

\$4 at Newsstands and Bookstores

# SocialistViewpoint

★ The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it. —Karl Marx ★

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2018 VOL. 18 NO. 5



*Eugenics and the Origins of U.S. Racist Immigration Policy - Page 4*

*"We Rise Together, Homie" - Page 6*

*U.S. Sold \$47 Billion in Weapons This Year - Page 19*



If we stay the present  
course of science denial,  
we are headed for a  
climate train wreck

September 8

in San Francisco,  
across the country  
& around the world –

**RISE FOR CLIMATE,  
JOBS AND JUSTICE**

[ca.riseforclimate.org](http://ca.riseforclimate.org)

<http://bit.ly/climatetrainwreck>

Solidarity**INFO**Service.org

**WOMEN'S MARCH ON THE PENTAGON**



# SocialistViewpoint

September/October 2018 Vol. 18, No. 5

SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

www.socialistviewpoint.org

email: info@socialistviewpoint.org

(415) 824-8730

## CONTENTS

### U.S. and World Politics

- Eugenics and the Origins of U.S. Racist Immigration Policy** ..... 4  
*By Bonnie Weinstein*
- “We Rise Together, Homie”** ..... 6  
*By Micah Uetricht*
- Unprecedented Cruelty Against Immigrants and Their Children**..... 8  
*By Bill Hackwell*
- Separating Migrant Families is Barbaric** ..... 10  
*By Shaun King*
- Trump Wasn’t First to Separate Families** ..... 12  
*By Nicholas Kristof*
- The Deportation Machine Obama Built for Trump**.. 13  
*By Marisa Franco and Carlos Garcia*
- Democrats Out-Right the Right**..... 15  
*By Ajamu Baraka*
- Trumpty Dumpty**..... 16  
*By Dr. Nayvin Gordon*
- Dogs as a Tool of Racist Repression** ..... 17  
*By Alex Moyle*
- U.S. Sold \$47 Billion in Weapons This Year** ..... 19  
*By Paul McLeary*
- Trump, Obama and the Nature of Fascism** ..... 20  
*By Tony McKenna*
- Hiroshima Survivor Speaks Out**..... 23  
*By Sophie Shevardnadze*
- “Why Can’t the U.S. Just Simply Invade?”**..... 26  
*By Jon Queally*
- U.S. in Central America** ..... 27  
*By Patience John*
- Guatemala** ..... 28  
*By Jeff Abbott*
- What’s Happening in Nicaragua?**..... 31  
*By Kevin Zeese and Nils McCune*
- Expansion of U.S. Military in Argentina** ..... 37  
*By Birson Filip*

- Palestinian Tipping Point** ..... 41  
*By Nicola Perugini*
- God Only Knows** ..... 42  
*By Kathy Kelly*
- UK’s Labor Party and its “Anti-Semitism” Crisis** ... 44  
*By Kenneth Surin*

### Environment

- Small Particles with Big Problems**..... 48  
*By Dr. Nayvin Gordon*
- Worm Apocalypse** ..... 49  
*By David R. Montgomery*
- Wolves, Bees, Whales, and Us**..... 50  
*By Steven Strauss*
- Capitalism vs. Green Energy** ..... 51  
*By David Klein*

### Reviews

- Kelley’s Hammer and Hoe** ..... 53  
*By Mumia Abu-Jamal*
- You Say You Want A Revolution?** ..... 54  
*By Briahna Gray*

### Incarceration Nation

- The New Prison Movement** ..... 55  
*By Kevin “Rashid” Johnson*
- Why I Believe that Edward Poindexter is Innocent of Murder** ..... 59  
*By Michael Richardson*
- The War on Assange Is a War on Press Freedom**.... 60  
*By Chris Hedges*
- Shakabooa Resentenced, Freedom is Near** ..... 64  
*By the Human Rights Coalition*
- Baby-Snatching Practice Blocked Motherhood for 20-million Seconds**..... 65  
*By Linn Washington Jr.*

### Arsenal of Marxism

- Nationalism or Internationalism?** ..... 67  
*By Chris Kinder*

Socialist Viewpoint (ISSN 1535-5438) is published bi-monthly by the Socialist Viewpoint Publishing Association, 60 29th Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110. Rates: For one year (6 issues): Introductory rate in the U.S. \$20.00; Regular rate in the U.S. \$30.00; Bargain rate: \$35.00 for two years; All other countries \$50.00 (Money orders, checks, etc., should be in U.S. dollars.)

Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, California.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Socialist Viewpoint, 60 29th Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110

## Eugenics and the Origins of U.S. Racist Immigration Policy

By BONNIE WEINSTEIN

In a July 5, 2018 article by Brendan O'Connor titled "The Eugenicist Doctor and the Vast Fortune Behind Trumps Immigration Regime<sup>1</sup>" that appeared in *SplinterNews.com*, he describes the deeply racist origins of U.S. immigration policy and its current form, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, (ICE). This article summarizes the important ideas in O'Connor's very informative essay.

According to *Wikipedia*:

"Eugenics...is a set of beliefs and practices that aims at improving the genetic quality of a human population. ...Frederick Osborn's 1937 journal article 'Development of a Eugenic Philosophy' framed it as a social philosophy—that is, a philosophy with implications for social order. ...Osborn advocated for higher rates of sexual reproduction among people with desired traits (positive

eugenics), or reduced rates of sexual reproduction and sterilization of people with less-desired or undesired traits (negative eugenics.)"

---

**...capitalism needs  
borders, even if  
capital itself does not  
adhere to them...**

---

This is the basic underlying philosophy of racism—that white people are genetically superior to people of color. It is the foundation of U.S. racist immigration policy and the fundamental driver of Manifest Destiny—the God-given right of white people to conquer and rule people of color—the historical foundation of the U.S. itself.

It has been used to justify everything from the near extinction of the native inhabitants of the Americas to the enslavement of Africans, the internment of Japanese Americans and today, to justify police murders and mass incarceration of people of color and the separation and deportation of immigrant families of color seeking a better life.

### The corporate money behind U.S. racism

In his article, O'Connor refers to Thomas Homan, the acting director of ICE who recently gave a speech at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. hosted by the Center for Immigration Studies defending U.S. immigration policy:

"A lot of people want to attack ICE. I see it every day. They want to call ICE racists, they want to call us Nazis," he said. However: 'We're simply enforcing the laws on the books. ...'If you think ICE is racist—is Congress racist because they enacted these laws? Think about that for a minute. The men and women of ICE deserve thanks from this country.'"

O'Conner goes on:

"While the Center for Immigration Studies bills itself as an independent, non-partisan research organization, it is in fact a key node in a small network of think tanks and nonprofits, founded and directed by a man whose private correspondence contains praise for anti-Semites, fascists, and race scientists of various ideological backgrounds...financed largely by one of the oldest and wealthiest families in America. That man is John Tanton, an aging ophthalmologist from Michigan; his benefactor was Cordelia Scaife May, heir to the



Families in Topeka, Kansas compete in the "Fitter Family" contest to find the most eugenically perfect family in 1925. From 1907 in the United States, men, women and children who were deemed "insane, idiotic, imbecile, feebleminded or epileptic" were forcibly sterilized.

Scaife family fortune, a branch of the Mellon family. ...The institutions they created together show more clearly than most how capitalism and white supremacy are mutually constitutive; how the ruling class uses racial resentment to reinforce its rule; and how the spoils of imperialism are redeployed toward maintaining the internal colonies, racial hierarchies, and economic order of our age.”

The Mellon family fortune, O’Connor points out, was built on oil, steel and war:

“Andrew Mellon, a banker, served as Treasury secretary to Presidents Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover, dedicating himself to rolling back (or working around) the gains of the early 20th century Progressive movement... Andrew Mellon’s private fortune and that of his family leaped from the hundreds-of-millions to over a billion...”

These are the financial roots of the current immigration policy. But there’s more says O’Connor:

“In practice...enforcement criminalizes more and more people living in the United States simply for being here, increasing the number of people categorized as undocumented without necessarily providing a mechanism to remove those people from the country. Therein lies an opportunity not only for cruelty and sadism but also profit. ...Since the 2016 election, according to a report from the Center for Popular Democracy, Wall Street behemoths JPMorgan Chase and Co., Wells Fargo, and BlackRock have all increased their shares in the nation’s two largest prison companies, CoreCivic and GEO Group, financing the growth of a \$5 billion industry with gargantuan loans: the two companies are now carrying a total of \$1.94 billion and \$1.18 billion in debt, respectively. CoreCivic’s most recent annual report to the Securities and Exchange Commission lays out the logic of carceral capitalism in

brutal terms. As the February filing explains, the company’s growth is contingent upon obtaining new contracts from the government for prisons and detention centers, which in turn depends on the culture and politics of incarceration. “The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by the relaxation of enforcement efforts,” the report reads, “or through the decriminalization of [immigration].” Last year, CoreCivic and GEO Group made \$3.2 billion from government contracts; according to SEC filings, \$985 million came from ICE contracts alone.”

---

**...the company’s growth is contingent upon obtaining new contracts from the government for prisons and detention centers, which in turn depends on the culture and politics of incarceration...**

---

**The bottom line**

O’Connor continues:

“There is deep and horrible irony in Mellon family money, which powered American imperialism in Central and South America and which grew as a result of that imperial expansion, now being spent to denigrate and punish the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the men and women whose countries the Mellons helped to colonize, who now come to the United States seeking respite from their nations’ ruin. For people like Tanton and Scaife May...the point is not to purge the United States of immigrants wholly but to ensure the continued immiseration and suffering of the poor and the dispossessed—the most destitute of whom, it is no accident, are mostly people of

color. ...Capitalism in crisis invites the reaction that racism readily provides: criminalization of the structurally oppressed, subject to heavily militarized control and containment and scapegoating by the culture industries. ...The border itself is the most powerful of these mechanisms—or, more specifically, it is from the idea of the border that other mechanisms of social control derive their power. (Race, after all, is itself a kind of border.) It is the border that allows capitalism to work at all; capitalism needs borders, even if capital itself does not adhere to them.”

And finally, in reference to Trump’s and Israel’s “walls” O’Connor concludes:

“The wall is white supremacy; the wall is the rule of the wealthy few over the impoverished many; the wall is a quarantine. It separates the United States from Mexico, Europe from Africa, and Israel from Palestine. The wall simply is the border made real, natural, and impermeable. But it is politics that made borders—and walls, and all the separations and segregations of this world—and politics that can unmake them. There is no immigration crisis; there is only a political crisis, wherein the white supremacist plutocracy scrambles to maintain its barbaric dominance over the world it has created however and wherever it can—thus billionaires; thus the Tanton network; thus concentration camps full of children, haunted by the ghosts of capitalists living and dead.”

There is much more information in this very long article by O’Connor that is well worth reading. The roots of U.S. racism reaches deep into the very beginning of Manifest Destiny—the foundation of world capitalism that is inextricably linked to white supremacy.

To end racism we must end capitalism and establish a socialist world. There is no other way.

---

1 <https://splinternews.com/the-eugenicist-doctor-and-the-vast-fortune-behind-trump-1827322435>

# “We Rise Together, Homie”

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANTOINE DANGERFIELD BY MICAH UETRICHT

U.S. labor history is full of moments of tremendous drama and upheaval. That history is riveting stuff, but getting a raw, unfiltered view of the human drama of workers fighting their bosses on the shop floor, the place where the day-to-day confrontation between workers and bosses takes place (and occasionally boils over), is rare.

Which is what makes Antoine Dangerfield’s recent viral video a must-watch. A thirty-year-old welder in Indianapolis, Dangerfield worked for a construction contractor building a UPS hub. On Tuesday, he says that a small number of Latino workers (millwrights, welders, and conveyor installers, in his telling) working for a different contractor but in the same hub were ordered home after disobeying the orders of a white boss he calls racist.

In response, the entire group of workers—over a hundred, in Dangerfield’s estimation—walked out.

Dangerfield caught their wildcat strike on camera at the moment they walked off the job. In his video, he is positively giddy watching them shut down their massive workplace.

“They are not bullshitting!” he says as Latino workers walk off. Referring to the boss, he says, “They thought they was gonna play with these amigos, and they said, ‘aw yeah, we rise together, homie.’ And they leaving! And they not bullshitting!”

After all the workers are gone, Dangerfield gives the viewer a tour of the empty hub. He’s incredulous: “Ain’t no grinding, cutting, welding—this motherfucker dead-ass quiet. The Mexicans shut this motherfucker down.”

Since he posted the video<sup>1</sup> on Wednesday, August 1, 2018, the footage has been viewed two million times on *Facebook* and *YouTube* (nearly 800,000

and on sites like *WorldStarHipHop* (300,000). It also, as he explains in this interview, led to his firing. Dangerfield thinks it’s worth it, though.

*Jacobin* managing editor Micah Uetracht spoke with Dangerfield on Thursday afternoon. Neither could track down the striking workers in the video, but Dangerfield spoke about what was a “life-changing” experience for him. The interview has been edited for clarity and brevity.

**Micah Uetracht:** Where do you work?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** It’s a contractor that’s doing a UPS superhub. They fired me about [the video], though.

**Micah Uetracht:** Really?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** They’re real mad about it. They tried to pay me \$250 to take it down. But there’s nothing I could do about it. I didn’t expect it to be this big.

**Micah Uetracht:** So what happened?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** There was a safety guy. He was just a racist, basically—always messing with anybody who’s not white. The Hispanics just stayed out of his way. They warned each other when he came because they knew he was always messing with them, taking pictures and videos, trying to get them fired.

We have safety meetings, and we usually have a translator [for Spanish speakers] because there are so many. On Tuesday, we had a safety meeting, and like I said, the Mexicans don’t really like [the safety coordinator].

He asked one of the Mexicans to come up and translate. He didn’t wanna do it. [The coordinator] got mad, real red-faced. Next thing you know, he dismissed the meeting. So he’s walking around just sending them home, trying to fire them. So he sent like five or six of them home.

So the Hispanics got together and were like, “Nah. We got families and kids. We’re not about to let these dudes just do whatever.” So they took a stand.

**Micah Uetracht:** Do they have a union?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** Nah. They just decided today’s the day. They fired the [safety coordinator], though. And they fired me, too, for the video. But there wasn’t one [worker] left in the building.

**Micah Uetracht:** How long had there been issues with the safety guy?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** As soon as he started. It’s been three or four months. I’ve been there since January.

**Micah Uetracht:** So what happened when the video went up?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** The owners of [the construction contractors] came down, corporate people from UPS.

**Micah Uetracht:** From UPS?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** That’s what people were telling me. Because I went back to pick up my last check and my welding gear. That was when they offered me \$250 to take it down. It was at 1.1 million views on *Facebook* at that point. So there was nothing I could do.

I was shocked. I come in here every day. The last video I posted got two likes! I wasn’t trying to harm anybody.

**Micah Uetracht:** How did you feel watching them walk off the job?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** I just felt that power, man. It just felt good. They were walking out with their heads up, strong. It touched me. That’s why I was like, wow, this is beautiful. It was beautiful that they came together like that—stood up for themselves and not let that dude walk all over them.

**Micah Uetracht:** Have you had that experience at work, feeling walked all over?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** I stay out of their way. I just work. I don't get involved with management usually. I just come in and get my check. And they just offered me a team lead job and everything. I was there every day and thought everything was cool. If I hadn't posted the video, I would still be there working.

I had just come back from California in December. In January, I came back home because my son is here. He didn't like me being gone—he had a hard time with it. So I decided to get something local, close to my dude. Because he loves me, you know what I mean?

**Micah Uetracht:** You said the workers walked off the job with their heads up.

**Antoine Dangerfield:** Yeah. It was powerful, bro. They were proud of themselves, like they're supposed to be. But [management] still paid everybody for the whole day. That's how you know they were wrong. They sent everybody home, but I stayed until the end, because I was in awe.

**Micah Uetracht:** Have you ever had an experience with that kind of action before?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** Never. It was like the Million Man March or something. You heard me in the video—I was excited.

**Micah Uetracht:** You're Black. The people you filmed in the video are Latino. You said in the description of your video that Black people need to learn something from this. What did you mean?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** All the hate going on—we need to stick together. I think Black people are moving in the right direction. We were down for a minute with the crack era. And you see the news, a lot of killings in the Black community. Sometimes we don't come

together. But if they can do it, we can do it. And we can all come together. There's power in numbers.

I don't like racist anything. I don't like people picking on people, bullying. It's ridiculous. So when people come together, it's a beautiful thing.

**Micah Uetracht:** They were specifically taking on a boss, taking action on the job.

**Antoine Dangerfield:** Yeah, and you can use that in any way. Votes, we could show up for. Or all corporations that have done you wrong.

We're the ones, the workers—we make the heads get rich. Treating us lesser-than isn't even cool. We're the reason the hub was getting built. Ain't no owners out there in their hard hats. We're the ones putting our life on the line. So you gotta respect us.

They're a cool company. I don't really have anything against them. But when you see wrong being done, you should step up and do something about it.

**Micah Uetracht:** There's what was happening at your workplace, but then there's the state of the economy as a whole.

**Antoine Dangerfield:** Yeah, and it can be on that scale. [The video] is funny or whatever, but people love seeing people come together like that. That's why it's so viral. Because everybody wants that deep-down. Everybody wants to move as one. That's why you look at the comments [on the video] and see Black people saying, "Yeah, that's what we need to do."

**Micah Uetracht:** Do you think this experience will change you, on the job in the future?

**Antoine Dangerfield:** You can say that. It was life-changing to me to see that happen. Because it was like, dang, they really came together. And that's

why I'm not mad about the video, about getting fired. Because it's five million people who saw that. And it might change their view on things. Empowering people.

So me losing a job is nothing compared to the big picture. If we can get it in our heads that we are the people, and if we make our numbers count, we can change anything.

*Update:* A GoFundMe has been created to support Dangerfield and his son: <https://www.gofundme.com/z9h8cc-support-antoine-fired-4-strike-vid>

—Jacobin, August 3, 2018

<https://jacobinmag.com/2018/08/wildcat-strike-indianapolis-shut-down>

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=4&v=Ykb6Nk9\\_PjI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=4&v=Ykb6Nk9_PjI)



Latino workers walking off the job building a UPS hub, en masse, in Indianapolis July 31, 2018 shutting the place down.

# Unprecedented Cruelty Against Immigrants and Their Children

BY BILL HACKWELL

Since Attorney General Jeff Sessions tightened U.S. immigration policy on April 6 by issuing a “zero tolerance” order against those trying to enter the country without papers, even for those seeking asylum from domestic abuse and violence, 2000 children have been ripped out of their parents’ arms by immigration agents including toddlers and breast feeding babies. Many of these parents do not know where their children are nor do the children know where their parents are.

Recently White House Chief of Staff, John Kelly backed up the policy when he explained that, “the children will be put in foster care or whatever.” This comes at the same time as a new report revealed that there are some 1,500 undocumented children, who have been placed by federal authorities in homes of “sponsors,” and are now missing in the system.

No other country has a policy of separating families who intend to seek asylum. “What the U.S. is doing now, there is no equivalent,” said Michael Flynn, executive director of the

Geneva-based Global Detention Project, a non-profit group focused on the rights of detained immigrants. “There’s nothing like this anywhere.”

Currently there are 140 detention centers in 14 states for the some 10,000 un-accompanied immigrant children now held in the United States. These facilities are overflowing with many of the children being placed in jail holding pens or in tent complexes in the blistering heat of Texas and Arizona. A closed Walmart has been taken over to warehouse 1400 of them in Texas while the Department of Health and Human Services is considering shipping the children to military bases.

This is not the first time that the policy of the U.S. government has been to forcibly separate children from their families. Beginning in 1862 and lasting for over 100 years over 40,000 Native American children from 62 tribes were forced from their families into Christian missionary run “schools” separating them not just from their families but from their history and culture as well. The schools emphasis was

not on education but on discipline and punishment. The trauma from this mass separation continues in Indian communities to this day.

The alarming horror of the inhumanity unfolding in front of our eyes is also reminiscent of another dark and racist chapter of U.S. history when 120,000 Japanese Americans were rounded up and forcibly interned in isolated prison camps in the western interior of the country. Like Trump, President Roosevelt set these orders into motion through an order from the executive branch in 1942. Only 20 percent of the fathers ended up with their families in those camps.

A general outcry is beginning with protests in many U.S. cities and opposition from civil rights groups and many religious denominations is starting to be heard. In what is now a predictable pattern, Trump is deflecting the blame with a bald-faced lie, “I hate the children being taken away,” he said. “The Democrats have to change their law. That’s their law.” But wait—there is no Democrats’ law that necessitates separating children from their parents. The separation policy comes directly from the decisions made by Trump and his administration—period.

Sessions too has been taking some heat for this reactionary, anti-human policy, even from his own church. His rebuttal to the criticism has been to bring in some heavy authoritative support from above, “Concerns raised by our church friends about separating families are not fair or logical,” he said in a speech in Fort Wayne, Indiana. “I would cite you to the Apostle Paul and his clear and wise command in Romans 13 to obey the laws of the government because God has ordained them for the purpose of order.”



Photo by Bill Hackwell

Immigration is as old as human history and it is doubtful that the new policy will even slow the flow of immigrants who are fleeing violence and poverty in Central American countries like El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras when staying, for many, could mean a death sentence. Nobody would want to leave their homes, communities and country if there were other options, but

---

**Nobody would want to leave their homes, communities and country if there were other options, but neo-liberal policies coming from the very country they are fleeing to has supplanted the independence of their countries with corrupt and subservient governments, and devastated their environments and way of life.**

---

neo liberal policies coming from the very country they are fleeing to has supplanted the independence of their countries with corrupt and subservient governments, and devastated their environments and way of life.

Beyond the immediate cruelty of the policy, what is going to be the long-term affect on these children? The trauma they will face will be severe and long lasting.

Father Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest from South Africa who was an activist freedom fighter in the struggle to end apartheid in his country, founded the Institute for the Healing of

Memories after a letter bomb from the defeated white racists blew off both of his hands, costing him an eye and nearly his life. Since that time Lapsley has become a healer, travelling the world to give seminars and to listen to the stories of those who suffer from various traumas. In a recent conversation he told me that in his experiences he has learned that of all the different types of trauma that people suffer the one that crosses all societies, races and cultures and is the deepest is childhood trauma.

About the 10,000 immigrant children now detained in the U.S. it now appears Trump is holding them hostage in order to push Congress for his border wall.

The United Nations Human Rights Office has warned these detentions

constitute “a child rights violation and should be “halted immediately.”

The American Civil Liberties Union has been even more to the point when they condemned the practice of separating children from their parents, as a deterrent to people forced to immigrate, and described this policy as one that is, “more than cruel and unnecessary, it is torture.”

*Bill Hackwell is an organizer with the International Committee for Peace Justice and Dignity and an editor for the English edition of Resumen Latinoamericano.*

—CounterPunch, June 20, 2018

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/06/20/unprecedented-cruelty-against-immigrants-and-their-children/>

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation		
1. Publication Title: Socialist Viewpoint		Editor:
2. Publication Number: 020 444		Editorial Board – Carole Seligman and Bonnie Weinstein 60 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110
3. Filing Date: 9/1/2018		Managing Editor: Bonnie Weinstein 60 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110
4. Issue Frequency: Bi-Monthly		10. Owner: Socialist Viewpoint, 60 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6		11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning 1 percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$30.00		12. Tax Status (For Completion by Nonprofit Organizations Authorized to Mail at Special Rates): Has not changed during the preceding 12 months
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known office of Publication: 60 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110 Contact Person: Bonnie Weinstein Telephone: 415-824-8730		13. Publication Title: Socialist Viewpoint
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 60 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110		14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September/October 2018, Vol. 18, No. 5
9. Publisher: Socialist Viewpoint, 60 29 <sup>th</sup> Street, #429, San Francisco, CA 94110		
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		
		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months
		Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total No. Copies (net press run)		300
b. Paid Circulation		300
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscription		162
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscription		18
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails		100
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail		9
Total Paid Distribution		289
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		2
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies		2
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies		0
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes		0
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail		0
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		2
f. Total Distribution		290
g. Copies Not Distributed		9
h. Total		300
i. Percent Paid		99%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		
a. Paid Electronic Copies		0
b. Total Paid Electronic Copies + Paid Print Copies		289
c. Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies		290
d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies)		99%
I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.		
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership: September/October 2018, Vol. 18, No. 5		
18. Signature and title of Editor, Publisher, or Owner Bonnie Weinstein, Co-Editor		9/1/2018

# Separating Migrant Families is Barbaric

It's also what the U.S. has been doing to people of color for hundreds of years

BY SHAUN KING

Like most of you reading this, I am deeply appalled at what I see happening right now in the United States—immigrant children being snatched away from their parents and sent to separate detention centers, often locked in cages with strangers, with no real idea of when they'll ever be reunited with their families. It's an abomination.

But I often see two troubling responses to this crisis that show just how aloof and asleep millions of Americans are right now.

The first is a statement that goes something like this: This is not the America I know and love. The second is a question, rooted in the same ignorance that goes something like this: How could this ever happen in the United States?

What's happening right now in our country is, without question, a human rights catastrophe. Yet every deeply entrenched mechanism used in these policies and the spirit fueling this catastrophe are as American as *Facebook* and Disneyland.

Let me break it down. At least five troubling factors are at play here. All five were fully and completely present before this current crisis ever began. They set the tone and created the culture in which something so heinous could ever take place.

## Slavery

First, this has happened here before. In fact, it has happened millions of times across the years in this country. Africans forced into slavery in this country were routinely separated from their children—not only in being transported to the Americas, but then repeatedly at the auction block. Not thousands, but millions—of mothers and fathers, husbands and wives, par-

ents and children, brothers and sisters—were all forcefully separated from each other. And this was no brief period of this nation's history, but a feature of the institution of slavery that existed in the United States for nearly 250 years.

## Indian "schools"

Not only were enslaved African children routinely separated from their families, but so too were Native Americans in this country. From the late 1800s all the way until the 1970s, children were routinely taken from Native American homes by force and sent to barbaric "Indian schools," where their hair was cut and their names and culture stripped away. Many of them never saw their families again.

What might be most shocking, though, is the way the U.S.—today, in the present—separates so many families whose stories go unremarked upon. I'm talking about the crisis of mass incarceration in America, of which the crackdown on immigrants is but one horrific piece.

## Massive incarceration

Right now, as you read this, hundreds-of-thousands of adults and children, disproportionately black and Latino, are in jails all over this country—not because they've been convicted of a crime, but because they cannot afford cash bail. Many of them will languish in jail not for days or weeks, but for months and years without ever being convicted of a crime. In fact, about 65 percent of people in local jails in this country on any given day have not been convicted of a crime. They are in jail simply because they cannot afford bail. They, too, are separated from their families.

You'd have a hard time finding an extended period of American history

where children and parents of color weren't forcefully separated from one another by the white power structure in this country. It's woefully and painfully normal. And it's because it's so normal that it is so easy for it to happen again and again in this country. This nation has mastered separating parents and children. Pretending otherwise is to offer a revisionist history.

It should come as no surprise, then, that so many on the right—those who would bristle at acknowledging, let alone apologizing for, this history—are embracing a policy of forced family separation.

On Monday night, June 18, 2018, *Fox News's* Laura Ingraham said, with a smug smile, that the immigrant children being held in detention centers are "essentially in summer camp." This, in spite of the reality that the leading doctors and medical groups across the country have said that forcefully separating children from their parents in detention centers causes "irreparable harm" to the children. This, in spite of the gut-wrenching audio obtained by *ProPublica* of detained children sobbing and wailing for their parents while they are mocked by guards.

Nearly 60 percent of Republicans approve the practice of separating immigrant children from their parents at the border. And it's not hard to understand why.

For years now, Donald Trump has dehumanized border-crossing Latinos every chance he gets—routinely calling them animals, murderers, and rapists. He reduced entire nations of color to being "shithole countries." On Monday, he reiterated this, saying immigrants were coming from "the most dangerous places in the world."

## Dehumanizing people

This essential step—of reducing immigrants to a subhuman status—must not be overlooked. It happened throughout the transatlantic slave trade. It happened throughout the genocide of Native Americans. It happened throughout the Holocaust. It happened throughout the Rwandan genocide. It happens today with victims of police brutality.

Whenever a group of people suffer unspeakable horrors and oppression, the people in power first reduce and dehumanize them—making it such that the conscience of the people in power is fully at ease during the oppression. This is how Ingraham could compare the detention centers to “summer camps.” She has convinced herself that the United States is doing these subhuman children a favor.

