	491,767
Belarus	655,846
Kazakhstan	496,096
Kyrgyzstan	716,118
Moldova	326,178
Tajikistan	1,303,302
Uzbekistan	2,188,835
Ukraine	1,763,930
CIS, total	8,592,567

Russian multinationals have an absolute dominant position in Uzbekistan: 55.6 percent of all foreign investment originates from Russia, with China being the second-largest investor (15 percent).²⁶

Imperialist Super-Exploitation via Migration

Finally, when we talk about Russia's super-exploitation of the semi-colonial countries in Eurasia, it is crucial to point also to the role of migration. As I have elaborated in other works, migration is one of several major forms of imperialist super-exploitation of colonial and semi-colonial countries, as it provides substantial value transfer from the oppressed to the oppressor country.²⁷

Imperialist Russia is one of those countries that enormously gains from super-exploitation of migrants. By June 2019, there were officially 10.13 million foreign citizens in Russia.²⁸ The vast majority of these legal migrants (8.59 million, or 85 percent) come from the semi-colonial CIS countries in Central Asia and Eastern Europe. (See Table 3)

Within an official Russian population of 146.7 million (2019), legal migrants constitute 6.9 percent. To this figure, one must

Table 4. Employment Rates of Migrants in the Russian Federation in 2016 (%)³¹

<i>Economic sector</i>	<i>Share of migrants employed in the sector, % of the overall number of employed</i>
Manufacturing industry	14.4%
Construction	7.2%
Service sector	15.9%
Agriculture	6.5%

add an unknown number of migrants living illegally in Russia. Estimates of the number of illegal migrants in Russia range from 1.5 million to 15 million. Several academics settle on the figure of 3–5 million illegal migrants.³⁰ If this figure is accurate, one can assume that about 13–15 million migrants are currently living in Russia (about 9–10 percent of the total population).

In addition to these legal and illegal migrants, one should add an unknown number of migrants from Russia's internal colonies. As an old empire, a sizeable minority of Russia's population (about 19 percent) are non-Russians. As I pointed out in my 2014 study, these minorities are nationally oppressed peoples who mostly live under worse economic and social conditions than the majority population. As a result, many of these oppressed minorities leave their native place and move to larger cities—in areas dominated by the Russian majority population—in the hope of finding a job there.

In Table 4, we can see that (legal) migrants constitute a sizeable proportion of employees in key sectors of Russia's economy.

Similar to other imperialist countries, migrants in Russia are super-exploited as a cheap labor force. A team of three Russian university professors calculates that “as a rule, the wage of migrants is approximately 70% of the wages of Russians.”³² They estimate the contribution of migrants to Russia's output: “Based on the fact that in 2016 the GDP amounted to 86,044 billion rubles, [an] additional 5,592.8 billion rubles were received

due to the use of foreign labor, which is 6.5% of Russia's total GDP.³³ They also quote other experts who estimate the contribution of migrants as 7.56 percent of Russia's GDP.

Conclusions

Russia is an imperialist power. This is evident not only from its political and military features but also from its economy. It is neither dominated by foreign corporations nor financially dependent on foreign imperialist institutions. It is a relatively strong economy dominated by domestic monopolies, with a low level of foreign debt and large foreign exchange reserves. Russia's monopoly capitalists—the so-called “oligarchs”—are closely linked with the state apparatus, which plays a strong, regulating role.

Russia's capital export is dominated by these monopolies. Here too, the state-owned corporations play a significant role, although the majority of these monopolies are privately owned. Russia's foreign investments are directed to imperialist as well as to semi-colonial countries. Naturally, Russia plays a stronger role in semi-colonial countries that were part of the USSR. Today, several of these states are members of the EAEU.

Having established the imperialist character of Russia, it is in my view impermissible for socialists to side with such a state in a conflict with great power rivals. Supporting Russia in any conflict with Western European states, the United States, or Japan is tantamount to social-imperialism, that is, serving one or several imperialist powers masked by socialist phrases. In contrast, socialists need a strategy of opposing the great powers of the East as well as those of the West.

NOTES

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Afghanistan and Its Challenge to Feminism

FRIEDA AFARY

THE TALIBAN'S TAKEOVER OF POWER after the United States' brutal twenty-year imperialist occupation is a catastrophe for women not only in Afghanistan but throughout the world.

It is true that world powers often close their eyes to atrocities against women, including most recently the rape and mass incarceration of Uyghur Muslim women in Xinjiang by the Chinese government, the rape and ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslim women by the Myanmar government, and the rape and assault on women in Congo and Ethiopia's Tigray Region by government forces.

What is different about the case of Afghanistan, however, is that the U.S. government and other occupying NATO allies practically handed over power to the Taliban, a misogynist, racist, and jihadist army that they claimed the occupation had originally sought to uproot. The Taliban is an army that is in many ways similar to ISIS and to the Ku Klux Klan in its extremism and brutality (Achcar 2021, Cole 2021).

Since their takeover, the Taliban have assaulted women's protests, beaten and censored reporters, stopped girls over the age of 12 from attending school or university, forced

girls and women to marry Taliban fighters, forced most employed women to stay home, reinstituted complete gender segregation, and replaced the department of women's affairs with their morality police, the Department of Promotion of Virtue and Prohibition of Vice (Nebehay and Farge 2021, Pal 2021, Engelbrecht and Hassan 2021).

In the words of Malalai Joya, an Afghan feminist and former member of the parliament who has survived four assassination attempts and is in hiding inside Afghanistan,

The Americans replaced the barbaric regime of the Taliban with brutal warlords and then began to negotiate with the Taliban, even though the nature of the Taliban has never changed. The Americans have thrown bombs, polluted the environment, made the system even more corrupt. They have never been interested in the Afghan people (Joya 2021).

In an interview with Los Angeles-based journalist Sonali Kolhatkar, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) stated that the Afghan National Army and the U.S.-backed Afghan government fell apart so quickly just before the U.S. withdrawal because

[t]he U.S. government negotiating with Pakistan and other regional players had an agreement to form a government mainly composed of Taliban. So the soldiers were not ready to be killed in a war that they knew there was no benefit of the Afghan people in it because finally it is set behind closed doors to bring Taliban to power.

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RAWA also emphasized that [i]t is human nature to resist, and history bears witness. We have the glorious examples of U.S. struggles [such as] “Occupy Wall Street” and “Black Lives Matter” movements. We have seen that no amount of oppression, tyranny, and violence can stop resistance. ... Our women are now politically conscious and no longer want to live under the Burqa, something they easily did 20 years ago. We will continue our struggles. ... Now our fear is that the world may forget Afghanistan and Afghan women, like under the Taliban bloody rule in late 90s. Therefore, the U.S. progressive people and institutions should not forget Afghan women (Kolhatkar 2021).

Indeed some progressives and feminists around the world have issued statements. Activists from Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and India to Europe, Canada, the United States, and Hong Kong have organized protest gatherings and meetings in solidarity with Afghan women. Many are actively helping Afghan refugees. A Los Angeles organization of Black women activists for reproductive justice organized a discussion in which they brought together the plight of women in Haiti and Haitian refugees with the plight of women in Afghanistan and Afghan refugees (Black Women for Wellness 2021).

Here I would like to take up three of the attitudes expressed by feminists:

1. The concern for and solidarity with Afghan women expressed by liberals who also accept the U.S. deal with the Taliban and seem to think that the only solution for now is to use economic pressure to make the Taliban more inclusive.
2. The claim by leftists that for the people of Afghanistan, the Taliban are the lesser of the two evils after 20 years of U.S. occupation and should thus be recognized or engaged.
3. Opposition by progressives and social-feminists to both U.S. imperialism and the Taliban, and support for the struggles

of Afghan women against religious fundamentalism and imperialism.

Liberals Who Justify U.S. Imperialism’s Deal with the Taliban

Many liberal feminists, like Michelle Goldberg, columnist for the *New York Times*, support the U.S. withdrawal and admit that the U.S. occupation was a corrupt effort that led to the deaths and suffering of tens of thousands of Afghan civilians. However, they argue that U.S. President Joseph Biden could not renege on the deal that former President Donald Trump made with the Taliban (Goldberg 2021, Goodwin 2021). They ignore the fact that Biden was not obliged to carry out the deal in order to withdraw U.S. forces. They also ignore the fact that it was the Obama administration that started negotiating with the Taliban. The Obama administration asked the Qatari government to open a diplomatic office for the Taliban in Doha in 2013; the purpose was to facilitate negotiations behind the backs of Washington’s own puppet Afghan government (Whitlock 2021, Tinkel 2018).

Another liberal feminist, Farah Stockman, a member of the *New York Times* editorial board, argues that the U.S. government should “leverage money and international recognition to incentivize the Taliban to establish the most inclusive and moderate government possible.” In her view, “even a deeply flawed government in Kabul is preferable to no government at all” (Stockman 2021).

Leftists Who Call for Recognizing or Engaging with the Taliban

Nancy Lindisfarne, co-author of *Afghan Village Voices* and co-editor of *Dislocating Masculinity and Masculinities Under Neoliberalism*, and Jonathan Neale, former abortion and HIV counselor and author of *A People’s History of the Vietnam War*, argue that the Taliban should be viewed as the will of the Afghan people (Lindisfarne and Neale 2021). They

emphasize that the Taliban, although “deeply misogynist” and “sometimes racist and sectarian,” have popular support inside Afghanistan because of the cruelty and corruption of the American occupation. “The Taliban have offered two things across the country: ... They are not corrupt ... [and] are willing to rule for the poor.” They are not the Taliban of 2001 but have now become more inclusive and also have “concerns for the rights of women.” They are “an army of poor peasants.” They are “anti-imperialist.” They “want peace.”

Lindisfarne and Neale make a distinction between Afghan women and Afghan feminists. They claim that most Afghan women do not oppose the Taliban. Thus, they suggest that those progressives who want to help Afghan feminists can “organize to buy them airplane tickets and give them refuge in Europe and North America.”

While most leftists do not back the above crude and shameful defense of the Taliban, the view of the Taliban as a popular anti-imperialist force with support from women is not uncommon within the left.

Anand Gopal’s moving article, “The Other Afghan Women,” which tells the life story of a rural Afghan woman named Shakira from her childhood during the Soviet Union’s occupation up to now, shows that even when some rural women say they prefer the Taliban forces to the Karzai and Ghani governments and the U.S. occupation, that is not because they admire the Taliban but because they have experienced bombings under U.S. occupation. In fact, rural women too say that they support women’s rights and want rights for all women and not only urban women (Gopal 2021).

However, even Gopal, author of *No Good Men Among the Living*, a Pulitzer prize-winning book on the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, calls for engaging with the Taliban. He does not advocate the immediate recognition of the Taliban government, but he does argue that “given that there are different currents within the Taliban, the extent to which the international community tries to

engage with the pragmatic current, that could empower that pragmatic current against the hardliners” (Remnick 2021).

Principled Feminist Solidarity

As part of an effort to articulate a principled collective position, a group of Iranian feminist organizations in exile has issued a statement, in which they write,

We condemn the recognition of the Taliban government by any country under the claim that “the Taliban have changed and have become more moderate.” We stand with the women of Afghanistan against the Taliban, who, after reconquering power, have turned women and girls into sexual slaves for their soldiers (Collective Action 2021).

A coalition of Indian women’s groups issued a call for Afghan solidarity demonstrations throughout India on August 23. Their demands included the following:

The UN, the international community, and all countries including India [must] refuse to recognize the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and instead support the demand raised by Afghan civil society and women’s groups that “any change of political order or the constitution must happen through elections and by the will of the people of Afghanistan, not through the threat of violence, or through war and military intervention,” and “drafting, legislating, and implementing the civil and penal laws shall be based on the Constitution of Afghanistan, the national parliament shall be the sole legislating body, and the creation of any non-elected body, including the Supreme Theological Council of the Taliban, and the practicing of any unconstitutional power shall be outlawed.”

An international tribunal [must be] set up to ensure justice for the war crimes committed by the United States and NATO in the course of the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

The UN Human Rights Council must

initiate a fact-finding mission to identify and bring to justice all perpetrators of atrocities and violence against Afghan civilians—including the occupying armed forces as well as the Taliban and other armed groups. Taliban leaders must also be brought to justice for every atrocity they inflicted on women and minorities in the past.

United Nations Secretary General, the UN Human Rights Council, international human rights organizations, and the international community must act to ensure that Afghan women's rights groups are the center of any negotiations and other processes to ensure a just peace and secure the rights of all Afghan people (All India Progressive Women's Association, et al. 2021).

Furthermore, Indian American scholar and activist Deepa Kumar, author of *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, has warned against the vilification of Muslims. She has urged those who draw connections between the Taliban and the extreme right in the United States to be nuanced in their discourse. She pinpoints the native roots of racism and misogyny in the United States that arose from several hundred years of de jure and de facto slavery preceding Islamic fundamentalism:

While the Taliban are indeed a retrograde force, it is important to look more deeply at the role the U.S. played in Afghanistan. Indeed, the U.S.'s failure to 'liberate' women is not so much the product of the backward 'culture' of Afghan people, but rather its choice of allies: the very same misogynistic warlords who began the attacks on women's rights in the early 1990s (Kumar 2021).

Perspectives for Socialist Feminist International Solidarity

Given all the above, what conclusions can socialist feminist activists draw as the basis for our solidarity with the Afghan people and Afghan women in particular?

It is critically important not to separate opposition to U.S. imperialism from opposition to the Taliban and solidarity with Afghan women, oppressed minorities, and refugees. Any talk of legitimizing the Taliban as the so-called "will of the Afghan people" should be rejected. If we allow for the legitimization of the Taliban government, we have betrayed Afghan women and we have emboldened the extreme-right racists and misogynists around the world, like those taking away voting rights and abortion rights in the United States. Instead we need to give voice to Afghan women who oppose the Taliban.

We need to continue to put pressure on our governments and the United Nations to deliver humanitarian aid to Afghanistan through reputable humanitarian organizations and independent channels that can be held accountable (Egeland, 2021). Those who wish to send donations to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan can go to this website: www.afghanwomensmission.org/2010/08/make-a-donation/.

While the effort of Chilean feminist Michele Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights, to install a UN official to monitor human rights in Afghanistan is a step forward, we cannot have any illusions about the United Nations. Among the 47 members of the UN Human Rights Council, 19—including China, Russia, and Pakistan—failed to support Bachelet's proposal to have a human rights watchdog for Afghanistan. Two months earlier, the members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation blocked Bachelet's call for a fact-finding mission (Cumming-Bruce, 2021). Furthermore, the permanent members of the UN Security Council (the United States, China, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom) each have the power to veto any UN effort—whether resolution or tribunal—to put themselves on trial and hold them accountable for committing war crimes in Afghanistan or elsewhere.

Thus, instead of putting our focus on creating a "feminist foreign policy" within the

context of capitalism (Chattopadhyay, 2021), socialist feminists need to challenge the very logic of capitalism that leads to militarism and war. This means recognizing that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan cannot be celebrated as the end of U.S. imperialism. Trump's and then Biden's eagerness to withdraw from Afghanistan is rooted not only in the failure of the twenty-year U.S. occupation but also in U.S. aims to concentrate its military forces in the Pacific to confront China in a potentially much larger and far more destructive war for capitalist single-world domination (Buckley and Myers 2021).

Facing this ominous reality demands that socialist feminists develop a global view that expresses awareness of women's struggles and anti-racist, labor, prison abolitionist, and LGBT struggles in the Middle East region, in South and Southeast Asia, and globally and helps to bring them in contact with each other. For instance while Iran, which is ruled by a religious fundamentalist, misogynist regime, is helping the Taliban, it also has a women's movement for reproductive rights and against rape, femicide, and Shari'a law. The most prominent symbols of Iran's feminist struggles are Nasrin Sotoudeh, a human rights attorney, and Narges Mohammadi, a children's rights activist, both of whom are currently imprisoned. They are both against the prison system and the death penalty. Iranian women are reaching out to Afghan women in solidarity and recently had a demonstration to express that solidarity, after which most of the participants were arrested. Palestinian women are fighting against both Israel's colonial rule and the misogyny of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, the latter of which congratulated the Taliban after its takeover of Kabul. Women in Myanmar have been involved in a popular uprising since February and have been raising feminist demands as more and more are being imprisoned by a brutal military regime.

All of these developments are taking place in the midst of the deadly Covid-19

pandemic that is taking tens of thousands of lives every day due to poverty, lack of sanitary conditions, and lack of personal protective equipment and safe vaccines. The demand of people in Afghanistan and Iran, Myanmar, Haiti, and elsewhere for free and safe vaccines and PPE should be part of the demands of any solidarity movement.

A global socialist feminist view also demands supporting the plight of Afghan refugees and confronting racist forces in our countries who use refugees as scapegoats for the problems caused by capitalism and imperialism.

Ultimately, these challenges cannot be addressed without a new international type of socialist feminist organizing that offers a humanist alternative to capitalism-racism-sexism-heterosexism and alienation. It is toward this aim that we need a deep rethinking and further development of the contributions of socialist feminism.

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Feminism Versus Fundamentalism in Afghanistan

KOBRA SULTANI

Presentation to the Marxist Feminism Conference 2021, Panel on Middle Eastern and North African Women's Struggles, the #Me Too Movement, and Their Challenges to Marxist Feminism. Translation by Frieda Afary.

I AM KOBRA SULTANI FROM AFGHANISTAN, a country that the international community has declared to be the worst place for women. I am glad to be part of this gathering today.

Afghanistan was declared the worst place for women at a time when a so-called bourgeois democracy ruled the country. Today however, Afghanistan has sadly returned to the Stone Age, and women have been pushed out of all social activities and denied their most basic individual and social rights.

Under the Taliban, girls are not allowed an education beyond the fifth grade. They do not have the right to work in offices or to engage in sports or in cultural work. They are not allowed to leave the house without a male relative. The compulsory hijab or burqa has been forced on us, and even the color of the burqa is chosen by the Taliban. These oppressive rules are being imposed on women at a time when the people are in a state of shock and suffering from unimaginable poverty. Families who have sold their property and basic livelihood for the sake of a meal resort

to selling their children and mostly little girls. Women who have lost their husband to the Covid-19 pandemic or war or terrorist attacks by Islamic jihadist groups, and have become the sole breadwinner for their family, are facing multiple problems. After selling their meager resources, they do hard and onerous labor, peddle on the street, beg, or work as domestic laborers for wealthy people. In addition to the stress of forced labor, these

Women in Afghanistan have gone out into the streets in protest, screaming that they want freedom and representing the voices of the destitute.

destitute women also have to endure the lashes and rifle butts of the Taliban on their face, chest, neck, and side because the Taliban ideologically oppose women's work and social activity outside the home.

But women in Afghanistan have not complied with the repressive rule of the Taliban. They have gone out into the streets in protest, screaming that they want freedom and representing the voices of the destitute of Afghanistan. These protests are spontaneous and arise from the depth of poverty and

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deprivation that these women suffer. These protests continue to face violence and beatings from the Taliban, who blame women

The traditional Afghan Left ignored the reactionary nature of the compulsory hijab and basically justified Islamic sharia laws.

for the international community's refusal to give diplomatic recognition to their rule. The Taliban dismiss women's protests and label them illegal. They have responded with intense violence not only to the protesters but also to the reporters who have tried to cover the women's protests for various global media. In the most recent protests in Kabul, the Taliban shot women and killed one. In the state of Badakhshan and cities of Bamiyan and Mazar-i-Sharif, they have abducted some women protesters. Afghan women's protests have also spread beyond the borders of Afghanistan where refugee and migrant women have had gatherings and protests to tell the freedom-seeking people of the world about the realities that Afghan women are forced to endure in the twenty-first century as a result of the shameful deals of corrupt capitalist rulers. The Taliban have been organizing targeted assassinations to silence women. Just a few days ago, four women from women's rights and civil society groups in Mazar-i Sharif were executed by firing squad. Their families have not spoken out from fear of the Taliban and have gone into hiding.

Afghanistan's history has always been about political changes and upheavals. This country has rarely experienced any harmony or peace. This might be one of the reasons for the scant attention given to creating and

developing a women's movement. Thus, today women's protests do not appear as a coherent, organized, and persistent movement with specific demands and a program. They are consequently less effective.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, women entered the Afghan left. This left consisted of the pro-USSR or Maoist parties. The leftist women's movement was very active in Kabul University. At the same time, some women became members of the parliament. The problem was that the women's movement remained urban and was not able to reach out to the masses of women in rural areas.

At the time of the rule of the pro-Soviet People's Democratic Party, there were some progressive reforms including the prohibition of child marriage, a reduction in the amount of dowry required of a woman's family, a literacy campaign, land reform, and other reforms. However, the glaring errors of the leadership, the use of force, dictatorship, and the severe restrictions placed on intellectuals and dissidents led to deep popular dissatisfaction, a turn away from this party and the rise and growth of political Islam.

The Afghan left was not successful in promoting women's emancipation. Even

Under the name of democracy, we saw the reproduction of patriarchy. In effect, the rulers of Afghanistan were ideologically in agreement with the religious extremists and misogynist clerics.

though it claimed to be for women's liberation, its paradigm for the role of women was still a traditional one. It would be more accurate to characterize the Afghan traditional left as bourgeois nationalist, because its par-

ties were essentially populist and reconciled themselves with religion as the beliefs of the masses. The traditional Afghan left ignored the reactionary nature of the compulsory hijab and basically justified Islamic sharia laws concerning divorce, custody of children, inheritance, and choice of partner in marriage.

After the withdrawal of Soviet forces, following ten years of Russian imperialist military occupation from 1979 to 1989, and after the overthrow of Mohammad Najibullah Ahmadzai, the last leader of the Democratic People's Party, the Islamic fundamentalist mujahideen took over the reins of power. In this period we saw retrogression in women's rights: The hijab was made compulsory, limitations were placed on women in universities and government offices. Laws were further Islamicized, and clerics regained control over people's lives.

All of you are aware of the rule of the Taliban from 1996 to 2001 and how they treated women. The goal of the Islamic Emirate of the Taliban was to deprive women of their political, social, economic, cultural, and most basic human rights. Thus, we saw women prohibited from attending school or working outside the home. Women were flogged and stoned in public. They were prevented from leaving the house without a male relative, denied health care and educational services or any presence in the cultural world.

During the years of the U.S. imperialist occupation and the rule of the U.S.-installed governments of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani from 2004 to 2021, under the name of democracy, we saw the reproduction of patriarchy and masculinity through many means such as religion, culture, tradition, and the judiciary. Thus, it was not difficult to harm and insult women. Although stoning became illegal and some laws in defense of women existed in the new constitution, women were still stoned based on edicts from clerics. Every extremist Islamist group could still flog women or take revenge or promote forced marriage and child marriage. [Women]

were not even safe in their own family, much less when working outside the home. Women who were not aware of their rights or who were sole breadwinners for their family had to comply with the sexual demands of their

Rule by political Islam is a serious threat to all progressive forces and especially women.

Because misogyny is deeply ingrained in religion, confronting religion itself should be a priority for women.

boss. In effect, the rulers of Afghanistan were ideologically in agreement with the religious extremists and misogynist clerics.

Most of the women who were among the rulers of the bourgeois democracy were placed in key posts as tokens on the basis of previously arranged ethnic quotas. They were obedient and determined to protect their rank and status. At the same time, they were used as a means to give the government the image of promoting women's liberation and to counter any voice of protest from human rights groups who opposed the institutional violence and prejudices against women. These token women damaged and derailed the actual struggles of women. They participated in the peace negotiations with the Taliban. They left Afghanistan at the first opportunity on U.S. planes and abandoned over 15 million women and girls to the criminal Taliban, which considers women to be an evil force and defines a woman's role as staying in the home, having children, and providing services for her husband.

Many analysts have asked why the United States was willing to make a deal with the Taliban. Some have pointed to the corruption and weak administration of the Afghan national government and the reluctance of

Afghan soldiers and their lack of morale. We can say that the victory of the Taliban was to a small extent due to the lack of resistance from hungry soldiers. However, to a large extent, it was due to the continuing undercover negotiations between Washington and the Taliban. The U.S. peace negotiations with the Taliban completely ignored the Afghan people. President Biden himself said that the

Women workers cannot separate
their participation in the class
struggle from the struggle
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custody of their children.

United States had not occupied Afghanistan as a nation-building mission, emphasized it had spent a trillion dollars on a totally corrupt and inefficient government in Kabul, and declared that he would not pay for the rights of Afghan women with the lives of U.S. soldiers. Thus, after twenty years of U.S. imperialist occupation that involved the bombing and direct killing of more than 65,000 innocent civilians, the U.S. peace with the Taliban meant the continuation of the war for the people of Afghanistan.

The U.S. withdrawal agreement with the Taliban contained two stipulations: First, the Taliban would not harm U.S. interests and American soldiers. Second, the Taliban would not allow Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups to use Afghan territory to threaten the United States. Washington also forced the Afghan government to release five thousand imprisoned Taliban fighters.

What shocked the Afghan people more

than anything was that their fate had been decided in these undercover negotiations. Once the people realized what had happened, they were overtaken by fear. Hence we saw tragic scenes such as the effort of some to hang on to planes taking off from the Kabul airport runway. Some fled the country and some have stayed. As I stated earlier, despite all of these hardships, women in Afghanistan refuse to be bystanders to the destruction of their future. They have appeared on the streets and face the repression.

What do Afghan women demand from freedom-seeking women around the world?

Support for Afghan women has to be for the purpose of changing their lives. However, the help from the international community today is not even meant to reduce the violence and repression of the Taliban.

Rule by political Islam and the coming to power of jihadist groups is a serious threat to all progressive forces and especially women. Considering that misogyny is deeply ingrained in religion, confronting religion itself should be a priority for women. Focusing on modernizing or reforming religious laws will be a waste of our energy. All women around the world suffer from gender oppression. Women who live in war zones are being crushed by the armies of ignorance, religion, and capitalism. Women's emancipation is only possible if we get to the roots of the oppression of women.

Women workers and toilers who try to stand up and express their identity as human beings in a class society cannot separate their participation in the class struggle from the struggle against the compulsory hijab, for the right to choose whom they marry, for the right to custody of their children, and for the right to the most basic personal freedoms. These struggles are not easy but will be easier with solidarity from freedom-seeking women around the globe.

Thank you for listening.

The Politics of Sports

An interview with Dave Zirin

DAVE ZIRIN IS SPORTS EDITOR for *The Nation*, host of the weekly show *Edge of Sports* on SiriusXM Radio, and a columnist for *SLAM Magazine* and *The Progressive*. He was named one of Utne Reader's "50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Our World," and was called "the best sportswriter in the United States," by Robert Lipsyte. Zirin is the author of ten books dealing with the politics of sports. His latest is *The Kaepernick Effect* (The New Press, 2021), which chronicles the impact of former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick's act of taking a knee to protest police killings of Black people.

New Politics co-editor Phil Gasper interviewed Zirin in November 2021. The interview was subsequently transcribed and lightly edited.

Phil Gasper for *New Politics*: *Well, great to see you, Dave. Let's start by talking about your new book, The Kaepernick Effect. What motivated you to take that on as a project?*

Dave Zirin: Well, it started as a conversation with John Carlos, the 1968 Olympian who, of course, raised his fist on the medal stand in Mexico. And John made a very offhand comment to me about young people who raised their fists at sporting events after he and Tommy Smith did so at those Olympics. And that immediately sent me spinning a little bit. I was wondering who these people were, and what happened to them, and what happened between them and their coaches, and was there a backlash? Was it similar to what young people had faced in this country who took a knee after Colin Kaepernick?

So, the parallel immediately struck me

because I've written a bunch of these one-off stories about young people who have taken a knee, for *The Nation*. And it got me to thinking that, my goodness, you know, we don't really have anything that looks at this in its totality, that looks at this as what I think it was, which was a national movement, even if it didn't organize itself as such or know of itself by that name. I mean, you could call it an unconscious mass movement in a national movement, as well.

And I was thinking about how history is often recorded. I thought about people like Howard Zinn and how they wrote history, and Studs Terkel, and about how one of their great contributions was that they preserved voices that otherwise would not have been preserved. And I thought, given everything we know about, first of all, how history is taught in this country—of course, it's a history of great people, normally men, who pull the levers—and also given the way our society operates on the basis of this kind of hyperactive celebrity culture, I was worried that all these stories were going to get forgotten and were going to get thrown down the memory hole. And if people remembered anything about this last period, it would be just a stale picture of Colin Kaepernick with a knee. And if we're lucky, maybe there would be a caption explaining why he was doing what he was doing. So, that was the motivator.

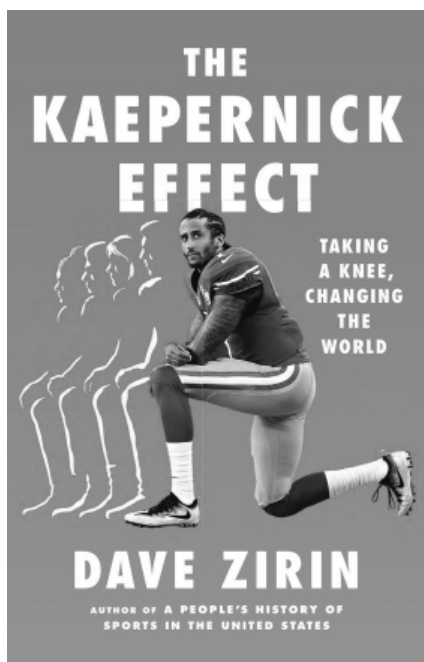
But then as I was writing the book, of course, the summer of 2020 happens. The police murder of George Floyd happens, and that changed the way I was thinking about the entire project. Because at that point I went back, and I got in touch with dozens

of people who I'd interviewed for the book, and they were all either in the streets or organizing people to get in the streets. And that really made me realize that these young people really laid the groundwork for what we were seeing in 2020, which, let's remember, were the largest set of demonstrations in the history of the United States. And I think sometimes we elide that truth. I mean, these were demonstrations that took place in all fifty states. It was a remarkable explosion of anti-racist consciousness. And the groundwork for that ... These things don't come out of nowhere, of course. And I feel like while many roads may have led us to that point—many, many, many roads—one of those roads, at least, runs through the athletic fields of the United States. And I felt that story really, truly needed to be told.

And now that the book is out, I'm also seeing what these young people did as really a canary in the coal mine. Everything we're seeing right now with these ridiculous so-called anti-CRT [Critical Race Theory] debates that are being used to attack public education, attack teachers, and to attack even the very idea of speaking about anti-racism or about the history of the United States, I think it's the backlash that these young people received for taking a knee during the anthem in their communities. If we had paid attention to the political tenor of that backlash, we would have gotten quite the sneak preview for everything we're seeing in 2021.

NP: *And of course, Kaepernick's protest itself emerged from what happened before, because we'd had several years of Black Lives Matter protests—up and down, but that's got a history now. So, when he took the knee in 2016, that was coming out of what had already been happening in many communities around the country.*

DZ: Yes, I mean, and that's why I'll always argue that for people interested in this issue of sports protests, they have to understand that it always starts off the athletic field and not on the athletic field. It always starts from what's



in the streets, then ricochets onto the field. And then people on the athletic field—you think about someone like Muhammad Ali in the 1960s or Billie Jean King—can have the capacity through using their sports platform to then shape what's taking place off the field. But it always starts in the streets.

And in Colin Kaepernick's case, the reason why he sat and then took a knee in the first place was because of the police murders of Philando Castile and Alton Sterling, both of which produced viral videos during that summer of 2016 and had already led to athletic protest in the WNBA. But what Colin Kaepernick did, what he gave the movement, what Colin Kaepernick did that was different from what we had seen before, even in the world of sports protest, was that he provided a symbol for visible dissent that anybody could replicate. That very simple act of taking a knee during the anthem, that was Colin Kaepernick's gift to the struggle, and so many people took that baton and ran with it.

NP: *Yeah, through the following couple of years, at least, and then again in 2020 with the protests around the murder of George Floyd.*

DZ: Part of it also is, I remember getting in conversations and arguments with people in 2018, 2019 where people were quite distressed about the state of the movement. And the argument that I had was two-fold. I mean, first, you read histories of the civil rights movement. You've got King and others in the late 50s wondering if the movement had run its course, right? And we can't forget that. And then the second thing is, I would also point to these protests saying, okay, you're saying nothing's happening because there's no national march in Washington. And maybe people who have been identified as organizational leaders seemed demoralized or distracted, or onto their own vanity projects in some cases. But if you look at sports, if you look at these athletic fields, you're still seeing the movement play itself out, even in those years that other people were describing as somewhat parched.

NP: *Right. Movements go up and down. So, we saw a high point in 2020. But today, 2021 going into 2022, where do you think that movement is now? Are these protests continuing in some form? Has the taking-a-knee form of the protest become passé? I mean, it's certainly been co-opted by Democratic Party politicians, even police departments having their photos taken, kneeling. Is it moving in new directions now, or is this still a form that it's taking in different places?*

DZ: It's moving in multiple directions, and the mere fact that there's been so many efforts to appropriate it by Democratic Party officials, even by police, as you mentioned, or by entire teams that do it as a kind of team activity—they do it together, with the acceptance or even approval or even encouragement of management—I mean, all of that, frankly, is a tribute to its power, because this society only appropriates things, or commodifies dissent, when it's gotten too big to ignore or destroy.

Because that's always the first instinct—you destroy the dissent, and you destroy the dissenters. And on both fronts, both in terms of Colin Kaepernick and the act of taking a knee, they failed to do so. So, then the next effort becomes one of appropriation.

So, Colin Kaepernick does his commercial for Nike and now he's got his Netflix special—which is frankly very good. (And make sure we keep that in the interview, that I actually think it's very, very good.) But it's just what you do when you can't completely bury and destroy somebody, you attempt to commodify. And there's no way they've been able to completely squelch the act, taking a knee.

Two points. First is, when these police officers take a knee or Nancy Pelosi, they're not doing it during the national anthem. And that's such an important part of the piece. They do it more as an act of anti-racist prayer, and it's all very, very performative. Whether it's in the hands of Pelosi or the police, I would argue it's equally performative. But when it's done during the anthem, it has this very direct challenge to this country. And it's saying, either... At most it's saying—to speak most generously—that there's a gap between what this country stands for and what it actually delivers, particularly to communities of color. But you take it to an even bigger level, it's saying that this country is actually a sham when it says, "Land of the Free, Home of the Brave" when, as Colin Kaepernick said, people are dead in the street and police are getting away with murder.

NP: *You mentioned the teams, whole teams taking the knee and that's kind of double-edged, because it could be management co-optation, but also the pressure has come from the players themselves. I mean, last year with the NBA, almost the entire NBA was taking the knee before games. And that seemed to come, from what I was seeing, from the anger and activism of some key leaders among NBA players.*

DZ: No, that's true, but it was also seen as a way for the NBA to try to ingest the dis-

sent that was already there. You'll cut with it instead of trying to squelch it.

NP: *Yeah. Very soon they saw that as their best move, right?*

DZ: Yeah, their best strategic move. And the players then, last August, moved past it very quickly, after the police shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha. They said, well, we're actually going to go on strike. We're not going to play at all. We're going to cancel playoff games. And that started with the Milwaukee Bucks. And there were several sports columnists who wrote that the Milwaukee Bucks' stand in solidarity cost them the NBA Championship because they were too distracted to play basketball. But nobody said—or some of us said, but none of these same writers, let me put it like that, said—when the Bucks actually won the championship in the summer of 2021, that their actions the previous year had brought the team closer together, which a lot of the players said it did.

So, I mean, not that it really matters if a team wins or loses based on this protest, but I do think it's interesting that the point of sports, which is of course to win the game, can often be used by the right and by the center as a way to try to squelch protests. I mean, that's why when we think of some of the great political athletes in history, it's not a coincidence that people like Ali or Arthur Ashe or King, that they all played in individual sports, not in team sports, because the team sport makeup can be extremely conservatizing. Which is why the people in the book, especially the young people who took a knee, all playing on sports teams, are all the more remarkable, because they're going against a culture that has been built up for a hundred and fifty years that says you do not do that.

NP: *And this has had an international impact as well, because taking a knee spread to international soccer, for instance. The English team was taking a knee in the lead up to the European Championships. And actually, it was condoned by*

their manager, who was a big supporter of it and played a big role in this happening. But they were getting pushback from the fans. I mean, there's an enormous amount of racism among football fans in England and in Europe. And this was a kind of way of standing with Black players and those who take the brunt of this. So that's a kind of interesting phenomenon as well, the way in which it has not just been a U.S. phenomenon, it's become this much, much more global act of some kind of resistance. I mean, I don't know how much resistance we can talk about, but it's certainly an act of anti-racist solidarity, which is not to be sniffed at.

DZ: Yeah. I was interviewed by an Irish publication for the book, and I sort of pooh-poohed those kinds of demonstrations over there in Europe. The journalist really did push back on me and said if you were more cognizant of how deep the racism among fans runs, you would see that taking a knee, even if it is management approved or all the rest of it, is really like a challenge to those fans to change. And that's very different from somebody in Brunswick, Ohio, or Beaumont, Texas, taking a knee by themselves to challenge the racism in their small town or community. But just because it's different, it doesn't mean it's absent of value. And it seems to me after a further study that it matters that they're doing this in Western Europe because it's about players trying to really change the culture of the entire sport.

NP: *And then you've got—I know this is true in the UK and probably in some other places as well—anti-racist, anti-fascist organizing going on among the fans. So, I mean, there's polarization. You've got racist fans. You've also got anti-racist fans. And I don't know if this is true in the United States, but certainly in England there are organizations that organize soccer fans to oppose racism, to work collectively around some of these issues, which is a very interesting phenomenon, too.*

DZ: Yes, some of them, I mean, go back 15,

20 years. The soccer fans organizing against racism, players wearing bracelets of solidarity, all kinds of things of that nature. And then there have been players of African and West Indian descent who have made a political impact. People like Marcus Rashford in the UK, who has played a remarkable role around the issue of hunger during the pandemic and applying not just his celebrity, but really organizing public pressure to change laws and to move laws through parliament that Boris Johnson has had to not only reluctantly sign, but heartily endorse. And it's been through Rashford's efforts. I know when Rashford was one of the players blamed for the most recent England debacle,* that's when his teammates really stepped forward, and several of them did talk about how it's connected to racism in the sport. It's pernicious. And that act of taking a knee is a challenge to a sector of fans.

NP: *Let's talk about another form of oppression that is intersecting with sport in a big way, which is the attack on trans people. You've written quite a bit about this. It's intensifying in the United States and in many other places. Some state governments have particularly focused on the rights of trans kids in schools. We've just now got a Texas law that prevents them from playing on sports teams of their gender. You're only allowed to play on the team of your biological sex at birth. Can you comment a little bit about this, both in terms of the attack, but also what kind of resistance there is, or what kind of organizing is happening around this issue?*

DZ: Well, a lot of the organizing that I see around it is happening on the school-by-school level, teachers, parents, a lot of people trying to fight back legislatively, lobbying. The ACLU has several rather brilliant legal minds trying to work on this, and their shift

has been a welcome one. But has it translated into a movement? That's unfortunately not something we're seeing. And has it translated into anything that we're seeing in the world of sports? Well, it should, frankly, because they're using sports as a wedge and as a cudgel to divide people, to divide what our side should be. And so, they've pulled onto their side prominent LGBTQ athletes like Martina Navratilova, who will say things like they're for trans rights but against trans people participating in the sport of their gender.

And it's been a successful wedge in a way that, say, the bathroom bills were not. Because they've been going after trans people for as long as trans people have asserted their visibility, and bathrooms didn't work. So, they're starting now with sports, and they're finding much more success with it, and that's scary. The amount of success they're finding is scary. But I'm just very confident, I've got to tell you Phil, in this generation of people that are coming up right now, the people I interviewed for the book, the people my daughter's age. I'm just very confident that they're not going to settle for the things that perhaps other generations were willing to settle for and that they're not going to abandon their trans friends because of some off-the-beam Texas politicians and their allies. So, I mean, there's a fight brewing, but I feel confident in saying that the fight is going to be joined.

NP: *So, you write about the intersection of sports and politics from a number of different angles. One of them is sport as big business, which of course it is. And it doesn't get any bigger business than the Olympics. So, we just had the postponed Summer Olympics, and now we're heading to Beijing for the Winter Olympics. There are big issues around this involving the risks of major sporting events while the pandemic is still going on, but also these questions about human rights and what's going on in the countries that are hosting these events. I mean, after the Winter Olympics, we're going to have the World Cup in Qatar, which also raises massive human rights*

*In July 2021, England lost the final of the European Championship to Italy in a penalty shootout after Rashford and two other Black players missed their kicks. This led to an eruption of racism against the players on social media.

issues. So, what are your thoughts about these big international events and the questions they are raising?

DZ: Well, it's such an exposure of these events when they nestle in places like Beijing or Qatar, because what they're really saying is that there is so much domestic opposition to the Olympics, to the World Cup in recent years, and to the spending priorities and the security priorities that these events demand, the displacement priorities, that they really have to find autocracies and dictatorships to host these events.

And they like to say, the International Olympic Committee, FIFA, that—and this is how they argue against the criticism that you're supporting an abusively anti-human regime, a regime that flouts human rights—they say, well by going there, we're actually engaging with them and we're making them more just, more democratic, just by our presence. It's a very Kiplingesque view as well. It's like we're bringing Western democracy and Western thought to these lands of dictatorship. But what you find instead is that when these events go to places like Rio or like Los Angeles, it's not that they've made Beijing a little more like the Western world, it's more like they're making bourgeois democracies more like Beijing. Because when they show up to places, it's hyper-militarism, it's squelching of free speech, it's squelching of free movement. It's all sorts of small autocratic leanings.

NP: *It's clearing out whole neighborhoods as well, right?*

DZ: Yes, exactly.

NP: *Displacement of the poor and the homeless and anybody who's in their way.*

DZ: When I was in Tokyo, before the pandemic, summer of 2019, just sort of examining the Olympic organizing and investigations, I actually spoke to people who had been displaced for these 2020 games, who were elderly, who had also been displaced in 1964

for those Tokyo Olympics. So, their lives have effectively been bookended by being displaced for the Olympic Games in Tokyo. So that's your Olympic Legacy.

NP: *I take it you won't be going to Beijing next year.*

DZ: No. I probably could but I wouldn't, and, honestly, it's more about personal safety. I was denied going in '08—they rejected me, as they rejected a lot of journalists from coming into the country. People I know who went to Beijing, who I interviewed, who attempted to unfurl a Tibetan flag on the street in front of the Olympic Stadium, got picked up and thrown into a van within thirty seconds and were put through a very frightening ordeal that involved being blindfolded. These are U.S. citizens, and they were eventually deported after getting the shit scared out of them. So, this is nothing I want to do, and I'm not going to go. And I think having these kinds of mega events in a time of Covid is just unbelievably irresponsible. I think what was done to Tokyo—a very, very heavily concentrated city with a very, very low vaccination rate—was abominable, and it led to the spasms of spreading of the virus in Tokyo.