At the root of the current human rights crisis at American borders is white supremacy and bigotry. Trump does not have a problem with immigrants. His mother was an immigrant from Scotland. His grandparents were all immigrants. His first wife, Ivana, was an immigrant from what is now the Czech Republic; Trump’s children with her—Donald Jr., Ivanka, and Eric—have an immigrant parent. Trump’s third wife, Melania, is an immigrant from Slovenia. She became a citizen in 2006. His son with her, Barron, has an immigrant parent. So no, Trump doesn’t hate immigrants. But he does seem to hate immigrants of color. And this distinction is essential.

Melania Trump’s parents are beneficiaries of what Trump and the right call “chain migration.” They are in the United States legally because of their relationship to her. Trump and conservatives rail against this policy—but his parents and grandparents and in-laws all benefited from it. If the right wing hated immigrants, Trump would probably be among the least-liked public figures in the country. But many of

those on the right—like everyone here but Native Americans—are all descendants of immigrants themselves. Their problem is not with immigrants; it’s with immigrants of color, be they from Mexico or the Americas or any of the nations listed in Trump’s Muslim ban.

White supremacy and bigotry drive so many American policies. Trump’s senior policy adviser Stephen Miller has shown bigoted tendencies since high school. And now he is said to be the chief author of both the Muslim ban and the new policy of separating immigrant children from their parents. We are living in the age where hate crimes are on the rise in the United States. White supremacists are running for office in record numbers.

There are two more essential factors at play in what we see happening at our border right now. We need to talk about these things to really understand what’s going on, to see how we got to this point.

## Incarceration nation

The first is the reality that the United States is the incarceration nation. No nation in the entire world incarcerates more people than we do. We routinely have somewhere around 2.3 million people in jail and prison on any given day, and at least 10.6 million are put into jails and prisons every year. The United States has criminalized poverty, forcing people into jail if they cannot afford to pay the most basic fees, whether traffic tickets, court fines, or cash bail. The United States has criminalized drug addiction, sending millions of people to jail and prison over the generations for simple drug possession. This nation has criminalized mental illness. Two million people with a mental illness are jailed in this nation each year.

It was only a matter of time until people seeking asylum at America’s borders were also criminalized and warehoused. It’s what this nation does. Instead of solving our most difficult

problems, we increase police forces, build more jails and prisons, including tent cities if necessary, and arrest people—especially people of color.

## Profiteering

Lastly—and this is key—what we see happening right now at America’s borders has everything to do with profiteering and the privatization of America’s jails and prisons. It’s a huge, multibillion-dollar industry. Our nation has publicly traded companies whose business it is to profit off mass incarceration—and there is a profit margin on building and running emergency holding facilities and tent cities like we see being formed right now to detain immigrant children and families. Not only are these places being staffed and secured, but the food, the cleaning crews, and the supplies all have an exorbitant cost.

The same conservatives who campaign on cutting costs and reducing deficits then have no problem at all spending multiple billions-of-dollars on mass incarceration. Executives from the private prison industry have seen their profits explode under Trump, and he has been rewarded handsomely with six-figure donations from their executives. In this country, when you see evil, you can almost always follow the money trail.

What’s happening right now is awful. Period. No ifs, ands, or buts. It didn’t come out of nowhere, though. It came right from the American playbook. This nation has routinely mistreated and abused people of color for hundreds-of-years—and has willfully separated millions of families, sometimes permanently, for sport and profit, on this soil. Speak out against it. Organize against it. But just know that what you are seeing has deep roots.

—*The Intercept*, June 20, 2018

<https://theintercept.com/2018/06/20/family-separation-immigration-history-slavery-mass-incarceration/>

# Trump Wasn't First to Separate Families

**But policy was still evil**

BY NICHOLAS KRISTOF

President Trump finally caved to public pressure and promised to stop separating children from parents at the border. After long insisting that he couldn't do anything about this, he snapped his fingers and changed the policy that he had denied was a policy.

Yet the next steps remain unclear and of uncertain legality. Will there be internment camps? This hazy juncture is a useful opportunity to draw lessons.

Trump is right that he didn't begin the practice of wrenching crying children from their parents. This fits into a long and shameful history:

“My brothers and sisters were bid off first, and one by one, while my mother, paralyzed by grief, held me by the hand. Her turn came, and she was bought by Isaac Riley of Montgomery County. Then I was offered to the assembled purchasers. My mother, half distracted with the thought of parting forever from all her children, pushed through the crowd while the bidding for me was

going on, to the spot where Riley was standing. ...She fell at his feet and clung to his knees, entreating him in tones that a mother only could command to buy her baby as well as herself. ...I must have been then between five and six-years-old. I seem to see and hear my poor weeping mother now.” —Josiah Henson, a slave in Maryland, in his account of his life from 1858

“The Negroes at home are quite disconsolate but this will soon blow over. They may see their children again in time.” —Thomas Chaplin, a slave owner, in 1845, quoted in “Help Me to Find My People,” by Heather Andrea Williams

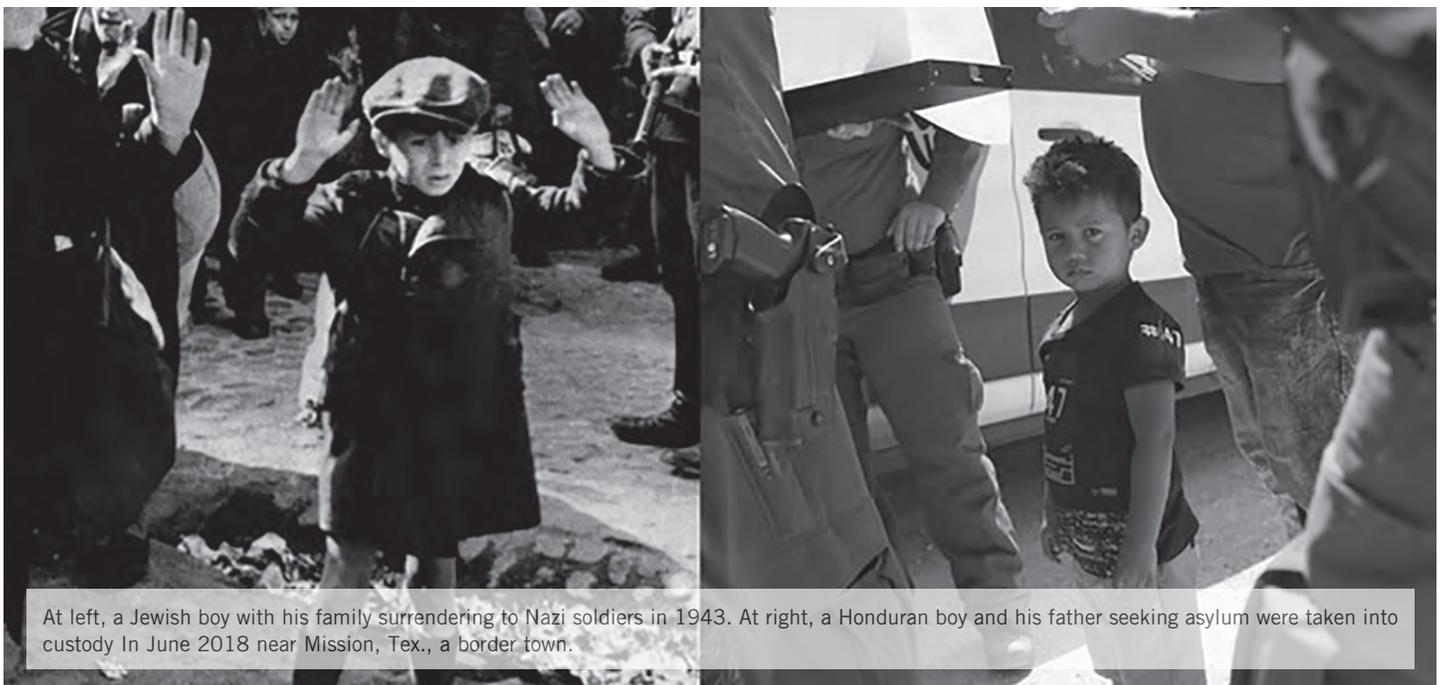
“My mother then turned to [her owner] and cried, ‘Oh, master, do not take me from my child!’ Without making any reply, he gave her two or three heavy blows on the shoulders with his raw hide, snatched me from her arms, handed me to my master, and seizing her by one arm, dragged her back. ...The cries of my poor parent became more and more

indistinct. ...The horrors of that day sank deeply into my heart.” —Charles Ball, whose 1837 autobiography of a life in slavery included this discussion of his separation from his mother at the age of four

The Black family “suffers little by separation.” —Thomas R. R. Cobb, a pro-slavery legal scholar, in 1858

“I stared intently, trying desperately not to lose sight of my mother, my little sister with her hair of gold and sun, my grandmother, my older sisters. I see them always, for I am still looking for them, trying to embrace them one last time. ... What remains of that night like no other is an irremediable sense of loss, of parting. My mother and my little sister left, and I never said goodbye. It all remains unreal.” —Elie Wiesel, “Memoirs,” describing how the Nazis separated his family during the Holocaust

“I’m going to take your child to get bathed.’ That’s one we see again and again. ...The child goes off, and in a-half-an-hour, 20 minutes, the



At left, a Jewish boy with his family surrendering to Nazi soldiers in 1943. At right, a Honduran boy and his father seeking asylum were taken into custody In June 2018 near Mission, Tex., a border town.

parent inquires, ‘Where is my five-year-old?’... And they say, ‘You won’t be seeing your child again.’” — Anne Chandler, Tahirih Justice Center, in *Texas Monthly* last week

“The children will be taken care of—put into foster care or whatever.” —White House Chief of Staff John Kelly last month

“All I can remember is how much my son and I were both crying as they took him away. ...It has been about six months since I last saw my son.” —A detainee in an A.C.L.U. lawsuit filed in April, describing the seizure of his 13-year-old son in October

“Womp womp.” —Corey Lewandowski, a Trump surrogate, mocking family separations on Tuesday

“My babies started crying when they found out we were going to be separated. It breaks my heart to remember my youngest wail: ‘Why do I have to leave? Mami, I want to stay with you!’ My youngest cried and screamed in protest. ...In tears myself, I asked my boys to be brave, and I promised we would be together again soon. ...I do not know where my sons are, and I am very worried about them.” —Mrs. J.I.L., a Salvadoran woman, in the A.C.L.U. suit

“We have an orchestra here.” —A Border Patrol agent joking last week as children cried inconsolably after being taken from their parents.

So, Mr. President, you’re right that you didn’t start family separation. Today’s practice is not the same as slavery or Nazism, but it still fits neatly into the annals of barbarism.

I hope you will genuinely stop this cruelty. One lesson from this history is that while there are always apologists at the time, ultimately we come to appreciate that to wrench shrieking children from the arms of their parents is not just cruel, not just abhorrent, but truly evil.

—*New York Times*, June 20, 2018

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/20/opinion/trump-family-separation-executive-order.html>

## The Deportation Machine Obama Built for Trump

By MARISA FRANCO AND CARLOS GARCIA

*We are reprinting this informative two-year-old article from the Nation because it sheds light on the current deportation/immigration disasters of the Trump administration. —The Editors*

June 27, 2016—When Barack Obama took office after his 2008 election, he inherited a budding deportation apparatus with its roots in the imagination of the “War on Terror” reactionaries who created the Office of Homeland Security in 2001 (later the Department of Homeland Security.) When he leaves office he will leave behind to his successor the most sophisticated and well-funded human-expulsion machine in the history of the country.

In his first two years, newly appointed Director of the Office of Homeland Security Tom Ridge expanded the purview of his department to include an immigration enforcement plan that sought to achieve a “100 percent removal rate” of the undocumented population in the United States by seeing to the drafting of a document that came to shape the next 15 years, “ENDGAME Office of Detention and Removal Strategic Plan.” At the time, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (later broken up into the Citizenship and Immigration Services, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection) had approximately 26,000 agents and \$4.9 billion. It was an enormous leap from when ICE was previously housed within Department of Justice but nothing like what it grew to be today.

Instead of reversing that architecture and disavowing that plan, President Obama turbocharged it. To pay for the ballooning enforcement-first approach, the budget for immigration enforcement grew 300 percent from the resources given at the time of its founding under Bush to \$18 billion annually,

more than all other federal law-enforcement agencies’ budget combined.

Before the end of his first term in office, the Obama administration had taken a small program developed in George W. Bush’s last days that aimed to turn local police into “force multipliers” and expanded it by about 3,600 percent. The Secure Communities program that DHS Secretary Jeh Charles Johnson described as causing “hostility to enforcement of immigration laws” existed in only 14 counties under Bush, but by the end of 2009 it spread to 88 counties. By 2013, it was active in all 3,181 U.S. jurisdictions. It was eventually scrapped in 2014 and replaced with a rebranded Priority Enforcement Program.

As record numbers of people were being deported, an increasing number were also charged and channeled into federal prison before their expulsion. Within two years of coming into office, President Obama doubled the number of people being prosecuted for reentry by expanding Bush’s border-court system, Operation Streamline, which tries up to 70 people per day in a cattle line of sentences. The experiment went from three jurisdictions in 2008 to every single border sector except California by 2010. From the time of its invention in 2005 to just four years later in 2009, Streamline sent over 209,000 individuals to serve federal prison sentences for no reason other than crossing the border.

To carry out the plans laid out in ENDGAME, DHS would become the largest law-enforcement agency in the country, with more than 48,000 personnel dedicated to immigration enforcement alone.

At the same time, the Obama administration worked to craft an image of being smart as well as hard on enforcement. It has promoted con-

cepts of prosecutorial discretion to narrow the targeting of its resources and established the temporary-relief program, deferred action, to further define who faces the threat of removal.

However, the implementation of such mechanisms and President Obama's professed support for immigration-reform legislation does not alter the massive net the president has sewn to ensnare the undocumented community. By April 2014, immigration authorities scanned a total of 32 million sets of fingerprints, a number three times the undocumented population and equivalent to 10 percent of the entire U.S. population. In fiscal year 2012, the height of its deportation quota pursuit, ICE processed nine million prints, matching 436,000 submitted by local law enforcement, and issued detainers (a practice largely abandoned now due to constitutional concerns) for over a quarter-million of those it identified.

With such far-reaching capacity, whether deportation numbers spike or drop under an administration is a question of opening or closing the faucet on what has become a well-oiled removal pipeline. Whether it is flowing rapidly or cut to a trickle is a choice of the person in charge, and will be a choice presented to President Obama's successor.

As Obama enters his final months, some say the record deportations he



oversaw and the raids against refugee mothers and children already seal his legacy as the deporter-in-chief, while others had argued that a positive ruling to expand deferred action in the

Supreme Court this summer could have somehow redeemed it.

However, a different measure will be comparing what he inherited to that which he'll pass to whoever comes next.

With the prospect of a Trump presidency overseeing future DHS activity, the most important decision the president has on immigration is yet to come. Will Obama dismantle the astronomical capacity to capture immigrants he created during his presidency, or risk handing over the reigns of a dragnet at-the-ready to the man who's promised to surpass him in using it?

—*The Nation*, June 27, 2016

<https://www.thenation.com/article/the-deportation-machine-obama-built-for-president-trump/>



Anti-deportation protesters demonstrate in front of the White House, 2016.

# Democrats Out-Right the Right

BY AJAMU BARAKA

If more proof was needed to persuade anyone that the Democrats are indeed a war party, it was provided when Senator Chuck Schumer and other Democrat leaders in the Senate engaged in a cynical stunt to stake out a position to the right of John Bolton on the summit between Trump and Kim Jong-un.

The Democrats asserted that the planned summit could only be judged successful if the North Koreans agreed to dismantle and remove all their nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, end all production and enrichment of uranium, dismantle its nuclear weapons infrastructure, and suspend ballistic missile tests.

Those demands would constitute an unconditional surrender on the part of the North Korean leadership and will not happen, and the Democrats know it.

But as problematic as those demands are, here is the real problem that again demonstrates the bi-partisan commitment to war that has been at the center of U.S. imperial policies: If these are the outcomes that must be achieved for the meeting to be judged a success, not only does it raise the bar beyond the level any serious person believes possible, it gives the Trump administration the ideological cover to move toward war. The inevitable failure to force the North Koreans to surrender essentially forecloses all other options other than military conflict.

This is a reckless and cynical game that provides more proof that neither party has the maturity and foresight to lead.

Both capitalist parties support the use and deployment of militarism, repression and war, but somehow—even though the historic record reveals the opposite—the Democratic Party has managed to be perceived as less likely to support the war agenda than

Republicans. That perception must be challenged directly.

---

**Not one drop of blood  
from the working class  
and poor to defend the  
interests of the  
capitalist oligarchy.**

---

The Democrats have had a long and sordid history connected to North Korea, and every other imperialist war that the U.S. has waged since the end of the Second World War. It was the policies of Democrat president Truman that divided the Korean peninsula and led to the brutal colonial war waged by U.S. forces. Conflict with Korea was valuable for Truman and his party advisors who were committed to remilitarizing the U.S. economy, and they needed the justification that the Korean War gave them. Truman tripled the military budget and established the framework for the network of U.S. foreign bases that would eventually cover the world over the next few decades.

The bipartisan commitment to full spectrum dominance continues with no real opposition from the Democratic party-connected “resistance.” Even the Poor Peoples’ Campaign (PPC) that was launched in May and purports to be an independent moral movement still dances around the issue of naming the parties and interests responsible for the “moral failures” of the U.S.

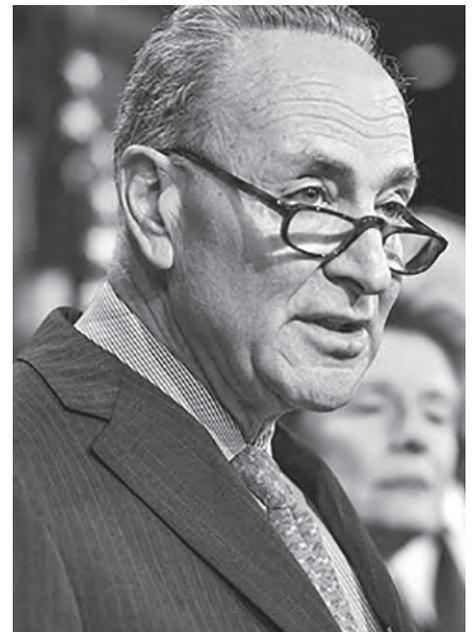
On the other hand, the Revolutionary Action Committee, the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, the student- and youth-led antiwar movement and eventually Dr. King clearly identified the bi-partisan commitment to the Vietnam War. What Dr. King and

the activists in the 1960s understood was that in order to be politically and morally consistent, it was necessary to name the culprits and identify the concrete geopolitical and economic interests driving the issue of war and militarism.

Appeals to morality as an element for popular mobilization against war can be useful. But such appeals have little more impact than an online petition if they substitute vague platitudes for substance and specificity.

So it was with the PPC’s week of actions against war. Just a few days before the week began, a vote took place in the House of Representatives to support yet another increase to the military budget. In a vote of 351 to 66, the House of Representatives authorized a significant hike to an incredible \$717-billion-a-year.

And then just a few days after the PPC’s week of action on militarism and war, the Democrats delivered their reckless and opportunistic ultimatum to the Trump administration on North Korea



Senator Chuck Schumer and other Democratic leaders in the Senate.

that could very conceivably lead to another illegal and immoral U.S. war.

Not calling the Democrats out on their warmongering is itself immoral.

It is also quite clear that vague moral appeals are not enough to delineate the interests of the capitalist elites and their commitment to war as oppositional to those of working people and the poor, who in the U.S. serve the moneyed interests as enlisted cannon fodder.

The positions staked out by the leadership of the Democratic Party just confirmed what was already commonly understood as the hegemonic positions among the majority in the foreign policy establishment.

Objectively, there was never much ideological space between the right-wing policies of Dick Cheney or John Bolton and the neoliberal right-wing policies of Democratic Party policy-makers. The differences were always merely tactical and not strategic in the sense that they all want the North Koreans to be supplicants.

Unfortunately, the general public is the only sector confused about the intentions and interests of elitist policy-makers, especially those elements of the public conditioned to believe that the Democratic party is less belligerent and less committed to militarism than the Republicans.

The fact is that the Democratic Party establishment is also firmly entrenched on the right. Defeating the bi-partisan right must be the task for ourselves and for the world.

That is why the peace, antiwar and anti-imperialist forces must do the work to clear up that confusion. The movement must declare without equivocation the position of the Black Alliance for Peace: Not one drop of blood from the working class and poor to defend the interests of the capitalist oligarchy.

—CounterPunch, June 12, 2018

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/06/12/the-democrats-out-right-the-right-on-north-korean-summit/>



## HOLT LABOR LIBRARY

4444 Geary Blvd., Suite 207  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
phone: 415-387-5700  
email: [holtlabor@holtlaborlibrary.org](mailto:holtlabor@holtlaborlibrary.org)

Monday through Friday  
7:00 am - 3:00 pm  
Appointment suggested

### Labor Studies & Radical History

- Over 6,000 labor & socialist books and pamphlets
- 90 current subscriptions to labor & left periodicals
- 300 labor & radical movies and documentaries
- Trotskyist bulletins, documents, and papers
- Scrapbooks & ephemera from the Anti-Vietnam War movement and Fairplay for Cuba
- Audiotapes of classes by Tom Kerry & Larry Trainor

Visit us on the web: <http://www.holtlaborlibrary.org>

## Trumpty Dumpty

BY DR. NAYVIN GORDON



Trumpty Dumpty sat on his wall,  
Trumpty Dumpty had a great fall.  
All the kingpin's forces and all the KKKlansmen  
Couldn't put Trumpty together again.

July 25, 2018

*Dr. Gordon is a California Family Physician who has written many articles on health and politics.*

# Dogs as a Tool of Racist Repression

BY ALEX MOYLE

In 2016, veterinarian Dan Wentz started a fundraiser to implant titanium crowns on the teeth of a 106-pound German Shepherd police dog.

In Ferguson, Missouri.

“Given all that’s happened,” said Wentz, “I want to make sure we are doing what we can to help keep these dogs on the street.”

Ferguson, of course, is where the 2014 police murder of unarmed, 18-year-old Michael Brown touched off an uprising that sparked the growth of the Black Lives Matter movement around the nation, and brought horrific police repression of protesters in response.

Wentz’s campaign was launched after the uprising. It came after the Ferguson Police Department had taken a police dog to the memorial left to Brown to piss on it. And it was after a Justice Department investigation into the Ferguson police found that officers only sicced dogs on Black people, including children, and that the dogs were used “not to counter a physical threat but to inflict punishment.”

This story isn’t an exception, though. Throughout the country, police departments cynically exploit people’s love of dogs to make the abuse of human beings by police K9 units and the abuse of the dogs themselves seem acceptable, obscuring a mass of brutality, corruption and abuse.

The “Rin Tin Tin” propaganda used by police departments for community outreach efforts must be confronted with the real history of decades of brutality—toward human and animal alike—as a result of the use of police dogs.

Like many aspects of modern policing, police dogs have their historical roots in slavery and colonialism.

Cuban bloodhounds were tools in the hands of professional slave catchers

for recapturing and brutalizing fleeing slaves, and instruments of psychological terror to prevent others from trying to escape. From slavery to Jim Crow to the era of mass incarceration, attack dogs have been a continuous feature of anti-Black violence.

It’s still the case today that police dogs are used disproportionately to maul and terrorize people of color. The Ferguson police department’s apartheid policy of dog attacks for Black people only isn’t unique.

---

**A 2013 report similarly found that 100 percent of the victims of police dog bites in Los Angeles County in the first six months of that year were Black or Latino.**

---

A 2013 report similarly found that 100 percent of the victims of police dog bites in Los Angeles County in the first six months of that year were Black or Latino.

The stark numbers show that no progress has been made in Los Angeles since former Police Chief Daryl Gates and the LAPD were sued by the ACLU and NAACP in 1991 for unleashing K9 units against the Black and Brown communities of Los Angeles, mauling more than 900 people over the course of three years.

Meanwhile, a 2016 report by the Center for Policing Equity, using data collected from 11 large, unnamed police departments, found that police were more likely to use dogs against Black suspects (as they were more likely to use force in general.)

Despite this history, it is even more difficult to convict police officers of wrongdoing or to win civil judgments in brutality cases where K9s are involved. Attorney Donald W. Cook has termed it the “Rin Tin Tin effect,” stating that jurors often seem unable to see police dogs as anything but noble, or to understand the severity of the maiming they can inflict, unless there is graphic video evidence.

“[Police] use terms like ‘apprehend’ and ‘restrain,’ to try to portray it as a very antiseptic event,” Cook told *NPR*. “But you look at the video and the dog is chewing away on his leg and mutilating him.”

Although recent history is rife with examples of needless mutilations, courts, like juries, have generally given police a wide berth to use dogs to inflict grisly injuries.

In 2017, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled for police in the case of *Maney v. Garrison*—a gruesome case where a police officer allowed a K9 to rip the scalp from the head of a defenseless homeless man. According to the decision, police had no obligation to immediately stop a K9 from mauling a person they knew wasn’t a suspect.

The courts have similarly looked the other way on police using K9s to violate legal protections against unreasonable searches.

In a rare moment of near-impossible naivety, the late Justice Antonin Scalia once asked why cops would want dogs that give false positives—indicating that drugs are present when they aren’t. Police answer that question themselves by referring to their K9 partners as “probable cause on a leash.”

The courts have held that a police dog’s signal to his handler constitutes

probable cause, allowing for a warrantless search, despite studies showing that up to 80 percent of positive identifications by police dogs are false positives, and that police dogs will indicate a positive identification based on the expectations of their handler.

Thus, in practice, cops can search anyone at any time so long as they have a K9 on hand.

And the drug seizures and civil asset forfeitures made possible by police K9s pay huge dividends to departments. A single police K9 in Monrovia, California, led cops to over \$1 billion in drug seizures over the course of six years. Around the nation, cops in 2014 used civil asset forfeiture to take more property than all the burglars in the nation combined.

In addition to the massive human and economic tolls, it should be pointed out that the public image of police as good keepers of their beloved K9 partners has no basis in reality. Police dogs frequently die when they are left in hot cars, struck by vehicles or killed in training exercises.

Along with the inherently abusive nature of training dogs to maul people, cops have frequently been caught committing animal abuse on the job against police K9s—including choking and beating them as one might expect the handlers of dogs trained for violence-on-command to do.



Civil rights demonstrator being attacked by police dogs, May 3, 1963, Birmingham, Alabama. Bill Hudson/AP Images

Showing how little they care about the welfare of their “partners,” in Illinois—where Macron County Sheriff Howard Buffett, the son of billionaire Warren Buffet, spends millions through his private organization to stock the state with K9 units—police recently threatened to euthanize their K9s if marijuana was legalized in the state.

Cops shouldn’t be allowed to pose as “friends to Fido,” given that they routinely shoot and kill family dogs, even in instances where the dog very clearly posed no threat.

According to Department of Justice estimates, cops kill more than 25 dogs each day in the U.S., adding up to some 10,000 animals per year. And since civilians’ dogs are considered chattel property, aggrieved owners often have little remedy outside of small claims court, where they can argue they’re entitled to the pitiful “market value” of their slain pet.

By contrast, harming a police dog—including protecting yourself from one that is attacking you—is a federal offense, punishable by up to ten years in prison. Around the nation, numerous “Blue Lives Matter” bills are ratcheting up such penalties at the state level.

Along with their capacity for brutalization and the practical elimination of protections against unreasonable searches, police dogs are an invaluable propaganda tool, available for elementary school tours, public events and local morning news talk show demos. They are viewed by police chiefs as an incomparably “favorable asset for public relations,” and as mascots for their own program and department.

This remarkable sleight of hand—using animals that have been trained to be a key instrument of brutality to build a more favorable public perception—shows how this system manages to turn the very features that ought to be damning indictments into beacons for public support.

But this exploitation has been hugely successful. People’s love for dogs is based

on 32,000 years of shared evolution that has produced remarkable animals many consider to be part of their family.

But in the hands of racist and brutal police departments, the physical abilities, intelligence and loyalty of dogs are put to the worst possible use.

Despite this brutal history, a popular movement against the use of police dogs doesn’t yet exist.

After the horrifying images of police dogs used against civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham, Alabama, and other cities in the 1960s, legislation was put forward to limit police dog use in California and Hawaii. But the proposals were crushed by pressure from law enforcement groups, and the use of police dogs has expanded ever since.

Even People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—which has absurdly equated animal abuse with human slavery and opposed the use of service dogs for the blind—doesn’t take a principled stand against the use of police dogs. It instead urges departments to fit K9s with hot-car alert systems—and thank them for their “service.”

All around the world, from Ferguson to Standing Rock, from the U.S.-Mexico border to Palestine, from Guantánamo Bay to Abu Ghraib, attack dogs remain quintessential tools of racist violence. The use of police dogs is simultaneously human rights abuse, animal abuse and a propaganda tool in the furtherance of escalating repression.