NP: *Yeah, and we shall see what the situation is like next year, but it's certainly not going to be back to normal.*

DZ: Yeah, and our hopes of getting to anywhere close to normality lie in not doing events like the Beijing Winter Olympics. We're actually running counter to what we need to be doing if we want to emerge from this.

NP: *I want to ask you about something that I don't know what the connection with sport is, but it's such a big issue right now: the climate crisis. From my perspective, that's the biggest crisis that we're facing. So, I'm wondering, have you written about that? Is there an intersection with what's going on in the sports world? That's one area in which we are beginning to see protests*

reemerge. So, what are your thoughts about that connection?

DZ: I certainly agree with you that it is the issue that existentially surrounds every single other issue that we work around and care about. The UN has something that a lot of athletes are involved in called the Sports for Climate Action Framework—S4CA, for folks who want to look that up. To me, I was reading it over and it speaks to how kind of desperate we are to find some method—because what is sports really going to do to deal with this? I mean, one of the organizations that signed on to this is the International Olympic Committee, an organization that leaves the heaviest possible carbon footprint wherever it goes and talks all the time about having a green Olympics. Like look at this new billion-dollar stadium we built—the gutters take rainwater and process it so it becomes freshwater that's then recirculated through the system. I've seen stadiums like that and I'm like, what about the billion dollars that went into building this stadium? What kind of carbon footprint did that leave to make your wonderful rain gutters?

What we see in terms of actual athletes doing work around this that's not through these kinds of first-use channels—we're not seeing it yet. But it's hard to imagine that it's not going to be discussed in Beijing, because having enough snow for these kinds of winter sports has lately required flying in snow and dumping it in different places, which leaves its own carbon footprint.

NP: *Right. So, it's experiencing the impact of climate change, and then you make it a little bit worse. You're using these energy intensive methods to produce the conditions for winter sports. So, it's ironic and kind of troubling the*

way that this is going.

DZ: But at least they signed onto a UN decree!

NP: *What else is happening in 2022? Anything on the horizon?*

DZ: I mean, some ideas, but just sitting with this book for a minute. I've got some stuff brewing. I thought about writing something, and I'm still thinking about it—it's kind of weird sounding—but an exposé of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

NP: *In preparation for the next LA Olympics?*

DZ: Yeah, exactly. Because one of the things that has been used by the LA 2028 committee is this kind of very, very rose-colored memory of '84 and what it meant to the city of Los Angeles, when they actually did a lot that would not fly today, I don't think, like what they called the gangs sweeps and the very, very pointed attacks on Black and Brown communities by Daryl Gates and the Los Angeles Police Department, during a time when the cities were just starting to rumble over the importation of crack cocaine by our own government to pay for their dirty wars overseas. Oh, did I just slip that in there to our sports interview! But the point is, I think that there's a lot there for us to talk about in terms of Los Angeles. And I'm trying to think of something that would be useful for the LA 2028 activists, who are really impressive. They've been organizing ever since the bid idea came up. And they've done some terrific work out in Los Angeles.

NP: *Excellent. Well, I hope you pursue that. I'm looking forward to seeing it and whatever else you are going to write about. Thank you so much.*

Psychoanalysis for Collective Liberation

*A Review of Erich Fromm's Critical Theory*¹

JAVIER SETHNESS

ERICH FROMM (1900–1980) WAS a humanistic psychoanalyst, writer, and activist who was principally influenced by the theories of Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, though he was critical of both figures. A German-American Jew from an Orthodox, middle-class family, Fromm studied sociology with Alfred Weber (brother of Max), joined the Institute for Social Research—otherwise known as the Frankfurt School—in 1930, and fled Nazi Germany in 1934 for exile in New York. He embarked on his own iconoclastic journey when his erstwhile comrades Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno expelled him from the Institute in 1939 for questioning Freudian orthodoxy about the libido, or human sexuality. Controversially, in place of Freud's idea that erotic satisfaction is life's driving force, Fromm suggested that our goals in existence are in fact relatedness, rootedness, identity, a frame of orientation (or object of devotion), and transcendence (or agency).

While this original thinker is perhaps best known for his book *The Art of Loving* (1956), in which he develops the idea of authentic and productive bonds of love based on mutual recognition, the editors of and contributors to the new volume, *Erich Fromm's Critical Theory*:

Hope, Humanism, and the Future, underscore the intellectual's innovative concepts and enduring relevance to a number of key topics. These include humanism, feminism, the social character, conformity, authoritarianism, and anti-fascism, among others. To this point, co-editor Joan Braune aptly points out the glaring absence of psychoanalysis and critical theory in the numerous books published in recent years that attempt to explain resurgent conservative-authoritarian populist and neo-fascist trends (219, 225n13). New studies of fascism by anarchists are not exempt from this trend, with the result that the left overlooks important considerations and strategies for understanding and resisting the far right. In essence, we ignore Fromm at our peril (40).

Prophetic Messianism, the Social Character, and Trumpism

According to Michael Löwy, one of the contributors to the volume, Fromm was a romantic Jewish intellectual and a “religious atheist,” inspired by the “universal utopian perspective” of Jewish messianism (45). On this reading, Fromm was a “religious romantic anti-capitalist—not [a] Marxist—” who interpreted Weber's sociology in a critical way (48). Likewise, he hailed the Hasidic Judaic tradition as being critical of capitalist modernity. In *The Dogma of Christ* (1931), Fromm lauds the early Christian community as an anti-bureaucratic, revolutionary “free brotherhood of the poor” that at once opposed Roman imperialism and instituted

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“love communism” (49). Anticipating his colleagues Horkheimer and Adorno’s argument about history and fascism in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944/1947), and echoing Karl Kautsky’s own analysis of the foundations of Christianity’s betrayal as starting with the empowerment of the bishops over the prophets and apostles (1908), Fromm traces the integration of Christianity with the state as parallel commentary on the destruction of the Russian Revolution by the Bolshevik Party. In Kautsky’s words, “The organization of a proletarian, rebellious communism thus became the staunchest support of despotism and exploitation, a source of new despotism and new exploitation.” Whereas Löwy suggests that this implicit parallelism communicates Fromm’s disgust with Stalin and sympathy with Trotsky’s analysis in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937), it may also convey the psychoanalyst’s convergence with anarchism. Indeed, in 1936, Adorno anxiously complained to Horkheimer about Fromm’s “anarchistic deviations” and “sentimental ... blend of social democracy and anarchism,” concluding, “I would urgently advise him to read Lenin” (152). Yet Fromm did read Lenin and considered that the “destruction of Socialism” began with him.²

As a critical social psychologist and public intellectual, Fromm is perhaps best known for his creative, neo-Freudian analyses of political and social authoritarianism. Integrating Marx, Freud, and Weber, Fromm theorized about alienation, neurosis, hierarchy, and sadomasochism. Per Freud, neurotic mood disorders may impart an expression of trauma, unmet needs (“the return of the repressed”), or even a rebellion against dominant norms. Fromm, for his part, concluded that alienation results from one’s embeddedness within defective social relations that build “artificial needs and drives”—namely, the will to power, exploitation, and domination—and so lead to the dehumanization and instrumentalization of self and others. To such understandings, writer Michael Thompson adds that neurotic

frustration may signal the breakthrough of critical consciousness over pathological social relations, while communicating the losses and sacrifices we must endure due to the systemic “abuse of the social bond” under the iron cage of capitalism, patriarchy, and the state (27). In contrast, robust bonds promote mutual recognition, community, creativity, knowledge, (self)discovery, and autonomous self-determination.

The contributors to *Erich Fromm’s Critical Theory* justly emphasize the importance of the humanist’s social-character theory and related insights into the psychosocial aspects of political movements. Social character can be defined as an intermediary between consciousness and the given socio-economic structure: the “most frequent pattern typical in a particular society ... and also the dominant characteristic” (194). Generally, social character serves adaptive and stabilizing functions, ensuring the persistence of the “pathology of normalcy” (6). Even so, Fromm identified different types. To name just two: the marketing character, which corresponds to the automaton conformity expected of monopoly capitalism, versus the productive character, which channels adversity into the creation of meaning and love. With Hilde Weiss (1900–1981), a brilliant student of the council-communist Karl Korsch, Fromm designed a study into the social character and political attitudes of German workers toward the end of the Weimar Republic (1929–1931). The findings of this survey, which will be discussed in more detail below, illuminate the great error of Marx’s almost mechanistic faith in the working classes, who are “not reliably socialist or anti-authoritarian” (135). In reality, the Weiss-Fromm study confirmed among many participants simultaneous psychical masochism and the idealization of strong men (144).

Connecting past with present, several of the essayists appearing in this volume seek to apply Fromm’s framework to the project of understanding the growth of extreme

right-wing movements. This analysis is most welcome in the wake of the Trump regime and the associated legitimization of neo-fascism. Charles Thorpe views the Trumpist phenomenon as “regressive identification,” to quote the English sociologist Anthony Giddens: The disgraced former president’s foot-soldiers “simply become dependent children again” and so surrender their consciences to the would-be dictator (181). Such a diagnosis is especially apt when considering the attempted coup incited by President Trump on January 6, 2021. In a Frommian sense, reactionary countermovements can be understood, at least in part, as anxious backlashes by those privileged in terms of race, class, gender, and sexuality to rapid, progressive societal changes that might threaten their dominance in the social hierarchy (85–86). Like Reagan and the shareholders in the 1980s, who rebelled against “bureaucracy” and “Communism” by imposing neoliberalism, the authoritarian syndrome of Trumpism represents a false revolt that re-entrenches privilege, irrationalism, and established tendencies toward aggressive self-destruction. Although the right in the United States often relies on community-building and the development of familial, in-group bonds for its propagation, rightist politics both presuppose and reproduce the bourgeois coldness of life in the capitalist, imperialist, and settler-colonial United States (167).

Humanism, Feminism, and Social Character in a Mexican Village

George Lundskow, in his essay on “The Necessity of Prophetic Humanism in Progressive Social Change,” differentiates between “two basic forms” of spiritual life: universalist emancipation and xenophobic idolatry. In Freudian terms, this conflict can be reinterpreted as the struggle between Eros and Thanatos, libido and *mortido*, or “a faith in life and a faith in death” (55). Lundskow’s universalist perspective is inti-

mately connected with biophilia, or love of life, whether human or nonhuman, and the prophetic-messianic Judaic tradition. Concurring (perhaps controversially) with Fromm that evolution demands that we all have a “frame of orientation and an object of devotion in order to survive,” Lundskow discusses Black Panther Huey P. Newton’s passion for revolutionary suicide—to sacrifice oneself for the people—in place of the *reactionary suicide* demanded by capitalism and authority (53). Channeling Hermann Cohen’s understanding of messianism as “the dominion of the good on earth,” the writer advocates the construction of a new “revolutionary religion” as a means of transforming the world (68). In like manner, in *The Ministry of the Future* (2020), the science-fiction novelist Kim Stanley Robinson depicts one of his characters calling for the founding of a new religion to unite humanity and save the planet.³

In her intervention considering the relationship between humanism and feminism, Lynn S. Chancer rightly chastises Fromm for his distance from the feminist movements that surged in the 1960s and 1970s and his related use of sexist language. At the same time, she praises Fromm’s concept of love as mutual recognition, finding it to be a framework that implicitly challenges the gender binary that encodes sadistic male chauvinism on the one hand and masochistic feminine passivity on the other. The struggle against sadomasochistic character orientations *and* practices—being “mechanisms of escape” that drive wars, exploitation, ecocide, and aggression—would be a process to redirect society toward a more peaceful, egalitarian, and erotic future (197). In such a world, the interrelated “social defense mechanisms” of sadism and masochism would be attenuated, in both the individual and collective, and interdependence would serve as an alternative to the master/slave relationships of past and present (99). Chancer praises Fromm’s concern for “care, loving, sanity, and reason” as implicit critiques of toxic masculinity, sexism, *and* heterosexism, being

systems that “have coercive consequences by limiting people’s gender and sexual freedoms” (101). While she criticizes the psychoanalyst’s gender essentialism and identifies his lack of interest in human sexuality—what fellow contributor David Norman Smith terms a “desexualized psychoanalysis”—as reflecting a “pre-oedipal” orientation that would stress relatedness over the libido, Chancer does not seem to acknowledge the link between Fromm’s own sex-negativity and heterosexist biases (102-05, 131).

In “Sociopsychanalysis and Radical Humanism,” Neil McLaughlin and Fromm’s own co-author Michael Maccoby note the following paradox: Though he was trained in sociology, Fromm is marginal to the core of this discipline, as to academia as a whole. This is in stark contrast to Pierre Bourdieu, or indeed, Michel Foucault. Dialectically, Fromm’s academic marginality provided him independence of thought but also disregard from the professoriate (109-10). This is sadly the case for his most scholarly late works, such as *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (1970) and *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973). In contrast, Bourdieu played the academic game and enjoyed considerable rewards and privilege as a sociologist in universities in Paris and Lille. While both figures were radical public intellectuals who engaged in similar projects of socioanalysis, or *sociopsychanalysis*, and criticized Western and Stalinist crimes alike—with Bourdieu protesting in his writings against the Algerian War and Fromm publicly opposing the Vietnam and Cold wars—Bourdieu made such arguments from within the academy, while Fromm made them from without. Insightfully, Maccoby and McLaughlin tie Fromm’s “intellectual decline” to his numerous conflicts “with orthodox Marxists, Freudians, neoconservatives, anti-humanist thinkers,” and his former comrades from the Frankfurt School, especially Herbert Marcuse, who resurrected Adorno’s opportunistic line against him in the 1950s (119).

These contributors productively compare Fromm’s social-character theory to Bourdieu’s theory of an internalized, unconscious *habitus*. This habitus perpetuates class society and the division of labor by mandating obedient participation and social reproduction. Otherwise known as the “cultural unconscious” or “mental habits,” the theory of habitus, for all its usefulness, “downplay[s] an explicit psychoanalytic analysis of emotions which is the core strength of Fromm’s social character theory” (122-23). Plus, in his focus on elites, structures, and symbolic violence, Bourdieu overlooks the self-defeating and self-destructive psychodynamics that often contribute to the reproduction of exploitation and domination. To this point, he was critical of Frantz Fanon’s concept of internalized oppression. However, Bourdieu’s deficit here can perhaps be corrected by Fromm’s social-character theory, particularly as applied in the Mexican village of Chiconcauc, Morelos state. During the 1950s and 1960s, Fromm and his colleagues carried out an empirical research study there into some of the psychological aspects of class stratification among *campesinos* (peasants) after the Revolution of 1910-1920. Tellingly, the resulting publication, *Social Character in a Mexican Village*, found that only single-digit percentages of the villagers interviewed had radically democratic character structures.⁴ The rest were divided among enterprising-sadistic and passive-receptive *campesinos*, with the divisions correlated to family status before the revolution. Many of those who capitalized on the new opportunities made available by the redistribution of lands had previously been landowners, while those who suffered greater rates of violence and alcoholism were typically descended from peons of the *hacienda* system imposed by Spanish colonialism (118).

In this sense, *Social Character in a Mexican Village* provides insight into some of the psychosocial dimensions of class divisions and social hierarchy as a whole. It confirms the Freudian notion that sadomasochism, or

authoritarianism, is a psychosocial system with constituent parts that may either accept their socially expected roles or rebel against them—whether productively or destructively. Similar critical studies could be conducted today into gender, class, caste, and ethno-racial inequalities, as well as political differences, throughout the world. Nevertheless, in light of the hostile and supremacist contemporary discourses around the “culture of poverty,” Maccoby and McLaughlin are right that Fromm’s social-character theory risks blaming the victims of given social structures (119–24). This is certainly a quandary that requires more reflection and investigation.

Authority and *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*

In his inquiry into “Anti-Authoritarian Marxism,” David Norman Smith explains how, in the twilight of the Weimar Republic, Fromm’s cousin Heinz Brandt sought to organize a united front of all anti-fascist forces against the rising Nazi menace. This initiative was promptly crushed by Stalin, in line with the Soviet despot’s disastrous imposition of the doctrine of “social fascism,” which equated the Social Democrats with the Nazis (135–36). Due to such betrayals, Brandt spent a total of 14 years in Nazi and, later, East German prison camps. Intriguingly, Smith traces Fromm’s instinctual revulsion over Stalinist hegemony, and almost unconscious approximation to Trotsky, about whom the psychoanalyst raved: He is “always stimulating, always alive” and “penetrating to the very essence of reality” (138). Such flourishes about the Red Army commander suggest, firstly, that Fromm was ignorant of the fate of the Russian Revolution’s “Third Revolution,” represented by the Kronstadt Commune, the Greens, and the Makhnovist movement: namely, to be crushed by the “People’s Commissar,” Trotsky. Furthermore, despite the analyst’s explicit homophobia, Fromm’s attraction to Trotsky provides evidence of the Freudian theory of

universal bisexuality.

Crucially, as well, Smith introduces Hilde Weiss, a Jewish student of industrial sociology, a mass-striker, and an affiliate of the Red Trade Union International (RTUI). Weiss was the primary author of the study on German workers’ attitudes, *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, that is more commonly attributed to Fromm himself.⁵ Using social-character theory, Weiss and Fromm predicted that small minorities of workers would be militantly *for* (10 percent) or *against* (15 percent) a Nazi takeover of Germany, while the vast majority (75 percent) would remain passive and essentially indifferent (217). The study also found a significant discrepancy between the 82 percent of respondents who professed fidelity to left parties (the Communists and Social Democrats), and the 15 percent who consistently responded with anti-authoritarian views.⁶ In a parallel study, Weiss revealed how workers often deified their bosses, in a revealing example of commodity fetishism *and* sadomasochism, as well as an exhibition of the persistent psychocultural legacy of Prussian militarism and elitism. These self-defeating ideologies were so pervasive as to even permeate Germany’s pyramidally organized left parties—in turn, laying the groundwork for the rise of Hitler.

Although such critique is very apt, it is unclear why someone like Weiss, who lauded Lenin and conformed to Marxist notions of the “dialectical” use of state authority, should be considered a principled anti-authoritarian herself. After all, she joined the RTUI rather than the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers’ Association, co-founded by Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Rudolf Rocker, among others, in 1922. In this vein, Weiss echoes the confusions of the libertarian-communist Otto Rühle, author of “The Struggle Against Fascism Begins with the Struggle Against Bolshevism” (1939), who cherished his personal friendship with his fellow exile in Mexico, one of the leading Bolsheviks—none other than Trotsky

himself (151).

Critique: History, Sexuality, and Internationalism

Whereas *Erich Fromm's Critical Theory* is undeniably an important intervention in psychoanalytic, humanist, and radical theory, some caution is needed with an expressly Marxist interpretation of Fromm's lifework. For example, some contributors express anxiety over the "neo-idealism" of critical approaches based in morality or norms, despite the fact that Fromm himself (like Freud) dedicated much of his life to contemplating the mind, dreams, socialization, and ethics, or the superego (37, 77). Plus, as Maccoby and McLaughlin correctly note, Fromm "rejected the inattention to emotions, morality, and human nature in [the] orthodox version of Marxism" (115). This tension may have to do with an unwillingness on the parts of the editors and contributors to do as Fromm did and criticize Marx himself.

Accordingly, some of the volume's contributors attempt to defend Marx's legacy in a way that is at variance with the historical record. For example, Smith claims that "Stalin's new course—which entailed the violent expropriation of the peasantry, the intensified exploitation of workers, and the eradication of opposition—was a sharp reversal of Marxist doctrine" (132). The distinction made here is questionable, considering how Marx arbitrarily expelled the anarchists Mikhail Bakunin and James Guillaume from the First International in 1872 in order to outmaneuver them, while wrecking the organization, and its cause, in the process.⁷ Additionally, in *Capital, volume 1*, Marx welcomes both the expropriation of the peasantry and the regimentation of the industrial workers as historically necessary steps in the "dialectical" struggle for communism.⁸ For their part, Lenin and Stalin were enthusiasts of Taylorist and Fordist management styles.⁹

It is true that Fromm's critical theory

elides easy classification as being either primarily Marxist or anarchist. Perhaps, he transcends and sublates both categories. To this point, the Anarchist FAQ Collective identifies the psychoanalyst as a "libertarian Marxist[t] close to anarchism." Similarly, Roger Foster and Charles Thorpe view Fromm as a socialist interested in "deep democratization rather than a managerial project," and one who believed in a decentralized, planned economy, as well as humanistic social planning, respectively (90-91, 185). In the end, it was Fromm's radical iconoclasm, arrived at through reflection and self-discovery, that so disturbed Adorno and doomed the psychoanalyst's tenure in the Frankfurt School. Then again, it liberated him to follow his own path.

Unfortunately, this volume has little to say about ecological problems such as global over-heating, except in passing, as manifestations of capital's self-destructive tendencies (75, 184-85, 210). Lundskow curiously equates "raw-food vegan[ism]" with Puritanism, when the Puritans were neither vegetarians nor vegans (59). What is more, in contrast to Puritans, vegans are not necessarily sex-negative. In this vein, we welcome Lundskow's praise for Huey Newton's explicit support for the queer community but lament that no one in this volume acknowledges Fromm's own homonegativity, which is derived from Freud's paternalistic view that gay people suffer from arrested development (65).¹⁰ Rather than be ignored, such limitations must be brought out and criticized.