Far from allowing police departments to exploit dogs as mascots that obscure police brutality, socialists, anti-racists and those opposed to animal cruelty should all strongly oppose the formation of K9 units, and demand that existing ones be disbanded as an important component of disarming militarized police forces.

—*SocialistWorker.org*, July 17, 2018

<http://socialistworker.org/2018/07/17/using-dogs-as-a-tool-of-racist-repression>

# U.S. Sold \$47 Billion in Weapons This Year

More than all of 2017

BY PAUL MCLEARY

July 16, 2018—The United States has already blown past the amount of weaponry it sold to foreign governments all last year—with more than two months to go before the fiscal year ends.

American defense companies, with the blessing of the Pentagon and State Department, have already sold \$46.9 billion worth of weapons to foreign governments this year, leaving the \$41 billion worth of deals in 2017 in the dust.

Lieutenant General Charles Hooper, director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, which coordinates foreign sales, revealed the new numbers to me on Monday. “The president and the administration’s plans have given us that leadership, guidance and focus, and we understand that this comes directly from the top, directly from the White House,” he said.

The record for any single year is the \$69.1 billion reached in 2012, but that was an outlier since it saw a staggering \$29 billion deal for 84 F-15s to Saudi Arabia—a single signature line item that sent the total rocketing up from \$40 billion.

The previous high—without that massive Saudi buy—was \$47 billion in 2015, a number the Pentagon is now within inches of topping.

The huge numbers being posted so far in 2018 are partly the product of a push by the Trump administration to increase weapons sales as part of its America First ideology to boost U.S. manufacturing and, the thinking goes, arm allies in order to take some pressure off the Pentagon from providing security across the globe.

Asked about where he sees the most growth in arms sales in the near term, Hooper said that “clearly we see an emergence in ballistic missile threats,”

and allies in Europe eyeing Russia, and the Persian Gulf, nervous about Iranian capabilities, are important in that regard.

Arms sales have become a central part of the president’s remarks whenever he travels overseas, where he extolls the virtues of American weapons, while pushing allies to spend more on their own defense. At the NATO summit in Brussels last week, Trump suggested that he’s willing to help some smaller allies buy more American gear.

“We have many wealthy countries with us today, but we have some that aren’t so wealthy and they did ask me if they could buy the military equipment and could I help them out. And we will help them out a little bit,” he said during an impromptu news conference.

“We are not going to finance it for them, but we will make sure that they are able to get payments and various other things so they can buy—because the United States makes by far the best military equipment in the world: the best jets, the best missiles, the best guns, the best everything.”

Hooper said the desire to make deals happen has pushed down to all levels of the process.

“Listen, I’ve been in security cooperation for 15 years,” he said. “I’ve never seen a time where there was a better collaboration with the State Department, the Commerce Department, and Capitol Hill, the National Security Council and the White House. There’s never been a better time.”

The Trump administration issued marching orders to diplomats, White House staffers and Pentagon staff to push American weaponry whenever traveling abroad.

Tina Kaidanow, the State Department’s acting assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs told reporters on a Monday conference call that “we have the entire weight of the U.S. government behind these efforts.”

—*Breaking Defense*, July 16, 2018

<https://breakingdefense.com/2018/07/the-u-s-has-already-sold-more-weapons-this-year-than-all-of-2017/>



# Trump, Obama and the Nature of Fascism

BY TONY MCKENNA

The latest Trump scandal hitting the news—the interment of children in cages, the forcible separation of screaming toddlers from their parents. It seemed to have touched a level of inhumanity, which is breathtaking, even by the standards of the current U.S. administration; an administration, which already feels like the court of Caligula set to an episode of bad reality TV, with a soundtrack handily provided by the Loony Toons. Fortunately, the president has stepped back, has issued a decree which will reverse the vile and traumatizing project of cleaving immigrant parents from their kids—though the practice of locking them all up in the same cage still seems to fall somewhat short of a positive exercise in empathy and human rights.

As a result of such events, *Facebook* was deluged with a variety of memes: but all carrying the same essential message. Trump, it was averred, is a fascist. Some of these were done with wit and verve: the image of a famous brand of margarine appeared, with Trump’s big sniggering face grinning out, under-

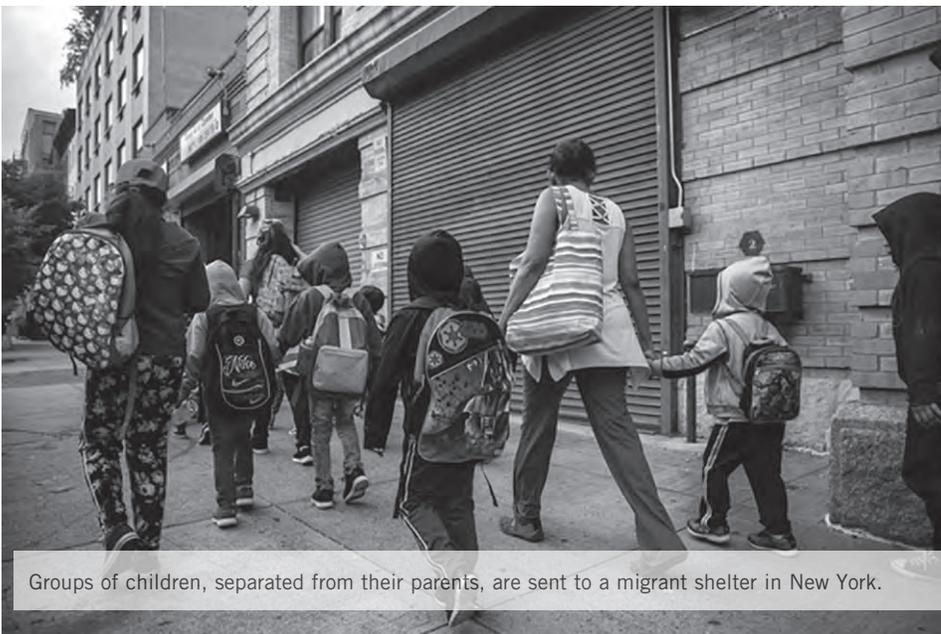
written by the slogan “I Can’t Believe It’s Not Hitler.” Others were significantly more serious; a host of images appeared split into two halves: on the top a photo of immigrant children who have been imprisoned in 2018 in American border camps, on the bottom images from Nazi concentration camps of emaciated Jewish children—wide, haunted eyes gazing out from behind writhing barbed wire. Others pointed out with mournful gravitas that Hitler did not begin with the Final Solution, that he worked his way up to it, and all it took was good people not to act. Trump 2018, then, reimagined in the guise of early thirties Nazi Germany.

It is easy to understand such comparisons; the dehumanizing of others, the reduction of people—both rhetorically and literally—to the status of caged animals has been part and parcel of Trump’s ongoing polemic and political project, and has clear affinities with fascist thought in terms of its othering of minorities, immigrants, and the disempowered more generally. But fascism is about more than just ideology.

Fascism evolved out of the need to neutralize strong mobilizations of the working class, so for instance, Hitler’s antecedents, the Freikorps, developed out of the struggle against the proletarian revolution, which took place in Germany in November 1918, as they helped suppress the uprising, murdering its leaders, most famously Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Mussolini’s movement and his Black Shirts evolved out of the need to destroy a very powerful workers’ movement which had formed works councils amid sweeping industrial unrest in the north in cities like Turin during the early twenties, and a Socialist Party which had hundreds-of-thousands of members.

In the case of Hitler himself, in combating a militant, highly industrialized German working class, he had not only forged his own party apparatus, but had amassed a personal army of hundreds-of-thousands of troops in 1932 (the year before he took power)—an army not only separate from the national army but also one far greater in number. He was able to do away with the liberal democratic institutions because of this, and because the ruling elite backed his play, for they themselves felt that the working classes were a threat to the capitalist system *per-se* and could no longer be contained within the parameters of parliamentarianism. Fascism, then, is the most extreme, barbaric and lethal form of counter-revolution, which involves crippling every democratic expression of the masses through the most prolonged and bloody form of open civil war.

None of these conditions pertain in the U.S. Unfortunately, the workers movements are relatively “passive,” having been in retreat for many years. In addition, Trump has no organized, auxiliary army which could bolster any attempt on his part to smash the work-



Groups of children, separated from their parents, are sent to a migrant shelter in New York.

er's organizations at a stroke, to absorb the unions into the state wholesale, and to abolish the political-democratic apparatus; perhaps more importantly, the American ruling class, have no interest in supporting such an offensive for the simple reason that class antagonism has been managed incredibly effectively within the particular American style of "oligarchic" democracy—even at a time of severe economic crisis.

Within two months of having been in power, Hitler was able to purge much of the police force in Germany, replacing its chiefs with his own people, and was able to authorize an emergency decree which justified the use of lethal force against communists and leftists more broadly, not to mention the Jews who were regularly subsumed under these categories whatever their political allegiances. Hitler was able to do this because it was the culmination of an ongoing life and death struggle enacted against the German working classes who posed a significant threat to the social order.

Within the first two months of his inauguration, Hitler had sent 25,000 social democrats, communists and liberals to internment camps. Within that same two-month window, he had introduced a decree, which allowed him to circumvent juries, and subject political opponents to military courts. In the same period the press was muzzled. This is what Hitlerism really was; the stark, violent process by which the democratic powers of the masses and any and every possibility of resistance is physically decapitated, without preamble, without hesitation—only the lethal sound of the swishing blade.

Now consider Trump's resume. After he first took office, his most racist and rabidly reactionary act of legislature was the attempt to introduce the notorious "Muslim travel ban," a ban which was in effect for several months, but was repeatedly blocked by Supreme

Court judges before being repealed. In April of that first year Trump was unable to fill 85 percent of positions in the executive branch that he required in order to run the swift, decisive, and more authoritarian form of government he craved; one which was capable of acting uniformly and sidestepping bureaucracy. And the American media have not only not been stifled by Trump; rather they are perhaps more openly hostile to him than any other president in American history.

That Trump would like to run the presidency on fascist terms; that he would happily bridle the press, send dissenters *en masse* to prison; that his political ideology is riven with all sorts of fascist yearnings and aspirations is beyond question—but the more significant issue is whether there exists the objective set of material and social forces which could allow such ideological strands to reach fruition through the formation of a militarized fascist state. At this point in time, there simply does not.

But why is that important? Why is it important that we don't give the Trump administration the designation "fascist," given the boost his presidency has provided to fascist, far right tendencies within the American political landscape like the KKK, and the increasing mistreatment and brutalization of immigrants and minorities, which has come with it? Surely debating the finer details of the concept is to get bogged down in esoteric trivia, and miss the broader humanitarian point. To ignore the suffering of these people.

In fact, the issue of a correct definition of fascism is a vital one. If one abstracts the ideological components of fascism from the historical processes, which create it, certain political implications inevitably follow. If you separate out fascism from its basis in class struggle, you come to create an ahistorical depiction which involves the following: on the one hand a dema-

gogic, populist leader figure who espouses fascist ideology, and on the other, the ahistorical abstraction of something called "the people" to whom this figure appeals.

There is usually a tertiary element, some mediating factor—an economic crisis perhaps—and because of this, "the people," who are invariably poor, ill-educated and desperate, then buy into the spiel the wannabe dictator is selling. They attend his rallies, they hungrily Hoover up his lies, they buy into the grotesque racism and rabid nationalism because they are poor and angry and resentful and stupid, and easily dazzled by the flashing colors of a fluttering flag.

Such a vision is middle-class liberal to its core. I am tempted to say it is Clintonite or Obama-esque. Many of Obama's and Clinton's most vocal supporters are nice, educated liberals who now spend a good deal of time wringing their hands in sorrow, lamenting the fact that the administration of the soft, well-spoken, liberal-intellectual Mr. Obama has been usurped by the vulgar fascism of the gaudy upstart, the belligerent, crass and supremely unlettered Mr. Trump. In their eyes, the Trump administration is fascist or quasi-fascist because it is more than just a more reactionary administration; it represents a political dark age, the period by which the respectable, rational, reasonable and professional guardians of the liberal *status quo* have been vanquished by the forces of a more atavistic and sinister primitivism.

And why, why has this happened? Because the people at the bottom have not been properly educated; they have not been sufficiently "taught" about "injustices" and it is this which led to "a fascist's win" and "America's moral loss." The good, venerable liberals "warned," of course, they even "begged," but the teeming masses are a volatile, emotive and combustible

bunch, the mob when roused rarely tends to respond to the laments and pleas of their educated betters; the humane, middle classes who are most equipped to act in the people's best interests.

It is remarkable how closely Obama himself cleaves to such a narrative. Responding to Trump's victory, without a hint of irony or introspection, Obama wistfully opined: "Maybe we pushed too far... Maybe people just want to fall back into their tribe." You get what happened right? Trump got in because the ill-educated masses couldn't appreciate the wisdom, the universalism, the sheer humanity of the Obama-liberal project, and just wanted to sink back into a Hobbesian bellum *omnium contra omnes* (all against all) of localized tribal impulses and antagonisms. The fascist urge was simply too strong to resist. When one of his aides assures the ex-president that, had he been allowed to run against Trump he would have won a third term, Obama demurs because he again feels that the masses are too dim-witted to appreciate his splendorous forward thinking: "Sometimes I wonder whether I was ten or 20 years too early."

Of course, the more cynical among us might want to point out that there was another factor, which reduced the Democratic vote in the 2016 election, specifically the eight years of the Obama presidency, which preceded it. The years of military strikes in one country after the next: Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan. In fact Obama launched ten times more air strikes in comparison with the George W. Bush presidency, which came before. Obama presided over a further militarization of a police force, which saw the slaying of unarmed Blacks spike. And, on the question of immigration, Obama deported more people than all the other presidents combined. Trump's policy of separating out children from their parents was

introduced on the June 4, 2018, and it marked a more reactionary development, for sure, but one which was in keeping with the punitive cruelty of the Democratic immigration policy, which had gone before—it simply represented an enhancement of it. During Obama's administration children were also kept caged in holding pens in immigration camps. Accounts of their physical, mental and sexual abuse were rife. Only these things received nothing like the same kind of media coverage.

---

**In fact Obama launched ten times more air strikes in comparison with the George W. Bush presidency, which came before. Obama presided over a further militarization of a police force, which saw the slaying of unarmed Blacks spike. And, on the question of immigration, Obama deported more people than all the other presidents combined.**

---

Clinton lost to Trump, not because millions of poor people were mobilized by a fascist message; but because millions of poor people didn't turn out to vote; they understood that Obama was a friend of war, a guardian of Wall Street, and a keeper of the neoliberal *status quo*. They didn't require more of the same in Clinton. But the actual facts of Obama's presidency are increasingly drowned out by the howls of "fascist" which are hurled at Donald Trump week by week, month by month. This is nothing new, incidentally.

Every single thoroughly reactionary Republican president of the past fifty years has had this charge leveled at them: Nixon, Reagan, both Bushes and now Trump. They were all fascists in their day.

But in allocating to an administration the label fascist—even if it is headed by a person with clear fascist ideological tendencies—we run the risk of underestimating not only the everyday run-of-the-mill racist and war mongering policies enacted by the "respectable" parties of the parliamentary mainstream; we also fail to comprehend the symbiotic connection which opens up between the period of Obama and the time of Trump. Trump's regime is, for the most part, more reactionary, and more overtly and rabidly racist than the Obama administration ever was; this cannot be denied. Trump's accession marks a truly awful period in American politics.

But it reached its fruition precisely because the Obama administration had exhausted its facile promises of hope and change in the flames of international war and the unrelenting economic oppression of the poorer layers of the domestic population. It is the continuation of such politics by more extreme means, with the ideological veneer of progressivism set aside, born from the thickening disillusionment of the poorer layers in a decaying political system and their increasing lack of interest in the ballot box (for very good reason.) It has the features of ineptitude and corruption, which are the product of such a development.

But is not a fascist administration. It does not mark a qualitative break in what has come before. The latest farrago involving immigrant children is unutterably awful, but its closest parallel in U.S. history—if not the immigration policies of Obama himself—might be something like the locking up of the families of Japanese Americans in WWII. That policy was carried out by

the Democratic Party headed by Roosevelt. The same party, which, by the way, supported slavery, used nuclear weapons against Japanese cities and escalated the war in Vietnam to a shrieking crescendo.

In describing the Trump administration as fascist we subscribe to a liberal logic, which separates out the material realities of fascism from its ideological expression. This helps whitewash the reality of the Democratic Party as a party of war and the financial elite, and instead recasts it in the type of morality play where the beleaguered and high minded liberals like Obama and Clinton become the last bastions of reason and humanity against an ever encroaching darkness—only their tragic struggle against barbarism is doomed to founder on the rocks of the prejudices and the whims of an easily excitable and unsophisticated mob. It is a vision, which combines hatred of the lower classes with a drooling sycophancy toward the elite. As tragedy goes, it is more *Vanity Fair* than Shakespeare.

Don't buy into it.

—CounterPunch, July 4, 2018

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/07/04/trump-obama-and-the-nature-of-fascism/>

## Hiroshima Survivor Speaks Out

BY SOPHIE SHEVARDNADZE



Nuclear weapons disarmament activist, Hiroshima bombing survivor, Setsuko Thurlow.

*The world looked total destruction in the eye 73 years ago, when American nuclear bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Today, can humanity come together and prevent the catastrophe from ever happening again? RT asked nuclear weapons disarmament activist, Hiroshima bombing survivor Setsuko Thurlow.*

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** Setsuko Thurlow, survivor of nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, welcome. It's really great to have you with us.

**Setsuko Thurlow:** Thank you.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** You were in Hiroshima in August 1945, when the nuclear bomb was dropped on the city. We now know that a nuclear bomb kills not only at the moment of explosion, but for many years after. You weren't far from the epicenter of the explosion—were you exposed to radiation, did it make itself known later?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** Everybody in the city was exposed to radiation. We were all contaminated to a different degree of seriousness. Some people were killed immediately, some people survived but they started developing symptoms

like loss of hair, internal bleedings, bleeding from the gum, diarrhea, fever—those things. Practically all the people who were in the city or who entered the city to rescue the dying people got contaminated too. So we all shared the common symptoms for some time. I lost my hair, had internal bleeding, bleeding from the gum, diarrhea.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** I read that someone pointed you out of the burning building and you crawled out...

**Setsuko Thurlow:** That's correct.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** What happened then? How did you find your family, how many of them survived?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** On the next day, August 7th, in the morning hundreds, thousands of people were just sitting on the nearby hills. We hardly slept; we kept watching the entire city burn all night. And then, the Japanese soldier came around with a megaphone and said: "Is there Setsuko Nakamura?" I said: "Here I am!" "Your parents are here looking for you!" And I was surprised. I saw my parents and learnt what happened to them. My father left town early that morning on the 6th of August, he was out in the fishing boat in the Inland Sea. He loved fishing and that was his day-off. And suddenly he heard something and saw a mushroom cloud rising. He knew something terrible happened so he came back. My mother was doing dishes after breakfast and she too was buried under the collapsed building. She had to be helped. She was helped and was able to escape outside of the city. How they came together I don't know. But they told me that my married sister and her four-year-old child who had been evacuated, moved out from the city of Hiroshima in order to protect themselves from air raids. But they came

home the night before to visit us. That morning they were on their way to the hospital, they were walking over the bridge—the mother and her four-year-old child—and they had no chance. By the time I saw them that morning they were just blackened and swollen. You just couldn't recognize them. They were simply blackened melted chunks of flesh. They survived for about four days, they kept begging for water, but there were no doctors or nurses, no food, all we could give them was some water. In my very close family eight people perished. My sister-in-law was a high school teacher; she was in the center of the city, supervising about seven or eight thousand students who were mobilized to do the task for the army in the city to establish the fire lane. So they were doing the physical labor at eight o'clock on August 6. It was so hot, many boys took off shirts, and then detonation took place right above them—500-600 meters above them. They were the ones who simply vaporized, melted or carbonized. From my school 321 girls simply disappeared.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** Setsuko, what were the days, months after the bombing like? How did you survive in a burnt-out city? Did you even know what had happened? I mean, it was the first time something like that ever took place...

**Setsuko Thurlow:** I thought Americans finally caught us because they had been air-raiding most of the cities especially since March 1, 1945. So we, people in Hiroshima were beginning to feel very anxious. Hiroshima was supposed to be tenth largest city in Japan at that time. But even smaller cities had been bombed, most of the cities had been bombed. How come we hadn't been attacked? Every day and every night B-29s flew around but they didn't drop any bomb. Little did we know, that the Americans had already selected Hiroshima as a target for the new type of bomb, which they already had.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** The American government's position has been that bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were needed to save American soldiers' lives from being lost in a potential war on the ground. How do you feel when you hear that? Does this explanation sound logical to you?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** That's an American myth, just a myth, because Japan had been exhausted, finished by that time. I can verify that, we were practically starving at home. The soldiers in the Pacific or any other battlefield didn't have any food, munitions. We were finished. The war ended and the Japanese were considering surrendering. There's much historical evidence that the use of nuclear weapons wasn't necessary, and most of historians acknowledge that.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** I read you saying that the U.S. occupation forces brought you a sense of relief and liberation from the oppression of Japan's militaristic government. But those were the people who, like you were describing so vividly, brought total destruction to your city, killed hundreds-of-thousands of people, eight people from your immediate family died. Did you not connect the U.S. soldiers with the atom bomb? Was there any hatred in you towards the Americans, or you were grateful they have brought the end of the war with them?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** At that time, I would say, most of the people in Hiroshima who experienced the atomic bombing, we were in the numbed condition. All the experience was so massive and grotesque, and our psyche wouldn't accept that. That meant the cessation of emotions, we were not responding to all the horrible scenes inside. If we had responded normally we wouldn't have survived. So in that condition people's emotional response to many things that were happening around us wasn't as sharp and normal

and powerful as you would expect. You have to remember this very point.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** Setsuko, I know that the U.S. occupational forces also imposed their sort of oppression—on the bombings survivors. What was it like?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** Let me give you a couple of examples. The United States established an institution called ABCC (Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission) and people were very happy that finally we got some medication, medical experts who knew what this was all about, who would help Japanese doctors who were at a loss. But the sole purpose of the ABCC was to study the effects of radiation on human bodies, not to help the people sick because of the radiation. The survivors felt they were used as guinea pigs twice: first time as a target, second as a subject for research. You can imagine that. Occupational forces didn't want the media, newspapers to write anything that could be seen as disadvantageous to occupational forces. And if a newspaper writes something about the destruction and especially human suffering in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this would be considered disadvantageous. This would have to stop. So they censored and forced some media companies to close up shop. This is not exactly a democratic thing to do. And the survivors wrote diaries. They had correspondence. Some people wrote haiku—a Japanese literary form—when they had pains. They had to express that by writing haiku. They had photographs, films, even medical information. All these things were confiscated, and 32 thousand items were shipped back to the United States because the scientific triumph of the United States of producing the atomic bombs was OK, the world could find out. But the human suffering these bombs caused—this was not to be found out by the world. That was the reason why.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** So I want to talk a little about the American reaction towards what happened 73 years ago. President Obama was the first American president to come to Hiroshima in 2016. He delivered a very emotional speech, but never said sorry for America's decision to drop the bomb. I know that the American public went nuts over the suggestion that he could apologize, with the pundits relentlessly mocking that idea. My question is—why in your opinion is it so hard for the Americans, why are the Americans so uneasy about owning up to the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** I suppose even today, 73 years later, they must believe what they did was justifiable. It was justified to end the war quickly, to rescue American G.I.'s lives. That was OK. I think, that mentality still continues unfortunately. Not thinking people though, many Americans woke up, it was such an atrocity; an unacceptable, immoral, illegal act that the United States took. And many Americans are sorry about that. But as a state, as a nation, I guess they are too proud to apologize. I know, apology was a very contentious and controversial issue. I feel that if he had offered it we should have accepted it. We deserve to accept it. But he chose not to. And he couldn't, I suppose, because of the political milieu in the States especially during the presidential election time. But it's not totally inappropriate if he did offer that apology. You know, in the war everybody did horrible things that were against the international humanitarian law. The Germans did, the British did, the U.S. did, the Japanese did too.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** But in most cases nations do apologize. The Germans made sure that their life after World War II was one big apology. British people apologized many times as well.

**Setsuko Thurlow:** And remember, both Germany and Japan were tried by the Tribunal.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** Yes.

**Setsuko Thurlow:** And the Japanese military leaders—six or seven of them—were hung. So the losers were tried, but the victors—no matter what they'd done—were not to be tried. It's a very unfair world—I understood that even as a child.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** The memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been kept alive thanks to people like you—and governments remember those lessons as well. There has not been a single combat use of a nuclear bomb since 1945. To me, it seems that humanity has learned its lesson, has seen enough to not ever use nukes again. Do you have less faith in humanity than I do?

---

**More important is to  
make sure that some-  
thing like that will never  
happen again to any  
human beings.**

---

**Setsuko Thurlow:** No, I do have faith. If they don't have it now, they will. Certainly, I have faith in humanity. This humanity must continue to live and this civilization must be preserved. I think, it's ridiculous that some goofy people are threatening each other by saying their bombs are bigger than others' and "we have more of them." Imagine, such childish impulsive statements are being exchanged by those people. Anyway, it's hard to believe those things are still happening. But I think people are gradually learning. More than anything, I'm grateful that hundreds-of-thousands and millions of people around the world came to realize, NGOs and 122 nations signed to adopt a United Nations treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** You said over and over again that you're doing this so that the deaths of your loved ones won't be in vain. Do you really have to make amends for what happened in 1945? It wasn't your fault, you didn't drop the bomb; it wasn't you who started or fought that war. Why do you feel that you're responsible in some way? Why do you burden yourself with it?

**Setsuko Thurlow:** Look, I experienced this, I witnessed the massive death and destruction. Anybody with the conscience and moral sense can't just remain silent about that horror. Something is wrong. Somebody did it. Somebody created such destruction and massive death of humanity. An entire city just disappeared with one bomb—that was caused by human beings. Then we have to stand up and stop that kind of behavior by the human beings who are responsible. The United States was responsible. They never said sorry about that, unfortunately. More important is to make sure that something like that will never happen again to any human beings. To us that's the highest priority. We have to stop that. And this is why we have been speaking out about our painful experiences for the past seven decades. Believe me, it's not easy. Each time I talk about it, I try to embrace but still I don't succeed, it pains me. But I keep doing it because there's no other way I can live. This is my moral imperative. I guess, that would be my answer to your question.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** Setsuko, thank you so much for being with us. I have no words actually to express my gratitude. Thank you for sharing this with us.

**Setsuko Thurlow:** I wish I could speak more. I really would. This is the first time that I speak to the Russian people.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** I promise you we're going to have another lengthy interview in the near future. I promise you that much.

**Setsuko Thurlow:** I hope so. I really want the Russian people to think about life and death. It's the life of every citizen I'm concerned about, not the national or international security and all these military joggings. Yes, it's important for us to know such things, but the most important thing for us is to remember our humanity. That's the most important thing.

**Sophie Shevardnadze:** I hope your message gets across and people will hear it, understand it and take it close to heart. Thank you so much. We were talking to Setsuko Thurlow, Hiroshima bombing survivor and disarmament campaigner, discussing how her grave experience should help us address the nuclear danger today.

—RT, August 3, 2018

<https://www.rt.com/shows/sophieco/434984-hiroshima-nagasaki-bombing-survivor/>



## “Why Can’t the U.S. Just Simply Invade?”

Officials say Trump pushed U.S. military overthrow in Venezuela

BY JON QUEALLY

Surrounded by his top military aides in a White House meeting less than a year ago, the *Associated Press* on Wednesday, July 4, 2018, reports that President Donald Trump wanted to know why the U.S. military couldn’t “just simply invade” the country of Venezuela.

Based on the account of “a senior administration official familiar with what was said,” *AP* reports that the president’s comments “stunned” those at the meeting, including U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and national security adviser H.R. McMaster, both of whom have now left the administration.

From *AP*:

“In an exchange that lasted around five minutes, McMaster and others took turns explaining to Trump how military action could backfire and risk losing hard-won support among Latin American governments to punish President Nicolas Maduro for taking Venezuela down the path of dictatorship, according to the official. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the discussions.

“But Trump pushed back. Although he gave no indication he was about to order up military plans, he pointed to what he considered past cases of successful gunboat diplomacy in the region, according to the official, like the invasions of Panama and Grenada in the 1980s.”

While some of those around him continued attempts to ignore or dissuade the president, reportedly Trump could not let the idea go and *AP* cites “two high-ranking Colombian officials” who

confirmed that he brought the idea of a military overthrow up with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos during a closed-door meeting in August of 2017.

A month later, during a dinner with other Latin American leaders on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York, the reporting says that Trump—despite warnings not to do so—once more brought up the subject.

“The U.S. official said Trump was specifically briefed not to raise the issue and told it wouldn’t play well,” *AP* reports, “but the first thing the president said at the dinner was, ‘My staff told me not to say this.’ Trump then went around asking each leader if they were sure they didn’t want a military solution, according to the official, who added that each leader told Trump in clear terms they were sure. Eventually, McMaster would pull aside the president and walk him through the dangers of an invasion, the official said.”

—*Common Dreams*, July 4, 2018

<https://www.commondreams.org/news/2018/07/04/why-cant-us-just-simply-invade-officials-say-trump-pushed-us-military-overthrow>



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

# U.S. in Central America

BY PATIENCE JOHN

So we're gonna pretend these refugees aren't a result of U.S. actions in Central America?

Are we? Is that what we decided to do here?

Just a bit of denial that our government's actions in the home countries of these refugees did not create the current situation?

Just wanna make sure.

Because just off the top of my head with no *Google* assist we found:

## Guatemala

Code-named Operation PBHistory followed by Operation PBSUCCESS, the 1954 Guatemalan *coup d'état*, which was a covert operation carried out by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) that deposed the democratically elected Guatemalan President Jacobo Árbenz and ended the Guatemalan Revolution of 1944–1954.

- We literally bombed Guatemala City in the '50s
- By the '60s, we had set them on a decade long military strong man path that has lead to a violent state from which refugees are fleeing North

## El Salvador

- There is compelling evidence to show that for over 30 years, members of the U.S. military and the CIA helped organize, train, and fund death squad activity in El Salvador.
- We had set them on a decades long military strong man path that has lead to a violent state from which refugees are fleeing North.

## Honduras

- Contra guerrillas backed by President Ronald Reagan used Honduras as a base to attack

Nicaragua's Sandinista government in the 1980s.

- Battalion 3-16: was the name of a Honduran army unit responsible for carrying out political assassinations and torture of suspected political opponents of the government during the 1980s. Battalion members received training and support from the United States Central Intelligence Agency both in Honduras and at U.S. military bases.
- U.S. president Barack Obama wanted to condemn the June 2009 *coup*, which ousted the leftist leader, Manuel Zelaya. Obama walked that back when congressional Republicans supported the *de facto* government as a bulwark against Venezuela's Hugo Chávez.

I wanted to make sure I spelled Zelaya correctly and found this:

### “Central America, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua: Patterns of Human Rights Violations<sup>1</sup>

#### “Executive Summary

“The four countries discussed in this report, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, share a history as well as contemporary social and economic characteristics. The Spanish colonial period, which lasted from the early sixteenth century until 1821, laid certain institutional foundations whose legacies are still in place. Two legacies stand out: concentration of land in the hands of a small powerful elite and the exploitation of the indigenous labor force.

“The economies of all four countries are dominated by a handful of extremely rich families while the overwhelming majority is socially marginalized, economically and politically excluded, and suffers the

lacerating effects of poverty, racism and discrimination. Moreover, the bloody internal conflicts of the 1970s and 1980s produced large-scale displacement, economic hardship, and debilitating fear. The recent surge of everyday violence rips into the most vulnerable, but society as a whole suffers from the instability resulting from the failure to reign in criminal activity.

“The new gang-related violence can be attributed to several factors including decades of internal wars and impunity, extensive displacement to urban areas, the absence of social and economic programs to integrate the youth, the migration to the United States, and the over all social exclusion of a large proportion of the population. The continuation of death squad violence and the expansion of the drug trade is a reflection of the absence of the rule of law as well as the continued links between these clandestine organizations and the military and other power elites.

“The harsh response to the variety of gang activities in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras has proved ineffective. While the problems are real, the government and the press find it more expedient to target the gangs and street children for virtually all the rampant violence in the society. In response, many citizens support draconian anti-gang laws and self-help “social cleansing” practices. In the process, the more powerful clandestine organized crime units tend to be overlooked, in part because of the links, influence and control they exercise at various institutional levels in the governments. Nicaragua, while the poorest country in Central America, has fewer gangs and less violence and its government's alternative approach to rehabilitate and integrate gang members into society has been much more successful.

“Violence against women is an extremely serious problem. These crimes are seldom solved or punished, creating further fear and vulnerability among women. Crimes against homosexuals are less identified and are also likely under-reported. Politically motivated violence against party workers, human rights defenders, and professionals dedicated to investigating and bringing to justice those responsible for these crimes, especially in Guatemala, has seen an alarming rise.

“The judicial system and the police have proved largely to be ineffective.

“The serious instability and danger resulting from violence and the failure of national protection leads to displacement and migration out of the country, especially to the United States. These undocumented migrants live in limbo with the increasing threat of deportation back to the country they fled, often in fear for their lives.”

Go read that report (see the footnote below,) everything I said and more is in there. The failure of national protection makes these fellow humans refugees.

We created these huddled masses, now we refuse to let them breath free.

—Daily Kos, June 20, 2018

<https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/6/20/1773818/-So-we-re-gonna-pretend-these-refugees-aren-t-a-result-of-our-actions-in-Central-America>

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/48ad1eb72.pdf>

## Guatemala

### Assassinations of indigenous leaders in Guatemala

By JEFF ABBOTT

By all accounts on the morning of May 9, 2018, Luis Arturo Marroquín did not know he was being followed when he left his home to travel to a meeting in San Luis Jilotepeque, Jalapa, Guatemala. The 56-year-old was a community leader and member of the coordinating committee of the Guatemalan *Campesino* Development Committee (CODECA). Founded in 1992 on Guatemala’s southern coast, CODECA is a human rights organization focused on improving the conditions of the rural poor, advocating for land reform, the nationalization of energy, and the improvement of wages for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous rural workers and farmers.

Marroquín was traveling to a meeting with other members from the organization. He stopped at a small store to make a few copies before his meeting, but he would not leave alive. Shortly after his arrival, a black Toyota Hilux pickup also arrived at the store. Two men got out, entered the store and opened fire, killing Marroquín. Concerned onlookers wrote down the license plate of the vehicle, which was later identified as belonging to José Manuel Mendez Alonzo, the mayor of the nearby municipality of San Pedro Pinula, Jalapa. Mendez Alonzo is also known to be an ally of the embattled administration of President Jimmy Morales.

According to a preliminary police report obtained by *Truthout* and confirmed by Hilda Pineda, the head of Guatemala’s Public Prosecutor’s Human Rights Office, agents from the Guatemalan National Police located the vehicle that witnesses identified after the murder of Marroquín. Inside the vehicle were Mayor Mendez Alonzo and his two bodyguards, Otto Edilcer Najera Estrada and Carlos Romeo Jimenez Estrada—both of whom were armed with guns, as well as two machetes and a military-style knife.

The police documented the identifications of the passengers and weapons located in the vehicle, but released the two bodyguards and the mayor—who, according to Guatemalan law, benefits from immunity from prosecution for crimes while in office. Najera Estrada and Jimenez Estrada remain key suspects in the murder, yet the initial investigation has yet to find a direct link between pistols found in the vehicle and the one used to kill Marroquín.

“At the moment, there is no evidence that connects them to the crime,” Pineda told *Truthout*. “However, we are not discarding any possibility. We are continuing with the investigation.”

#### ***Campesinos targeted for their activism***

The day Marroquín was killed, representatives of CODECA filed the official paperwork with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal to legalize the group’s political arm, the Movement for Peoples’ Freedom (MLP), as a legal political party that will participate in the September 2019 elections. The party is currently going through the process for official recognition by the electoral body. As the Guatemalan daily newspaper *Prensa Libre* reports, Marroquín was planning to run for mayor of San Pedro Pinula with the MLP, the same town where the vehicle identified by witnesses on May 9 reportedly originated.

“The strongest hypothesis of this investigation right now is that Mr. Marroquín had intended to participate in the upcoming election, [and] that this was the primary motivation of the crime,” Pineda told *Truthout*. “We believe this was a politically motivated crime.”

Luis Arturo Marroquín was killed in what many within the movement of

small farmers, known in Spanish as *campesinos*, see as a campaign of terror against them. Since May 9, seven *campesino* leaders from CODECA and the *Campesino* Committee of the Highlands (CCDA) have been murdered.

“Every day it is getting worse,” Leiria Teresa Vay Garcia, a leader from CODECA, told *Truthout*. And in the weeks that followed, the situation deteriorated.

Just days after the assassination of Marroquín, two leaders associated with the CCDA, Mateo Chamán Pau and José Pau Xol, were murdered by unknown assailants in the towns of San Juan Tres Ríos and Choctun Basila in the department of Alta Verapaz. On May 30, yet another leader with CCDA, Ramon Choc Sacrab, was attacked with a knife in the community of Ixloc San Pedrito. He died days later from his injuries.

On June 3, Florencio Pérez Nájera and Alejandro Hernández García, two organizers with CODECA, had met with members of the organization in the community of Llano Largo in Jutiapa to discuss land rights. They were supposed to return to their homes that night after the meeting, but failed to arrive. Their families thought that maybe they had stayed with members of the community, but the following day, their bodies were found along a highway, showing signs of torture. Days later, another community leader, Francisco Munguia, a 78-year-old with CODECA from the village of Divosadero Xalapan, Jalapa, died on the way to a hospital after being attacked with a machete. There are no known suspects in these attacks.

For the members of CODECA and CCDA, the people responsible for the assassination of Marroquín are clear: They blame the Guatemalan government.

“CODECA publicly holds President Jimmy Morales responsible,” wrote the *campesino* organization in a press statement issued following the killing of Marroquín. “In a speech [Morales] gave...on May 2, he tried to foment

hate and resentment toward CODECA. Instead of seeking national unity in his speech, he aimed to incite animosity and divide the people.”

The week before Marroquín was murdered, the president spoke at a rally of workers from the Guatemalan central market that support his administration. Morales has come under investigation for illicit financing during the 2015 presidential election. In his speech, Morales targeted CODECA because of the death of a child during a November 2017 protest demanding his resignation. During that protest, members of *campesino* organizations had blocked a highway across the country.

---

**Decades after the end of the war, land remains one of the core causes of social conflicts in Guatemala. Today, a small land-holding elite controls the majority of arable land, which leaves the majority of *campesinos* with insufficient or no land to support their families.**

---

In early June, following the assassinations of the *campesinos*, representatives of the United Nations’ Human Rights Commission were visiting Guatemala and meeting with Indigenous leaders. The Commission has been meeting regularly with Indigenous leaders in Guatemala following the increase of repression and discrimination against Indigenous organizers in Guatemala in the last decade.

The UN Commission issued a statement voicing concern for the growing campaign of terror against *campesinos*.

“We are concerned about what appears to be a deteriorating climate for the defense of human rights in Guatemala,” Ravina Shamdasani, the Commission’s spokesperson, said in a press release. “We call on the authorities to promptly investigate these murders and other attacks and threats against human rights defenders, and to ensure that those found responsible are held accountable. We also urge the State to adopt all necessary measures to ensure a safe, enabling environment for human rights defenders to carry out their work free from threats and attacks.”

The murders of *campesino* leaders is unprecedented in the two decades since Guatemala’s 36-year-long internal armed conflict ended in 1996, suggests Simon Granovsky-Larsen, an assistant professor of politics and international studies at the University of Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada.

**A thorn in the side of the government**

CODECA represents more than 90,000 *campesinos* in 20 of Guatemala’s 22 departments. The MLP is still working for official recognition, but the party already has over 23,000 registered members. CODECA has worked diligently to train and educate the communities of their political and human rights.

The prospect of CODECA running for positions in the Guatemalan political system has the Guatemalan political elite nervous. In 2012, former President Otto Pérez Molina referred to the organization as a “social cancer” because of the organization’s protests against high costs of energy and social inequalities. Since the fall of Pérez Molina in 2015 on corruption charges, organizers have maintained pressure on the Morales administration over its own corruption charges.

Both CODECA and the CCDA have sought to put pressure on the political *status quo* in the streets and within the government. The economic and political elites have sought to derail the movement through the criminalization

of the leadership of CODECA and through accusations of fraud and corruption in the organization. Yet every investigation has failed to find evidence of these accusations.

“There has been a strong campaign of misinformation about the organization,” Vay Garcia told *Truthout*. “[The government and Public Prosecutor’s Office] talk about crimes committed by members of the organization, but have not been able to show any evidence of these alleged crimes.”

She adds, “We believe that since they...cannot show evidence of crimes...now they are carrying out this campaign of terror in order to destabilize the organization of the communities.”

In May 2018, the Morales administration requested the change of the ambassadors from Sweden and Venezuela over their support for both CODECA and the UN-backed International Commission Against Impunity, which played an important role in the investigation and prosecution of Pérez Molina.

Since 2012, CODECA has sought to propose a constitutional assembly to

re-found the Republic of Guatemala. These efforts accelerated during the administration of Molina, in part due to the corruption scandal that eventually led to the president’s resignation and prosecution for the cooptation of the state. But faced with the continued corruption in the Morales administration, CODECA proposed to resolve the problem from within the Guatemalan political system.

“After analyzing the situation in the country, we realized that with the political parties that are currently in government and with the levels of corruption, we could never advance in a constitutional assembly,” Vay Garcia told *Truthout*. “These sectors that are in power now will not allow it. So, we decided to pursue a political instrument that would represent the communities [in the government].”

The CCDA has also been active in challenging the Morales administration. In 2015, Leocadio Juracan, then general coordinator of the CCDA, won a congressional seat as part of the *Covergencia* party, a coalition of social movements and members of the political left.

As the assassinations and criminalization increase, the Morales government seems to be avoiding any work to resolve the conflicts across Guatemala. In August 2017, *campesinos* associated with the CCDA occupied the street in front of the presidential palace to demand that the administration comply with an agreement made by the administration of Otto Pérez Molina to resolve more than 40 conflicts over land. The occupation ended after four days, when the administration decided to comply with the agreement. However, the assassination of community leader and CCDA member Chamán Pau in May 2018 has undermined the *campesinos*’ faith that the government will comply with the agreement.

“To date, governmental institutions have not complied with any of the points of the agreement,” Lesbia Artola, a representative from CCDA in Alta Verapaz, told *Truthout*. “The government lacks any willingness to resolve the conflicts in Alta Verapaz.”

As Artola points out, many of these communities, including San Juan Tres Ríos and Choctun Basilá, have filed lawsuits for violations of human rights and attempted assassinations in the past. Yet none of these cases seem to be under investigation by prosecutors.

### A message of terror

Decades after the end of the war, land remains one of the core causes of social conflicts in Guatemala. Today, a small land-holding elite controls the majority of arable land, which leaves the majority of *campesinos* with insufficient or no land to support their families.

*Campesino* organizations have played an important role in the movement of rural farmers in demanding the right to land, as well as against the corruption that plagues Guatemala. These organizations have taken different forms of action to demand access to land. For many in the movement, the recent violence seems intended to terrorize those who struggle for land rights.



Members of the Guatemalan Campesino Development Committee (CODECA) march to demand the resignation of Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales in Guatemala City on March 7, 2017.

“These criminal acts have been registered in different departments...geographically it can be said that they have no relation, but it is evident that there is a relationship in intentionality,” wrote Jose Gabriel Cubur in a [blog post](#). “[T]here are clandestine groups or apparatuses that try to spread terror and fear in indigenous and *campesino* organizations, so that they do not continue to defend the collective rights of indigenous peoples, human rights and nature rights.”

According to the *campesinos*, the goal of the state’s violence is to demobilize the populations that clamor for their rights and for a Guatemalan state that represents the interests of the citizens of the country. Added to this, the ruling political and economic elites seek to maintain the corruption and impunity that has scarred the two decades since the end of the war.

“CODECA is not just in the struggle for land and the nationalization of resources, but rather that we are calling

for a Constitutional Assembly to re-found the state,” Vay Garcia told *Truthout*. “This bothers them because they feel they are losing control, especially now that CODECA and other organizations are trying to establish our own political instrument. This is why they are killing our comrades.”

—*Truthout*, July 22, 2018

<https://truthout.org/articles/assassinations-of-indigenous-leaders-in-guatemala-trigger-fear/>

---

## What’s Happening in Nicaragua?

BY KEVIN ZEESE AND NILS McCUNE

A massive peace march was held on July 7, 2018, in Managua showing support for the Nicaraguan government. Source UK Morning Star.

There is a great deal of false and inaccurate information about Nicaragua in the media. Even on the left, some have simply repeated the dubious claims of *CNN* and Nicaragua’s oligarchic media to support the removal of President Ortega. The narrative of nonviolent protesters versus anti-riot squads and pro-government paramilitaries has not been questioned by international media.

This article seeks to correct the record, describe what is happening in Nicaragua and why. As we write this, the *coup* seems to be failing, people have rallied for peace (as this massive march for peace held Saturday, July 7 showed) and the truth is coming out (e.g., the weapons cache discovered in a Catholic Church on July 9th.) It is important to understand what is occurring because Nicaragua’s is an example of the types of violent *coups* the U.S. and the wealthy use to put in place business dominated, neoliberal governments. If people understand these tactics, they will become less effective.

### Mixing up the class interests

In part, U.S. pundits are getting their information from media outlets, such as Jaime Chamorro-Cardenal’s *La Prensa*, and the same oligarchical family’s *Confidencial*, that are the most active elements of the *pro-coup* media. Repeating and amplifying their narrative delegitimizes the Sandinista government and presents unconditional surrender by Daniel Ortega as the only acceptable option. These pundits provide cover for nefarious internal and external interests who have set their sights on controlling Central America’s poorest and yet resource-rich country.

The *coup* attempt brought the class divisions in Nicaragua into the open. Piero Coen, the richest man in Nicaragua, owner of all national Western Union operations and an agrochemical company, personally arrived on the first day of protests at the Polytechnical University in Managua, to encourage students to keep protesting, promising his continued support.

The traditional landed oligarchy of Nicaragua, politically led by the Chamorro family, publishes constant ultimatums to the government through

its media outlets and finances the roadblocks that have paralyzed the country for the last eight weeks.

The Catholic Church, long allied with the oligarchs, has put its full weight behind creating and sustaining anti-government actions, including its universities, high schools, churches, bank accounts, vehicles, tweets, Sunday sermons, and a one-sided effort to mediate the national dialogue. Bishops have made death threats against the President and his family, and a priest has been filmed supervising the torture of Sandinistas. Pope Francis has called for a peace dialogue, and even called Cardinal Leonaldo Brenes and Bishop Rolando Alvarez to a private meeting in the Vatican, setting off rumors that the Nicaraguan *monseñores* were being scolded for their obvious involvement in the conflict they are officially mediating. The church remains one of the few pillars keeping the *coup* alive.

A common claim is Ortega has cozied up to the traditional oligarchy, but the opposite is true. This is the first government since Nicaraguan independence that does not include the oligarchy. Since the 1830s through the

1990s, all Nicaraguan governments—even during the Sandinista Revolution—included people from the elite “last names,” of Chamorro, Cardenal, Belli, Pellas, Lacayo, Montealegre, Gurdián. The government since 2007 does not, which is why these families are supporting the *coup*.

Ortega detractors claim his three-part dialogue including labor unions, capitalists, and the State is an alliance with big business. In fact, that process has yielded the highest growth rate in Central America and annual minimum wage increases five to seven percent above inflation, improving workers’ living conditions and lifting people out of poverty. The anti-poverty Borgen project reports poverty fell by 30 percent between 2005 and 2014.

The FSLN-led government has put into place an economic model based on public investment and strengthening the safety net for the poor. The government invests in infrastructure, transit, maintains water and electricity within the public sector and moved privatized services—healthcare and primary education into the public sector. This has ensured a stable economic structure that favors the real economy over the speculative economy. The lion’s share of infrastructure in Nicaragua has been built in the last 11 years, something comparable to the New Deal-era in the U.S., including renewable electricity plants across the country.

What liberal and even leftists commentators overlook is that unlike the Lula government in Brazil, which reduced poverty through cash payouts to poor families, Nicaragua has redistributed productive capital in order to develop a self-sufficient popular economy. The FSLN model is better understood as an emphasis on the popular economy over the State or capitalist spheres.

While the private sector employs about 15 percent of Nicaraguan workers, the informal sector employs over 60 percent. The informal sector has

benefitted from \$400 million in public investments, much of it coming from the ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas) alliance funds to finance micro loans for small and medium-sized agricultural enterprises. Policies to facilitate credit, equipment, training, animals, seeds and subsidized fuel further support these enterprises. The small and medium producers of Nicaragua have led the country to produce 80-90 percent of its food and end its dependence on IMF (International Monetary Fund) loans.

As such, workers and peasants—many of whom are self-employed and who accessed productive capital through the Sandinista Revolution and ensuing struggles—represent an important political subject of the stable, postwar social development of the last decade, including the hundreds-of-thousands of peasant farmers who have received land title and the nearly one-quarter of the national territory that has been given collective title as territory of indigenous nations. The social movements of workers, peasants, and indigenous groups were the base of popular support that brought the FSLN back into power.

Land titling and assistance to small businesses have also emphasized equality for women, resulting in Nicaragua having the lowest level of gender inequality in Latin America and ranked 12 out of 145 countries in the world, just behind Germany.

Over time, the FSLN government has incorporated this massive self-employed sector, as well as maquiladora workers (*i.e.*, textile workers in foreign-owned plants located in free trade zones created by previous neoliberal governments,) into the healthcare and pension system, causing the financial commitments to grow which required a new formula to ensure fiscal stability. The proposed reforms to Social Security were the trigger for the private sector and student protests on

April 18th. The business lobby called for the protests when Ortega proposed increasing employer contributions by 3.5 percent to pension and health funds, while only slightly increasing worker contributions by 0.75 percent and shifting five percent of pensioners’ cash transfer into their healthcare fund. The reform also ended a loophole which allowed high-income individuals to claim a low income in order to access health benefits.

This was a counter-proposal to the IMF proposal to raise the retirement age and more than double the number of weeks that workers would need to pay into the pension fund in order to access benefits. The fact the government felt strong enough to deny the IMF and business lobby’s austerity demands was a sign that the bargaining strength of private capital has declined, as Nicaragua’s impressive economic growth, a 38 percent increase in GDP from 2006-2017, has been led by small-scale producers and public spending. However, the opposition used manipulative *Facebook* ads presenting the reform as an austerity measure, plus fake news of a student death on April 18th, to generate protests across the country on April 19th. Immediately, the regime-change machine lurched into motion.

The national dialogue shows the class interests in conflict. The opposition’s Civic Alliance for Justice and Democracy has as its key figures: José Adan Aguirre, leader of the private business lobby; Maria Nelly Rivas, director of Cargill in Nicaragua and head of the U.S.-Nicaragua Chamber of Commerce; the private university students of the April 19th Movement; Michael Healy, manager of a Colombian sugar corporation and head of the agribusiness lobby; Juan Sebastian Chamorro, who represents the oligarchy dressed as civil society; Carlos Tunnermann, 85-year-old ex-Sandinista minister and ex-chancellor of the National University; Azalea

Solis, head of a U.S. government-funded feminist organization; and Medardo Mairena, a “peasant leader” funded by the U.S. government, who lived 17 years in Costa Rica before being deported in 2017 for human trafficking. Tunnermann, Solis and the April 19th students are all associated with the Movement for Renovation of Sandinismo (MRS), a tiny Sandinista offshoot party that nonetheless merits special attention.

In the 1980s, many of the Sandinista Front’s top-level cadre were, in fact, the children of some of the famous oligarchic families, such as the Cardenal brothers and part of the Chamorro family, in charge of the revolutionary government’s ministries of Culture and Education and its media, respectively. After FSLN’s election loss in 1990, the children of the oligarchy staged an exodus from the party. Along with them, some of the most notable intellectual, military and intelligence cadre left and formed, over time, the MRS. The new party renounced socialism, blamed all of the mistakes of the Revolution on Daniel Ortega and over time took over the sphere of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Nicaragua, including feminist, environmentalist, youth, media and human rights organizations.

Since 2007, the MRS has become increasingly close with the extreme right-wing of the U.S. Republican Party. Since the outbreak of violence in April, many if not most of the sources cited by Western media (including, disturbingly, Amy Goodman’s *Democracy Now!*), come from this party, which has the support of less than two percent of the Nicaraguan electorate. This allows the oligarchs to couch their violent attempt to reinstall neoliberalism in a leftist-sounding discourse of former Sandinistas critical of the Ortega government.

It is a farce to claim that workers and peasants are behind the unrest. La

Vía Campesina, the National Union of Farmers and Ranchers, the Association of Rural Workers, the National Workers’ Front, the indigenous Mayangna Nation and other movements and organizations have been unequivocal in their demands for an end to the violence and their support for the Ortega government. This unrest is a full-scale regime change operation carried out by media oligarchs, a network of NGOs funded by the U.S. government, armed elements of elite landholding families and the Catholic Church, and has opened the window for drug cartels and organized crime to gain a foothold in Nicaragua.

### **The elephant in the room**

Which brings us to U.S. government involvement in the violent *coup*.

As Tom Ricker reported early in this political crisis, several years ago the U.S. government decided that rather than finance opposition political parties, which have lost enormous legitimacy in Nicaragua, it would finance the NGO civil society sector. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) gave more than \$700,000 to build the opposition to the government in 2017, and has granted more than \$4.4 million since 2014. The overarching purpose of this funding was to “provide a coordinated strategy and media voice for opposition groups in Nicaragua.” Ricker continues:

“The result of this consistent building and funding of opposition resources has been to create an echo chamber that is amplified by commentators in the international media—most of whom have no presence in Nicaragua and rely on these secondary sources.”

NED founding father, Allen Weinstein, described NED as the overt CIA saying, “A lot of what we do today was done covertly 25 years ago by the CIA.” In Nicaragua, rather than the traditional right-wing, NED funds the MRS-affiliated organizations which

pose left-sounding critiques of the Sandinista government. The regime change activists use Sandinista slogans, songs, and symbols even as they burn historic monuments, paint over the red-and-black markers of fallen martyrs, and physically attack members of the Sandinista party.

Of the opposition groups in the National Dialogue, the feminist organization of Azalea Solis and the peasant organization of Medardo Mairena are financed through NED grants, while the April 19th students stay in hotels and make trips paid for by *Freedom House*, another regime change organ funded by NED and U.S.AID. NED also finances *Confidential*, the Chamorro media organization. Grants from NED finance the Institute of Strategic Studies and Public Policy (IEEPP), whose Executive Director, Felix Maradiaga, is another MRS cadre very close to the U.S. Embassy. In June, Maradiaga was accused of leading a criminal network called Viper, which, from the occupied UPOLI campus, organized car-jackings, arsons and murders in order to create chaos and panic during the months of April and May.

Maradiaga grew up in the United States and became a fellow of the Aspen Leadership Institute, before studying public policy at Harvard. He was a secretary in the Ministry of Defense for the last liberal president, Enrique Bolaños. He is a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum and in 2015, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs gave him the Gus Hart Fellowship, past recipients of which include Cuban dissident Yoani Sánchez and Henrique Capriles Radonski, the Venezuelan opposition leader who attacked the Cuban embassy during the *coup* attempt of 2002.

Remarkably, Maradiaga is not the only leader of the *coup* attempt who is part of the Aspen World Leadership Network. Maria Nelly Rivas, director in Nicaragua of U.S. corporate giant

Cargill, is one of the main spokespersons for the opposition Civic Alliance. Rivas, who currently also heads the U.S.-Nicaragua Chamber of Commerce, is being groomed as a possible presidential candidate in the next elections. Beneath these U.S.-groomed leaders, there is a network of over 2,000 young people who have received training with NED funds on topics such as social media skills for democracy defense. This battalion of social media warriors was able to immediately shape and control public opinion in *Facebook* in the five days from April 18th to the 22nd, leading to spontaneous violent protests across the country.

### On the violence

One of the ways in which reporting on Nicaragua has ventured farthest from the truth is calling the opposition “nonviolent.” The violence script, modeled on the 2014 and 2017 *guarimba* protests in Venezuela, is to organize armed attacks on government buildings, entice the police to send in anti-riot squads, engage in filmed confrontations and publish edited footage online claiming that the government is being violent against nonviolent protesters.

Over 60 government buildings have been burned down, schools, hospitals, health centers attacked, 55 ambulances damaged, at least \$112 million in infrastructure damage, small businesses have been closed, and 200,000 jobs lost causing devastating economic impact during the protests. Violence has included, in addition to thousands of injuries, 15 students and 16 police officers killed, as well as over 200 Sandinistas kidnapped, many of them publicly tortured. Violent opposition atrocities were misreported as government repression. While it is important to defend the right of the public to protest, regardless of its political opinions, it is disingenuous to ignore that the opposition’s strategy requires and feeds upon violence and deaths.