In terms of international analysis, Langman and Lundskow use a Marcusean term to hail the Arab Spring as an important "great refusal" of domination, but they do not differentiate among the fates of the different uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa (205). Thorpe suggests that the "upsurge of imperialist war in the Middle East has been a major cause of the growth of authoritarianism and nationalism" (177). Presumably, he means war in Iraq, Syria, and/or occupied Palestine, but he does not say. While such a view may

partially explain the recent resurgence of the far right in Europe and the United States, it overlooks the specific actors and mechanisms involved in the case of Syria, who are themselves quite authoritarian and nationalist: principally, Bashar al-Assad and Vladimir Putin. These fascists, in their bloody suppression of the Syrian Revolution over the past decade, have killed up to a million people and displaced millions more across international borders. According to Rohini Hensman, committing atrocious war crimes to provoke mass-refugee flows from Syria has been a deliberate strategy on Putin's part to destabilize the European Union.¹¹ In the struggle to bring Syrian, Russian, U.S., and Israeli war criminals to justice, and to study their examples in the hopes of preventing similar atrocities from recurring, critical Frommian perspectives have much to contribute.

Conclusion

The co-editors and essayists of *Erich Fromm's Critical Theory* have performed an important service by re-engaging the public with the history of Fromm's sociopschoanalysis, in the hopes that the theorist's insights be heeded in the cause of humanistic social reconstruction. Both history and the present attest to the strong anti-humanist tendencies professed by many considered to be on the left—from Georges Sorel and Stalin in the past to the GrayZone of today—thus corroborating Maccoby and McLaughlin's fitting diagnosis of the left as "contradictory, an admixture of tendencies humanist *and* anti-humanist" (135, emphasis in original). In light of this problem, as well as the realities of global

warming and ecocide, persistent political authoritarianism, entrenched sadomasochistic social systems, and disorganized working classes, we see the prospect of new Frommian studies on social character; humanistic, internationalist resistance toward anti-humanist opportunists; and the integration of left psychoanalysis with labor and community organizing as important components in the ongoing struggle for universal emancipation.

NOTES

1. Kieran Durkin and Joan Braune, eds., *Erich Fromm's Critical Theory: Hope, Humanism, and the Future* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020).
2. Erich Fromm, *The Sane Society* (London: Routledge, 1955), 258.
3. Kim Stanley Robinson, *The Ministry of the Future* (Orbit, 2020), 254–55.
4. Erich Fromm, *Social Character in a Mexican Village* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1996).
5. The version published by Harvard University Press in 1984 lists Fromm as the primary author.
6. Lawrence J. Friedman, *The Lives of Erich Fromm: Love's Prophet* (Columbia University Press, 2013), 43–44.
7. Robert Graham, *We Do Not Fear Anarchy; We Invoke It* (Oakland: AK Press, 2015).
8. Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. I: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin Books, 1976), 873–95.
9. Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
10. Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 31.
11. Rohini Hensman, *Indefensible: Democracy, Counterrevolution, and the Rhetoric of Anti-Imperialism* (Haymarket Books, 2018), 233–38.

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Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, & Pseudo-Populist Authoritarianism

SCOTT REMER

IN A SENTENCE WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN penned yesterday, Erich Fromm wrote in his 1941 classic, *Escape from Freedom*, that “the crisis of democracy...confront[s] every modern state.”¹ Fromm was a democratic socialist, philosopher, psychologist, and a member of the Frankfurt School, a group of German-Jewish theorists who analyzed fascism and the pathologies of capitalist modernity. Forced to flee Germany, the Frankfurt School philosophers lived what they theorized. They suffered the Weimar Republic’s collapse, the trauma of WWII and the Holocaust, and the alienating experience of American mass society. For them, deciphering fascism and unmasking the dangers lurking behind the placid façade of consumer capitalism was no idle academic exercise. It had life-and-death stakes. It was an effort to wrest meaning from the cataclysmic collapse of prewar socialist hopes. As Fromm wrote, “When Fascism came into power, most people were unprepared, both theoretically and practically. They were unable to believe that man could exhibit such propensities for

evil, such lust for power, such disregard for the rights of the weak, or such yearning for submission” (8).

Much ink has been spilled in contemporary political periodicals in an effort to understand neofascism’s ascendancy in Western Europe, the UK, India, Brazil, the Philippines, and the United States. Many commentators have looked to Hannah Arendt, who wrote extensively on existential homelessness and the crises of the 1920s and 1930s. I agree that Arendt’s writings provide useful insights into the present.² But fewer commentators—with occasional exceptions here and there—look to Fromm.³ This is a mistake. Fromm was one of the keenest observers of the psychology of fascism. Partially as a result of his experience leading *The Working Class in Weimar Germany*, a 1929-1930 study that investigated blue- and white-collar workers’ unconscious attitudes and assessed their authoritarian propensities, Fromm recognized the dangers of Nazism early on. At his urging, the Frankfurt School relocated to Geneva in 1930. The questions which enthralled him—whether authoritarianism and liberalism were directly connected, how capitalist modernity generates fascism, and how to defeat authoritarianism—remain all too relevant. Fromm’s analysis of authoritarianism, specifically in *Escape from Freedom*, offers us a useful lens for evaluating today’s new authoritarianism and acting accordingly.

The Psychology of Modernity

Fromm begins by observing that modernity unleashes freedom to a degree unique in the

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sweep of history. Capitalism enables individuation, dissolving the “distinct, unchangeable, and unquestionable place in the social world” that denizens of the Middle Ages enjoyed. In the premodern world, people were “rooted in a structuralized whole,” grounded in traditions and obligations that provided “a meaning which left no place, and no need, for doubt” (41). Capitalism brought economic dynamism, but it also destroyed the stability of medieval society, replacing reciprocal obligation with competition. People became alienated from their labor and interpersonal relationships.

Modern life is conducted on a large, mediated, abstract scale. Consequently, people feel alienated as citizens, residents of cities, and consumers, deprived of direct political and economic participation. As Fromm explains, by losing their place in a closed world, people lose the answer to the meaning of their lives; this results in doubts about themselves and the aim of life. They are “threatened by powerful suprapersonal forces, capital, and the market.” Their relationships to other people, each “a potential competitor, has become hostile and estranged.” Each person “is alone, isolated, threatened from all sides” (62).

People can’t endure permanent insecurity and existential vertigo. Against the consciousness of our mortality and insignificance, we need roots. We can’t withstand prolonged loneliness and isolation, bereft of community. Existential angst prompts people to seek methods of escape: “They cannot go on bearing the burden of ‘freedom from’; they must try to escape from freedom altogether unless they can progress from negative to positive freedom” (134).

In the absence of life-affirming outlets for personal expression, freedom becomes “a burden, too heavy for man to bear, something he tries to escape from” (6), giving rise to masochistic tendencies. The drive for individual annihilation and the drive for domination are two sides of the same coin: they are manifestations of a warped desire for

genuine connection. Nationalism, religion, and submission to an authoritarian leader are common mechanisms of escape, “refuges from what man most dreads: isolation” (20).

The nation is a kind of surrogate family, an imagined community that provides shelter from loneliness (19–20). Nationalism provides a psychic income:

Aside from the family, the national pride (in Europe frequently class-pride) gave him [the person without much property] a sense of importance also. Even if he was nobody personally, he was proud to belong to a group which he could feel was superior to other comparable groups (121).

Participation in a nation or an authoritarian movement submerges the individual in something larger, yielding a sense of connection and vicarious power that staves off “the unbearable feeling of powerlessness” and satisfies the human need to belong to “a bigger and more powerful whole outside of oneself” (155).

Fromm’s Analysis of Nazism

The unique value of Fromm’s analysis lies in his ability as a psychoanalyst to skillfully unweave the tangled skein of economic, political, psychological, and cultural factors. This is an understanding often missing from contemporary discussions of neofascism, resulting in immense (and unnecessary) recrimination on the Left between those who understand neofascism economically, as a manifestation of lower middle class frustration and an upper-class defense of class interests, and those who understand neofascism culturally, as a function of racism and xenophobia. Fromm is clear that this dichotomy is false: “Nazism is a psychological problem, but the psychological factors themselves have to be understood as being molded by socioeconomic factors; Nazism is an economic and political problem, but the hold it has over a whole people has to be understood on psychological grounds” (208).

Fromm distinguishes between three groups: Nazi fanatics, people who resigned themselves to Nazism, and those who exploited Nazism to further their economic interests. He categorizes most of the German working class and the liberal and Catholic bourgeoisie as passive collaborators. Fromm explains this reluctance to resist by referring to the “state of inner tiredness and resignation” that the German working class and labor movement felt after a series of post-WWI losses (209), including the defeat of the Spartacist uprising, as well as the fact that the Nazis could exploit the bourgeoisie’s sense of patriotism after they’d commandeered the German state apparatus (210).

By contrast, Nazism appealed emotionally to the “lower strata of the middle class, composed of small shopkeepers, artisans, and white-collar workers.” The Nazi “spirit of blind obedience to a leader and of hatred against racial and political minorities, its craving for conquest and domination, its exaltation of the German people and the ‘Nordic Race’” dovetailed with the lower middle class’s traditional psychological values: “love of the strong, hatred of the weak” (211) and a scarcity mindset.

Even before 1918, the lower middle class’s economic position had been declining, but its vicarious identification with a strong German monarchy and a conservative state and its self-assured faith in tradition and religion gave its members psychological ballast. After World War I ended, traditional certainties dissolved: defeat in war, the Kaiser’s abdication, the founding of the democratic Weimar Republic, a rising working class, hyperinflation, and the Great Depression conspired to undermine the lower middle class’s economic and psychological wellbeing. Thrift no longer made sense, vicarious identification with powerful authorities wasn’t possible, and youth were economically stymied. Rather than understanding their suffering as a class, the lower middle class engaged in projection: they “thought of their fate in terms of

the nation” and “project[ed] social inferiority to national inferiority.” A similar projection occurred with “peasants [who] felt resentful against urban creditors to whom they were in debt” — many rural Germans were also diehard Nazis (216–17).

Filled with resentment at German national inferiority, rural denizens and the lower middle classes sought revanchist national regeneration. Hitler’s sadism — his drive for domination over racial and political minorities — allowed him to achieve psychic fusion with his followers. His authoritarian character resonated with their craving for an authoritarian leader. The lower middle classes, who benefited little economically, derived “emotional satisfaction” from Nazi violence. Nazism, “an ideology which gave them a feeling of superiority,” was “able to compensate them—for a time at least—for the fact that their lives had been impoverished, economically and culturally” (220).

Members of Fromm’s third category—Nazi supporters motivated by self-interest—were instrumental in vaulting Hitler to power. Industrialists and aristocrats acquiesced to fascism to defend their property and profits. Confronted with the specter of communism, “representatives of these privileged groups expected that Nazism would shift the emotional resentment which threatened them into other channels and at the same time harness the nation into the service of their own economic interests” (218–19).

Hitler performed according to expectations: Nazism proved to be extremely favorable for big business and monopoly capitalism. Hitler unified lower middle class true believers and upper-class backers who simply sought protection of their prerogatives: he was “such an efficient tool because he combined the characteristics of a resentful, hating, petty bourgeois, with whom the lower middle class could identify themselves emotionally and socially, with those of an opportunist who was ready to serve the interests of the German industrialists and Junkers” (220).

Fromm's fundamental insight, one that applies equally to fascist *enragés* and ascetic capitalists—who, as Marx remarks, engage in “self-renunciation, the renunciation of life and of all human needs”⁴ simply to amass capital—is that destructiveness is the bitter fruit of thwarted desire. The “passion for destruction” (184) is what remains of *joie de vivre* when one's hopes have been frustrated time and again.

Implications for Today

First, a few caveats: history doesn't repeat itself, and I'm not claiming that Trump is Hitler redux (direct comparisons to Nazism are, with good reason, fraught). That said, Trumpism and other contemporary forms of neofascism resemble the original article. The context in which neofascism has arisen is similarly troubled: the 2008 crash and anemic recovery, soaring inequality, rising prices and declining wages, national defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan, and disruption from the COVID-19 pandemic. The white lower middle class feels threatened. Absent a materialist understanding of its plight, it seeks refuge in nationalism, focusing on supposed national

neofascism. According to Pew, non-college whites comprised 63 percent of Trump's 2016 electoral coalition.⁵ Caveats about the repugnant choice on offer in the 2016 election notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that, despite millions of dollars in anti-Trump campaigning, the Democratic margin among union households dropped starkly: from an 18-point advantage for Obama in 2012 (58 percent-40 percent) to an 8-point advantage for Clinton in 2016 (51 percent-43 percent).⁶ 56 percent of nonvoters in 2016 made less than \$30,000 a year, according to Pew Research figures.⁷ In 2020, the Democratic advantage among union households rebounded—Biden received 56 percent to Trump's 40 percent—but a substantial portion of those making below \$30,000 a year (46 percent) or between \$30,000-\$49,999 a year (43 percent) voted for Trump, even after having seen the implications of a Trump presidency for four years.⁸

As in Germany, where some communist and committed socialist workers did resist, one part of the American working class—largely composed of people of color—has fought back. But as a whole, the American working class is disorganized and demoralized after suffering forty-plus years of neoliberalism, attacks on labor unions, and the frustration of Occupy Wall Street, the Bernie Sanders campaign in 2016 and 2020, and Black Lives Matter protests. Although the Sanders campaigns helped politicize workers, and although labor militancy is on the rise, the working class is still weak and largely depoliticized, and the union movement is enfeebled, unable to organize its members to resist the Right's cynical culture-wars electioneering.

An examination of the partisan breakdown of union households' votes in presidential elections between 1976 and 2016, the forty years that roughly coincide with neoliberalism, reveals that between 30 percent and 40 percent of union households have consistently voted Republican for decades. In 2016, about 6 percent voted third-party

The questions—whether authoritarianism and liberalism were directly connected, how capitalist modernity generates fascism, and how to defeat authoritarianism—remain all too relevant.

decline and humiliation.

Like the German proletariat of yesteryear, the American working class—at least some segments of the white working class—hasn't been able to forcefully resist

or refused to answer), and 3 percent defected from the Democrats to Trump.⁹ Even in late September 2020, after four years of broken promises to labor, union leaders attested to solid support among the rank-and-file for Trump in construction trade unions in swing states like Ohio and Pennsylvania.¹⁰ NBC exit polls in 2020 found that a solid 40 percent of voters in households with a union member voted for Trump,¹¹ and Trump won Ohio union households by 12 percent despite unions spending millions of dollars on anti-Trump campaigning during the 2020 election.¹² The situation is similar in Europe, Brazil, and India: the Left has endured a long period of retrenchment internationally in the face of neoliberal assaults on social democracy, and worker organization has suffered, leaving workers vulnerable to the faux populist siren call of the far right.

As in Germany, the Trumpist coalition includes both an economically squeezed lower middle class and the über-rich, who have used Trumpism as a vehicle for massive corporate handouts, tax cuts, and a spate of deregulation. Trumpism has likewise benefited from sharp tensions between rural denizens and city dwellers. Trumpism is the misdirected expression of the rage of the lower middle class, rural residents who feel neglected, and segments of the white working class.

It is also an upper-class phenomenon. As an excellent analysis by *FiveThirtyEight* detailed, 2016 primary exit polls showed that the average income of a Trump voter was \$72,000, well above the median income.¹³ In a careful accounting in *Jacobin* in 2017, after examining additional polling data and statistics on the class composition of the American workforce, Kim Moody convincingly concluded that “Trump’s victory was disproportionately a middle-class, upper-income phenomenon.”¹⁴ In another 2016 postmortem, Mike Davis concurred, writing, “Endlessly cited have been exit polls that demonstrate Trump’s extraordinary popularity among non-college white men, although the same polls indi-

cate that he ran up his highest margins in middle-class Republican constituencies.”¹⁵ Once he was in power, many of Trump’s appointees were drawn from the ranks of Wall Street and the echelons of corporate

As in Germany, the Trumpist coalition includes both an economically squeezed lower middle class and the über-rich, who have used Trumpism for massive corporate handouts.

America.¹⁶ Tellingly, in 2020, the only income bracket that Trump won resoundingly was the \$100,000–\$199,999 a year: 58 percent versus Biden’s 41 percent.¹⁷ Without collaboration from establishment Republicans and the rich, Trumpism wouldn’t have reshaped the political landscape.

We don’t have to select a single motivation: neofascism is psychological *and* economic. These motivations interact. The lower middle class’s genuine pain and economic desperation leads them to visit this unhappiness on others. Trumpism offers them an outlet for sadism, racism, and xenophobia. It has given them a psychic income, even as it reduced their quality of life by heightening inequality and mauling the social safety net. They enjoy a vicarious connection to Trump, and they can express revanchist nationalism through Trump’s rhetoric and the notion that his movement will “Make America Great Again.” Meanwhile, Wall Street has laughed its way to the bank even as it disdains Trump’s déclassé vulgarity.

Some of Fromm’s observations ring especially true. Trump’s lack of a coherent ideology beyond favoring capitalist interests mirrors Hitler’s “radical opportunism” and lack of

“genuine political or economic principles” (220). Fromm wrote of Hitler that “he never fought against established strong power but always against groups which he thought to be essentially powerless” (232), and the same

We live in a world where
it's easy to lose hope, where
socialism seems like a distant
dream. Fromm argued that the
loss of hope promotes political
resignation.

could be said of Trump and his propensity for picking on the weak. Additionally, Fromm notes of Hitler that

He and the German people are always the ones who are innocent and the enemies are sadistic brutes. A great deal of this propaganda consists of deliberate, conscious lies. Partly, however, it has the same emotional ‘sincerity’ which paranoid accusations have. These accusations always have the function of a defense against being found out with regard to one’s own sadism or destructiveness (228-29).

Such a comment could easily be transposed to Trump.

Fromm’s approach to political analysis—his catholicity in examining economic, political, social, and psychological causes—is worth emulating. So is his appreciation of the fact that “destructiveness is the outcome of unlived life” (184). Socialists must point out the bait-and-switch that pseudo-populists use to seduce the lower middle class and segments of the working class. Nationalism and anti-urban animus distract from real causes of suffering. Anti-Semitism and xenophobia are the socialism of fools. We want to give people the real thing. If we improve material

conditions and give people a chance at genuine happiness, destructive passions will abate and hopefully dissipate in time. The more we—without condescension—unmask the cynical manipulations that Trump and his ilk use to substitute nationalism for class politics, the more successful we will be at building a multiracial, cross-class coalition strong enough to create a world worth living in.

Fromm’s Solution: Hope as a Revolutionary Force; Democratic Socialism as Escape to Positive Freedom

Fromm perceived a direct connection between the contradictions of liberalism and monopoly capitalism and the rise of authoritarianism. The same feelings of isolation, powerlessness, and alienation that spawned Nazism exist in liberal formal democracies, where members of the middle class are menaced by “the power of monopolies and the superior strength of capital” (39) and society is organized on an inhuman scale. Economic and political conditions don’t allow for the “active solidarity” and fulfilling “love and work” (36) that people need to transcend loneliness.

People need security, autonomy, community, love, and meaningful relationships. Democratic socialism—which Fromm defines as characterized by cooperation, democratic control, a balance between top-down economic planning and decentralized, bottom-up mass participation, and the intelligent administration of social resources—would resolve the powerlessness and anomie which epitomize capitalist modernity (271-76). Winning democratic socialism would liberate the individual. Thoroughgoing economic and political transformation will free us to realize our intellectual, emotional, and social potential. Fromm writes convincingly and passionately on this point:

Only if man masters society and subordinates the economic machine to the purposes of human happiness, and only if

he actively participates in the social process, can he overcome what now drives him into despair — his aloneness and his feeling of powerlessness. Man does not suffer so much from poverty today as he suffers from the fact that he has become a cog in a large machine, an automaton, that his life has become empty and lost its meaning. The victory over all kinds of authoritarian systems will be possible only if democracy does not retreat but takes the offensive and proceeds to realize what has been its aim in the minds of those who fought for freedom during the past centuries (276).

We live in a world where it's easy to lose hope, where socialism seems like a distant dream. Fromm argued that the loss of hope promotes political resignation, "physical or spiritual extinction."¹⁸ It turns people into "well-adjusted members of the herd," inducing them to "reduce their demands to what they can get."¹⁹ The perception that genuine social transformation is foreclosed is tremendously destructive for radical politics.²⁰ Hopelessness engenders political defeatism. Speaking directly to our present, Fromm warned of "the danger that the sense of powerlessness which grips people today — intellectuals as well as the average man — with ever increasing force, may lead them to accept a new version of corruption and original sin."²¹

Fromm's declaration that "to hope is an essential condition of being human"²² was a direct response to this self-defeating tendency on the Left. Hope is a revolutionary force. Faith, provided it isn't passive and quietist,²³ is essential for our survival.²⁴ As Fromm wrote, "If people have reasons to believe that they are marching towards a better future, they can move mountains."²⁵

In one of his last books, Fromm preciently warned that "even the remnant of democracy that still exists is doomed to yield to technocratic fascism...unless the giant corporations' big hold on the government (which becomes stronger daily) and on the

population (via thought control through brainwashing) is broken."²⁶ The prospects for halting the world's downward spiral appear remote. But as Fromm reminded us, "In matters of life — be it of the individual or of a society — it does not matter whether the chance for cure is 51 percent or 5 percent. Life is precarious and unpredictable, and the only way to live it is to make every effort to save it as long as there is a possibility of doing so."²⁷ Armed with Fromm's keen analysis of fascism, confident that democratic socialism is the only true bulwark against barbarism, we must do our utmost to escape from fascism and achieve true freedom.

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7. "For Most Trump Voters, 'Very Warm' Feelings for Him Endured: An examination of the 2016 electorate, based on validated voters," Pew Research, Aug. 9, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/08/09/an-examination-of-the-2016-electorate-based-on-validated-voters/>.

8. "Exit Polls 2020," NBC News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2020-elections/exit-polls/>.

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10. Holly Otterbein and Megan Cassella, "Rank-and-file union members snub Biden for Trump," *Politico*, Sept. 22, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/09/22/donald-trump-union-support-snub-joe-biden-418329/>.

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21. Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (London: Routledge, 1965), 21.

22. Fromm, *The Revolution of Hope*, 58.

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26. Erich Fromm, *To Have or to Be?* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978), 180-181.

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Engaging Federici on Marx, Capitalism, and Social Reproduction

SUSAN FERGUSON

THE INTRODUCTION TO *Patriarchy of the Wage* suggests that the collection is inspired by “the feminist return to Marx” (1). What follows, however, is not an extended and developed critique of Marx’s relevance to understanding gender and feminism—this Federici promises to deliver in a forthcoming, second volume. Instead, readers get a “return to Federici.” Outside of a short introduction, the volume showcases no new writing. Yet, while readers looking for something new from this prolific and provocative feminist theorist will be disappointed, the collection of essays delivers a relatively cohesive critique of the bearded man’s ideas and influence—one that is, to my mind, balanced if not always fair.

The discussion of Marx is embedded in Federici’s signature critique of the social reproduction of labor power in capitalist societies. Federici correctly identifies a crucial shortcoming in Marx’s oeuvre: his failure to theorize the production of the very commodity, labor power, upon which he insists capitalist value-making and profits depend. But because she ultimately flattens the distinction between unpaid social reproductive work and waged work, her critique of Marx leads readers down certain questionable paths.

This conflation is symptomatic of a general predicament of the autonomist-influenced feminist tradition of which Federici is part: The impulse to stretch Marxist categories in potentially promising ways is undermined by a lack of specificity that confounds more than it clarifies.

Patriarchy of the Wage: Notes on Marx, Gender, and Feminism

SILVIA FEDERICI
PM Press, 2021, 138 pages

Critical Framework: From Wages for Housework to the Patriarchy of the Wage

To take up Federici’s discussion of Marx, it is helpful to first unpack the book’s wider theoretical scaffolding. Those familiar with her work will know that Federici’s early insights about unpaid housework have developed into a critique of wagelessness that addresses disenfranchised producers in general. She proposes that both capital and Marx fail to recognize these producers despite their essential contribution to capitalism and despite their centrality to a politics of liberation. While the essays in *Patriarchy of the Wage* track this evolution in Federici’s thinking, they do not always address or resolve the difficulties associated with her original formulations—difficulties that stem from equating “capitalistically unproductive” (social reproductive) labor with “capitalistically productive” labor.¹

Chapters One and Two, written in the mid-1970s, introduce the ideas and debates that the later chapters circle back to

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and extend. Here, Federici (and co-writer Nicola Cox) advance the case for theorizing housework and unwaged work as “the pillars of capitalist production” (12), while lambasting “productivist” leftists for their narrow understanding of capitalism as a system of *waged* labor alone and for their disdain for the politicization of housework (instead tying the prospects for women’s liberation to participation in waged labor). “Leftists,” they write, “are not interested in freeing us from housework but only want to make our work more efficient” (26).

These chapters usefully affirm a point that critics often occlude: The Wages for Housework campaign that Federici co-founded was not imagined as a reformist bid for monetary compensation.² It was an *anti-wage*, and therefore anti-capitalist, demand. Campaigners vied “not to be let into the wage relation (though we are unwaged, we were never outside of it) but to be let out, for every sector of the working class to be let out” (19). In refusing to reproduce for capital, Wages for Housework feminists aimed “to be priceless, to price ourselves out of the market” (22). Such paradoxical logic is clever but ultimately confusing: The wage demand is after all, *on the face of it*, a demand for a capitalist wage. Even Federici and Cox cannot avoid the implication, noting, “We want a wage in order to reclaim our time and energy and not have to be confined by a second job because we need financial independence” (20). Unfortunately, Federici misses the opportunity here (in footnotes or later chapters) to address these and other confoundments.

Rather, her later essays, while dropping the wage demand, do not engage critics of her focus on women’s *unpaid* work. In a 2017 essay, for instance, Federici continues to position women’s unpaid domestic and sex work as the defining feature of women’s oppression, writing that “capitalism has empowered men to supervise and command our unpaid labor and discipline our time and space” (44). Without denying that many women are oppressed by

their partners at home, her claim is far from universally true (consider that the number of U.S. households that are headed by single parents or same-sex couples is much higher today than in the 1970s).³ Federici likely wouldn’t contest such facts, but she nonetheless fails to account for them theoretically. Neither does she take up the longstanding criticism (beginning in 1981 with Angela Davis in *Women, Race and Class*) that this portrayal of oppression does not generally resonate with Black women’s experiences.⁴

Federici does address race and racism when she extends her analysis beyond the housewife, though this discussion is brief and unsatisfying. In a 2014 essay, she links the conditions of unpaid, undervalued housewives to those of subsistence farmers and informal laborers who produce the food and clothing that keep the cost of socially reproducing other waged workers low (57). Together, she proposes, these are the workers that capital exploits but does not recognize, drawing on racist and sexist ideologies to divide the labor market. This observation has the virtue of emphasizing that capitalism thrives on multiple forms of work, not just waged labor in the formal economy. And it describes racism as structured into the global organization of the labor market in ways that contain the overall costs of social reproduction. But it theorizes racism simply as an ideology that serves capital, a fairly obvious but not full or nuanced explanation.⁵ Moreover, the passage says nothing about the specificity of racial, colonial, and sexist relations within capitalism, while also effacing any meaningful distinction between the social reproductive work of producing human life and that of precarious informal workers who produce goods and services for the capitalist market (some, not all, of which are essential to life).

This sliding between groups of workers who endure radically different conditions of work speaks to a more general, and frustrating, tendency in these essays to overlook or bypass significant distinctions in favor of making

sweeping claims. We see as much in Federici's uptake of Marxist categories, such as her insistence that unwaged social reproductive work, though not organized directly by capital (57), is nonetheless fully subsumed to capital (42). We also see it in her more descriptive passages, such as her proposal that women's decisions to divorce or bear fewer children constitutes a "revolt" against capital (29) or that women's refusal to reproduce children is the impetus for the "formation of a global labor market" (93).⁶

Yet Federici's sweeping approach has an upside. She is a big thinker, by which I mean someone who never loses sight of the whole, of the capitalist totality. If she often ignores the nuances, she identifies larger patterns that highlight the core dynamics of capitalism. One such pattern appears in Chapters Three and Six, in which she links increasing state intervention in family life (beginning with the passage of protective legislation in England in 1842 and intensifying through the 1870s into the turn of the century with the criminalization of sex work, compulsory schooling, and the emergence of domestic arts training and day nurseries) with the shifts in the dominant form of capitalist exploitation—the shift, that is, from light to heavy industry, which called for a more resilient, disciplined, and "skilled," workforce. Over this period, she writes, social reproduction "becomes the object of a specific state initiative binding it more tightly to the need of the labor market and the capitalist discipline of work" (42). This inaugurates what Federici calls the "patriarchy of the wage," an era that lasts until the 1970s in which the wage grants working-class men control over their wives (and children's) bodies and work.⁷

Federici's commentary here does not acknowledge the complexity of power relations: The state appears to act simply on behalf of the capitalist, and male workers mostly collude in keeping women out of waged work.⁸ Still, the move to track state regulation of social reproduction in relation to the dominant forms of exploitation in capitalist society

is precisely the sort of empirical work that can advance social reproduction feminism as a field of study. If not a novel contribution—Federici's *Caliban and the Witch* along with books by Antonella Picchio and Wally Secombe are trailblazers in this regard⁹—Federici's thesis serves as an important point of reference for further research.

On Marx and Marxism

The thesis on state involvement in social reproduction unfolds as part of a discussion of Marx and Marxism. Here, Federici pursues two questions: Why does Marx not theorize women's oppression and social reproductive labor in particular? And why do feminists need Marxism? She answers the second question without reservation. Marx's historical materialist methodology and analysis are essential to feminism primarily because he provides a language and set of concepts that reveal how the capitalist organization of work is exploitative and based upon social antagonisms and subordination. In "refusing to separate the economic from the political" (52), Marx shows us that the economy is not the closed system that classical political economists would have us believe. Marx is also essential, she proposes, for locating the key to social liberation in the communal organization of work.

Feminists cannot dispense with Marx, therefore. But they must also recognize the limits of his oeuvre and push beyond them if they are to account for women's oppression in capitalist societies. In this, Federici is spot on, helpfully identifying those limits in Marx's conceptual frame and reasoning. But the weaknesses outlined above resurface in her explanation of Marx's shortcomings, leading her to stretch and/or misconstrue the evidence in ways that ultimately produce a one-sided, and thus inaccurate, account of Marx and Marxism.

Federici considers two types of explanation for why Marx was not a feminist, one

taking stock of his socio-historical positioning, the other of his theoretical concepts and analysis. Regarding the former, Federici informs readers that her thinking has changed over time (38–39). In early essays, she writes, she accepted that Marx was writing at a moment when the patriarchal proletarian family was not yet consolidated. Since working-class women and children were, initially, swept into formal waged labor, his neglect of domestic labor is, if not forgivable, perhaps understandable. Today, however, Federici no longer buys this, and what flows from her skepticism is a thoughtful, if not always fair, appraisal of Marx's social and political milieu.

As early as the 1830s, Federici points out, feminist utopian socialists were debating and experimenting with the socialization of housework, while by mid-nineteenth century, women comprised just 20 to 30 percent of factory workers, as many exited waged work upon childbirth. Those who remained struggled for reduced working hours—allowing them to shift domestic work from evenings onto a Saturday afternoon (38–39). So, domestic work *was* an issue for women workers in Marx's time. Moreover, Federici notes, while Marx laments both the harsh conditions of female factory workers and the fact that male heads of households controlled the wages of their wives' labor, he does not attempt to *explain* these gendered power imbalances. Had he done so, she writes, he "would have recognized the existence of a fundamental anomaly in capitalist relations," (85)—namely that juridical "freedom" is not a universal condition of all waged workers.

This leads Federici to a series of speculations. She submits that perhaps Marx was a creature of his time, after all, pointing out that increasingly after 1830, in the state and popular imaginary, "worker" meant "laborious, honest wage worker" (82)—an ethical and rights-bearing figure distinct from more precarious, less trustworthy members of the underclasses. From here Federici moves on to another, less tenable, speculation: Marx's

neglect of domestic labor was a matter of "political expedience" (86). As a leader of the First International Workingmen's Association, Marx, in 1872, supported the ousting of Section 12, led by American feminist Victoria Woodhull. He did so by urging a resolution insisting that two-thirds of the membership of any IWA section be wage earners, thereby precluding any section's domination by unwaged housewives. To shore up the evidence of his sexism, Federici cites Harriet Law, the only woman on the IWA's General Council. Law castigates Marx for his supposed "fence-sitting" (87) in debates over the family wage. Though he supported women's right to work in the factories, he harshly criticized the conditions of such work—a stance Law believed emboldened the anti-feminists. This was possibly politically expedient, suggests Federici, because Marx knew that such a view would go over well with the majority of the IWA membership.

These are tantalizing speculations, even if they are not terribly compelling. As Federici acknowledges, Marx's apparent support for the family wage was possibly "temporary" (87) and no doubt ambivalent because he anticipated the dissolution of the family and believed working-class consciousness could only develop if women were welcomed into the ranks of waged workers.¹⁰ As for Marx's support for the expulsion of Section 12, one should (but Federici doesn't) at least take into account his overt justification, which has to do with fears of middle-class reformers swamping IWA sections, fears that, according to Hal Draper, informed Marx's politics from the 1840s onward.¹¹

While Federici is correct that we cannot excuse Marx for simply being ignorant that unpaid domestic work was a point of individual or collective struggle, it is equally true that we may never definitively know Marx's motivations. And it is for this reason that her other question—about the theoretical apparatus we inherit from Marx—is more germane.

Here, Federici identifies a "contradiction"

(55) at the heart of Marxism:¹² Although Marx saw work as social activity that takes a specific social form, he fails to extend this understanding to procreation, childcare, and domestic and sexual work. His naturalization of these activities is especially vexing because he builds his theory of capitalist accumulation upon the sale of labor power—a commodity that he understood was produced outside the capital/labor relation. Marx, writes Federici, “should have realized that though housework appeared as an age-old, natural activity and a personal service, in reality, no less than the production of commodities, it was a historically specific type of work, a product of the separation between production and reproduction that had never existed in societies not governed by the law of exchange value, and essential, in proletarian communities, to the production of labor power” (39).

Federici accepts that this is at least in part because Marx’s attention in *Capital* is on the “inner logic” of the system (81). “According to his political theory,” she writes, “the sphere of familial and gender relations had no specific function in capital accumulation or the constitution of workers’ subjectivity and class formation” (77). And this, she proposes, leads him to codify the separation between production and reproduction despite apparently knowing better. At this point in the text, Federici directs readers to a quote from Marx’s *Theories of Surplus Value*, Part I, in which he writes, “Productive labor would therefore be such labor as produces commodities or directly produces, trains, develops, maintains or reproduces labor-power itself” (93, n. 21). In appearing to claim that social reproductive labor is value-productive, claims Federici, Marx proves that he saw such labor as “an essential part of capitalist production” (82).

This is, frankly, wrong. The citation is from a passage in which Marx discusses *Adam Smith’s* (not his own) understanding of reproductive labor. And he goes on to say that Smith ultimately *excludes* reproductive labor from the category of labor producing

capitalist value—a *position Marx agrees with*, albeit for different reasons than those Smith gives.¹³ Not only does Federici misrepresent Marx’s view here, the point is irrelevant to the argument that she, correctly, wants to advance. That is, whether or not Marx knew better, he *does* fail to theorize social reproductive work, and this failure stands *despite* his clear understanding that labor power is attached to living labor that is produced in some other way.

Holding that Marx knew better, however, Federici isn’t content to rest with the “inner logic” explanation. And so she reaches for another, rooted in Marx’s apparent misrecognition of what capitalist work is and how capitalism lays the material foundation upon which socialism can be built. Marx, she proposes, defined work narrowly, as male, white, waged labor, ascribing to it positive, liberating qualities. That is, Marx saw the capitalist organization of work into large-scale, industrialized operations as advantageous insofar as it taught workers “uniformity, regularity, and the principles of technological development” (60)—qualities essential to building communism. (She doesn’t explain how he reconciles this view with his critique of alienated labor.) Federici stresses that Marx condemned preindustrial forms of production as backward and put his faith in technology’s productive powers as the basis for provisioning a future socialist society, freeing workers from the drudgery of work.

Yet social reproductive work, Federici observes, is typically resistant to rationalization and technologization, thus falling outside of Marx’s purview. Moreover, far from preparing workers for communism, she notes, capitalism (and automation) *destroys* cooperative forms of work that did exist, robs workers of essential skills and knowledge, and ruinously depletes the world’s ecosystems. Feminists must reject this “machine-based communism” (62) in favor of a politics of the commons that prioritizes self-organized “communing activities,” such as urban gardening, time-banking, and open-sourcing (67). In this way, she

claims, work itself is restructured, subverting capitalist meanings and production of value.

Part of what Federici writes here cannot be denied. Marx did focus on waged work and did have an overly optimistic appraisal of industrialization and industrial work as laying the material foundations for the transition to communism. And she is wise to warn against the idea that workers could simply take over existing technology and use it to advance the collective good. But Marx's views are far more critical than Federici presents—a point she acknowledges almost as quickly as she dismisses. For example, she writes that Marx “intuited” (61, emphasis added) how devastating the mechanization of agriculture was to the soil and the worker. And that Marx “apparently abandoned some of his political axioms” (52, emphasis added) after the Paris Commune and his reading of *Ancient Society*. These are clear understatements that skirt serious engagement with the scholarship of people like Kevin Anderson, Heather Brown, and John Bellamy Foster (all researchers that Federici cites).¹⁴ Downplaying these and other aspects of Marx's critique is consistent with Federici's “big picture” politics but does little to promote confidence in her conclusions.¹⁵

The reader of this review will no doubt sense my ambivalence. It is difficult to make my own sweeping pronouncement about this book. While there is much I disagree with and find unconvincing in Federici's writings, I nonetheless respect and value her contribution. The left needs Federici's tireless commitment to promoting an anti-capitalist theory that highlights the centrality of social reproductive labor, especially one that doesn't shy away from questions about what liberation looks like and how to get there. And in no small way, her analytic conflation and sweeping statements can help advance a socialist critique and politics: They present an opportunity for us to clarify what are often tricky, elusive theoretical ideas and through that, to develop the political arguments that might assist the project of overturning capitalism

and building a better, communal, and truly democratic world in its place. In that regard, this “return to Federici” has much to offer.

NOTES

1. It is important to bear in mind that some social reproductive labor is also capitalistically productive. I make this critique of autonomist-influenced feminism in Susan Ferguson, *Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), Chpt. 8.
2. See Louise Toupin, *Wages for Housework: A History of an International Feminist Movement, 1972–77*, trans. Käthe Roth (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018) for an account of the campaign's misinterpretation.
3. United States Census Bureau, “National Single Parent Day, March 21, 2021,” www.census.gov/newsroom/stories/single-parent-day.html; and “Family Fact Sheet, November 2017,” www2.census.gov/cac/nac/meetings/2017-11/LGBTQ-families-factsheet.pdf.
4. Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (Vintage Books, 1981). A recent study of U.S. Black families also highlights this experiential division: Chrishana M. Lloyd et al., “Family, Economic, and Geographic Characteristics of Black Families with Children,” *Child Trends*, March 5, 2021, www.childtrends.org/publications/family-economic-and-geographic-characteristics-of-black-families-with-children.
5. See, for example, David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 2007) for an account that stresses that race and racism cannot be explained simply by their functionality for capital.
6. For a powerful critique of autonomist-influenced social reproduction feminism's uptake of Marxist categories, see Paula Varela, “Marxism, Autonomism, and Social Reproduction in Dispute,” *Spectre* (No. 4, Fall 2021), forthcoming.
7. The “patriarchy of the wage” era is difficult to reconcile with Davis' critique that Black women have, post-slavery, always worked for a wage, performing domestic work for white households among other jobs; see Davis, *Women, Race and Class*.
8. See, for example, pp. 85–86. For more balanced assessments of working-class support for protective legislation, see the landmark essays: Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas, “Rethinking Women's Oppression,” *New Left Review* (No. 144, 1984), 33–71; and Jane Humphries, “Protective Legislation, the Capitalist State, and Working-Class Men: The Case of the 1942 Mines Regulation Act,” *Feminist Review* (No. 7, 1981), 1–33.
9. Antonella Picchio, *Social Reproduction: The*

Political Economy of the Labour Market (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Wally Secombe, *Weathering the Storm: Working-Class Families from the Industrial Revolution to the Fertility Decline* (London: Verso, 1993); Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004).

10. Federici provides no hard evidence that Marx *actually* promoted the family wage, and she acknowledges that he criticized the capitalist family, seeing women's entry into factory work as a means of undermining patriarchy. Heather Brown's meticulous study of this question supports the view that Marx was ambivalent about women working in factories, but this was not because he endorsed the family wage. His one discussion of it appears in an article for *The People's Paper*, in which Marx reports, without further comment, on *women's* support for the family wage on behalf of their husbands. Brown also notes that these women later struggled with the trade-off between fighting for a family wage and for equal treatment as workers. Heather Brown, *Marx on Gender and the Family: A Critical Study* (Haymarket, 2012), 103–04.

11. Marx is admittedly scathing in his discussion of Victoria Woodhull, referring to the American Section as comprised of “middle-class humbugs and worn-out Yankee swindlers” while calling Woodhull “a banker's woman, free-lover and general humbug.” Aside from referencing her marital status, however, this language is no more harsh than he often used to describe men with whom he disagreed. Karl Marx, “Notes on the American Split,” Marxist Internet Archive, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1872/09/splits.htm; Hal Draper, *Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution: State and Bureaucracy*, vol. 1 (Monthly Review Press, 1977), Chpt. 10.

12. Considering that the theorization of social reproductive work *extends* rather than *overturns* Marx's analysis of capitalism, I quibble with the term “contradiction.” What Federici goes on to describe is more accurately labeled an “absence” or “shortcoming” of Marx's work.

13. See Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus-Value*, Part I,

trans. Emile Burns (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1963 [1861–63]), 262–73. Federici may be picking up on Leopoldina Fortunati's discussion—and misreading—of this passage; see Fortunati, *The Arcane of Revolution: Housework, Prostitution, Labor and Capital*, trans. Hilary Creek (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1995 [1981]), Chpt. 8. Marx calls Smith's exclusion of social reproductive work from “productive” (i.e., value-creating) work “arbitrary,” but he does not do so because he thinks Smith is wrong to exclude it (contrary to Fortunati's interpretation of this passage). He has in fact been arguing for ten pages prior to the passage quoted that much (though not all) reproductive labor is unproductive. (Some “menial” and other personal service work, like hotel cooks and seamstresses in factories, he writes, is commodified and therefore directly part of the capitalist value-making system.) Rather, Marx calls Smith's position “arbitrary” because Smith excludes it from productive work *for the wrong reasons*.