National and international news claim deaths and injuries due to “repression” without explaining the context. The Molotov cocktails, mortar-launchers, pistols, and assault rifles used by opposition groups are ignored by the media, and when Sandinista sympathizers, police or passers-by are killed, they are falsely counted as victims of state repression. Explosive opposition claims like massacres of children and murders of women have been shown to be false, and the cases of torture, disappearances and extrajudicial executions by police forces have not been corroborated by evidence or due process.

---

**This unrest is a full-scale regime change operation carried out by media oligarchs, a network of NGOs funded by the U.S. government, armed elements of elite landholding families and the Catholic Church, and has opened the window for drug cartels and organized crime to gain a foothold in Nicaragua.**

---

While there is evidence to support the opposition claim of sniper fire killing protesters, there is no logical explanation for the State using snipers to add to the death toll, and counter-protesters have also been victims of sniper fire, suggesting a “third party” provocateur role in the destabilizing violence. When an entire Sandinista family was burned to death in Managua, the opposition media all cited a witness who claimed that the police had set fire to the home, despite the house being in a neighborhood barricaded off from police access.

The National Police of Nicaragua has been long-recognized for its model of community policing (in contrast to militarized police in most Central American countries,) its relative lack of corruption, and its mostly female top brass. The *coup* strategy has sought to destroy public trust in the police through the egregious use of fake news, such as the many false claims of assassinations, beatings, torture, and disappearances in the week from April 17th to 23rd. Several young people whose photos were carried in opposition rallies as victims of police violence have turned out to be alive and well.

The police have been wholly inadequate and underprepared for armed confrontations. Attacks on several public buildings on the same night and the first major arson attacks led government workers to hold vigils with barrels of water and, often, sticks and stones, to fend off attackers. The opposition, frustrated at not achieving more police conflicts, began to build roadblocks across the country and burning the homes of Sandinistas, even shooting and burning Sandinista families in atrocious hate crimes. In contrast to *La Prensa’s* version of events, Nicaraguans have felt the distinct lack of police presence, and the loss of safety in their neighborhoods, while many were targeted by violence.

Since May, the strategy of the opposition has been to build armed roadblocks across the country, closing off transport and trapping people. The roadblocks, usually built with large paving stones, are manned by between five and 100 armed men with bandannas or masks. While the media reports on idealistic young people running roadblocks, the vast majority of roadblocks are maintained by paid men who come from a background of petty crime. Where large areas of cities and towns are blocked off from government and police forces, drug-related activities intensify, and drug gangs now control many of the roadblocks and pay the salaries.

These roadblocks have been the centers of violence. Workers who need to pass through roadblocks are often robbed, punched, insulted, and, if suspected of being Sandinistas, tied up, stripped naked, tortured, painted in blue-and-white, and sometimes killed. There are three cases of people dying in ambulances unable to pass roadblocks, and one case of a ten-year-old girl being kidnapped and raped at the roadblock in Las Maderas. When organized neighbors or the police clear roadblocks, the armed groups run away and regroup to burn buildings, kidnap or injure people in revenge. All of the victims that this violence produces are counted by the mainstream media as victims of repression, a total falsehood.

The Nicaraguan government has confronted this situation by largely keeping police off the streets, to prevent encounters and accusations of repression. At the same time, rather than simply arrest violent protestors, which certainly would have given the opposition the battle deaths it craves, the government called for a National Dialogue, mediated by the Catholic Church, in which the opposition can bring forward any proposal for human rights and political reform. The government created a parliamentary Truth and Peace Commission and launched an independent Public Ministry query.

With the police out of the streets, opposition violence intensified throughout May and June. As a result, a process of neighborhood self-defense developed. Families who have been displaced, young people who have been beaten, robbed or tortured, and veterans of the 1979 insurrection and/or the Contra War, hold vigil round the Sandinista Front headquarters in each town. In many places, they built barricades against opposition attacks and have been falsely labeled paramilitary forces in the media. In the towns that do not have such community-organized barricades, the human toll from opposition violence is much great-

er. The National Union of Nicaraguan Students has been particularly targeted by opposition violence. A student delegate of the National Dialogue, Leonel Morales, was kidnapped, shot in the abdomen and thrown into a ditch to die in June, to sabotage the dialogue and punish him for challenging the April 19th students' right to speak on behalf of all Nicaraguan students.

There have been four major opposition rallies since April, directed toward mobilizing the upper-middle class Nicaraguans who live in the suburbs between Managua and Masaya. These rallies featured a who's-who of high society, including beauty queens, business owners, and oligarchs, as well as university students of the April 19th Movement, the moral high-ground for the opposition.

---

**This is the first  
government since  
Nicaraguan  
independence that does  
not include the  
oligarchy.**

---

Three months into the conflict, none of the mortal victims have been bourgeois. All have come from the popular classes of Nicaragua. Despite claims of total repression, the bourgeois feel perfectly safe to participate in public protests by day—although the last daytime rally ended in a chaotic attack by protesters against squatters on a property of, curiously enough, Piero Coen, Nicaragua's richest man. The night-time armed attacks have generally been carried out by people who come from poor neighborhoods, many of whom are paid two to four times the minimum daily wage for each night of destruction.

Unfortunately, most Nicaraguan human rights organizations are funded

by NED and controlled by the Movement for Sandinista Renovation. These organizations have accused the Nicaraguan government of dictatorship and genocide throughout Ortega's presidency. International human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have been criticized for their one-sided reports, which include none of the information provided by the government or individuals who identify as Sandinistas.

The government invited the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) of the OAS (Organization of American States), a Washington-based entity notoriously unfriendly to leftist governments, to investigate the violent events of April and determine whether repression had occurred. The night of a controversial skirmish in the highway outside the Agrarian University in Managua ended a negotiated 48-hour truce; IACHR Director Paulo Abrao visited the site to declare his support for the opposition. The IACHR ignored the opposition's widespread violence and only reported on the defensive violence of the government. Not only was it categorically rejected by Nicaraguan chancellor Denis Moncada as an "insult to the dignity of the Nicaraguan people," a resolution approving the IACHR report was supported by only ten out of 34 countries.

Meanwhile, the April 19th Movement, made up of current or former university students in favor of regime change, sent a delegation to Washington and managed to alienate much of Nicaraguan society by grinning into the camera with far-right interventionist members of the U.S. Congress, including Representative Ileana Ros Lehtinen, Senator Marco Rubio and Senator Ted Cruz. M19 leaders also cheered Vice-President Mike Pence's bellicose warnings that Nicaragua is on the short list of countries that will soon know the Trump

Administration's meaning of freedom, and met with the ARENA party of El Salvador, known for its links to the death squads that murdered liberation theologian, Archbishop Oscar Romero. Within Nicaragua, the critical mass of students stopped demonstrating weeks ago, the large civic protests of April and May have dwindled, and the same-old familiar faces of Nicaraguan right-wing politics are left holding the bill for massive material damage and loss of life.

### Why Nicaragua?

Ortega won his third term in 2016 with 72.4 percent of the vote with 66 percent turnout, very high compared to U.S. elections. Not only has Nicaragua put in place an economy that treats the poor as producers, with remarkable results raising their standard of living in ten years, but it also has a government that consistently rejects U.S. imperialism, allying with Cuba, Venezuela, and Palestine, and voices support for Puerto Rican independence and a peaceful solution to the Korean crisis. Nicaragua is a member of Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, a Latin American alternative to the OAS, neither include the U.S. or Canada. It has also allied with China for a proposed canal project and Russia for security cooperation. For all of these reasons,

the U.S. wants to install a U.S.-friendly Nicaraguan government.

---

## It is a farce to claim that workers and peasants are behind the unrest.

---

More important is the example Nicaragua has set for a successful social and economic model outside the U.S. sphere of domination. Generating over 75 percent of its energy from renewable sources, Nicaragua was the only country with the moral authority to oppose the Paris Climate Agreement as being too weak (it later joined the treaty one day after Trump pulled the U.S. out, stating "we opposed the Paris agreement out of responsibility, the U.S. opposes it out of irresponsibility.") The FMLN government of El Salvador, while less politically dominant than the Sandinista Front, has taken the example of good governance from Nicaragua, recently prohibiting mining and the privatization of water. Even Honduras, the eternal bastion of U.S. power in Central America, showed signs of a leftward shift until the U.S.-supported military *coup* in 2009. Since then, there has been massive repression of social activists, a clearly stolen 2017 election, and Honduras has permitted

the expansion of U.S. military bases near the Nicaraguan border.

In 2017, the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed the Nicaraguan Investment Conditionality Act (NICA Act), which if passed by the Senate will force the U.S. government to veto loans from international institutions to the Nicaraguan government. This U.S. imperialism will cripple Nicaragua's ability to build roads, update hospitals, construct renewable energy plants, and transition from extensive livestock raising to integrated animal-forestry systems, among other consequences. It may also signify the end of many popular social programs, such as subsidized electricity, stable bus fares, and free medical treatment of chronic diseases.

The U.S. Executive Branch has used the Global Magnitsky Act to target the finances of leaders of the Electoral Supreme Court, the National Police, the city government of Managua and the ALBA corporation in Nicaragua. Police officers and public health bureaucrats have been told their U.S. visas have been revoked. The point, of course, is not whether these officials have or have not committed acts that merit their reprimand in Nicaragua, but whether the U.S. government should have the jurisdiction to intimidate and corner public officials of Nicaragua.

While the sadistic violence continues, the strategy of the *coup*-mongers to force out the government has failed. The resolution of the political crisis will come through elections, and the FSLN is likely to win those elections, barring a dramatic and unlikely new offensive by the right-wing opposition.

### An upside down class war

It is important to understand the nature of U.S. and oligarch *coups* in this era and the role of media and NGO deception because it is repeated in multiple Latin American and other



Sandinistas and followers of President Daniel Ortega wave their flags in a march for peace, in Managua, Nicaragua, Saturday, July 7, 2018.

countries. We can expect a similar attack on recently elected Andrés Manuel López Obrador in Mexico if he seeks the changes he has promised.

The U.S. has sought to dominate Nicaragua since the mid-1800s. The wealthy in Nicaragua have sought the return of U.S.-allied governance since the Sandinistas rose to power. This failing *coup* does not mean the end of their efforts or the end of corporate media misinformation. Knowing what is really occurring and sharing that information is the antidote to defeating them

---

**Nicaragua's is an example of the types of violent *coups* the U.S. and the wealthy use to put in place business dominated, neoliberal governments**

---

in Nicaragua and around the world.

Nicaragua is a class war turned upside down. The government has raised the living standards of the impoverished majority through wealth redistribution. Oligarchs and the United States, unable to install neoliberalism through elections, created a political crisis, highlighted by false media coverage to force Ortega to resign. The *coup* is failing; the truth is coming out, and should not be forgotten.

*Kevin Zeese is an attorney who co-directs the U.S.-based Popular Resistance. Nils McCune is on the technical team of IALA Mesoamerica (Agroecological Institute of Latin America in Nicaragua) and a research fellow at the University of Michigan.*

—Popular Resistance, July 10, 2018

<https://popularresistance.org/correcting-the-record-what-is-really-happening-in-nicaragua/>

## Expansion of U.S. Military in Argentina

By BIRSON FILIP

*At present, the U.S. maintains more than 800 military bases in over hundred countries, which cost in excess of \$100 billion annually to operate. That means the Americans currently have more military bases in foreign lands than any other nation or empire has ever possessed since the times of the ancient Greeks. America's global military dominance becomes more apparent when considering that Russia only has military bases in nine countries, many of which are former soviet republics, the UK has ten, France has nine, and China has just one. American officials justify their extensive foreign presence and the associated costs by claiming that the United States is an exceptional country that is committed to safeguarding world peace and security. That being said, specific pretexts do differ depending on region, with the War on Drugs being frequently cited in Latin America, protecting countries from Russian aggression constituting the dominant rationale in Europe, containing Chinese influence and North Korea representing the main motivations in the Asia-Pacific region, and combatting terrorism and containing Iranian influence among the objectives in the Middle East.*

Argentina is currently among the countries considered likely destinations for new American military installations in the foreseeable future, despite the fact that such arrangements have been rejected by both the population and former leadership of the country in recent years. In fact, all military exercises between Argentina and the U.S. were suspended from 2007 to 2015, as the successive governments of Nestor and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner sought to reorient Argentine foreign policy away from the U.S. in an attempt to combat imperialism and strengthen regional integration. However, that stance has effectively been reversed since the election

of Mauricio Macri as President of Argentina in December of 2015. The Macri administration has prioritized strengthening diplomatic ties with Washington at the expense of regional cooperation, which entailed favoring pro-American foreign policies, while implementing neo-liberal economic reforms at home. This included signing security and defense “cooperation agreements” with both the Obama and Trump administrations, permitting the U.S. to establish military bases throughout the country.

A number of U.S. military bases have been established throughout Argentina since the election of president Macri. For example, a base was set up in Argentina's Salta province, located near its borders with Bolivia and Chile, on the pretext of combatting drug trafficking. Another base was established in Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego province, at the southernmost tip of the country, only a few kilometers from the NATO base on the Falkland Islands and close to an important source of fresh water. Researchers have estimated that Ushuaia possesses the largest reserve of frozen fresh water in the world with enough capacity to meet the needs of the entire planet for next 200 years if properly managed.

In early 2018, Macri's government also approved the construction of another American military base in the province of Misiones. This is a highly strategic position because the province is situated in the tri-border area (TBA) of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, which contains the Guaraní Aquifer, the largest subterranean drinkable and renewable fresh water reserve in the world. Specifically, of the 1.2 million square kilometers of land containing the Guaraní Aquifer, 850,000 square kilometers are in Brazil's territory, 225,000 square kilometers are in

Argentina, 70,000 square kilometers are in Paraguay, and 25,000 square kilometers are in Uruguay.

None of the foreign military bases constructed during Marci's presidency were approved by Argentina's congress, which is explicitly required under Argentine law. This practice was defended by Argentina's Minister of Defense, Oscar Raúl Aguad, on the basis that congressional approval was not required for such joint military "cooperation agreements," because American military forces were only providing technical assistance and military intelligence. More precisely, the Macri government claimed that joint military exercises with the Americans were necessary in the TBA to combat terrorism and limit the global trafficking of drugs and weapons of mass destruction in the region, while scientific research was the basis for the American presence in Ushuaia.

This sentiment was echoed by Argentina's security minister, Patricia Bullrich, who explained that the government was creating "an analysis center with Paraguay and Brazil (and the U.S.) to figure out where, how and with whom narco-traffickers operate" in the TBA. In other words, the main objectives for allowing growing numbers of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and FBI agents to operate on Argentine territory in the TBA, in addition to an increased presence of American military personnel, are to reduce narco-trafficking and counter terrorism. Minister Bullrich further adds that part of the rationale for this decision is that Argentine law does not permit drug samples or materials related to terrorism to be sent abroad for analysis or investigation.

According to Bullrich, this close relationship with the DEA and FBI has already proven to be invaluable in terms of reducing the instances of drug-related offenses and limiting the presence of international terrorist

organizations like Hezbollah in the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. Her enthusiastic support for the strategy was evident in her 2018 statement that "...it's important for our government to collaborate (with the U.S.) and that they collaborate with us. We're going to work together at the triple border regarding terrorism. We think we'll have DEA and other agencies there to better understand what's happening in the region."

There is little evidence to suggest that the increasing presence of foreign agents and soldiers is generating such enthusiasm among the Argentine populace and certain segments of its leadership. Meanwhile, the rationale put forth by the Macri administration to justify its agreement with the U.S., allowing for the establishment of multiple foreign military bases throughout the country without seeking approval from the Argentine congress, has also been met with much skepticism. For instance, on July 10, 2018, a group of approximately 60 organizations, including "political parties, social organizations, human rights groups, workers' unions," arranged a protest against the establishment of a U.S. military base in Neuquén, Argentina. There are two large rivers situated in Neuquén, the Limay and Neuquén rivers, which are important water sources that generate approximately one-quarter of all hydroelectric power produced in Argentina. Additionally, the Neuquén Basin is home to Vaca Muerta, a 36,000-kilometer area that, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), represents the second largest non-conventional gas resource and the fourth largest shale oil reserve in the world. As such, it should come as no surprise that Vaca Muerta has garnered the attention of some of the most prominent oil companies in the world, including Chevron, ExxonMobil, Royal Dutch Shell, and U.S. oil. At present, YPF (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales), an Argentine

company that specializes in the exploration, production, refining and commercialization of petroleum, "owns 42 percent of the area, GyP, a state company of Neuquén, has 12 percent, and the remaining 46 percent is distributed among other companies that include ExxonMobil, Pan American Energy, Petronas, Pluspetrol, Shell, Tecpetrol and Wintershall, among others."

The Macri administration has already enacted measures that make it easier for large corporations to invest in Vaca Muerta. According to Ernesto López Anadón, an engineer and president of the Argentine Institute of Oil and Gas (IAPG):

"Vaca Muerta has many players who are working and obtaining optimal results with very good productivity. The costs are being lowered and is already an asset that has gained international relevance. For those who are looking for business opportunities to develop reserves, Vaca Muerta represents that attraction. Why is there a hurry to enter? Because there are still opportunities, areas that were not awarded and possibilities of partnership with other companies. This will allow the investor to be one of the leaders. We have gone from the exploration stage to the development phase in almost all the companies that approached to this project and the tendency is the momentum for expansion. Later entry will also likely be possible, but at a higher cost."

The protestors did not believe claims emanating out of Washington and Buenos Aires that the facility in Neuquén was a humanitarian base as opposed to a military installation. This was evident in the official statement released by the protest group, contending that "the base is presented as humanitarian aid (to avoid) being called a military base, which would require approval of Argentina's Congress."

The TBA has long been regarded as

a strategically important region by Washington, first being identified as such during the Reagan presidency. Subsequently, in early 2000, the Bush administration began fabricating stories about the presence of terrorist threats and fundraising activities for Islamic terror organizations taking place in the TBA, which were reported in the mainstream media. Among the claims made by officials was the notion that Ciudad del Este in Paraguay and Foz do Iguacu in Brazil were “a terrorist paradise.” American authorities also maintained that Al Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, and, more recently, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS) had conducted training exercises and obtained a significant amount of financing within the region. Such stories about a significant terrorist presence in the TBA have allowed for an unprecedented expansion of American military forces in the region since 2000.

#### **False flag?**

In actuality, no hard evidence has ever been presented to back claims of a significant terrorist presence in the TBA of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay, which was used to justify the establishment of a significant American military presence in the region. On the contrary, a report by the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering confirmed that while the TBA is in fact an important location for money laundering, there is no evidence to demonstrate that Islamist terror organizations have generated any funding there, or that the region has been used as a training ground for Islamist terrorists. As a matter of fact, the last Islamic terrorist attack to take place in South America occurred in 1994, when the Argentine Israeli Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires was targeted in a bombing that killed 85 people. The persistence of fabricated stories about the training and funding of Islamist terrorists in the

TBA, despite the complete lack of any tangible evidence, is likely to justify the continued presence of American military forces in the region. As for the Americans, they are likely using the pretext of terrorism as a false flag to conceal their real motivation for maintaining and expanding the presence of their military in the region. Considering the history of American interventions, the fact that the region is rich in natural resources, including oil, gas and, particularly, freshwater reserves, could represent the U.S. with an enticing incentive to increase its influence in the TBA.

---

**While American  
politicians and officials  
have a reputation for  
climate change denial,  
the Pentagon has no  
reservations with  
including it as a key  
factor in future conflicts  
in its assessments of  
combat readiness.**

---

At present, almost 50 percent of the global population does not have consistent access to a safe source of potable water. This figure is forecast to rise going forward, as the effects of climate change are likely to exacerbate water shortages. This deplorable inequality in the distribution of global freshwater resources illustrates the growing strategic importance of significant water reserves like the Guaraní Aquifer and the freshwater sources in Ushuaia. These realities make it easier to understand why the Americans are so keen to establish military bases in these regions of South America that are particularly rich in water resources. While American politicians and officials have a reputation for climate change denial, the

Pentagon has no reservations with including it as a key factor in future conflicts in its assessments of combat readiness. In fact, the Pentagon released a study at the beginning of 2018 stating that extreme weather linked to climate change “endanger 1,700 military sites worldwide, from large bases to outposts,” which “run contrary to White House views on global warming.”

According to the World Bank, Latin America will play an increasingly important global role if water shortages significantly worsen moving forward, given that the continent possesses some of “the largest freshwater reserves in the world.” There has already increased commercial interest expressed in the water reserves of the Guaraní aquifer, in addition to political debates between the governments of Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. This has come from a number of prominent multinational companies involved in the water market including Monsanto, Thames Water, Bechtel Company, and Vivendi.

History has demonstrated that the real motivation for the global expansion of American militarization has always been to dominate and control the world’s economy and natural resources, by influencing the political and market arenas of the host countries and their neighbors. Countries that resist or refuse to accept American hegemony often find themselves subjected to destabilization efforts directed by the U.S. military aimed at overthrowing the incumbent government. The 20th and 21st centuries provides many examples of American military bases organizing, directing, and participating in interventions against the countries hosting them or other nations in the region. If and when a foreign intervention is deemed necessary by U.S. officials, “Somehow they always manage to find the necessary pretext.” Typically, such interventions have been justified on the grounds of national security, with recurring pre-

texts including the Cold War, the Global War on Terrorism, the War on Drugs, and immigration control. To be more precise, during the Cold War, the main impetus for the American military to establish foreign bases was the battle of ideologies against communism. Subsequently, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it became the war on drugs and, more recently, the war on terrorism.

Other key U.S. objectives for establishing permanent military bases in foreign territories include: repressing social movements opposed to neo-liberal economic policies; preparing for future wars in the region by establishing a dominant military posture; and creating regional conflicts. It is reasonable to suspect that the Pentagon has been manufacturing false narratives to justify an American military presence in the TBA of Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, as this would allow them to gain control over parts of the Amazon rainforest, the freshwater reserves of the Guarani Aquifer, natural gas reserves in Bolivia, carbon deposits in Brazil, and even the largest proven oil reserves in Venezuela. If the relatively conventional notion that future wars will be fought over the control and distribution of increasingly scarce fresh water and energy resources turns out to be true, then the TBA region represents a very strategic location for the U.S. and its rivals.

Macri delivered strategic territories of Argentina situated in both the north and south of the country to the American military despite an abundance of historical evidence demonstrating that the interests of the host nation are rarely among the priorities of U.S. military bases. Perhaps president Macri feels that he may need some assistance in oppressing the freedom and self-determination of his own electorate, given that his administration has already experienced three national strikes against his neo-liberal econom-

ic reforms in less than three years. Many Argentines are likely becoming increasingly frustrated with the rapid deterioration of their economic circumstances and prospects since Macri assumed the presidency. Further strikes and protests might be expected in response to the recent agreement with the IMF that will provide Argentina with a \$50 billion loan, the largest in the institution's history.

---

**The 20th and  
21st centuries  
provides many  
examples of  
American military  
bases organizing,  
directing, and  
participating in  
interventions  
against the  
countries hosting  
them or other  
nations in  
the region.**

---

The expansion of American military bases throughout South America will undoubtedly continue in the absence of significant pushback. That being said, Argentines need to realize that the

recent military cooperation agreements signed between the Macri administration and the U.S. have neglected their country's national interests. In particular, the agreement to permit the American military to establish permanent bases throughout the country is a matter national interest that should require some degree of public discourse. Furthermore, before permitting the Americans to take the lead in combatting terrorism in their country, Argentines should consider their previous performances in the Middle East, and North Africa. Similarly, they should also consider the poor track record of America's Drug Enforcement Agency in attempting to eliminate the illicit drug trade via interventions in Colombia and Mexico. If Argentines do not react soon, they could lose sovereignty, independence and self-determination over important parts of their country, while the Argentine Army becomes increasingly subordinate to U.S. interests, as has been the case in many countries throughout the 20th and 21st centuries.

Any future government that seeks to reverse the present expansion of American military influence within Argentina should proceed with caution, as contemporary history includes many examples of countries being subject to military interventions for defying Washington's dictates, resulting in catastrophic outcomes. With this in mind, Argentines should take heed of Hugo Chavez's warning that: "When imperialism feels weak, it resorts to brute force...Most governments in the United States in a hundred years have not respected the peoples of Latin America. They have sponsored *coup d'états*, assassinations."

—Global Research, July 24, 2018

<https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-expansion-of-u-s-military-installations-in-argentina-and-their-implications-for-argentine-sovereignty/5648379>

# Palestinian Tipping Point

BY NICOLA PERUGINI

On Wednesday, June 13, 2018, for the second time in a few days, Palestinians took the streets of central Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank, as part of a popular campaign launched against the financial sanctions imposed by the Palestinian Authority on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip. The hardships imposed by the Fatah-led PA on the tormented coastal enclave include cutting the wages of over 63,000 government employees, refusing to pay Gaza's electricity bill, ending all spending on ministerial functions in Gaza, and severely limiting support to Gaza's healthcare ministry and system, including decreasing permits for patients to leave the strip. The aim of the sanctions is to try to topple the Hamas government, in what many Palestinians, especially from young generations, perceive as a cheeky collaboration with the regime of siege and isolation inflicted on the Gaza population by Israel and Egypt.

In Ramallah, the demonstrators defied an order issued by President Abbas, which banned protests until the end of the three-day *Id al-Fitr* holiday marking the end of the Ramadan month of fasting. Can you imagine living under military occupation and your own people who claim to struggle for your national liberation impose on you the same measures of the occupying power?

As it has often happened during the recent years, the protests were met with brutal repression: tear gas, stun grenades, bullets shot in the air, journalists and protesters beaten, arbitrary arrests.

Among the many who were detained by the PA security forces there was Laith Abu Zayed, one of my former students at Al Quds Bard College Human Rights Program. After a brilliant study career, Laith has worked for several years for the rights of Palestinian

prisoners in Israeli and Palestinian jails at Addameer (the Palestinian Support and Human Rights Association), before being hired by Amnesty International, for which he was monitoring the Ramallah protest, before being detained, severely beaten, and tortured while in police custody. Amnesty reported that "Upon his release, he recalled seeing 18 other fellow detainees receive the same treatment. His plight is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the mass show of excessive force and torture unleashed by the Palestinian security forces last night. We demand a full, independent investigation into these violations, and call for all those responsible to be held to account."

Laith is part of a new generation of Palestinians who have grown under the shadow of the Second Intifada, witnessing the increasing transformation of the Palestinian Authority into an entity that vicariously enforces Israel's colonial policies through its collaboration with the occupying power: from the assistance to the Israeli military in maintaining Israel's security through a cooperation that has resulted in the arrest and killing of many Palestinians who fought for their right to self-determination; through the reproduction of an economic system of dependency from the occupation; to the imposition of fratricide measures like the sanctions that West Bank Palestinians have decided to oppose at the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

The Palestinian question has reached a point of

no return, no matter how much violence is deployed by the Palestinian security forces to repress internal democracy. To Laith, those who participated in the demonstrations he was monitoring, and the many Palestinians who still do not take the streets for the fear of the PA repression, it has become clear that the struggle for justice in Palestine is not anymore merely a struggle against Israel's regime of dispossession. They are aware that like in other colonial situations, the colonizer has built a mechanism of indirect rule with the participation of the colonized elite, as the sanctions on Gaza clearly reveal. Thus, they have realized that the meaning of the word liberation has irreversibly changed, and self-determination will be achieved only by making the struggle against the occupier and that for the end of internal political divisions, democracy and human rights at home part of the same political horizon.

*Nicola Perugini teaches at the School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh. He is the co-author of The Human Right to Dominate.*

—CounterPunch, June 20, 2018

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/06/20/the-palestinian-tipping-point/>



A fireball exploding in Gaza City during Israeli bombardment on July 20, 2018. Israeli aircraft and tanks hit targets throughout the Gaza Strip.

# God Only Knows

BY KATHY KELLY

*“If they would just confirm to us that my brother is alive, if they would just let us see him, that’s all we want. But we can’t get anyone to give us any confirmation. My mother dies a hundred times every day. They don’t know what that is like.”*

In July of 2018, an *Amnesty International* report entitled “God Only Knows If He’s Alive,” documented the plight of dozens of families in southern Yemen whose loved ones have been tortured, killed, or forcibly disappeared by Yemeni security forces reporting to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The UAE is part of the Saudi-led coalition that, with vital U.S. support, has been bombarding and blockading famine-and-disease-ravaged Yemen for three brutal years. The disappearances, and torture, can sadly be laid at the doorstep of the United States.

One testimonial after another echoes the sentiments of a woman whose husband has been held incommunicado for more than two years. “Shouldn’t they be given a trial?” she asked. “Why else are there courts? They shouldn’t be disappeared this way—not only are we unable to visit them, we don’t even know if they are dead or alive.”