14. As John Bellamy Foster and others have shown, Marx more than “intuited” the effects of agricultural mechanization; he studied the works of German chemist and ecologist Justus von Liebig, whose condemnation of British industrial agriculture helped him theorize the metabolic interaction between labor and the earth and the ecological crisis that capitalist agriculture portended. John Bellamy Foster, “Marxism and Ecology: Common Fronts of a Great Transition,” Great Transition Initiative, October 2015, greattransition.org/images/Foster-Marxism-and-Ecology.pdf. On the evolution of Marx's views on colonialism and gender, see Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins: On Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Non-Western Societies* (University of Chicago Press, 2016) and Brown, *Marx on Gender and the Family*.

15. This one-sided account also promotes a sort of argument by implication, evident, for example, when after claiming Marx “was deeply mistaken” about technology's liberating potential, Federici writes, “Machines are not produced by machines in a sort of immaculate conception” (61). As if this would be news to Marx!

Half-Apology for Apartheid?

DAVID FINKEL

A STRIKING RECENT TREND IN REGARD to Israel and Palestine—one of very few positive developments in an increasingly dismal pattern—has been the growth of pro-Palestinian awareness in the overall U.S. population, particularly in the younger sectors of the Democratic base and Jewish youth in particular. The Israeli Knesset’s passing the “Jewish nation-state” law has accelerated the visible alienation of much of the U.S. Jewish community from its previous unquestioning support for anything Israel does.

Changes in public sentiment of course take much longer to penetrate the corporate-, military-, and lobby-infested halls of Congress, where Rep. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan was verbally assaulted in vicious terms for her courageous one-minute speech against the billion-dollar supplemental appropriation for Israel’s Iron Dome system.

(The Iron Dome appropriation passed in the House by a 420-9 vote and was supported by every Senator, with the sole exception of the semi-isolationist Rand Paul, who blocked “unanimous consent.” I’ve discussed the attack on Tlaib and the Democratic leadership’s silent complicity on the Solidarity website¹ and in *Against the Current* 215, November-

December 2021. Disclosure: Rashida Tlaib is my representative, both in her home Congressional district and in the values she fights for.)

Nonetheless, the shift in U.S. Jewish sentiment has reached the point where Ron Dermer, former Israeli ambassador in Washington, opines that Israel can no longer view American Jews as its unshakeable allies but needs to rely instead on the support of evangelical Christians. Yet even in that

sector, recent polling indicates young evangelicals showing pro-Palestinian sympathies in line with the overall U.S. public.

For those interested in the changing climate among American Jews, Stanley Heller has summarized it on the *New Politics* website.² Norman Finkelstein addressed the trend years ago in *Knowing Too Much: Why the American Jewish Romance with Israel Is Coming to an End* (2012).

Peter Beinart has eloquently stated that the two-state solution is a dead letter and that American Jewish identity must be separated from loyalty to the Israeli state. The growth of the vibrant organization Jewish Voice for Peace and its political action arm JVP Action, as well as If Not Now and various local groupings, and even mainstream Jewish irritation over the Orthodox rabbinate’s monopoly over marriage and conversion in Israel, further illustrate the trend.

Against this backdrop, Susie Linfield’s *The Lions’ Den* reads like an intervention toward holding back this encouraging tide.

The Lions’ Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky

SUSIE LINFIELD
Yale University Press, 2019,
318 pages + notes and index

DAVID FINKEL is managing editor of *Against the Current* and a member of *Jewish Voice for Peace*—Detroit chapter.

Partly a defense of progressive aspirations that were ostensibly embedded in traditional Zionism—in contrast to what she perfectly well knows to be Israel's acts on the ground—it's been widely praised in outlets from the liberal *Moment* to the neocon *Commentary* and advertised on the its cover as “co-winner of the fall 2019 Natan Notable Book Award, sponsored by the Jewish Book Council.”

With those credentials, it may come as little surprise to readers of this journal that it's an irritating, often infuriating book—so much so that this reviewer had to put it aside several times to get enough distance to assess it fairly. In brief, here's why:

1) *The Lions' Den* purports to be a critical dissection of the left's problematic relations with Zionism, but its most interesting chapters (see below) are almost entirely irrelevant to discussions on *today's* actual left, about which Linfield seems to know or care little.

2) Where she does directly address the present left, in a 37-page polemic against Noam Chomsky's writings on the Middle East (“The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” 262-298), she manages to entirely ignore Chomsky's *most important point*.

3) While critically praising, in particular, I.F. Stone and Fred Halliday, Linfield misses a crucial part of what they actually said and meant—characteristic of her myopia with which I'll conclude this review.

What Is Zionism Anyway?

Linfield begins with recognizing the existence of “many kinds of Zionists; unless otherwise noted, I generally take this to mean those who support a democratic state for the Jewish people” (4).

Say what? By this absurdly constrained definition, “Zionism” must be virtually extinct, particularly in Israel where the overwhelming Knesset majority, as well as the courts, enact measures placing the state's “Jewish” character above anything formally democratic about it.

Topping that is the mystification of a

“state for the Jewish people,” privileging non-Israeli Jews over the state's non-Jewish citizens. How that can be “democratic” is something Zionist liberals don't address. This isn't to disparage Israeli democracy entirely: It's possible there to indict a sitting head of government for corruption, unlike the situation in one close-to-home democracy we could mention—but that's a different matter.

Remarkably, to be fair to Linfield, she knows what's happening, as she states explicitly: “Israelis—not all, but a seemingly overwhelming number—have told themselves that the Palestinians are not a people, or that this people does not desire or deserve national sovereignty. ... Israelis have told themselves that they can oppress another nation without wreaking havoc on their own democratic institutions” (300).

Between those two quotes is Linfield's book-length attempt at squaring the circle, mostly through a trip down memory lane interrogating the works of a series of historical authors. As for “the Left,” she proposes that its switch from Israeli to Palestinian sympathies was not so much “the result of the brutal Israeli Occupation” as “the transformation of the Left itself ... from defining itself as anti-fascist to defining itself as anti-imperialist, and to an identification of the formerly colonized peoples of the Third World as the main agents of social justice” (4).

That paints both “old” and “new” lefts with a pretty broad brush. In any case, regular readers of *New Politics* are attuned, I think, to the shortcomings of “Third Worldism.” More to the point here, however, Zionism's quarrel with the left since the 1960s is precisely our recognition—thanks in considerable part to the pioneering theoretical work of the Israeli Marxist Matzpen group—that Israel is a product and ongoing expression of what's called “settler colonialism.”

According to Linfield, this newly anti-imperialist left is largely blind to Palestinian and Arab sins of “rejectionism” and terrorism. That's why it's unfortunately necessary here

to observe—even though it’s generally bad form for a reviewer to critique an author for the book she didn’t write—that *today’s* left is almost entirely absent from her discussion.

She touches briefly on the important work of Rashid Khalidi, particularly his criticism of the Palestine Liberation Organization’s onetime “armed struggle” fetish (prior to transforming to its present role as a subaltern agent of the Occupation) but not his full dissection of Israeli methods of crushing Palestinian aspirations for self-determination. Aside from brief references to Enzo Traverso’s critique of twentieth-century Marxism’s shortcomings in confronting anti-Semitism and the Nazi genocide, today’s left goes virtually unmentioned.

A very brief list of important current writers Linfield never mentions would include Gilbert Achcar (*The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives*, 2010), Norman Finkelstein (*Knowing Too Much*, cited above, and his many other books including *Gaza: A Requiem into its Martyrdom*, 2018), Moshe Machover (*Israelis and Palestinians: Conflict and Resolution*, 2012), Jeff Halper (*An Israeli in Palestine: Resisting Dispossession, Redeeming Israel*, 2008; *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification*, 2015; *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine: Zionism, Settler Colonialism and the Case for One Democratic State*, 2021 [the latter published, of course, later than Linfield’s book]), and many others including the new Israeli historians.

These authors are not obscure, and their works are certainly relevant for a meaningful discussion of today’s pro-Palestinian left. Among historical figures, Linfield’s reading is wide but gap-filled. She focuses on several superstars but appears entirely unaware, for example, of the U.S. socialist Hal Draper who back in the 1950s documented the basic facts of the 1947–49 Zionist ethnic cleansing of Palestine, all hiding in plain sight in a New York YIVO library. (See “The Great Land Robbery,”³ and Draper’s Winter 1967 *New*

Politics essay, “The Origins of the Middle East Crisis.”⁴)

Historical Excursions

The book’s core chapters are a mixed bag, covering “Europeans” Hannah Arendt and Arthur Koestler; “Socialists” Maxime Rodinson, Arthur Koestler, Isaac Deutscher, and Fred Halliday; and “Americans” I.F. Stone and Noam Chomsky. They’re hard to encapsulate in a single review, but they’re most absorbing when the author seems to engage in dialogue across the decades with her subjects.

This requires a certain empathy, best expressed in the chapter “Hannah Arendt. Left, Right or Wrong?” where Linfield works out her own complex relationship with Arendt and the “tortuous saga of Arendt and Zionism” (78). Arendt of course was grappling with intractable antinomies of the mid-twentieth century: the necessity and yet utter futility of Jewish military resistance to Nazism, the desperate urgency of a home for the Jewish refugees and yet the certainty, which Arendt understood all along, that their settlement in Palestine meant an inevitable confrontation with the indigenous population and the larger Arab world. For me this is the book’s best chapter.

On the other hand, Linfield has no affinity with “Arthur Koestler. The Zionist as Anti-Semite,” who “despised the Jews of the Diaspora” yet “wasn’t fond of the Israeli Sabra either” (80). This chapter (I read it so you don’t need to) is of little interest and even less relevance for today. I don’t understand why it’s there. Readers interested in this (two-time) Zionist and anti-Zionist, Communist and anti-Communist, consistent misogynist, science journalist, and purveyor of several crackpot theories can consult his autobiographical works and novels.

Linfield’s engagement with more-or-less-traditional Marxism is her chapters on Maxime Rodinson and Isaac Deutscher. Regarding the former’s critical support of

Arab nationalism, she charges that “Rodinson repeatedly stated that the Arab states had recognized Israel ‘in practice’ after the 1948 and 1967 wars, though he must have known this was untrue” (132).

In fact, serious Middle East historians like Avi Shlaim and Rashid Khalidi, among many others, know it *is* true and that the bloody (and useless) rhetoric of Arab regimes covered up peace initiatives that Israel consistently rejected—because its acceptances of the 1947 UN partition plan and 1949 armistice lines were only tactical.

Rodinson, says Linfield, “often evaded the nefarious and unique aspect of Palestinian and Arab nationalists: their desire not only to build their own state, which is legitimate, but also to eliminate a neighbor, which is not” (132). To whatever extent this is true, it is hardly a “unique” sin among nationalist movements, as is clear from the example of political Zionism *from its very inception*.

At the same time, Linfield recognizes that “[t]hough he [Rodinson] did not believe in the reality of a Jewish people, he believed in the reality of an Israeli people; though he deplored the founding of the Israeli state, its sovereignty was a fact” (135). Here as elsewhere, I don’t think that Linfield recognizes that this distinction is both crucially important and entirely consistent with democratic and socialist principle.

In discussing Isaac Deutscher, Linfield traces his responses to the emergence of genocidal Nazism, the overwhelming tragedy of the destruction of European Jewry, and his shifting attitudes toward the Israeli state culminating in his post-1967 revulsion, all in her view “intimately tied to his conflicted feelings about the Jewish world of his childhood” (155). It seems to me that Deutscher’s changing positions are much more straightforwardly explained in political terms.

Space doesn’t permit here a discussion of a problem that’s not directly related to the Zionist-Palestine conflict: the difficulty of Deutscher, along with many secularists in-

cluding “classical Marxists,” to account for the persistence of Jewish identity, with its ability (like other cultures) to evolve in multiple directions rather than remaining an ossified relic—not only because of anti-semitism. (For

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a detailed treatment of Deutscher’s problematic stance in this regard, I recommend Samuel Farber’s *New Politics* essay.⁵)

Linfield is strongly sympathetic to Albert Memmi and Fred Halliday, and to I.F. Stone, although after 1967 he allegedly “ignored the role of Palestinian terror and the agonies of Jewish history on the Israeli psyche” as well as “the irredentist strain of the Palestinian movement and the larger Arab world” (260). (She seems oblivious to Noam Chomsky’s observation: That “strain” never seriously threatened Israel, while Palestinian or Arab peace initiatives endangered Israeli-U.S. rejectionism and needed to be suppressed at all costs.)

Linfield praises Memmi for his dual anti-colonialism and critique of nationalism. Fair enough as far as it goes, but too comfortable. In favorably quoting *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, she doesn’t come to grips with the stark challenge Memmi posed from the standpoint of his own dual indigenous Tunisian and Jewish identities: “Once he has discovered the import of colonization and is conscious of his own position [vis-à-vis] that of the colonized and their necessary relationship, is he going to accept them? Will he agree to be a privileged man, and to [merely]

underscore the distress of the colonized?” (Memmi quoted by Halper, *Decolonizing Israel, Liberating Palestine*, 8).

Halper takes this as his own challenge to be the “colonizer who refuses” privilege. As I previously noted, he’s one of *today’s* writers of whom Linfield takes no notice, which is a shame.

As for Fred Halliday, Linfield salutes his critical Marxist intelligence but is most laudatory where sharp critique is most required: his despairing embrace of imperialist so-called humanitarian intervention after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. For a more balanced assessment, I recommend Phil Hearsé’s 2002 review, “Fred Halliday and Pax Americana.”⁶

The most infuriating of Linfield’s chapters is on “Noam Chomsky. The Responsibility of Intellectuals,” finding that the key to Chomsky’s worldview and its “weakness” is that “[h]is loyalty to principle has morphed into a crippling ideological rigidity that prevents him, time and again, from apprehending what is happening in the world around him” (297).

Many among Chomsky’s admirers, in fact, would criticize his “rigidity” in clinging to the two-state solution mantra long after it’s become a mirage in the waves of Israeli settlement during these miserable decades after the Oslo Accord. That, however, is definitely not Linfield’s critique.

It would be unbearably tiresome for this reviewer, even more so for *New Politics* readers, to enter into a point-by-point dissection of her contentions that Chomsky ignores Palestinian and Arab rejectionism, reactionary nationalism, brutal regional regimes, and the general reality that “the Middle East is not Chomskyland” (298). Chomsky himself is capable of that slog if it’s worth his time.

The central point that Linfield can’t comprehend is the very title of Chomsky’s major work on the subject: *Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*. “The United States” comes first in the triangle

precisely because, as Chomsky contends more insistently than on any other point, *it’s been U.S. policy and intellectual culture* that has enabled Israel’s rejectionism and its authorities’ “crimes of persecution and apartheid,” in the words of the 2021 Human Rights Watch report.

Linfield takes no note of what Chomsky says about this pivotal issue—nor does she address U.S. policy at all. As I stated at the outset, U.S. political culture is changing at the base—to the alarm and fury of Israel’s propagandists—although not yet in the halls of power. Even with her own criticisms of Israel, Linfield represents a good left-wing liberal arm of the very intellectual culture that’s been Chomsky’s central target—which may help explain why she can’t see the point.

Missing Crucial Distinctions

Two examples in particular, for me, strikingly highlight what I call Linfield’s myopia. The first is her treatment of I.F. Stone’s *Underground to Palestine* (1947 and 1978), a book she knows well (she actually wrote about it back in 2012, in *Dissent*).

Stone’s book is a gripping firsthand report for *PM* magazine of a 1946 voyage of Jewish displaced persons, Holocaust survivors, on a boat illegally headed to Palestine. It’s a story I strongly recommend to activists trying to comprehend the desperate journeys of refugees—then and now, including the horrors we’ve witnessed from Afghanistan and Myanmar to the crime scene at the United States’ southern border—and why the Zionist dream commanded understandably powerful progressive and emotional appeal in the wake of World War II, at a time when the Palestinian people’s own story was essentially untold.

Missing in Linfield’s account, however, is the book’s contemporaneous fate, as Stone recounted when it was reissued three decades later. It’s a story Linfield knows but obviously considered peripheral, yet it’s vitally important.

After the harrowing journey, Stone arranges an interview with Arab League leader Azzam Bey and tells him, “Nothing will stop the people I traveled with from rebuilding a great Jewish community in Palestine” (Stone quoted by Linfield, 240).

Stone’s dispatches were a sensation in *PM*, and the American Zionist leadership intended to promote the book with high-powered funding and a tour. They only wanted a one-word change: that Stone change “community” to “state” in accounting his conversation with Azzam Bey. Stone declined—“Jewish state” wasn’t what he’d said, or what he meant. So there was no promotion or tour, and the book went “underground” until its 1978 republication.

Linfield isn’t covering this up—rather, she simply does not recognize the significance of what the Zionist movement’s 1940s leadership, and Hannah Arendt in her 1945 “Zionism Reconsidered,” already perfectly understood: Zionism had consolidated around an all-out statist program, frontal confrontation with Palestine’s Arab society was certain, and other possibilities including non-statist Zionist dissent were to be suppressed.

My second illustration is Linfield’s quotation of Fred Halliday’s argument that “The Jews of the world are not a nation, but Israelis are not just Jews.

“Israelis ... have a culture, language and history distinct from that of Jews in gentile countries. While Jews do not form a nation, Israelis do” (Halliday quoted by Linfield, 211).

Exactly! It’s the same distinction that some of the authors whom she knows, like Maxime Rodinson and Rashid Khalidi, and others she apparently doesn’t, such as Hal Draper and Moshe Machover, have clearly

laid out. Linfield even goes on to say, parenthetically, “This was not, of course, a Zionist position, which posits that Jews do form a nation.” She apparently doesn’t notice that the point isn’t parenthetical, but *fundamental*.

One is left with a sense that Linfield, like so many liberal Zionists, is caught between living in her version of a bygone dream and her knowledge of the reality that Israel has become, but which she won’t name outright: a *Jewish-supremacist state* with all its ugly implications, making mockery of the so-called democratic state for the Jewish people.

Certainly Zionism is hardly the only movement that turned out quite differently than many of its adherents and allies hoped or intended. Far from it, as we socialists and anti-imperialists know too well. But Linfield’s much-praised book ultimately reflects a liberal-Zionist entanglement that’s not hers alone: They know the truth, but they can’t quite handle it.

NOTES

1. David Finkel, “‘Threshold Crossed’ in Congress: The Assault on Rashida Tlaib,” Sept. 30, 2021, solidarity-us.org/threshold-crossed/.
2. Stanley Heller, “We Anti-Zionists Speak for a Quarter of U.S. Jews,” Sept. 13, 2021, newpol.org/we-anti-zionists-speak-for-a-quarter-of-u-s-jews/.
3. *The New Internationalist*, Winter 1957, 7–30, marxists.architexturez.net/archive/draper/1957/xx/tragedy.html.
4. www.marxists.org/archive/draper/1990/zionism/07-origins.htm.
5. “Deutscher and the Jews: On the Non-Jewish Jew—An Analysis and Personal Reflection” (Winter 2014), 83–96, newpol.org/issue_post/deutscher-and-jews/.
6. *Against the Current* (No. 97, March/April 2002), againstthecurrent.org/atc097/p1289/.

The Life and Political Contributions of Hubert Harrison

BRIAN KWOPA

WITH THE COMPLETION OF HIS biography of Hubert Harrison, Jeffrey B. Perry has made a monumental contribution to our understanding of one of Black history's most important yet neglected figures. Hubert Henry Harrison (1883-1927) was the first Black figure in the Socialist Party of America to organize a Black-led multiracial party formation, the Colored Socialist Club. Harrison spearheaded the World War I-era "New Negro" movement by founding the Liberty League of Negro-Americans and *The Voice* newspaper. He inspired Marcus Garvey to build one of the largest international movements of Black

people in history. Harrison also pioneered the tradition of street corner speaking in Harlem, which seeded the intellectually eclectic, grassroots, and African-centered community culture that endures there to this day. As Perry argues, "Harrison is the key link in the ideological unity of the two great trends of the Black Liberation Movement—the labor and civil rights trend associated with Martin Luther King Jr. and the race and nationalist

trend associated with Malcolm X" (Vol. 1, 5). Yet before Perry's work, Harrison's story was largely unknown. At last, we have a richly textured and two-volume scholarly biography that decisively restores to history a figure who made such important contributions to the Black radical tradition in the early twentieth century.

Perry's first volume features intensive genealogical work on Harrison's ancestry, deftly rendering the historical and economic backdrop for Harrison's birth on the Caribbean island of St. Croix in 1883 and his upbringing in the Danish colony that the United States would acquire during World War I.

Perry also sheds light on Harrison's migration to New York City in 1900, his early experiences in debate clubs and study groups, and his break with religion and role in the anti-religious Freethought movement, along with the fateful termination of Harrison's post office job by the "Tuskegee Machine" for his outspoken criticisms of Booker T. Washington.