The report describes bureaucratic farces in which families beg for information about their loved ones’ whereabouts from Yemeni prosecutors and prison officials, but the families’ pleas for information are routinely met with silence or intimidation.

The families are appealing to an unelected Yemeni exile government whose president, Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, (when “elected” president in 2012, he was the only candidate) generally resides in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The UAE has, so far, supported Hadi’s claim to govern Yemen. However, the Prosecutor General of Hadi’s government, as well as other officials, told

*Amnesty International* the government of Yemen has no control over operations “spearheaded by the UAE and implemented by the Yemeni forces it backs.”

When months and years pass and families of people who are missing still have no news about their loved ones, some try to communicate unofficially with prison guards or with former detainees who have been released from various detention sites. They repeatedly hear stories about torture of detainees and rumors about prisoners who died in custody.

The *Amnesty* report implicates UAE-backed local forces in Yemen, as well as the UAE military, in the crimes of torture and other ill-treatment of detainees. Of seven former or current detainees interviewed by *Amnesty*, five said they were subjected to these abuses. “All seven witnessed other detainees being tortured,” the report adds, “including one who said he saw a detainee held in a cell next to him being carried away in a body bag after he had been repeatedly tortured.”

In June 2017, Human Rights Watch and the *Associated Press* exposed a network of clandestine prisons operated by the UAE in Yemen. Their reports described ghastly torture inflicted on prisoners and noted that senior U.S. military leaders knew about torture allegations. Yet, a year later, there has been no investigation of these allegations by the Yemeni government, by the UAE, or by the UAE’s most powerful ally in the Yemen war, the United States.

“It is shocking, to say the least,” the *Amnesty* report states, “that one year after a network of secret prisons operated by the UAE and the Yemeni forces it backs was exposed, these facilities continue to operate and that there has

not been a serious investigation undertaken into credibly documented violations, including systemic torture in custody.” The *Amnesty* report calls on the U.S. to “facilitate independent oversight, including by the U.S. Congress, over U.S. military or intelligence cooperation with Yemeni and UAE forces involved in detention activities in Yemen.” It further calls for investigating any involvement of U.S. military or intelligence personnel in detention-related abuses in Yemen.

To date, the U.S. continues selling weapons to the UAE and to its coalition partner, Saudi Arabia, despite several Congressional debates and a few increasingly close votes demanding a full or partial end to U.S. weapons sales considering the terrible practices being carried out as part of the Yemen war.

Since March of 2015, a coalition of nine countries led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE and relying on crucial U.S. logistical aid, has bombarded Yemen while blockading its major port, despite Yemen’s status as one of the poorest countries in the world. Targeting transportation, electrical plants, sewage and sanitation facilities, schools, mosques, weddings and funerals, the vicious bombing has led to starvation, displacement, and the spread of disease including cholera.

On the same day that the *Amnesty* report was released, Saudi Arabia’s King Salman pardoned “all military men, who have taken part in the Operation Restoring Hope of their respective military and disciplinary penalties, in regard of some rules and disciplines.” It seems likely that the *Amnesty* report precipitated this royal decree.

Along with three countries in North Africa’s “Sahel” desert region, Yemen has been cited as part of the worst famine crisis in the 70-year history of the

UN. In the past three years of aerial and naval attacks, Yemen's key port of Hodeidah has remained partially or fully closed despite the country's vital need for relief supplies. And, while Yemenis suffer the chaos and despair characteristic of war, the Saudis and UAE refer to the war as "Operation Restoring Hope."

Many thousands of Yemenis, subjected to consistent bombing and threats of starvation and famine, have fled their homes. Many seek refuge out of Yemen. For instance, close to 500 Yemenis have traveled nearly 500 miles to reach a visa-free port on South Korea's Jeju Island. On July 21, during an international phone call hosted by young friends in Afghanistan, listeners heard Kaia, a resident of Jeju Island, describe the "Hope School." She explained how she and several other young people are trying to help welcome Yemenis now living in their village of Gangjeong. The young people are already committed to peacefully resisting U.S. and South Korean military destruction of their shoreline and ecosystem. Now, they have started an informal school so Yemeni and South Korean residents can learn from one another. Small groups gather for conversational exchanges translated from Arabic to English to Korean. Many South Koreans can recall, in their own

familial history, that seven million Koreans fled Japanese occupation of their land. Their Korean forebears relied on hospitality from people in other lands. The Catholic Bishop of the Jeju diocese, Monsignor Kang Woo-il, called on Koreans to embrace Yemeni refugees, labeling it a crime against human morality to shut the door on refugees and migrants.

Kaia's account of the newly launched school describes an effort that truthfully involves restoring hope. The cynical designation of Saudi and UAE led war in Yemen as "Operation Restoring Hope" creates an ugly smokescreen that distracts from the crucial need to investigate war crimes committed in Yemen today.

U.S. citizens bear responsibility for the U.S. government's support of these crimes.

The Yemenis mean us no harm and have committed no crime against us. Congressional votes have come quite close, with bipartisan support, to ending U.S. participation in and support for the Saudi and Emirati led Coalition war against Yemen.

Ending arms sales to the UAE and Saudi monarchies, supported by both sides of the aisle, will signal to the UAE and Saudi Arabia the U.S. will no longer assist their efforts to prolong war and siege in Yemen. On cue from the initiative and energy shown by young South Koreans, people in the U.S. can and should organize campaigns to educate their communities, educational institutions, and media outlets about the plight of people in Yemen.

Conscious of the nightmare faced by Yemenis whose husbands, brothers, fathers and sons have been disappeared or detained by shadowy military enforcers, U.S. people can work toward implementing each recommendation in *Amnesty's* devastating report.

*Kathy Kelly co-coordinates* Voices for Creative Nonviolence ([www.vcnv.org](http://www.vcnv.org))

—*Voices for Creative Nonviolence*, July 24, 2018

<http://vcnv.org/2018/07/23/god-only-knows-kathy-kelly/>



Witness Against Torture activists Protest at the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates on January 9, 2018.

# UK's Labor Party and its "Anti-Semitism" Crisis

BY KENNETH SURIN

The Labor Party is in the midst of an "anti-Semitism crisis" orchestrated by the media, pro-Zionist Jewish groups, and the party's Blairite faction bent on ousting Jeremy Corbyn as Labor leader.

The UK's media is overwhelmingly rightwing and pro-Israel. Even the *BBC*, terrified of being donated to Rupert Murdoch in a Tory privatization, is pro-Tory and pro-Israel in its news reporting, all its professions of "objectivity" notwithstanding.

Corbyn has been their constant target since he became the party's leader, and the "anti-Semitism" smear is the latest installment in this rightwing effort to discredit him.

Even the supposedly liberal *Guardian* newspaper, whose editorial line on Israel is led by the staunch Zionist Jonathan Freedland, is resolutely anti-Corbyn.

No leader of a major political party has been as resolute as Corbyn in defending Palestinian rights. The *Observer* newspaper put this succinctly: "As a long-term and ardent critic of Israel's policies and staunch supporter of Palestinian causes, he has always been distrusted by the Jewish community."

Pro-Zionist Jewish groups fear that under his leadership Britain will become much more like Ireland (which recently banned the import of products made in the illegal Israeli settlements) in its disposition towards Israel.

A clue to the motivation of these pro-Zionist UK Jewish groups was provided by the recent public protest in London against Labor's "anti-Semitism"—many protesters carried the Israeli flag and "Israel we stand behind you" signs, thereby making it clear that their concern for Zionist Israel was highly instrumental, and perhaps pri-

marily so, in their presence at this rally against Labor's "anti-Semitism."

Several Blairite Labor MPs were present at this demonstration.

The Blairite faction in Labor has already made one attempt to overthrow Corbyn when it made him submit to an unprecedented reelection shortly after he became party leader.

Corbyn went on to win this challenge with a percentage exceeding Blair's when the latter was elected Labor leader.

Labor's Blairite bloc know that Corbyn has to lose the next general election if they are to survive as a force within the party. If Labor (under Corbyn) wins this election, they will have little choice but to take the option already being talked about by some of these Blairites, that is, splitting from Labor and forming a new "centrist" party.

Their eminence grise, Tony Blair himself, has already talked about creating this "centrist" party.

So, paradoxically, Labor's Blairites would rather have the Conservatives win the next general election as their ticket to survival within their own party!

Predictably, one of these Blairites, Labor's deputy leader Tom Watson, jumped on the "crisis" bandwagon by saying that Labor faces "eternal shame" over anti-Semitism.

Of course, there are pockets of anti-Semitism in Labor, as is the case in nearly every non-Jewish British walk of life, including the Tories (though dressing up in Nazi uniform and chanting "Sieg Heil!" at parties, as opposed to upholding Palestinian rights, is their forte.)

A few days ago, it was revealed that the senior Tory politicians Boris

Johnson, Michael Gove, and Jacob Rees-Mogg had recently met in secret with Steve Bannon, who runs *Breitbart News*, a haven for anti-Semitic views. The British media, and the Blairite Labor MPs hounding Corbyn, have said nary a word about these meetings. Nor have the vociferous UK Jewish organizations.

The notion that there is significant anti-Semitism in Labor, let alone one amounting to a "crisis," is a red herring.

The most recent purported manifestation of this crisis pivots on the decision of Labor's National Executive Committee (NEC) to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Association's "non-legally binding working definition" of anti-Semitism, but not the "illustrations" which accompany it. The definition states:

"Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."

The "illustrations" which accompany this definition include some, which are uncontroversial for any fair-minded and relatively rational person, and others which are highly problematic for such a person.

The uncontroversial "illustrations" of anti-Semitism:

- Advocating the killing or harming of Jews for ideological or religious reasons;
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such;
- Holding Jews as a people responsible for real or imagined wrong-

doing committed by a single Jewish person or group;

- Holocaust denial;
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis;
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel;
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.

The controversial “illustrations” of anti-Semitism (and non-coincidentally they all have a bearing on the Palestinian cause:

- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel than to the interests of their own nations;
- Claiming that the existence of the state of Israel is a racist endeavor;
- Applying double standards by requiring of Israel conduct not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation;
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.

A close examination of this latter set of “illustrations” shows that Labor is absolutely right to resist the immense pressure from Zionists and their supporters to accept these latter “illustrations” as part of the definition of anti-Semitism.

There are examples of Jewish U.S. citizens being more loyal to Israel than to the interests of their country.

The casino mogul Sheldon Adelson donated \$25 million to Trump’s 2016 campaign (\$82 million in total to Republicans in 2016,) and \$5 million towards his inauguration. Earlier this year Adelson donated \$70 million to Birthright, the organization that brings young Jews to Israel for nothing (he’s donated \$100 million in total to

Birthright.) He also donated \$30 million to Republicans after Trump withdrew from the nuclear agreement with Iran. Adelson spent \$150 million in the 2012 election in a futile attempt to unseat the “anti-Israel” Barack Obama.

Adelson’s aim in all of this is to swing Trump behind his friend Netanyahu’s “Greater Israel” political agenda. To this end Adelson pushed hard for the U.S.’s withdrawal from the Iran deal, appointing the arch-Zionist John Bolton as a Trump adviser, recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital (in contravention of international law,) and moving the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Adelson has succeeded in all of these objectives.

Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and “envoy” for a “peace” deal in the Middle East, has made it clear that any such deal will have to be compatible with Likud’s “Greater Israel” political agenda.

According to the *New York Times*, Kushner’s family real estate company “received a roughly \$30 million investment from Menora Mivtachim, an insurer that is one of Israel’s largest financial institutions.”

The same *New York Times* article also reported that “the Kushners had teamed up with at least one member of Israel’s wealthy Steinmetz family to buy nearly \$200 million of Manhattan apartment buildings, as well as to build a luxury rental tower in New Jersey.”

More from the same article: “Mr. Kushner’s company has also taken out at least four loans from Israel’s largest bank, Bank Hapoalim, which is the subject of a Justice Department investigation over allegations that it helped wealthy Americans evade taxes.”

Kushner’s family foundation also donates to an illegal settlement in the West Bank.

Meanwhile, U.S. military aid to Israel amounts to \$3.8 billion annually, or \$23,000-per-year for every Jewish family living in Israel for the next ten years.

At the same time, 40 million Americans live in poverty, seniors and veterans are sleeping rough, and teachers have to buy school supplies, and in some cases food, for their students.

Given these two examples of prominent Jewish individuals with loyalties divided between the U.S. and Israel, with Israel acquiring much and the U.S. gaining so little from their actions, it is arguable whether it is “anti-Semitic” to broadcast the information detailed above.

Claiming that the existence of the state of Israel is a racist endeavor is likewise hardly anti-Semitic. The recently passed Israeli Nationality Law confirms why.

According to the law, Israel’s full name is “Israel, the nation state of the Jewish people.” The law stipulates that Eretz Israel (historical Palestine) is the homeland of the Jewish people, while the state of Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people.

As such, only Jews have the right to self-determination in Israel. Hebrew is the only official language; with Arabic no longer considered an official language.

The nationality law enjoins that future Jewish settlement in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories is a supreme national objective (in contravention of international law.)

The law also grants Jewish communities the right to a segregated territory in the state (in practice legalizing exclusive villages and towns for Jews.)

The nationality law effectively deprives Arabs of any official semblance of their national identity, and confirms Israel’s status as an apartheid, *i.e.*, racist, state. Saying this is certainly anti-Zionist, but only a dogmatist would insist that it is *ipso facto* “anti-Semitic.”

The IHRA “illustration” maintaining that it is anti-Semitic to apply double standards by requiring of Israel

conduct not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation is likewise extremely awkward in formulation and also in practice.

The 2017 *Democracy Index* used four categories to assess countries—full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime, and authoritarian regime.

The following countries were ranked by the Index as full democracies: Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Uruguay.

Israel was listed as a flawed democracy, as was the U.S.

Israel's leaders have always touted their country as "the only democracy in the Middle East," as if their country stood on a par with the 19 countries ranked as full democracies by the 2017 *Democracy Index*.

Is it "anti-Semitic" to hold Israel to a standard deemed to be achieved by Mauritius and Uruguay?

Or to say that Israel is really an "ethnocracy," as opposed to being a democracy?

The Israeli political geographer Oren Yiftachel argued in his 2006 book *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* that an ethnocracy is a regime promoting "the expansion of the dominant group in contested territory...while maintaining a democratic façade."

---

**U.S. military aid to Israel amounts to \$3.8 billion annually, or \$23,000-per-year for every Jewish family living in Israel for the next ten years.**

---

When it comes to drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis, it all depends on the basis used in making the comparison between Israel and the Nazis.

Having gas chambers for mass exterminations, then certainly not.

However, nearly everyone who believes that comparing Israel with the

Nazis is "anti-Semitic" invariably takes the concentration-camp gas chambers as the implicit norm, whether out of bad faith or ignorance, for making such comparisons.

The Nazi "final solution," vast as it was, had many strands, with horror piled upon horror. This multiple-layering must be considered when making the Israel-Nazi comparison.

Encircling and starving-out an entire community in a ghetto (Warsaw,) then yes, the comparison is valid—this is precisely what is taking place in Gaza.

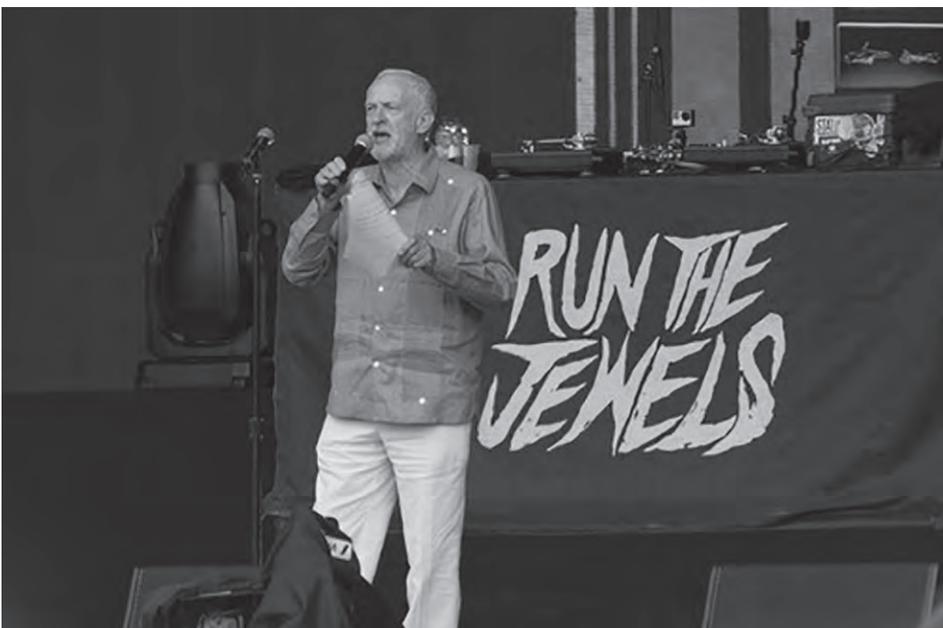
The Nazis confiscated Jewish property wholesale; the Israelis are doing the same to Palestinian houses and land in order to "clear" them for the expansion of the illegal settlements, and for alleged military purposes. B'Tselem, Israel's human rights watchdog, confirms this on their website. So, yes, in this case the comparison between Israel and the Nazis is valid.

Jews were prevented from leaving German-occupied Poland by the SS. Similarly, Palestinians are prevented from leaving Gaza (even for medical treatment) by the combined efforts of Israel and the Egyptian dictatorship. So, yes, in this case the comparison between Israel and the Nazis is valid.

German Civil Police K-9 Units were used by the SS to assist in the roundup and deportation of Jews in WWII. Similarly, the Israeli army uses attack dogs on unarmed Palestinians when raiding their homes, and when arresting peaceful demonstrators. So, yes, in this case the comparison between Israel and the Nazis is valid.

It is difficult to see why comparing Israel to the Nazis on these latter bases, while scrupulously eschewing the gas chambers as a basis for comparison (the Palestinians have not been sent to gas chambers *en masse*,) necessarily makes one an "anti-Semite."

The Israeli historian Ilan Pappé describes Israel's policy regarding Gaza



Labor Party Leader, Jeremy Corbyn.

**New aid package: \$38 billion for 10 years (2019 – 2028) — current \$30 billion pact ends in 2018**

- \$5 billion is for developing missile defense systems.
- Israel will not ask Congress for more funds for missile defense systems.
- The deal phases out the use of 25% of the aid for purchases from Israeli defense industries.
- Israel already gets more than half of all of America's foreign defense aid.
- Since Obama took office in 2009, America has given Israel \$23.5 billion in defense aid.
- Under Obama the U.S. has given Israel \$3 billion to develop missile defense systems.

An Iron Dome air defense system fires to intercept a rocket from Gaza Strip in Ashkelon.

as “incremental genocide,” in contrast to the Nazi’s absolute genocide. The final outcome however is not in doubt.

The distinguished Oxford jurist Stephen Sedley (himself a Jew) has said that “there is no legal bar on criticizing Israel. Yet several of the “examples” that have been tacked on to the IHRA definition (by whom is not known) seek to stifle criticism of Israel irrespective of intent. The House of Commons select committee on home affairs in October 2016 advised adding: “It is not anti-Semitic to criticize the government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent.”

Corbyn, under siege from the media and Jewish groups (who say, with risible hyperbole, that he poses an “existential threat” to British Jews,) has apologized for not doing enough to root out anti-Semitism in the Labor Party.

Corbyn’s apology was unnecessary. Not just because it was not merited by the real circumstances underlying this manufactured “crisis,” but also because every step he takes now is dismissed as “meaningless” and “too little, too late” by his opportunistic opponents.

Instead Corbyn should have given an immediate forensic analysis of the IHRA’s flawed “examples” of “anti-Semitism,”

indicating that Labor was wise not to incorporate these, root and branch, in the definition of anti-Semitism it adopted.

Corbyn should also have come out earlier with his pledge to deal firmly with those justifiably guilty of anti-Semitism in the Labor party.

Corbyn has many admirable qualities, but perhaps doing forensics is not one of them. However, he has many surrogates capable of undertaking this task, and they should be entrusted with it immediately.

The late and much missed Robin Cook, the former Labor minister who demolished Blair’s rationales for the Iraq war in the House of Commons debate on Blair’s push for the war, would have been perfect for the job.

Will Labor now find its anti-Zionist Robin Cook?

*Kenneth Surin teaches at Duke University, North Carolina. He lives in Blacksburg, Virginia.*

—Counterpunch, August 7, 2018

<https://www.counterpunch.org/2018/08/07/the-uks-labor-party-and-its-anti-semitism-crisis/>



## Small Particles with Big Problems

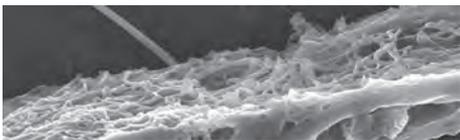
### Nanotech—a biological time bomb

BY DR. NAYVIN GORDON

After more than 20 years of scientific evidence that nanoparticles (objects 1,000 times smaller than the width of human hair) are toxic to biological systems, there is still no comprehensive regulation for the manufacturing of nanoparticles, nor for the products that contain them. There is also no international regulation of nanoproducts or nanoproducts.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), nanoparticles “exhibit unique properties that affect physical, chemical, and biological behavior,” and “Occupational health risks associated with manufacturing and using nanomaterials are not yet clearly understood.”<sup>1</sup> Potential health hazards from exposure to nanoparticles have been clearly identified. Scientists have demonstrated the following toxic effects:

1. Damage to DNA<sup>2</sup>
2. Accumulation in lung and liver.<sup>3</sup>
3. Inflammation, scarring, allergies, DNA toxicity and potential to cause cancer.<sup>4</sup>
4. Eco-toxicity in a variety of species.<sup>5</sup>
5. Nanoparticles have the ability to cross cell barriers and enter cells to react with the internal structures and cause cellular stress. They also cause lung toxicity. Scientists knowledgeable in this field agree that nanotechnology



Magnification of nanoparticle.

in commerce poses important potential risks to human health and the environment.<sup>6</sup>

Nanoparticles are in over 600 products worldwide from cosmetics and clothing to food. In June 2016 The French National Laboratory of Metrology and Testing found nanoparticles in: chocolate biscuits, chewing gum, a can of veal casserole and spices for guacamole.<sup>7</sup> Estimates of over half-a-million tons of nanoparticles are being produced every year in a rapidly growing industry. Billions in profits are being made. In 2014, nanotech was a \$20 billion business.<sup>8</sup>

---

### The historical record reveals that industry's constant search for profits have placed millions of workers at risk for disease and death.

---

An estimated six million factory workers will be working in the nanotech industry by 2020. Nanotechnology is a highly profitable industry and production is accelerating. We have witnessed more than 20 years of toxic warnings and yet production continues to rise and protection is lacking for the millions of workers in the industry and the billions exposed to their products.

The historical record reveals that industry's constant search for profits have placed millions of workers at risk for disease and death. In 1988 it was estimated that in the U.S. there were

over 100,000 work related deaths and 20 million work related injuries.<sup>9</sup> For over one hundred years it has been the workers and their families who have demanded that industry and the government protect workers by passing regulatory laws. Clearly what we do have as regulation is insufficient.

It appears that we are sitting on a nanotech ticking time bomb. Only the working people can demand protection. Owners of industry, left to themselves, will continue to sacrifice workers to the “God of profit.” History clearly demonstrates that the essential nature of our present capitalist economic system is to put profits over workers lives. We can and must do better. We need an economic system that has the workers health as the guiding principle, the prime directive.

*Dr. Nayvin Gordon is a California Family Physician who has written many articles about health and politics.*

1 <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/nanotech/default.html>

2 <http://news.mit.edu/2014/tiny-particles-may-pose-big-risk>

3 [http://www.euro.who.int/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/233154/e96927.pdf?ua=1](http://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/233154/e96927.pdf?ua=1)

4 <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0192623310390705>

5 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17435390701314761?journalCode=inan20>

6 [http://www.assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2013/Asocdocinf03\\_2013.pdf](http://www.assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2013/Asocdocinf03_2013.pdf)

7 [http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/nanotechnology\\_is\\_a\\_growing\\_research\\_priority/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/nanotechnology_is_a_growing_research_priority/)

8 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/robertbowman/2014/08/14/doctors-claim-evidence-that-nanotechnology-can-make-workers-sick/>

9 *Occupational Health*, by Levy and Wegman, 1988

# Worm Apocalypse

BY DAVID R. MONTGOMERY



You can't avoid the zombie apocalypse in popular culture. But you may not have heard about the real one going on right beneath your feet: A worm apocalypse has been transforming farmland around the world.

Why should you care? If you dreamed up plots to quietly undermine civilization, few could be more diabolical than destroying its foundation—the soil life that builds the fertility of the farmland we depend on to grow our food.

Still, it's safe to say that most of us missed the recent study in the journal *Soil Systems* that lays out the case for the worldwide decimation of earthworms. Yet this new report offers a stark assessment of the health of Earth's agricultural soils. And that should concern us all.

The study reviewed global evidence for loss of earthworms under modern conventional farming. Long-term farming trials—some that have run for over 170 years—consistently found losses of 50 percent to 100 percent of worm biomass, with an average loss of more than 80 percent.

In other words, modern farming practices have killed off four out of five worms that once lived on farms. Farmers around the world have been turning verdant fields into subterranean deserts.

This matters because recent scientific advances have shown how soil life partners with plants through the original underground economy. For example, plants, we now know, push sugary exudates out of their roots for microbes

to lap up like dogs at breakfast. They don't do this for free. The plants get something in return. Soil microbes consume and convert the exudates into metabolites that benefit the growth and health of their botanical hosts.

And no less than Charles Darwin recognized the importance of worms mixing organic matter into fertile soil. He called worms "God's ploughmen" and spent his whole career studying them. Both his first scientific paper and his last, lifetime best-selling book addressed the importance of lowly worms in keeping soils fertile.

So just what's been killing off the world's worms? The new study blames tillage (plowing) and intensive use of chemical fertilizers that deplete soil organic matter. In other words, practices that form the backbone of modern conventional agriculture destroy worm food and decimate soil life. In the U.S. and around the world, soil organic matter levels are roughly half of their historical levels before the advent of modern agriculture.

Soils are nature's recycling system that converts once living matter—the remains of plants and animals—back into the building blocks of new life that plants can take back up and reuse. Carbon-rich soil organic matter is a source of nutrients and fuel for soil life. Less organic matter means less worm food, and thus fewer worms—and thus less mixing of mineral and organic matter. And the loss of soil life makes farmers more dependent on chemical fertilizers to keep up crop yields.

Is degrading the soil and killing off worms and other soil life an inevitable consequence of intensive agriculture? Hardly. Bringing soil back to life can be done on commercial farms. How do I know? Researching my most recent book, *Growing a Revolution: Bringing*

*Our Soil Back to Life*, I visited farmers around the world who already did so on small-scale subsistence farms in Africa and Costa Rica and large commodity crop farms across North America.

These farmers shared a common set of principles that underlay their unconventional practices. They cultivated beneficial soil life—like Darwin's worms. Specifically, they minimized their disturbance of the ground, planted cover crops to protect their soil and introduce organic matter to their fields, and diversified their crop rotations to include more than one or two crops. Some even brought livestock back onto their farms to manure their land. These were not radical organic farmers, but conventional farmers who had adopted practical new ways of doing things.

Their practices merged the modern technology that allows no-till farming with the ancient wisdom of cover crops, crop rotations, and manuring. Farmers who had adopted all of these practices built up their soil organic matter and the life in their soil, and did so remarkably fast—in years not decades. As the health of their soil improved they found they could harvest as much—if not more—with far less fertilizer, diesel, and pesticide. And this saved them money, making their farms more profitable.

Worms may not be warm and fuzzy, but their essential role in many ecosystems across this planet makes them canaries in the agricultural coalmine. And unlike the ever-popular zombie apocalypse, the worm apocalypse is one we can't afford to ignore. For we need fertile soils to feed the world today—and into the future.

—*Daily Beast*, August 6, 2018

<https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-coming-worm-apocalypse-should-terrify-you>

# Wolves, Bees, Whales, and Us

BY STEVEN STRAUSS

Threatened, vulnerable, endangered, extinct. In medicine, we describe a hospitalized patient's chances of survival with the terms good, fair, serious, and critical. Environmental biologists use similar descriptors. Depending on how fast populations are falling, a species can be threatened, vulnerable, or endangered. When fully overwhelmed, it becomes irreversibly extinct.

The Chinook salmon is threatened. The African elephant is vulnerable. The orca whale of the Pacific Northwest is endangered. And with the recent death of the last male northern white rhino, that species is essentially extinct.