The place where Perry's first volume perhaps shines brightest is in his treatment of Harrison's experience in the Socialist Party. Here we encounter the story of Harrison's trailblazing theoretical writings on "the Negro and Socialism," as well as his groundbreak-

Hubert Harrison: The Voice of Harlem Radicalism, 1882-1918

JEFFREY B. PERRY
Columbia University Press,
2008, 624 pages

Hubert Harrison: The Struggle for Equality, 1918-1927

JEFFREY B. PERRY
Columbia University Press,
2020, 988 pages

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ing practical work founding and leading the Colored Socialist Club in Harlem. Failing to convince the party of the need for explicit anti-racist politics and special attention to recruiting African Americans for socialism, Harrison's radical positions on issues like IWW-style industrial unionism, direct action, and the Paterson Silk Strike eventually drew the ire of the white and politically moderate party leaders. They responded to Harrison's radicalism and racial arguments with, in his words, a "most contemptible form of persecution" (Vol. 1, 212).

As a socialist, Harrison had argued that due to the history of slavery, African Americans formed a group that was more essentially proletarian than any other American group. He maintained that the capitalist class sustained racism and racial prejudice in order to keep wages low, strikes infrequent, and workers divided. If not organized as socialists, Black workers would thus be used against the labor movement to the detriment of Black and white workers. Therefore, for Harrison "the Negro" formed "the crucial test of Socialism's sincerity." In its 1912 convention the national party took the position that racial differences were due to biology rather than socio-economic factors, and the New York local censured Harrison and aborted his precious Colored Socialist Club. Harrison's experience led him to reconsider his faith in the capacity of the advocates of proletarian emancipation to manifest any substantive commitment to the most essentially proletarian group in the country. As Harlem-based historian John Henrik Clarke once quipped, Harrison "was a socialist until he discovered that most socialists are not true to the teachings of socialism."

After parting ways with the white radicals in the Socialist Party, Harrison devoted himself to organizing and empowering the Black community in his home neighborhood of Harlem. In response to President Woodrow Wilson's decision to take the United States into World War I in 1917, Harrison founded

the Liberty League of Negro-Americans, which was the first wartime-era organization of the "New Negro" movement to emerge in Harlem. The League offered a Black radical alternative to the pro-war liberalism of the NAACP, and Harrison's journalism exposed and thereby aborted W.E.B. Du Bois' attempt to become an agent of U.S. military intelligence amid the patriotic fervor of World War I. Perry's first volume ends with the Liberty Congress of Negro-Americans, the historic convening of dissident and "New Negro" activists in Washington DC in 1918 that elected Harrison its chairman and petitioned for federal anti-lynching legislation, despite the heightened wartime state repression of the Espionage and Sedition Acts. What a story!

Perry continues in the second volume where the first left off, chronicling Harrison's travels to places like Virginia and Chicago, his work as a freelance educator, and the creation of his final organization effort in the form of the International Colored Unity League. Crucially, this volume also covers Harrison's relationship to Marcus Garvey, his time as editor of Garvey's *Negro World* newspaper, and his role as a left-wing voice within the Universal Negro Improvement Association. This is an area, among many others, where Perry's work is illuminating, particularly for the way in which his reconstruction of Harrison's life story and vantage point reveals new perspectives on the rise and fall of Marcus Garvey. Although Garvey's movement drew much inspiration from the model of Harrison's Liberty League, it ultimately came to embody an authoritarian form of Black nationalist capitalism and imperialism that repulsed Harrison and led to his departure from Marcus Garvey's employ—not to mention some very trenchant criticisms of Garvey. Summing up Harrison's significance to socialism and Garveyism, Perry writes memorably of how "in the period of the First World War, Harrison was the most class conscious of the race radicals, and the most race conscious of the class radicals" (Vol. 1, 17).

Although Perry is not the first person to write about Harrison or to try to preserve his legacy, the depth of this biography has surpassed all previous such efforts. Harrison contemporaries like J.A. Rogers and Richard B. Moore included Harrison in their writings about Black history and Harlem intellectual life. In the 1980s, historians like Wilfred Samuels and Portia James published the first academic journal articles on Harrison. Since then, other scholars have written a Harrison-inclusive article or book chapter here and there. Unfortunately, all of these works have been exceptions to the general rule of Harrison's near-erasure from mainstream history and memory. For example, a recent book surveying 400 years of African American history by Harvard University professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. makes *no mention* of Hubert Harrison. Similarly, the University of Oxford's five-volume *Encyclopedia of African American History* mentions his name only four times and only in passing. And there has been no book-length biography of Harrison ... until Perry.

As a result, it has been a Herculean effort to recover Harrison, and the amount of labor Perry devoted to this objective is truly awe-inspiring. In the early 1980s, Perry wrote a PhD thesis on Harrison, in the course of which he built a relationship with Harrison's descendants. They gave him access to a whole trove of Harrison's papers, including his diaries, scrapbooks, correspondence, and various published and unpublished writings. In 2001, Perry edited and published *A Hubert Harrison Reader*. Then Perry compiled, sorted, organized, cataloged, and donated the papers to Columbia University, laying the basis for what is now the Hubert H. Harrison collection, much of which is accessible online. Drawing on this unique set of sources, Perry has rendered the chronology of Harrison's life in stunning detail. Indeed, the biography achieves a standard of rigor and meticulousness that only his nearly forty years of research could produce.

One question inevitably arises in studying Harrison: Why has he been so marginalized in history and memory? As Perry explains, "Harrison was poor, Black, foreign-born, and from the Caribbean. Each of these groups has suffered from significant discrimination in the United States and limited inclusion in the historical record." Not only that, but Harrison

opposed capitalism, white supremacy, and the Christian church—dominant forces of the most powerful society in the world. ... Though he worked with many organizations and played important roles in several key ones, he had no long-term, sustaining, and identifying relationship with any [single] organization or institution, and so lacked the recognition and support that would have come with such a tie." (Vol. 1, 13)

And finally, "Harrison's willingness to directly challenge prominent leaders and organizations in left and African American circles stung many of the individuals ... and groups ... most likely to keep his memory alive" (Vol. 1, 14). That Harrison could remain so obscure for so long is also testament to how pervasive the very power structures that Harrison was contesting in the early twentieth century have remained, including their role in shaping how historiography is done.

Perry's recounting of so many details of Harrison's personal chronology sometimes leaves the reader wanting more emphasis on analysis that could draw out the deeper meaning of those details. For example, in Vol. 2 (613) we learn that in 1924, Harrison met an aging Ida B. Wells-Barnett in Chicago and was given a cordial reception at her home. Yet we get only one sentence about it. One wonders whether more could have been said about the significance of Wells-Barnett's own groundbreaking role in spearheading the anti-lynching movement in which Harrison and so many others would come to labor. Similarly, one wonders what political or intellectual fruits came (or might have come) out of this historic crossing of paths between two titans

of the Black radical tradition. Contextual perspectives like these could help form an even fuller appreciation of the significance of the details that Perry's biography chronicles.

Nevertheless, Perry's decisive and incontrovertible historical restoration of such a towering influence as Harrison invites both scholars and activists alike to rethink the meaning of the Black political and intellectual traditions upon which Harrison's restoration has bearing. As a prime example, I myself began an exploration that is culminating in the writing of my own book on Harrison. Thanks to Perry's work, I am able to use Harrison and his vantage point as a vehicle through which

to rethink larger themes like Black Marxism, Black (inter)nationalism, Black Freethought and the church, African-centered knowledge in the diaspora, Black masculinity and sexuality, and the "Harlem Renaissance." These are subjects whose discussions and reference points have too often neglected Harrison, despite his unique theoretical, practical, and at times contradictory contributions to them. Perry's tribute is indispensable for understanding the great stimulus Harrison's example contributes toward an expanded "sense of possibility" for Black liberation, both in Harrison's time and in ours.



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What Is Social Reproduction Theory Trying to Explain?

LILLIAN CICERCHIA

SUE FERGUSON'S *WOMEN AND WORK* has the great virtue of giving a history of various theoretical trends in feminist thinking about, well, work. If you have ever, like me, had the experience of wading into literature on this topic and left feeling more disoriented than before you began, Ferguson's book does the service of putting various arguments into their context as well as relating them to one another. Indeed, one of Ferguson's goals is diagnostic: to disambiguate trends in feminist theorizing about the relationship of women's work to their oppression, so as to develop a more coherent socialist feminist perspective than currently exists.

Why might one need a diagnosis of this kind? One learns quickly that many feminists talk about work, so a first glance may give the impression that they mostly agree. Certainly, liberals are often the ones who criticize gender norms and promote body positivity and strong friendships with other women, and one

Women and Work: Feminism, Labour, and Social Reproduction

SUSAN FERGUSON
Pluto Press, 2019, 192 pages

tends to gravitate to the left if one wants to get to the bottom of things. But left-liberals, radical feminists, and socialists alike have a history of identifying the kind of work that

women do, both in certain "feminized" segments of the labor market and in the home, as a core cause of women's oppression. This similarity notwithstanding, the

radicals and the socialists tend to equate liberalism with white, wealthy, professionals whose leading lights are the likes of Hillary Clinton and Susan Sontag.

This equation always felt like a cheap shot at the liberals to me. It might make for a good polemic, but it's not all that analytically meaningful. Liberal feminism can be egalitarian, and its theorists sometimes make extraordinarily similar claims to those made by socialists regarding issues like domestic labor, labor market discrimination, universal childcare, family leave, sexual agency, challenging the conceptual distinction between the public and private domains, and so on. They are not always, in fact, anti-egalitarian, racist, status-clinching monsters trying to break a mythical glass ceiling. Liberals quite often agree that such an aspiration is completely insufficient, and their ranks include plenty of women of color, too.

Ferguson helpfully avoids cheap shots in the interest of figuring out what the meaningful analytical and political differences among

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us really are. Instead of the usual political distinctions like the ones that I have mentioned, she uses conceptual distinctions to describe historical-theoretical trends. First, Ferguson describes “equality feminism” as one of the earliest trends to discuss women’s work. Equality feminism leverages rational-humanist arguments to justify women’s equality with men by virtue of their capacities to act as independent, thinking persons.

A standout equality feminist is Mary Wollstonecraft, who saw women’s work as part of the problem and the solution. She was scathing toward the frivolous lives led by aristocratic and middle-class women, arguing that the path out of their dependency on men is through work. Wollstonecraft was indebted to the radical republican ethos of her time, which had some real strengths, but Ferguson argues that Wollstonecraft has the shortcoming of taking class divisions among women for granted. Thus, she concludes that working women are paradigms of autonomy rather than oppressed for reasons that differ from their wealthy peers. She does not interrogate the form that their labor actually takes on its own terms, or the relationships in which it is embedded. Wollstonecraft is not unique in this regard, but she is paradigmatic.

By contrast, critical equality feminism develops an analysis of reproductive labor under capitalism that is more historically specific to its form. Beginning with the utopian socialists, like Flora Tristan, critical equality feminism notices that there is some reciprocity between how the economy is organized and how people organize themselves. In political-economic language, there is a feedback loop between production and reproduction. Although they don’t develop this analysis systematically, critical equality feminists see the desirability of communalizing reproductive work. They frequently see work as a source of suffering, but also as having a creative potential. To change society fundamentally, one must change how one produces life itself, not just how one produces

the things that we need to live life.

Ferguson’s distinction between equality and critical equality feminism is rarely examined. But, as she points out, it is crucial for developing a coherent account of women’s oppression, and not one that assumes that work, generically speaking, will liberate the millions of women who already work in a manner that is undesirable or unjust for historically particular reasons. The analytical payoff is appreciating the political difference between the demand to do more work or to transform work. The latter is where Ferguson places her political allegiances so as to have an inclusive feminist perspective that avoids elitism by class and race.

The prescriptive part of the project is to endorse social reproduction theory, which, Ferguson argues, is the most capable of the socialist feminist traditions of understanding capitalism’s distinct system logic. Social reproduction theory de-centers household labor, which goes a long way to taking on-board Black feminist critiques of that focus in the other traditions. For social reproduction

Ferguson helpfully avoids cheap shots in the interest of figuring out what the meaningful analytical and political differences among us really are.

theory, capitalism reproduces gender and race relations as it demands that certain populations reproduce the life that is required for its use of labor power.

Ferguson’s recommendations are to see how an analysis of this process of social reproduction plays out regarding a host of oppressions, including sexuality, disability, and others, as well as in “non-productive” institutions like schools, daycare centers,

and hospitals. Politically, she supports a web of alliances between workplaces and non-workplace sites of reproduction to transform both from the ground up. There is much to recommend in what this latter ideal of what taking social reproduction theory on board in socialist politics might entail. Indeed, it is quite necessary for all sustainable strike actions to have the support of non-workplaces. Systematizing why that might be so, and why one should further exploit the opportunities therein, can only be a good thing.

Ferguson uses the idea of a “social reproduction strike” as an example of a political strategy that follows from her interpretation of social reproduction theory. By way of example, she foregrounds the “Feminism for the 99%” slogan and the “Women’s Strike” organizing efforts around International Women’s Day (1-8, 121-39). Ferguson’s political adherence to the idea of a social reproduction strike throughout the text is reason to wonder whether social reproduction theory is being made to fit political reality, or the other way around.

The Women’s Strike in the United States had some organizing legs in 2017, in the fallout after Donald Trump’s election. But

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it did not continue to draw much interest. I suspect that whatever initial enthusiasm existed was a spillover from the Women’s March on Washington. And it makes sense that American women in general have little interest in striking in this way. There are

relatively few legal or economic cross-class obstacles that they have in common, the existence of which are normally the basis for a politically distinctive, mass feminist movement, as in South America.

Indeed, Ferguson seeks to deploy social reproduction theory as the key to unlocking the potential of a mass feminist movement that not only has feminist goals but develops in a way that makes socialist revolution its logical conclusion.

This motivation drives what seems like a functionalist argument throughout the book, despite Ferguson at one point briefly criticizing such explanations for reducing oppression to what facilitates capital accumulation. She criticizes critical equality feminists for having “tended to default to a functionalist logic, explaining gender relations as shaped by the demands of capital to keep wages as low as possible” (87). A functionalist argument explains a phenomenon by its tendency to have an effect. Critics of functionalist explanations usually point out that they neglect to posit a causal mechanism for how the phenomenon X comes to have a certain effect Y, instead relying on overly vague claims about the inherent potential of X to bring about Y. Functionalist explanations are notoriously resistant to the kind of counterfactual reasoning that one might use to explain why a phenomenon had one particular effect instead of another, or how the phenomenon changes over time relative to other changes in a system. Thus, even if functionalist explanations are logically valid or one can say that their premises are true, they do not explain as much as they advertise. They can instead come to reflect motivated reasoning.

The relevance of this point is that I do not see why Ferguson offers an altogether different explanatory framework. At one point, she says that it is insufficient to explain women’s and racial oppression via capital’s need to funnel those populations into low-wage work to divide, conquer, and better exploit workers, but she normally explains

oppression by how it “enables,” “ensures,” “sustains,” or “reinforces” the labor power required for capital accumulation. The latter all mean the same thing, which is that racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, and so on exist because capitalism needs reproducible labor power that is cheap, segmented, or atomized. For example, Ferguson argues that capitalism must “sustain and reinforce racist and patriarchal practices and relations that degrade some bodies more than others” and that “this socially differentiated workforce reinforces and sustains the conditions for capital accumulation” by keeping “the costs of social reproduction lower by ensuring some people take on labor at a free or low wage” and by ensuring “a steady supply of sufficiently marginalized and precarious workers prepared or forced to accept waged work that is unregulated, unhealthy, and poorly paid” (115–16).

Theoretically, functionalist explanations tend to emerge from overburdening a theory with unrealistic expectations, given existing limits on our knowledge. They tend to reach beyond those limitations in a way that is hard to falsify. In the Marxist tradition, the motivation for doing so has been to try to link together many social issues into one potential revolutionary movement. Ferguson shares this motive, but is also more specific in her stated desire to avoid “class reductionism.” The latter is presumably the point of view that would most fail to create the requisite revolutionary link, although Ferguson never quite defines what it means. I suspect that wanting to avoid this third rail leads Ferguson to oscillate between criticizing functionalist explanations for reducing race and gender to the logic of capital accumulation in one chapter, while doing much the same thing in the next.

There were two political trends that seemed more, and not less, ambiguous after reading *Women and Work*. I was left wondering what the difference is between a class reductionist perspective and a feminist one, at least in the medium term. Is it a commitment to

build alliances between workplaces and non-workplaces? To organize the unorganized in feminized service sectors or those dominated by migrant workers? To represent enough women in unions so that they have leverage

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to demand universal daycare and family leave? To involve health care workers in a universal health care campaign (and use it to expand reproductive rights)? But then again, none of these seems reductive to me. And even if one were to think so, it is nonetheless urgently important to emphasize them at a time when mainstream feminism has for many years been undergoing a full-blown discursive revolution under the heading of diversity, equity, and inclusion. My own view is that left feminists would do well to free themselves of this preoccupation with class reductionism. It is an albatross that may not have as clear of a referent as its critics assume.

Undoubtedly, however, these questions wouldn't have emerged without Ferguson's careful framing of the debates surrounding women and work. One very good reason to read Ferguson's book carefully is that she lays out the issues, doesn't hide behind political labels, and advances a sophisticated analysis that crystallizes some contemporary thinking. One may now respond by thinking much more clearly than before about the big-picture questions for socialist feminist theory today: Where have we failed, what is our progress, and most importantly, how can we make our analysis politically relevant in the twenty-first century?

The Centrality of Dialectics in Marxist Theory and Politics

SUDDHABRATA DEB ROY

KEVIN B. ANDERSON'S¹ LATEST offering, *Dialectics of Revolution*, brings forward diverse perspectives on the concept of dialectics that have been discussed over the past two centuries. Beginning from Hegel, Anderson extends the discussion to Marx and then further on to Marcuse and Lukács. He also takes up positions regarding prominent social thinkers of the contemporary era, which include Pierre Bourdieu, Giles Deleuze, and Antonio Negri among others. The most interesting part of his critiques and appreciations of thinkers is that throughout the course of the book, Anderson never really criticizes merely for the sake of critiquing but instead keeps referring the reader back to his primary agenda, which forms the vantage point through which he is looking at the ideas—*Dialectics*.

Anderson has been a committed Marxist-humanist for the last four decades. His academic writings have focused on the primacy of dialectics not only as a mode of analysis but a philosophy of organization and Marxist working-class movement itself (4). However, because of the broad stretch of time that these essays cover, there are certainly some

discontinuities (5), but they only add to the original scope of the book because they add to the human development of the particular intellectual, especially one with as diverse a field of operation as Kevin Anderson.

The book begins with his and Peter Hudis's² jointly written piece on the concept of dialectics, in which they argue that Hegelian dialectics is embedded within

Dialectics of Revolution: Hegel, Marxism, and Its Critics Through a Lens of Race, Class, Gender, and Colonialism

KEVIN B. ANDERSON
Daraja Press, 2020, 254 pp.

the socio-historical development of human civilization, especially focused on the periods ranging from the Age of Enlightenment to the French Revolution in 1789 (13). These two epochal events form the backdrop for most of Hegel's influential works. However, with Hegel, as with other thinkers like Darwin, there are two schools of interpretation—one on the right and one on the left.³ Marx critiqued the conservative aspect of Hegelian socio-political theory and emphasized the ideas of Hegel that bring forward the centrality of the dialectical mode of thinking. For example, in Hegel's writings, elements like contradiction are usually presented within the realm of human consciousness, which though "rooted in the experience of human labor, is privileged over the fullness of human praxis, both mental and manual" (15). But, with Marx, this notion of contradiction finds a materially tangible basis within the realm of political economy.

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After discussing Hegel and his relationship with Marx's writings, the book moves further on to the Russian revolutionary Vladimir I. Lenin and other post-Marx Marxists. There is a considerable amount of discussion on Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*, which have been relatively undiscussed in other books and writings on the questions of dialectics. The book also references the Hungarian philosopher György Lukács and his often-neglected work *The Young Hegel*.⁴ Anderson argues that Lukács attempted to recover the revolutionary dialectics of Hegelian Marxism from crude materialist writings that had dominated much of the revolutionary praxis of the twentieth century (126). Lukács was one of the first Marxists of his times who argued about the centrality of the "standpoint of the proletariat"⁵ and the criticality of the idea with reference to how he views the totality being in a dialectical relationship with the existing capitalist reality (132). According to Anderson, Lukács was against intuitionism, but his arguments are weakened by the outright rejection of any romanticism in *The Young Hegel* (139). Lukács' Hegel is more concerned with economics and labor in a relatively crude materialistic manner, which can be analyzed as a practical necessity because of the pressure exerted by the Soviet Union under Stalin (133, 140, 150). These points raised by Anderson become critical if one is to analyze the fetishist desire among most twentieth-century Marxists to explain and counter philosophical questions at the level of human praxis through crude materialist praxiological understanding (53). This becomes clearer if one considers the point that historically "Stalinism ... returned most of Marxism to such crudely materialist and positivist views for many years. Even Trotsky, despite his political opposition to Stalin, certainly never freed himself from positivist and Kantian categories at a philosophical level" (133).