Caused ultimately by reckless endangerment of the environment for profit, these slow deaths are unnecessary and preventable. Capitalism should be charged with mass murder.

To address the problem of species at risk, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was passed in 1973. It was a reform reflecting increasing awareness of human invasion of natural habitats.

The law is supported by more than 90 percent of the country. It has even been effective. Ninety-nine percent of the more than 1,600 species designated for protection have so far been saved from extinction.

However, the ESA has always been threatened. Some Democrats and many Republicans have sought exemptions for energy tycoons, land developers, and other profit-driven environmental rapists.

And now, with the Trump administration continuing the rightward trajectory of capitalist politics, "threatened" no longer characterizes the ESA's status. "Vulnerable" is more

appropriate. Its opponents are trying to make it "extinct."

Recently, Trump appointed former Texas comptroller Susan Combs to a key policy position at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Combs' qualifications include supporting legislation which would require permission from private landowners before data about endangered species on their property could be collected. Siding with fossil fuel investors, she opposed listing the dune sagebrush lizard as endangered.

Bills currently before Congress would allow the Fish and Wildlife Service to ignore science and instead use economic criteria (read capitalist profit) to deny protections. Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico would risk the very existence of regional black bears, bighorn sheep, desert tortoises, and jaguars. That being the case, we can predict that proponents of the wall will be pitted against defenders of the ESA.

As far back as the 19th century, Herman Melville had a hunch that something might go tragically awry from human plundering. Reflecting on the consequences of global whale hunting, the creator of *Moby Dick* asked "whether Leviathan can long endure so wide a chase," and "whether he must not at last be exterminated from the waters, and the last whale, like the last man, smoke his last pipe."

Who indeed will be "the last [hu] man?" We already know that capitalist pollution of the planet is making us sick. It could also turn us into an endangered or extinct species.

Why not? Capitalism is destroying ecosystems; the mutually-sustaining complex interactions among life forms.

Destruction of ecosystems is why species are at risk. Humans are as much a part of these networks as other living things.

The Yellowstone ecosystem had its last pack of wolves killed off by humans back in the 1920s. As a result, elk had fewer predators. They widened their grazing territory, leading to the degradation of willows and aspens. The soil eroded. Birds lost their nesting habitats and beavers lost their wood. Rabbits and mice lost hiding places and became easier prey. Thankfully, the reintroduction of wolves in 1995 has dramatically improved the balance of nature there.

Similarly, human dam and culvert construction has harmed salmon. Whales now have a shortage of food.

Beehives are disappearing. Scientists think pesticides play a role. Yet bees pollinate the plants that produce more than a third of the human food supply.

Contrary to what capitalists would like us to believe, humans are not exempt from the laws of biology. We rely on the very species and food webs that are being decimated. But capitalism is compelled to find profits even if that means destroying ecosystems.

So let's threaten capitalism by demanding environmental impact studies on every single project that affects nature. Let's make capitalism vulnerable by organizing the oppressed. And let's finally make it extinct by replacing it with the earth-friendly ecosystem called socialism.

—*Freedom Socialist*, June/July 2018

<https://mailchi.mp/igc.org/wolves-bees-whales-and-us?e=8b6f3136bf>

# Capitalism vs. Green Energy

BY DAVID KLEIN

Renewable energy is expanding rapidly all around the world. The energy capacity of newly installed solar projects in 2017, for instance, exceeded the combined increases from coal, gas and nuclear plants. During the past eight years alone, global investment in renewables was \$2.2 trillion, and optimism has soared along with investments. “Rapidly spreading solar technology could change everything,” announced a piece in the *Financial Times*, which also explained that, “there is growing evidence that some fundamental changes are coming that will over time put a question mark over investments in old energy systems.”

But can renewable energy grow fast enough in the market economy to pinch off the use of fossil fuels and help fend off climate catastrophe? Unfortunately, it’s not likely. Even as the percentage of global energy generation from renewables increases, so too does global energy consumption, which means that fossil fuel emissions are also increasing.

The world’s energy-related carbon emissions rose by 1.7 percent in 2017 and energy consumption grew by 2.2 percent, the fastest rate since 2013. For the past decade, primary energy consumption increased worldwide at an average rate of 1.7 percent per year. Power generation rose last year by 2.8 percent with renewable energy providing 49 percent of that increase and most of the rest (44 percent) coming from coal. Globally, oil consumption grew by 1.8 percent, natural gas by three percent and coal consumption increased by one percent. The key point is that greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels are increasing even as renewable energy use is growing.

To visualize the relationship between the growing percentage of green energy and increasing total global energy production, imagine a “dynamic energy consumption pie chart.” A growing portion of the pie represents green energy sources, so that piece of the pie is getting wider, but the radius of the pie chart also increases with time to account for the increase of global energy consumption. The pie is getting bigger and bigger while the fossil fuel slice is growing longer (which is bad) but thinner (which is good). Which process wins out? As long as fossil fuel use is not decreasing, it doesn’t matter for the climate.

People often get confused when fossil fuels and renewable energy are discussed together, but the climate only cares about the former. The latter has no effect. Solar panels, wind turbines and the like neither help nor harm the climate. The only thing that matters, in terms of climate disruption, are greenhouse gas emissions.

It is not enough for the percentage of green energy to increase each year—

unless it reaches 100 percent of global energy production very quickly. Even if the rate of greenhouse gas emissions decreases, but doesn’t decrease fast enough, we face disaster. What is required is that global greenhouse gas emissions decrease rapidly to zero by midcentury in order for the biosphere to stand a chance of survival. Unfortunately, even a rapidly increasing percentage of green energy production is unlikely to achieve that under capitalist market forces.

## What about the carbon bubble?

Falling prices for renewable energy have led academics, activists and investors to warn of a “carbon bubble” of overvalued fossil fuel assets in the global economy, which could lead to a major capitalist crisis. A recent economic study, published in *Nature Climate Change* predicted that a sudden decrease in the value of fossil fuels—triggered by low renewable energy prices—would cause the carbon bubble to burst, and under the assumption of continuing trends, such an event will likely occur before 2035.



Economic crises notwithstanding, could the bursting of the carbon bubble at least prevent or significantly delay environmental collapse? Unfortunately, no. Lead author Jean-François Mercure warned, as reported by the *Guardian*, “that the transition was happening too slowly to stave off the worst effects of climate change. Although the trajectory towards a low-carbon economy would

---

**Capitalism is not only incapable of responding adequately to the environmental crisis, it is the very cause of the crisis and can only make matters worse.**

---

continue, to keep within [two degrees Celsius] above pre-industrial levels—the limit set under the Paris agreement—would require much stronger government action and new policies.”

### **Capitalism or survival**

Capitalism requires perpetual economic growth in order to avoid economic crises such as the Great Depression. More specifically, in order to stave off mass unemployment and economic misery, capitalism requires increasing commodity production, escalating resource extraction, increasing trash and toxic dumping, and ever increasing energy production. Capitalism, by its very nature, must expand unendingly and it has already surpassed the limits of sustainable

growth in the sense that global consumption now exceeds the planet’s bio-capacity to regenerate the resources consumed. According to the World Wildlife Fund, 1.6 Earths would be required to meet the demands humanity makes on nature each year. Capitalism is not only incapable of responding adequately to the environmental crisis, it is the very cause of the crisis and can only make matters worse.

As Richard Smith points out in *Green Capitalism: The God that Failed*, the scale of change needed to achieve a sustainable civilization is staggering. The rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions together with resource conservation requires that we radically reduce or close down large numbers of power plants, mines, factories, mills, processing and other industries around the world. It means drastically cutting back or closing down not only fossil fuel companies, but the industries that depend on them, including automobile, aircraft, airline, shipping, petrochemical, construction, agribusiness, lumber, pulp and paper, and wood product companies, industrial fishing operations, factory farming, junk food production, private water companies, packaging and plastic, disposable products of all sorts, and above all, the war industries. The Pentagon is the single largest institutional user of petroleum products and energy.

The loss of jobs from the de-industrialization required to save ourselves would not be just a few coal mining and oil drilling jobs but millions of jobs in the industrialized world. Mainstream environmentalists argue that the jobs versus the environment dichotomy is a false one, but they are wrong. Within a capitalist framework that is exactly the choice. What we would need to do within this framework to save the biosphere, including ourselves, would result in total economic collapse.

It is not enough just to oppose capitalism. We also need to create something

better: An alternative system of human relations along the lines of eco-socialism is not only desirable, it is imperative. Included in such a vision are free healthcare, free education, free mass transportation, and since most jobs under capitalism are pointless or destructive, we need a drastically reduced workweek.

Polluting industries will not voluntarily shut down. To accomplish what is needed requires socializing virtually all large-scale industries. The only way to rationally reorganize the economy sustainably is to collectively and democratically plan most of the world’s industrial economies.

While all kinds of useless, wasteful and polluting industries must be eliminated, we cannot contract the entire economy. We need to expand some industries, including renewable energy, public healthcare, public transit, long-lasting energy efficient housing, durable mass transportation vehicles, long-lasting appliances and electronics, repair shops, public schools, public services, environmental remediation, reforestation and organic farming.

It is essential that environmental activists begin to focus on ending the economic system of capitalism itself. The survival of life on this planet depends on it.

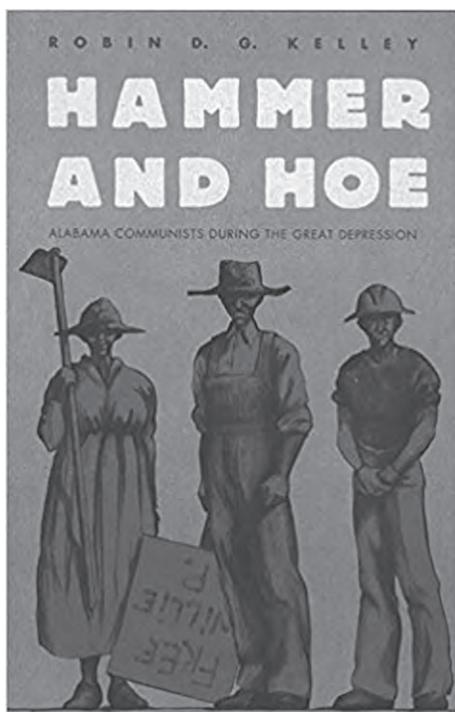
*David Klein is a mathematical physicist and professor of mathematics at California State University Northridge, where he is also director of the Climate Science Program, an educational program designed to prepare students for careers or graduate work in climate science and related fields. He is a member of System Change not Climate Change and is the author of the ebook, Capitalism and Climate Change: The Science and Politics of Global Warming.*

—*Truthout*, June 16, 2018

<https://truthout.org/articles/the-limits-of-green-energy-under-capitalism/>

## Kelley's *Hammer and Hoe*

REVIEW BY MUMIA ABU-JAMAL



*Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*, Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies, New Edition, By Robin D.G. Kelly

Noted historian and public intellectual, Robin D.G. Kelley is brilliant, productive and talented, but all this could be seen in the beginning of his career a quarter of a century ago, when the University of North Carolina Press published *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. By “Alabama Communists,” Kelley means (for the most part) Black Alabamans, workers, miners, agricultural workers, trade unionists, who struggled through the 1930s to build a Communist Party against the forces of the armed state and fascist rightwing terrorists, who beat, shot, assaulted, raped and murdered people who tried to unite and fight for better wages and a better life.

Who knew that there were hundreds and perhaps thousands of Black Communists organizing in Alabama during the '30s?

Well, Robin D.G. Kelley did, and his book is nothing short of a revelation. This hidden, little-known history of Black revolutionary organizing at a time of fascist reaction in America (and especially Alabama!) is what I call underground history. History lived at a high level of resistance, seldom reported and afterwards all but forgotten, reminds us that Black history is often revolutionary history, yet it is rarely acknowledged as such.

Kelley's usage of personal interviews with former party members, his study of union newsletters and files of groups active during the Depression gives us valuable insights into how revolutionary Black life was lived during times of arch-repression.

Sometimes, a book comes along that transforms our thinking of how history is understood. For example, Herbert Aptheker's *American Negro Slave Revolts* or C.L.R. James' *Black Jacobins* (on the Haitian revolution)



Mumia Abu-Jamal

changed everything that preceded it, as well as all that followed.

Robin D.G. Kelley's remarkable work, *Hammer and Hoe* (originally published in 1990) does similar work.

Write to:

Mumia Abu-Jamal AM-8335  
SCI-Mahanoy  
301 Morea Road  
Frackville, PA 17932



# You Say You Want A Revolution?

The anti-capitalist film, *Sorry to Bother You* shows the way—an excerpt

BY BRIAHNA GRAY

This movie differs from classic “rags to riches” tales like *The Pursuit of Happyness*—a moving film, but one which celebrates a poor man’s journey from homeless to stock broker without critiquing the relationship between concentrated wealth and a dearth of affordable housing, or the absurdity of a “meritocracy” that would hinge a family’s survival on a parent’s ability to dazzle an interviewer with a Rubik’s Cube. *The Pursuit of Happyness* is touching because it shows one man overcoming impossible odds. *Sorry to Bother You* is moving because it shows that we don’t have to beat those odds alone.

This framing is no accident. As Riley explained in a series of recent interviews, he’s not interested in performative art or performative politics that aren’t rooted in broader movements. “Progressives and radicals have turned more to spectacle and gone away from actually organizing at the actual point of contradiction in capitalism, which is the exploitation of labor, which is also where the working class has its power,” he recently told Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now!* “We’ve gone in favor of demonstrations that don’t necessarily have teeth...and I feel like we have to give these demonstrations more teeth by being able to affect the bottom line.”

Riley critiqued an anti-Iraq War “die-in” in an interview with *Build*. The protest, he said, was enacted with the expressed purpose of making peo-

ple “aware” of the carnage caused by the war. But “everybody knows the war is fucked up,” said Riley, “they just don’t think they can do anything about it. So there’s a different question that needs to be answered by the artists.” He added, “Art has a place, but it has to be connected to actual movements.” That connection is what makes *Sorry to Bother You* feel revolutionary.

After seeing the film, I struggled to recall an instance in which a labor strike had been represented at all in mainstream cinema—much less depicted heroically as in *Sorry to Bother You*. Although other examples exist, the only one I could remember without resorting to Google was *Norma Rae*, a 1979 biopic in which Sally Field played Crystal Lee Sutton, who successfully organized a strike at a southern textile mill.

*Sorry to Bother You* may make more of an impact than *Norma Rae* precisely because it’s not a film “about” organizing, which might come across as didactic or inaccessible to audiences who don’t see themselves as political, or who’d rather avoid a biopic on a Saturday night. By embedding his message in the Trojan horse of satirical comedy, Riley has made the indignity of wage labor a part of the public conversation, including among a multiracial demographic that has been excluded from media narratives about the progressive movement, even as we drive it.

The diverse cast challenges the myth that class struggle must come at the expense of nonwhite interests—an increasingly popular characterization among liberals who’ve argued against breaking up the banks because it won’t cure

racism, who’ve undermined a “new” New Deal on the basis that racial disparities marred the original, or who’ve implied, even if unwittingly, that the recent teacher strikes in West Virginia, Arizona, Kentucky, and Colorado were somehow at odds with the interests of people of color. But its equally relevant for working-class white audiences for whom a genuinely worry-free “white voice” is inaccessible, too.

Of course, the class struggle is most urgent for those at the bottom of the economic hierarchy, which, due to a legacy of racism, is disproportionately non-white. As Terry Crews explained when asked why he took the role:

“It reminded me of so many people I grew up with in Flint, Michigan. They’d given up all of their dreams, everything they wanted in life for the security of the factory, and it turned on them. They told you you’re gonna have health care for life, you’re gonna have this for life—everyone was told the same thing: This is for life, y’all. And it went 15 years. And it was over. And everybody was like, ‘What do I do now?’”

Earlier in the interview, Crews summed it up precisely: “This is the movie we didn’t know we needed.”

Today, when the country is being led by a cruel megalomaniac who has been empowered by a decades long, corporate-funded attack on democracy, hope can seem elusive, even naive, and political art can seem similarly hollow. Yet when art connects to movements, it transforms superficial hope into something weighty with possibility: a plan.

—*The Intercept*, July 25, 2018

<https://theintercept.com/2018/07/25/sorry-to-bother-you-review-boots-riley/>



Jermaine Fowler as Salvador, Steven Yuen as Squeeze, and Lakeith Stanfield as Cassius Green star in Boots Riley’s *Sorry to Bother You*.

## The New Prison Movement

The continuing struggle to abolish slavery in Amerika

By KEVIN "RASHID" JOHNSON

### The rising new prison movement

Across Amerika (home of the world's largest prison population) growing numbers of the imprisoned are coming to realize that they are victims of social injustice.

Foremost, they are victims of an inherently predatory and dysfunctional capitalist-imperialist system, which targets the poor and people of color for intensified policing, militaristic containment, and selective criminal prosecutions while denying them access to the basic resources, employment and institutional control needed for social and economic security. Deprivations, which generate "crime"—economic crimes, crimes of passion, and crimes of attempting to cope (through drug use and addictions.)

Secondly, once imprisoned they become victims of inhumane abuses, warehousing, and one of the most decadent and dehumanizing forms of social economic injustice—slavery.

This rising awareness among the imprisoned has prompted increasing numbers of prisoners to unite in resistance proclaiming "no more!" And the momentum is building.

This "new" prison movement is seeing growing waves of open resistance to slave labor and conditions of abuse, which is eroding the structures put in place beginning nearly 50 years ago to repress the prison movement of that era, such as solitary confinement.

### From yesterday's suppressed prison movement

During the earlier wave of the prison movement (of the 1960s-70s), when the courts barred their doors against

prisoners' lawsuits seeking redress against the inhumane conditions that pervade U.S. prisons, the prisoners rose up in resistance.

In a dialectical relationship, their movement both informed and was informed by revolutionary ideas then prevalent in the broader social movements of the time, which exposed and challenged the capitalist system. At the forefront of that movement was the original Black Panther Party and allied groups on the outside and comrades like George Jackson who formed the BPP's first prison chapter on the inside.

To suppress that movement and stamp out its revolutionary consciousness, the establishment began constructing and operating solitary confinement prisons and units (called Supermaxes and Control Units) at an unprecedented level. Beginning with the Marion Control Unit which opened in 1972, after the assassination of George Jackson by guards, and the

peaceful 1971 uprising at Attica State Prison that officials suppressed by murdering 29 prisoners and ten civilians, then tortured hundreds more, international outrage was sparked and the inhumane conditions in U.S. prisons was exposed.

In a rare admission of the actual political purpose of subsequent high security units, Ralph Arons, a former warden at Marion, testified in federal court: "The purpose of the Marion Control Unit is to control revolutionary attitudes in prison and society at large."<sup>1</sup>

Alongside this repression also came concessions to the Prison Movement, including prison officials granting prisoners more privileges and the federal courts opening their doors to prisoner litigation challenging their living conditions. But this did not last.

As the U.S. prison system expanded eight-fold and solitary confinement



units contained prisoner resistance the concessions were rolled back and the courts soon made rulings like *Turner v. Safley*,<sup>2</sup> and laws like the Post Litigation Reform Act (PLRA)<sup>3</sup> were enacted, that in effect reinstated the courts' old "hands off" doctrine towards prisoner lawsuits.

### **Oppression breeds renewed resistance**

With these reversals, abuse conditions intensified, especially with the vastly expanded use of solitary confinement, a condition which the U.S. Supreme Court found to be cruel and unusual and constituted torture back in the late 1800s,<sup>4</sup> and the attendant enlargement of prison labor pools to be exploited as free workers. Under these conditions of heightened abuse and exploitation a new prison movement has emerged and is only growing.

At each stage of this new movement record numbers of prisoners have joined and forged unity across racial and tribal lines by which the system has traditionally been able to keep prisoners divided and controlled. Even more monumental is that unity in these struggles has been achieved not just within individual prisons, but across entire prison systems and now across the country, with public support spanning the country and reaching international levels.

This has and can only inspire greater levels of resistance and help us refine our forms of resistance and methods of organizing and communication.

To these ends I'd like to summarize the major events in today's growing waves of prison resistance and call on readers to join and support the struggles to come.

### **And resist we have!**

When in 2008 a migrant, Jesus Manuel Galindo, was left to die in a solitary confinement cell from untreated epilepsy, hundreds of detainees at Reeves County Detention Complex in

Pesos, Texas took over the complex and put it to the torch. Over \$2 million in damage was reported in an uprising that united detainees from Cuba, Nigeria, Venezuela, and Mexico.

During December 2010, prisoners in six Georgia prisons went on a mass strike, protesting unpaid slave labor, solitary confinement, and other oppressive conditions. Latinos, Blacks, whites, prison tribes of all orientations, Muslims, *etc.*, united in this protest. Following the weeklong strike, two years later at Jackson State Prison, where many of the 2010 strike leaders had been transferred, a 44-day hunger strike was staged as guards violently retaliated.

---

**...rising awareness among the imprisoned has prompted increasing numbers of prisoners to unite in resistance proclaiming "no more!"**

---

In 2011 and 2013 three historic mass hunger strikes were undertaken by California prisoners protesting indefinite solitary confinement and other abuses, where 6,000, 12,000, and 30,000 prisoners respectively participated. Prisoners in other states also joined the strike—in Virginia, Oregon, Washington state, *etc.* This strike united and was led by Blacks, Latinos, and whites, and all the major California prison tribes. Which led to a call by the prisoners to end all racial and group hostilities, and which Cali prison officials have repeatedly tried to sabotage. This strike and unprecedented unity alongside legal challenges by some strike leaders and participants forced the Cali prison system to reform its long-term solitary confinement policies and release some 2,000 prisoners to general population in 2015.<sup>5</sup>

Inspired by the 2010 Georgia prison strike, in 2013, prisoner leaders of the Free Alabama Movement (FAM) called for a strike in protest of Alabama's "running a slave empire" and "incarcerating people for free labor." In January 2014, prisoners at four Alabama prisons took up the strike. As a result of FAM's organizing efforts and collaborating with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), a committee within the IWW was formed called the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee (IWOC), which now has over 800 imprisoned members in 46 states. The IWOC has since played an important support role in subsequent strikes and building public support. Shortly after the IWOC's founding, the IWOC and the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter united as allies in this work, and I as a co-founder of the NABPP and numerous other NABPP members joined IWOC.<sup>6</sup>

In 2014, all 1200 detainees at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, went on a 56-day hunger strike, which spread to the Joe Corley Detention Center in Conroe, Texas, all protesting oppressive conditions at the facilities. Outside protesters organized in support of the strikers.

In April 2016, prisoners in seven Texas prisons went on a work strike at the call of leading comrades of the NABPP's Texas branch and IWOC. The month before, a spontaneous uprising took place in Alabama at Holman prison, where the new warden, Carter Davenport, known for his role in physical assaults on prisoners, ended up on the receiving end of violence.

These initiatives in early 2016 inspired a call to prisoners across the U.S. to engage in a country-wide strike beginning on September 9, 2016, a date chosen to commemorate the 1971 Attica uprising.

September 9th proved historical as over 30,000 prisoners in up to 46 facil-

ities in 24 states took up various forms of protest from refusing to work, to hunger strikes, to prison takeovers, to disrupting operations. Outside protests took place in various cities across the U.S. in support of the prisoners.

In response to the rising voices of prisoners resisting slave labor and abusive treatment, on August 19, 2017, a March on Washington was undertaken in support of prisoners and against the 13th Amendment which, enacted at the end of the Civil War in 1865, legalized enslavement of the criminally convicted, in violation of international law written and ratified by the U.S. after World War II, which forbids all forms of slavery and involuntary servitude.<sup>7</sup>

Shaken by the protests of September 2016, in an unprecedented move, states like Florida locked down their entire prison system hoping to head off any possible uprisings attending the August 19, 2017, Washington march. Florida went even further to serve its prisoners special gourmet meals during the entire four-day lockdown (from August 18-21).

Despite this move, Florida prisoners made an end run around officials and still undertook a strike code-named Operation PUSH, beginning January 15, 2018, on Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. PUSH involved prisoners across the state refusing to turn out for work and boycotting the prison commissary. They were protesting unpaid slave labor, price-gouging in the system's commissary and packaging services, the gain-time scam that replaced parole, compounded by extreme overcrowding caused by extreme sentencing, causing inhumane conditions.

As Florida prison officials scrambled to replace men who refused to work with more compliant ones and transferred and carted off strike participants to solitary confinement, they falsely reported to the media that no strike and no retribution against participants occurred—an outright lie.

As one of Operation PUSH's main outside supporters informed me in a letter in late January 2018:

"I am receiving mail daily from prisoners all over Florida who are either participating in PUSH or being retaliated against for having literature or correspondence with outside organizations that support the strike, such as IWOC and FTP. Some have been outright threatened with punishments if they continue to talk to us...There was only six weeks of planning and it was covered by 50 news outlets including *Newsweek*, *The Nation*, *Teen Vogue*! I think we're off to a good start and the DOC is lying that no one is participating."

Not only this but I can bear witness to Florida officials' lying about there being no strike, nor reprisals, because I also participated.

On the eve of the strike the warden at Florida State Prison (FSP) had me and nearly a dozen others with whom I was known to socialize split up, which we'd anticipated. This did nothing to prevent our planned boycott of the commissary for several weeks. In fact it allowed us to spread the word.

Then on January 10th the warden had me charged with a disciplinary report for inciting Florida prisoners to riot, in retaliation for me writing an article explaining the strikes purpose and the prisoners' need of public support that was published online.<sup>8</sup> After a prompt kangaroo hearing and conviction of the infraction I was put in an unheated cell with a broken window as outside temperatures dipped into the 20s, and guards kept exhaust fans on 24/7, sucking the freezing air into the cell.<sup>9</sup>

Yet another call went out, initiated by NABPP's comrade Malik for a renewed round of strikes across the U.S. to begin on Juneteenth (June 19, 2018). As I and several dozen prisoners at Florida's Santa Rosa prison where I was then confined prepared a commis-

sary boycott for this strike, and undertook to build unity among the prisoners there in solitary (to counter the culture of guard-manipulated violence between them,) I was abruptly interstate transferred back to my home state of Virginia and promptly assigned to a permanent solitary confinement status called Intensive Management.

### The struggle continues

But the struggle doesn't end there. A broad call has gone out for a sustained prison strike from August 21-September 9, 2018, for prisoners across the U.S. Participants are called on to participate in any, several, or all of the following manners:

- Work strikes: prisoners will not report to assigned jobs. Each place of detention will determine how long its strike will last. Some of these strikes may translate into a local list of demands designed to improve conditions and reduce harm within the prison.
- Sit-ins: In certain prisons, people will engage in peaceful sit-in protests.
- Boycotts: All spending should be halted. People on the inside will inform you if they are participating in this boycott.
- Hunger strikes: People shall refuse to eat.

The strike will raise the following ten general demands:

1. Immediate improvements to the conditions of prisons and prison policies that recognize the humanity of imprisoned people.
2. An immediate end to prison slavery. All persons imprisoned in any place of detention under United States jurisdiction must be paid the prevailing wage in their state or territory for their labor.
3. The Prison Litigation Reform Act must be rescinded, allowing

imprisoned humans a proper channel to address grievances and violations of their rights.

4. The Truth in Sentencing Act and Sentencing Reform Act must be rescinded so that imprisoned humans have a possibility of rehabilitation and parole. No humans shall be sentenced to Death by Incarceration or serve any sentence without the possibility of parole.
5. An immediate end to the racist overcharging, over-sentencing, and parole denials of Black and Brown people. Black people shall no longer be denied parole because the victim of the crime was white, which is a particular problem in southern states.
6. An immediate end to racist gang enhancement laws targeting Black and Brown people.
7. No imprisoned person shall be denied access to rehabilitative programs at their place of detention because of their label as a violent offender.

8. State prisons must be funded specifically to offer more rehabilitative services.
9. Pell grants must be reinstated in all U.S. states and territories.
10. The voting rights of all confined citizens serving prison sentences, pretrial detainees, and so-called “ex-felons” must be counted. Representation is demanded. All voices count!

### Conclusion

Slavery and oppressive “containment” of the marginalized and poor never ended in Amerika. The 13th Amendment was passed as a compromise to previous slave owners whereby they could continue to exploit the labor of disempowered people, but now free of the burden of paying for their upkeep. This was done at taxpayers’ expense.

This oppressive dynamic must continue to be resisted, as must the inhumane and dehumanizing conditions that attend imprisonment in Amerika. It was only by resistance that the slaves of the old antebellum slave system effectively countered the lies, and logic

of the ruling powers of that system erected by them to justify their institutions of slavery. It was only by unifying in that resistance and sabotage and ultimately fighting for their freedom, with the support of outside allies and comrades, that the slaves of the old South destroyed the system as it was.