Along with Lukács, Anderson brings to light some of the important points raised by

the critical theorist Herbert Marcuse within his discussions on Hegel. He particularly focuses on Marcuse's *Reason and Revolution*⁶ and the importance of the text as an original contribution in the field of Hegelian Marxism. *Reason and Revolution* was the first systematically arranged Hegelian Marxist book to appear in English that focused on the critical aspects of much of Hegel's most important writings. Anderson refers to Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*⁷ and his writings on revolution, and he notes,

However much it was expressed in a language of deep pessimism about the human prospect, it is clear that Marcuse's revolutionary vision encompassed the need to overturn totally the capital relation, the class society upon which it was based, and its noxious by-products, from aggressive militarism to stultifying social conformity in the consumer society. In short, a total uprooting was needed, however unlikely that might seem as a concrete historical possibility. (184)

Along with the aforementioned theorists, Anderson also focuses on the issues that are raised by Lenin in his 1914-15 writings on Hegel and brings to light the contradictions that can be studied when they are contrasted and compared with the writings on Lenin, primarily those by Althusser and Sheehan among others (61). Anderson's focus, it must be mentioned, remains upon shedding light on the Hegelian Marxist in Lenin and not on the positivist anti-Hegelian Marxist that most deem him to be. He refers back to Lenin's statement to further emphasize the centrality of the need to study Hegel when studying Marx: "It is impossible completely to understand Marx's *Capital*, and especially its first chapter, without having thoroughly studied and understood the *whole* of Hegel's *Logic*. Consequently, half a century later none of the Marxists understood Marx!" (*Lenin Collected Works*, Vol. 38, quoted at 63).

Anderson brings out a picture of Lenin that sees the crude materialist Lenin in a

dialectical relationship with the Hegelian Lenin; this remains one of the most enamoring aspects of the chapters dedicated to Lenin in the book. Anderson's Lenin is the dialectical Lenin. In the discussion on Lenin and the importance of dialectics in his works, Anderson lays considerable focus on the theories regarding imperialism and national liberation struggles to exemplify his point. He refutes the conflation of Lenin and Bukharin by the dogmatic anti-Leninist Marxists and instead tries to bring forward their theories in a new light. In his account on imperialism, Anderson argues,

To be sure, the two Russian Bolshevik theorists of imperialism were closer to each other's views than to those of any of the German interpretations mentioned above. Nevertheless, I argue below there were important and usually overlooked differences between Bukharin and Lenin on imperialism. These differences emerge more clearly if one discusses the two Bolshevik theorists' analysis of national liberation movements alongside their study of imperialism proper. (69)

The beauty of Anderson's book lies in his continuously relating his own ideas to those of the classical dialectical thinkers such as Hegel and Marx. He makes use of the arguments put forward by Raya Dunayevskaya, which are based on the dialectics of organization and philosophy. A critical look at the relationship between philosophy and organization not only allows one to look at the overall totality of existent reality but also enables one to delve into the multiplicity of issues that co-exist within a revolutionary movement. Dunayevskaya's vantage point on dialectics as a philosophy of revolution remains a highly relevant tool in contemporary revolutionary analysis. Her focus on the Hegelian concepts of abstract negativity and concrete universality help in understanding the nuances of the Marxist mode of dialectical thinking, which can provide pathways toward a more detailed comprehension of the revolutions taking place

in underdeveloped or developing nations such as Russia (189). Dunayevskaya's approach becomes relevant because she did not succumb to either crude materialism or to romantic idealism. Instead, she focused on the coexistence of both in a dialectical relationship. Her ideas, and Anderson's, about dialectics and its centrality are based on the elements of both idealism and materialism coexisting in the 1844 Paris *Manuscripts* of Marx. This is an argument that is often refuted by scholars of both the left and the right, especially those belonging to the crude materialist school of the former.

The revolutionary legacy of Lenin has to be found in his dialectical arguments and in taking his theories in light of the existing praxis of the times in which he wrote as a holistic model to be referred to, not imitated, in the contemporary struggles, as Anderson argues (53-54). In this light, Dunayevskaya's argument on the dialectical Lenin, with regard to national liberation struggles, can be taken up: "As opposed to Bukharin's (and many others') concept of capitalist growth in a straight line, or via a quantitative ratio, Lenin's own work holds on tightly to the dialectical principle, 'transformation into opposite.'"⁸

Anderson proceeds further to bring out sharp critiques of some of the most prominent contemporary social philosophers. One of his sharpest critiques is of Michel Foucault, who is often referred to as "a demigod" within contemporary social sciences and humanities because of his theories on power and authority. These accounts more often than not leave out the requisite critical evaluation of Foucault's ideas. Anderson notes that Foucault's theories lack the essence of emancipation and instead argue only for resistance with very little emphasis on the result of the resistance, an argument that also finds resonance with Marxist Autonomists like Holloway.⁹ Anderson's critique of Foucauldian theories also stresses Foucault's outright non-dialectical rejection of Marxist ideas and his support for authoritarian Islamic socio-political per-

sonalities during the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79 (183-184).

The socio-biological and evolutionary biological thinking that often focuses on a non-dialectical mode of thought are also criticized in the book (156-157). This also forms one of the bases of the book's critique of Engels' positivism and his notion of Marxism as a "naturalistic" science, which is often heralded by many on the left as one of Engels' great achievements. However, it must also be remembered that Anderson does not critique thinkers merely for the sake of critiquing but rather does it because of their stance on the question of dialectics. For example, in his critique of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*,¹⁰ a book that has found considerable space in the present author's own writings, Anderson analyzes Negri and Hardt's theories as highly postmodernist, based on the assumption that Hegelian dialectics is based on the fusion of totality and teleological reason:

They attack Hegel as a theorist of capitalism and colonialism. They target as well, all forms of dialectic, including Marxian dialectics, as part of "logic of modern domination." ... They are referring, of course, to the type of procedure in Hegel's *Logic* where identity breaks down into difference but then difference is subsumed by contradiction. ... They conclude that "the postmodernist project must be non-dialectical." (159, 160)

Similar is his argument against French Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whom Anderson categorizes as someone fundamentally opposed to all forms of humanism or idealism, even if they are revolutionary in nature (158). The book also traces out a dialectical opposition to other thinkers, like Richard Rorty¹¹ and Jacques Derrida. Regarding Derrida,¹² the book describes his contribution in an appreciative manner because of Derrida's "hauntological" insistence on the much-needed academic emphasis on Marx's original writings. However, that being said, the book also critiques Derrida because of his notion of

the permanence of fetishism and his idea of Marxism being "an attempted (undialectical) exorcism of the fetish" (174-175).

Capitalism has a homogenizing tendency rooted in its intrinsic character, whereby it attempts to universalize oppression and exploitation. The book lays the groundwork for working through both the theory of concrete universals and the power of abstraction to counter the power of capital (201). It reveals Marx as a philosopher who retains his contemporariness even in the twenty-first century and analyzes him as someone whose ideas pierced the national, ethnic, gender, racial, and regional boundaries of capital accumulation. The book ends with a captivating discussion on Anderson's acclaimed 2010 book, *Marx at the Margins*,¹³ where he concluded that "Marx's critique of capital was both global and local, both universalizing and particularizing" (186).

The originality of Anderson's writings collected in the volume stems from his deep-rooted conviction regarding the importance of the dialectical mode of thinking. The book lays forward an important contribution toward analyzing contemporary society through a vantage point informed by the "whole of Marx," without descending into the simplistic idealism-materialism duality debate. Anderson's *Dialectics of Revolution* remains not only highly contemporary but also a very critical contribution to Marxist theory in general.

NOTES

1. For further details on the author, refer to his website kevin-anderson.com.
2. Peter Hudis is the writer and editor of numerous books and articles on Marxist theory and Marxist-humanism. He is also the general editor of Verso's current project of publishing *The Complete Works of Rosa Luxemburg*.
3. See Frederick Beiser, *Hegel* (London: Routledge, 2005).
4. György Lukács, *The Young Hegel* (London: Merlin Press, 1975).
5. In György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*

(MIT Press, 1971).

6. Herbert Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (London: Routledge, 1986).

7. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man* (London: Routledge, 2002).

8. Raya Dunayevskaya, *State-Capitalism and Marx's Humanism or Philosophy and Revolution* (Detroit: News and Letters, 1967). Retrieved from <https://bit.ly/3bNBdZ3>. Quoted at 69-70

9.. John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power* (London: Pluto, 2002).

10.. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*

(Harvard University Press, 2000). This work forms the first installment of their much-discussed *Commonwealth Tetralogy*.

11. The book references many writings of Rorty, but mostly Richard Rorty, "The Intellectuals and the End of Socialism," *The Yale Review* (80(1/2), 1992), 4.

12. The book refers to Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (London: Routledge, 2006).

13. Kevin Anderson, *Marx at the Margins* (University of Chicago Press, 2010).

Marx's Last Years Explored

KEVIN B. ANDERSON

KARL MARX'S LAST YEARS, WHEN HE famously failed to complete all the volumes of *Capital*, were for a long time viewed as a period of illness and even senescence, even though he was only 63 years old at his death in 1883. Since the 1980s, however, this period has received increasing attention, centering on two areas of intense contemporary concern: gender and the family, and Indigenous and village com-

munities at the peripheries of capitalism.

The first of these issues was brought to light through *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, by Marx's longtime collaborator Friedrich Engels. The book was published a year after Marx's death on the basis of his

The Last Years of Karl Marx, 1881-1883: An Intellectual Biography
MARCELLO MUSTO
Stanford University Press, 2020. 208 pages.

notes on the Darwinian anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan. For better or worse, Engels's book is still considered in many quarters to be the classic Marxist treatise on the subject. The second of these topics was known through Marx's 1881 letter to Russian revolutionary Vera Zasulich—and the lengthy notes he made at the time—on Russia's communal villages as a possible source of resistance to capital and as a building block for a communist future. But few were aware of the full extent of Marx's research on which these two texts, one of them not even written by Marx,

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were based.

After the publication by Lawrence Krader in the 1970s of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* and other notebooks from his last years, interest in the late Marx slowly increased. A few feminist Marxists, like Raya Dunayevskaya and Adrienne Rich in the 1980s, and later Heather Brown, engaged Marx's notes on gender and the family and found them more nuanced and complex than the perspectives of Engels, who tied gender oppression in reductive fashion to the rise of private property and the state. Others in the 1970s and 1980s, like Hans-Peter Harstick, Teodor Shanin and, again, Dunayevskaya—and later on David Norman Smith and this writer, among others—developed notions of the late Marx as a global, anti-colonial, and multilinear thinker. They did so based upon the notes on Russia that surrounded the Zasulich letter and a wide range of other unpublished notes on communal villages and Indigenous communities in South Asia, North Africa, and the Americas.

Marcello Musto's intellectual biography enriches the discussion of the late Marx in an attempt to systematically examine the entirety of Marx's theoretical and political concerns and projects during his last years, from roughly 1875 to 1883. The book departs somewhat from the usual focus of an intellectual biography in that it covers Marx's illnesses and the toll he suffered from the death of his spouse and collaborator Jenny Marx in late 1881, and then that of his daughter Jenny Longuet in early 1883. But, as Musto constantly reminds us, Marx soldiered on with his scholarly and political projects until the very end. Thus, even after months of convalescence in Algeria and elsewhere in 1882 as ordered by physicians, a case of pleurisy, and other travails, Marx nonetheless resumed serious intellectual work in late 1882, only months before his death. This included notes on physics, ecology, and British imperialist designs on Egypt.

The book's title, specifying the years

1881–1883, is a bit misleading, but this is all to the good as it is hard to grasp Marx's very last years without looking at the late 1870s as well. The period 1879–1881 is the focus of the first and strongest chapter in the book, “New Research Horizons.” Here, Musto recounts Marx's notes in his last years on a number of studies in the natural sciences, especially chemistry and mathematics. All of this research took place, he points out, during the same period in which Marx produced one of the key texts in the critique of political economy: his 1880 notes on the academic socialist economist Adolph Wagner, wherein he clarified his concept of value.

Not limiting himself to theoretical issues, Musto also takes up Marx on political matters, especially Ireland and India. In another blow to the notion of Marx's last years as ones of decline and inactivity, Musto details his intense involvement in the French socialist movement. Marx had a major influence on the program put forward in 1880 by the French Workers' Party, one of whose planks called for the “emancipation” of “all human beings without distinction of race or class” (cited on 45). Soon afterward, he also composed the questions for a lengthy “Enquête Ouvrière” (“A Workers' Inquiry”), also intended for French workers.

In this chapter, Musto also takes up Marx's notebooks on non-Western, colonial, and pre-capitalist societies during the years 1879–81. He begins with the 1879 notes on agrarian, communally oriented societies in precolonial and colonial Latin America, India, and Algeria. These notes were based on the work of a young Russian interlocutor of Marx during his last years: Maxim Kovalevsky's book on communal property. (By this time, Marx had become fluent in Russian, a language he began to learn around the time when, to his surprise, *Capital* was translated into Russian in 1872 and soon garnered far more attention than the book's German edition.) In his notes on Kovalevsky's book, Marx rejects the common (including among

his later followers) “feudal” appellation for these societies in their precolonial phases, thus breaking away from the slavery-feudalism-capitalism schema he and Engels advanced in the 1840s in *The German Ideology*. (This may account for the fact that, unlike the notes on Wagner, those on Kovalevsky were never included in USSR-sponsored editions like the Marx-Engels *Collected Works*.) In addition, as Musto argues persuasively, Marx saw the future of these societies in a nondeterministic manner in “his refusal to believe that either Indian or Algerian society was destined to follow the same course of development as in Europe” (22).

As also recounted in an important part of this chapter, Marx pursued these interests further in what are usually termed the *Ethnological Notebooks* of 1880–81, his notes on Morgan, Henry Sumner Maine, and other anthropologists. In those on Morgan, Marx identifies with the U.S. anthropologist’s critique of previous scholars who saw the family rather than the clan or gens as originative. In the latter, descent tended to be matrilineal and women to have exercised enormous social power, a phase that preceded the consolidation of the patriarchal family. At the same time, Musto is largely in accord with Dunayevskaya and Brown in showing Engels’s treatment of these issues as overly schematic in its reduction of changes in gender relations to those in the economic sphere. However, while Morgan, Marx, and Engels devoted tremendous space to Indigenous American societies (especially the Iroquois of North America), more briefly comparing them to the Greeks and the Romans, Musto concentrates almost exclusively on the latter. This leaves aside what many, including this writer, have seen as the more emancipatory implications for the future of their accounts, albeit varying ones, of these First Peoples.

These kinds of issues come to the fore in a more focused way in chapter 2, “Controversy over Capitalism in Russia,” the whole of which is devoted to Marx’s 1881 letter to

Vera Zasulich and other of his writings concerning agrarian Russia from 1877 to 1882. Here, Musto wrestles with a deep contradiction: on the one hand, Marx celebrated the development of the productive forces through capitalist industrialization, which involved uprooting those villages and creating a proletariat, as had occurred in Western Europe in what he termed primitive accumulation. On the other hand, he wrote in the 1880s that Russia might be able to build communism around its communal villages without passing through capitalism and having to see its early form of communism uprooted. If the second possibility were true, then, as Marx wrote in 1877, his Russian defenders, like Nikolai Mikhailovsky, made a serious error by “transforming [my] historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into a historical-philosophical theory of the general course imposed upon all peoples, whatever the historical circumstances in which they find themselves” (cited on 64). As a whole, Musto presents this issue with perspicacity, writing of “the thesis, falsely attributed to [Marx], that the bourgeois mode of production was everywhere an inevitability” (59) and finding an “ever greater theoretical openness” (69) in Marx’s approach to these and other issues by his last years.

At the same time, Musto differs strongly with the main bent of Teodor Shanin’s 1983 collection, *Late Marx and the Russian Road*, which saw the late writings on Russia as a sharp break with his earlier perspectives, as in the *Communist Manifesto*, where he had celebrated the expansion of capitalism eastward as a painful but necessary form of progress. In his brief 1881 reply to Zasulich, in the notes surrounding it, and in the 1882 preface to a new Russian edition of the *Manifesto*, Marx theorized about Russia’s communal villages not as destined for absorption by a progressive capitalism, but as a possible social base of a progressive resistance to both capitalist encroachments and the tsarist autocracy. They could, if they mobilized, move toward the

modern communism Marx envisioned, and they might be able to do so without passing through capitalism. This kind of thinking, Shanin's book suggests, explains why Marx counted many Russian Populists among his friends during his last years. However, contra Shanin, Marx did not envision an autarkic socialism in one country, even one as large as Russia. Instead, as he wrote in the 1882 preface to the *Manifesto*, success on the communist project in Russia would depend upon linkages to the Western labor movement in a wider revolution in which the Russian village might nonetheless be the spark, "the starting point for communist development" (cited on 71). At this juncture of the argument, Musto seems to bend Marx in the opposite direction from Shanin. Rather than a possible starting point for a serious revolution, the Russian villages instead become a mere bit player: "In [Marx's] view, sporadic rebellions or resistance struggles must not be confused with the establishment of a new social-economic order on a communist basis" (69). This too is a one-sided view.

All of this impinges on a larger question: whether Marx's studies in his final years of communal social relations in a number of agrarian or nomadic societies in South Asia, North Africa, and Indigenous America were linked to his Russia writings in the sense that he saw their precapitalist communal social forms also as possible loci of resistance to capital. Musto answers decisively in the negative, underlining the uniqueness of the Russian case and writing that Marx did not intend to create a "general model" out of these wider studies of communal social forms (69). But what about an inclination in that direction, rather than a model per se? Many commentators on the late Marx, including this writer, would not dismiss the possibility of a broader research and political project. In this view, Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* and similar late writings were concerned not only with social and economic development but also with real possibilities of resistance and

revolution against capital outside Western Europe. It was in this sense that Dunayevskaya saw a return on Marx's part to his 1850 concept of "Revolution in Permanenz." It was also notable that Marx turned his attention eastward and southward in search of allies after the Western labor movement was severely weakened in the wake of the repression of the Paris Commune and the breakup of the First International.

The rest of the book is more biographical, as it recounts Marx's mounting health problems, the terrible blow inflicted on him in late 1881 by Jenny's death, and other personal and family problems. Yet, as Musto recounts, it was after his wife Jenny's death that Marx completed a massive set of notes on European history, in the winter of 1881–1882. These notes, still unpublished, are slated to fill an entire volume of the *Marx-Engels-Gesamtausgabe*, their collected works. Under doctor's orders, Marx traveled to Algeria from February through May 1882 for convalescence, but the weather was cold and stormy, and the trip did not improve his recurrent bronchitis and other problems. While he apparently followed his physician's recommendation to avoid mental or physical strain, his letters from Algeria to family members show some keen and admiring descriptions of Arab society and culture. Still in weakened condition upon his return to London, by fall 1882 Marx was again engaging in research, as seen in his notes on physics, ecology, and Egypt. The notes on Egypt took up an October 1882 article on the impact of British imperialism, its financial pressures, and local despotism, at a time when Britain was moving to directly occupy Egypt in the wake of the Urabi nationalist revolt.

Given that Marx's health irrevocably deteriorated from late 1882 until his death in March 1883, his research notes on Egypt may have been his last. When one considers these very late research notes alongside the fact that Marx's last publication—dated January 1882—was the preface to the Russian edition of the *Manifesto* that conceptualized Russia's

communal villages as a possible starting point for a European-wide communist revolution, it is no exaggeration to say that in his last years, Marx increasingly turned his attention eastward and southward, outside the areas of the world where the capitalist mode of production had penetrated most deeply.

Musto's study makes an invaluable contribution to our understanding of Marx in his last years, offering an angle from which to consider him that departs from the more usual focus on either the young Marx of alienation, dialectics, and humanism, or the "mature" Marx of the *Grundrisse* and *Capital*. Moreover, since Musto, as a biographer, surveys

the whole of Marx's intellectual and political projects during his last years, one gets for the first time a sense of how the various pieces fit together, or at least connected somehow.

This biographical focus also illustrates what some may consider a limitation of this study: that it is undertheorized. For example, the book never develops a real thesis or argument beyond the notion that Marx was an original thinker who worked in creative ways that have not been fully captured by the Marxist tradition or in previous biographies. But that would be a different book. As it stands, this study by Musto fills a huge gap in our understanding of Marx.

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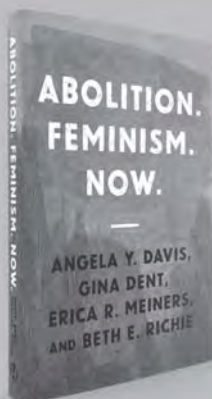
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IN THIS ISSUE

It's particularly difficult to take COP26 pledges seriously when a leading cause of global warming, deforestation, species extinction, water depletion, ocean "dead zones," ocean plastics, soil erosion, air pollution, world hunger, antibiotic resistance, and infectious diseases, including, most likely, Covid-19, was barely discussed at all: animal consumption.

Laura Schleifer and Daniel Fischer
ANIMAL LIBERATION FROM BELOW

We who are in prison escape every day, perhaps not by digging a tunnel, but by reshaping the prison, the prison that the enemy designed as a coffin for us, we turn it into a place of life and change.

Layan Kayed
WE WHO ARE IN PRISON ESCAPE EVERY DAY: STUDENT
AND WOMEN ORGANIZING AGAINST ISRAELI OCCUPATION

Today's campists will not discuss the authoritarian and oppressive political powers or the exploitative economic systems of what they consider to be the "anti-imperialist nations," such as Russia, China, or Cuba, or of Iran or Syria.

Dan La Botz
INTERNATIONALISM, ANTI-IMPERIALISM
AND THE ORIGINS OF CAMPISM

It always starts from what's in the streets, then ricochets onto the field. And then people on the athletic field—you think about someone like Muhammad Ali in the 1960s or Billie Jean King—can have the capacity through using their sports platform to then shape what's taking place off the field. But it always starts in the streets.

Dave Zirin
THE POLITICS OF SPORTS