But it was only reformed into the system of penal slav-

ery that it is now. So we still have much work to do until slavery in Amerika is abolished once and for all.

Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win!  
All Power to the People!

Write to:

Kevin Johnson, #1007485  
Sussex 1 State Prison  
24414 Musselwhite Drive  
Waverly, VA 23891  
[www.rashidmod.com](http://www.rashidmod.com)

---

1 Quoted in Stephen Whitman, “The Marion Penitentiary—It Should be Opened-Up Not Locked Down,” *Southern Illinoisian*, August 7, 1988, p. 25.

2 *Turner v. Safley*, 482 U.S. 78 (1987), basically established that if prisoner officials can invent a rational sounding justification for violating a prisoner’s established constitutional rights the courts will allow them to act illegally.

3 Congress enacted PLRA in response to a significant increase in prisoner litigation in the federal courts; the PLRA was designed to decrease the incidence of litigation within the court system.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prison\\_Litigation\\_Reform\\_Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prison_Litigation_Reform_Act)

4 See, *In re Medley*, 134 U.S. 160 (1890).

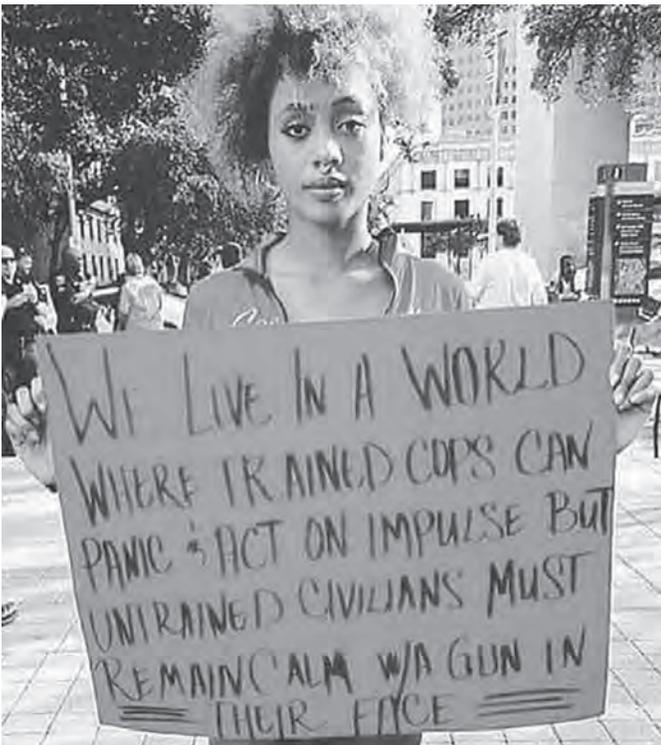
5 “California Solitary Success,” By Kevin “Rashid” Johnson, *Socialist Viewpoint*, Vol. 15, No. 6, [http://www.socialistviewpoint.org/novdec\\_15/novdec\\_15\\_33.html](http://www.socialistviewpoint.org/novdec_15/novdec_15_33.html)

6 Kevin “Rashid” Johnson, “Black Cats Bond: The Industrial Workers of the World and the New Afrikan Black Panther Party-Prison Chapter.” <http://rashidmod.com/?p=1251>

7 See, Article 4 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states: “No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.”

8 Kevin “Rashid” Johnson, “Florida Prisoners Are Laying it Down.” (2018) <http://rashidmod.com/?p=2498>

9 “How to Organize A Prison Strike,” *Pacific Standard* (May 7, 2018) <https://psmag.com/social-justice/how-to-organize-a-prison-strike>



# Why I Believe that Edward Poindexter is Innocent of Murder

BY MICHAEL RICHARDSON

When I began researching the August 17, 1970 bombing murder of Omaha policeman Larry Minard for a book that would take me ten years to write, I did not know Edward Poindexter and was unsure of his guilt or innocence despite attending his 1971 trial. Poindexter and Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa (then David Rice) were put on trial for their lives for the death of Minard, implicated by the confessed bomber, fifteen year-old Duane Peak. In exchange for his testimony Peak, who admitted laughing about Minard's death, never spent a day in prison.

After a decade I finally finished the book, *FRAMED: J. Edgar Hoover, COINTELPRO and the Omaha Two* story, and can pursue efforts to help gain freedom for Poindexter, who I now believe innocent of the crime. Poindexter was head of Omaha's Black Panther affiliate group the National Committee to Combat Fascism and was a target of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's clandestine, and illegal, counterintelligence program code-named COINTELPRO.

My purpose in writing the book was to make a record of what happened. The story, until now, has never been told in full, in the context of its time and place. Much of the story only came out years after the murder. In writing the book I followed the advice of Mondo to follow the truth. What I came to learn is that both men were innocent and prosecuted for murder because of their political beliefs.

The Minard murder trial was not a search for truth, the outcome was fixed. The trial was marred by contradictory police testimony about discovery of dynamite; withheld exculpatory evidence, the 911 recording of a killer's voice; and planted evidence, dynamite where it doesn't belong.

I didn't meet Ed Poindexter until my second or third trip to the prison to interview Mondo. I had known Mondo before his arrest but never knew Poindexter. I remember our first meeting in a tiny visitor room. The close quarters put me up close to him. I hadn't yet learned enough from my research into the role of the FBI and the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms Division to know about Poindexter's innocence. I remember my apprehension and unease as I contemplated the horrific crime for which he was accused. As I looked into his eyes and closely studied his demeanor I began to slowly learn of Ed's dignity. Over time, as I uncovered more pieces of the story, my understanding of what had happened to Ed and Mondo deepened. The more I learned, the more I became convinced their claims of innocence were valid.

I can't rewrite my book in this article but it can be read free, in install-

ments, at [NorthOmahaHistory.com](http://NorthOmahaHistory.com). The critical elements are the only two pieces of evidence that pointed to Poindexter's guilt. There is nothing else in the controversial two-week trial that implicated Poindexter.

Duane Peak, the teenager who made a deal with prosecutors to trade his freedom for that of Mondo and Poindexter, gave a half-dozen different versions of the crime and denied any involvement of the pair at the preliminary hearing. After a court recess, when Peak was threatened with the electric chair, he changed his tune and claimed the two Panther leaders put him up to the bombing. That night, in his cell at the Dodge County Jail, Peak wrote in a letter that he "betrayed those two bloods."

The dynamite evidence used against Poindexter were some dynamite particles in his jacket pocket. Poindexter tested clean when examined for traces



Edward Poindexter and Michael Richardson in 2016 at the Nebraska State Penitentiary.

of explosives. The jacket, which was seized at the time of arrest, was transported to the ATF Laboratory by agent Thomas Sledge whose brother James Sledge was an Omaha policeman injured in the fatal bombing. Sledge also transported two glass vials of dynamite particles for analysis at the laboratory. Sledge had both motive and opportunity to salt the jacket with particles.

Dynamite particles were also found in Mondo's pants pocket. However, a *Omaha World-Herald* photo of Mondo on his way to jail with his hands jammed into his pockets proves the particles were added after the pants were taken from Mondo as his hands tested clean moments after the 1970 newspaper photo. The significance of the photo was not noticed for over two decades later and still did not lead to a new trial.

That's it. The word of a perjuring, self-confessed bomber and dynamite particles that mysteriously appeared in a jacket pocket. There is no other evidence linking Ed Poindexter to murder.

The Omaha Two, Mondo and Poindexter, were caught in a triangular cross fire from command officers of the Omaha Police Department, the clandestine COINTELPRO operation of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and compromised evidence handling by at least one agent of the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division.

Not one, not two, but there were three law enforcement conspiracies against the Omaha Two. The implausibility of three police agencies competing with misdeeds to convict has carried the day for forty-seven years since the trial. However, after studying the

record, much of it revealed by the Freedom of Information Act, I understand that is indeed just what happened in Omaha.

Ed Poindexter has always said he is innocent and had nothing to do with the murder. I believe him.

—OpEd News, July 19, 2018

<https://www.opednews.com/articles/Why-I-believe-that-Edward-by-Michael-Richardson-Black-Panthers-COINTELPRO-Crime-Evidence-180719-612.html>

Write to:

Ed Poindexter #27767  
P.O. Box 2500  
Lincoln, NE 68542

---

## The War on Assange Is a War on Press Freedom

By CHRIS HEDGES

The failure on the part of establishment media to defend Julian Assange, who has been trapped in the Ecuadorean Embassy in London since 2012, has been denied communication with the outside world since March and appears to be facing imminent expulsion and arrest, is astonishing. The extradition of the publisher—the maniacal goal of the U.S. government—would set a legal precedent that would criminalize any journalistic oversight or investigation of the corporate state. It would turn leaks and whistleblowing into treason. It would shroud in total secrecy the actions of the ruling global elites. If Assange is extradited to the United States and sentenced, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and every other media organization, no matter how tepid their coverage of the corporate state, would be subject to the same draconian censorship. Under the precedent set, Donald Trump's Supreme Court

would enthusiastically uphold the arrest and imprisonment of any publisher, editor or reporter in the name of national security.

There are growing signs that the Ecuadorean government of Lenín Moreno is preparing to evict Assange and turn him over to British police. Moreno and his foreign minister, José Valencia, have confirmed they are in negotiations with the British government to “resolve” the fate of Assange. Moreno, who will visit Britain in a few weeks, calls Assange an “inherited problem” and “a stone in the shoe” and has referred to him as a “hacker.” It appears that under a Moreno government Assange is no longer welcome in Ecuador. His only hope now is safe passage to his native Australia or another country willing to give him asylum.

“Ecuador has been looking for a solution to this problem,” Valencia commented on television. “The refuge

is not forever, you cannot expect it to last for years without us reviewing this situation, including because this violates the rights of the refugee.”

Moreno's predecessor as president, Rafael Correa, who granted Assange asylum in the embassy and made him an Ecuadorean citizen last year, warned that Assange's “days were numbered.” He charged that Moreno—who cut off Assange's communications the day after Moreno welcomed a delegation from the U.S. Southern Command—would “throw him out of the embassy at the first pressure from the United States.”

Assange, who reportedly is in ill health, took asylum in the embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden to answer questions about sexual offense charges. He feared that once in Swedish custody for these charges, which he said were false, he would be extradited to the United States. The Swedish prosecutors' office ended its “investigation”

and extradition request to Britain in May 2017 and did not file sexual offense charges against Assange. But the British government said Assange would nevertheless be arrested and jailed for breaching his bail conditions.

The persecution of Assange is part of a broad assault against anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist news organizations. The ruling elites, who refuse to accept responsibility for profound social inequality or the crimes of empire, have no ideological veneer left to justify their greed, ineptitude and pillage. Global capitalism and its ideological justification, neoliberalism, are discredited as forces for democracy and the equitable distribution of wealth. The corporate-controlled economic and political system is as hated by right-wing populists as it is by the rest of the population. This makes the critics of corporatism and imperialism—journalists, writers, dissidents and intellectuals already pushed to the margins of the media landscape—dangerous and it makes them prime targets. Assange is at the top of the list.

I took part with dozens of others, including Daniel Ellsberg, William Binney, Craig Murray, Peter Van Buren, Slavoj Žižek, George Galloway and Cian Westmoreland, a week ago in a 36-hour international online vigil demanding freedom for the *WikiLeaks* publisher. The vigil was organized by the New Zealand Internet Party leader Suzie Dawson. It was the third Unity4J vigil since all of Assange's communication with the outside world was severed by the Ecuadorean authorities and visits with him were suspended in March, part of the increased pressure the United States has brought on the Ecuadorean government. Assange has since March been allowed to meet only with his attorneys and consular officials from the Australian Embassy.

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights ruled Friday that those seeking political asylum have the right

to take refuge in embassies and diplomatic compounds. The court stated that governments are obliged to provide safe passage out of the country to those granted asylum. The ruling did not name Assange, but it was a powerful rebuke to the British government, which has refused to allow the *WikiLeaks* co-founder safe passage to the airport.

The ruling elites no longer have a counterargument to their critics. They have resorted to cruder forms of control. These include censorship, slander and character assassination (which in the case of Assange has sadly been successful,) blacklisting, financial strangulation, intimidation, imprisonment under the Espionage Act and branding critics and dissidents as agents of a foreign power and purveyors of fake news. The corporate media amplifies these charges, which have no credibility but which become part of the common vernacular through constant repetition. The blacklisting, imprisonment and deportation of tens-of-thousands of people of conscience during the Red Scares of the 1920s and 1950s are back with a vengeance. It is a New McCarthyism.

Did Russia attempt to influence the election? Undoubtedly. This is what governments do. The United States interfered in 81 elections between 1945 and 2000, according to professor Dov Levin of Carnegie Mellon University. His statistics do not include the numerous *coups* we orchestrated in countries such as Greece, Iran, Guatemala and Chile or the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba. We indirectly bankrolled the re-election campaign of Russia's buffoonish Boris Yeltsin to the tune of \$2.5 billion.

But did Russia, as the Democratic Party establishment claims, swing the election to Trump? No. Trump is not Vladimir Putin's puppet. He is part of the wave of right-wing populists, from Nigel Farage and Boris Johnson in

Britain to Viktor Orbán in Hungary, who have harnessed the rage and frustration born of an economic and political system dominated by global capitalism and under which the rights and aspirations of working men and women do not matter.

The Democratic Party establishment, like the liberal elites in most of the rest of the industrialized world, would be swept from power in an open political process devoid of corporate money. The party elite, including Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, is a creation of the corporate state. Campaign finance and electoral reform are the last things the party hierarchy intends to champion. It will not call for social and political programs that will alienate its corporate masters. This myopia and naked self-interest may ensure a second term for Donald Trump; it may further empower the lunatic fringe that is loyal to Trump; it may continue to erode the credibility of the political system. But the choice before the Democratic Party elites is clear: political oblivion or enduring the rule of a demagogue. They have chosen the latter. They are not interested in reform. They are determined to silence anyone, like Assange, who exposes the rot within the ruling class.

The Democratic Party establishment benefits from our system of legalized bribery. It benefits from deregulating Wall Street and the fossil fuel industry. It benefits from the endless wars. It benefits from the curtailment of civil liberties including the right to privacy and due process. It benefits from militarized police. It benefits from austerity programs. It benefits from mass incarceration. It is an enabler of tyranny, not an impediment.

Demagogues like Trump, Farage and Johnson, of course, have no intention of altering the system of corporate pillage. Rather, they accelerate the pillage, which is what happened with the passage of the massive U.S. tax cut for corporations.

They divert the public's anger toward demonized groups such as Muslims, undocumented workers, people of color, liberals, intellectuals, artists, feminists, the LGBT community and the press. The demonized are blamed for the social and economic dysfunction, much as Jews were falsely blamed for Germany's defeat in World War I and the economic collapse that followed. Corporations such as Goldman Sachs, in the midst of the decay, continue to make a financial killing.

The corporate titans, who often come out of elite universities and are groomed in institutions like Harvard Business School, find these demagogues crude and vulgar. They are embarrassed by their imbecility, megalomania and incompetence. But they endure their presence rather than permit socialists or leftist politicians to impede their profits and divert government spending to social programs and away from weapons manufacturers, the military, private prisons, big banks and hedge funds, the fossil fuel industry, charter schools, private paramilitary forces, private intelligence companies and other pet programs designed to allow corporations to cannibalize the state.

The irony is that there was serious meddling in the presidential election, but it did not come from Russia. The Democratic Party, outdoing any of the dirty tricks employed by Richard Nixon, purged hundreds-of-thousands

of primary voters from the rolls, denied those registered as independents the right to vote in primaries, used super-delegates to swing the vote to Hillary Clinton, hijacked the Democratic National Committee to serve the Clinton campaign, controlled the message of media outlets such as MSNBC and *The New York Times*, stole the

---

**The extradition of the publisher—the maniacal goal of the U.S. government—would set a legal precedent that would criminalize any journalistic oversight or investigation of the corporate state.**

---

Nevada caucus, spent hundreds-of-millions of dollars of “dark” corporate money on the Clinton campaign and fixed the primary debates. This meddling, which stole the nomination from Bernie Sanders, who probably could have defeated Trump, is unmentioned. The party hierarchy will do nothing to reform its corrupt nominating process.

*WikiLeaks* exposed much of this corruption when it published tens-of-thousands of messages hacked from

Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta's email account. The messages brought to light the efforts by the Democratic Party leadership to thwart the nomination of Sanders, and they disclosed Clinton's close ties with Wall Street, including her lucrative Wall Street speeches. They also raised serious questions about conflicts of interest with the Clinton Foundation and whether Clinton received advance information on primary-debate questions.

The Democratic National Committee, for this reason, is leading the Russia hysteria and the persecution of Assange. It filed a lawsuit that names *WikiLeaks* and Assange as co-conspirators with Russia and the Trump campaign in an alleged effort to steal the presidential election.

But it is not only Assange and *WikiLeaks* that are being attacked as Russian pawns. For example, *The Washington Post*, which has sided with the Democratic Party in the war against Trump, without critical analysis published a report on a blacklist posted by the anonymous website PropOrNot. The blacklist was composed of 199 sites that PropOrNot alleged, with no evidence, “reliably echo Russian propaganda.” More than half of those sites were far-right, conspiracy-driven ones. But about 20 of the sites were major progressive outlets including *AlterNet*, *Black Agenda Report*, *Democracy Now!*, *Naked Capitalism*, *Truthdig*, *Truthout*, *CounterPunch* and the *World Socialist Web Site*. PropOrNot, short for Propaganda or Not, accused these sites of disseminating “fake news” on behalf of Russia. The *Post*'s headline was unequivocal: “Russian propaganda effort helped spread ‘fake news’ during the election, experts say.”

In addition to offering no evidence, PropOrNot never even disclosed who ran the website. Even so, its charge was used to justify the imposition of algorithms by *Google*, *Facebook*, *Twitter* and



Julian Assange speaking from the balcony of the Ecuadorian embassy.

Amazon to direct traffic away from the targeted sites. These algorithms, or filters, overseen by thousands of “evaluators,” many hired from the military and security and surveillance apparatus, hunt for keywords such as “U.S. military,” “inequality” and “socialism,” along with personal names such as Julian Assange and Laura Poitras. These keywords are known as “impressions.” Before the imposition of the algorithms, a reader could type in the name Julian Assange and be directed to an article on one of these targeted sites. After the algorithms were put in place, these impressions directed readers only to mainstream sites such as *The Washington Post*. Referral traffic from these impressions at most of the targeted sites has plummeted, often by more than half. Challenged by these algorithms and the abolition of net neutrality, these sites will be pushed further and further to the outer reaches of the media.

Any news or media outlet that addresses the reality of our failed democracy and exposes the crimes of empire will be targeted. The January 2017 Director of National Intelligence Report spent seven pages on *RT America*, where I have a show, “On Contact.” The report does not accuse *RT America* of disseminating Russian propaganda, but it does allege the network exploits divisions within American society by giving airtime to dissidents and critics including whistleblowers, anti-imperialists, anti-capitalists, Black Lives Matter activists, anti-fracking campaigners and the third-party candidates the establishment is seeking to mute.

If the United States had a public broadcasting system free from corporate money or a commercial press that was not under corporate control, these dissident voices would be included in the mainstream discourse. But we don’t. Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, Malcolm X, Sheldon Wolin, Ralph Nader, James Baldwin, Susan Sontag,

Angela Davis and Edward Said once appeared regularly on public broadcasting. Now critics like these are banned, replaced with vapid courtiers such as columnist David Brooks. *RT America* was forced to register under the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA). This act requires Americans who work for a foreign party to register as foreign agents. The FARA registration is part of the broader assault on all independent media, including the effort to silence Assange.

---

**Global capitalism and its ideological justification, neoliberalism, are discredited as forces for democracy and the equitable distribution of wealth.**

---

*WikiLeak’s* publication in 2017 of 8,761 CIA files, known as Vault 7, appeared to be the final indignity. Vault 7 included a description of the cyber tools used by the CIA to hack into computer systems and devices such as smartphones. Former CIA software engineer Joshua Adam Schulte was indicted on charges of violating the Espionage Act by allegedly leaking the documents.

The publication of Vault 7 saw the United States significantly increase its pressure on the Ecuadorean government to isolate and eject Assange from the embassy. Mike Pompeo, then the CIA director, said in response to the leaks that the U.S. government “can no longer allow Assange and his colleagues the latitude to use free speech values against us.” Attorney General Jeff Sessions said Assange’s arrest was a “priority.”

It is up to us to mobilize to protect Assange. His life is in jeopardy. The Ecuadorean government, violating his fundamental rights, has transformed

his asylum into a form of incarceration. By cutting off his access to the Internet, it has deprived him of the ability to communicate and follow world events. The aim of this isolation is to pressure Assange out of the embassy so he can be seized by London police, thrown into a British jail and then delivered into the hands of Pompeo, John Bolton and the CIA’s torturer in chief, Gina Haspel.

Assange is a courageous and fearless publisher who is being persecuted for exposing the crimes of the corporate state and imperialism. His defense is the cutting edge of the fight against government suppression of our most important and fundamental democratic rights. The government of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia, where Assange was born, must be pressured to provide him with the protection to which he is entitled as a citizen. It must intercede to stop the illegal persecution of the journalist by the British, American and Ecuadorean governments. It must secure his safe return to Australia. If we fail to protect Assange, we fail to protect ourselves.

—*Truthdig*, July 15, 2018

<https://www.truthdig.com/articles/the-war-on-assange-is-a-war-on-press-freedom/>



# Shakaboona Resentenced, Freedom is Near

BY THE HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

On May 17, 2018, Kerry “Shakaboona” Marshall, a renowned incarcerated human rights activist and juvenile Life-Without-Parole prisoner, was re-sentenced at the Criminal Justice Center (CJC) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to a prison term of 29 years-to-life (“time served”) for a murder he committed in 1988 when he was 17 years old.

As a prelude to Shakaboona’s re-sentencing hearing, an interactive exhibit and assembly titled “People Change, People Change the World” was held on March 24 at the Mosaic Community Church in West Philly. It was organized by the Human Rights Coalition<sup>1</sup>, the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration, Global Women’s Strike, Abolitionist Law Center, Amistad Law Project, and The Redemption Project.

Almost 100 people gathered at the exhibit and assembly to talk about redemption and celebrate the inspiration of currently incarcerated human rights activist Kerry “Shakaboona”

Marshall. The exhibit traced Shakaboona’s life as a teenager growing up in the streets of West Philly, and in prison, and the “tough on crime” policies that sought to punish, rather than heal, Black and Latino communities impacted by crack cocaine and violence.

Former Pennsylvania Juvenile Lifer and human rights activist Kempis “Ghani” Songster, who has been recently re-sentenced and released from Pennsylvania prison after serving 30 years of incarceration, attended the assembly and said of Shakaboona, “This human rights activist, this brilliant mind, this person defied all odds and transformed himself against and in defiance of everything within the prison system and in his prison experience that wanted to corrupt him and drag him into the prison culture. He fought against that and is a shining example of the human capacity for transformation and redemption.”

On May 17th, Shakaboona’s re-sentencing hearing was held before the Honorable Judge Jeffrey L. Minehart at CJC, where almost 150 people—including a squad of recently re-sentenced and parole-released Juvenile Lifers—came out in a show of support for Shakaboona and overwhelmed the court. Some people came from as far as Massachusetts and Ohio to support Shakaboona at his re-sentencing hearing. The diverse rainbow of Black, white, Latino, and Asian people packed the courtroom to the walls, with people sitting on the laps of others just to witness the court hearing, while about 100 supporters filled the court’s hallways awaiting the outcome of the hearing. Philly’s Sheriffs were so afraid of the huge multi-ethnic group of people, they commenced to tighten security in the courthouse.

The re-sentencing hearing was emotionally charged from the beginning, with Shakaboona’s legal defense team calling one expert witness and four character witnesses on his behalf. Each gave moving testimony about the transformative and redemptive life of Shakaboona. Then, the court gave Shakaboona the opportunity to speak, at which time he gave a powerful speech addressing the Court, the deceased victim’s family, and his own family. His testimony was so emotionally impactful that it had nearly the entire courtroom full of spectators in tears. Judge Minehart then re-sentenced Shakaboona to a term of 29-to-Life (time served), making him immediately eligible for parole release.

Shakaboona’s fight for freedom is not yet over. He now awaits parole release to a federal detainer sentence, which his legal defense team will immediately appeal for time-served and his immediate release from the federal sentence. No matter the outcome, Shakaboona now has a short walk to freedom.

Congratulations, Shakaboona. Victory is near!

*Brother Shakaboona is a co-founder of the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) and the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration (CADBI), founder and editor of The Movement human rights magazine, correspondent and social commentator for PrisonRadio.org, and is an advisory council member of Decarcerate PA and other community activist organizations in Philadelphia.*



Kerry “Shakaboona” Marshall

---

<sup>1</sup> Philadelphia Chapter, c/o LAVA Space, 4134 Lancaster Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19104, 267-293-9169, email: [info@hrcoalition.org](mailto:info@hrcoalition.org)  
<https://hrcoalition.org/?reqp=1&reqr=>

# Baby-Snatching Practice Blocked Motherhood for 20-million Seconds

By LINN WASHINGTON JR.

The piercing, bone-deep pain for a parent from having their child forcefully snatched away by authorities is a hurt Debbie Sims Africa knows in horrific ways.

The immense suffering some immigrant parents currently experience—triggered by the child-snatching, family separation, anti-immigration policies pursued by the Trump Administration on America’s southern border—is something that impacts Africa very personally.

On August 8, 1978 authorities in Philadelphia, literally snatched Africa’s two-year-old daughter from her arms.

A few weeks later when Africa gave birth to her son, Philadelphia authorities snatched him away also.

For more than 39-years Africa could not do what she wanted to do all her life: be a lovingly embracing, nurturing and protective mother.

Those 39-plus years Africa lived with that agony of unfulfilled motherhood are more than 467-months: more than 14,200-days, more than 341,640-minutes and more than 20.5-million seconds.

On August 8, 1978 Philadelphia police arrested Africa following a shootout between police and members of the radical MOVE organization where a policeman was killed. Africa is a member of MOVE—in fact, a niece of MOVE founder John Africa. (All MOVE members utilize Africa as their last name.)

Africa and eight other MOVE members (five men and three women) were convicted for that Philadelphia policeman’s death and sentenced to identical prison terms of 30 to 100-years.

Recently Debbie Africa, now 62-years-old, won parole release from

a Pennsylvania prison—the first MOVE member convicted for that 1978 shootout to leave prison...alive. (Two of the MOVE 9 died in prison.)

Africa, during a press conference following her release, said seeing the cruel separations on the southern border “brought back emotions” for her.

“When I saw that immigration separation on TV, I had a familiar feeling,” Africa said, sitting beside her son Michael “Mike” Africa Jr. during that press conference. “It is totally wrong what Trump is doing. The child did nothing wrong regardless of the parent. It pulls at the heart strings.”

The emotions Africa felt watching Trump’s immigration enforcement practices paled in comparison to the emotions she felt arising from the reality that she had to leave her MOVE colleagues in prison, including the two surviving MOVE women who shared a prison cell with her.

“I was happy to go home but hurt that they are still in prison,” Debbie Africa said, describing how her MOVE member cellmates, Janine and Janet, helped her pack to leave prison. One of the still imprisoned MOVE 9 men is Debbie’s husband, Michael.

Debbie Africa said she did maintain contact with her daughter and son (who was born in a prison cell) throughout her 39-plus-year imprisonment. Yet, she noted that sharing a few hours with her children in a prison visiting room is not the same as full-time, real-time mothering.

Debbie’s son Mike said life was “hard” for him growing up without his mother and father, not having their “guidance” at times when he needed it. Mike said that when he went to wake up his mother the morning after her release from prison he saw her feet for

the first time in his life.

“Things people take for granted like just talking to your parents—I never had,” Michael said. “Fortunately I had the support of my parent’s family, other MOVE members and MOVE supporters. It helped a lot.

## “I can’t wait to see my dad come home.”

The arbitrary and often abusive practices of authorities that drove clashes between MOVE and Philadelphia City authorities was evident in the parole release of Debbie Africa—a parole granted after eight previous parole rejections.

Debbie and fellow MOVE members Janine and Janet each saw the Pennsylvania Parole Board on the same day. Each had similar unblemished prison records, each were credited with positively mentoring other inmates, each were praised for helping keep calm in the prison and each—for the first time ever—had a release recommendation from Philadelphia’s new District Attorney.

But the Parole Board rejected Janine and Janet while that Board released Debbie during a process that is completely secret even from lawyers representing inmates.

One reason given by the Parole Board for the rejection of Janine and Janet was they received a negative recommendation from Philly’s District Attorney—a claim that is factually inaccurate according to Brad Thomson, the lawyer who represented Debbie, Janine and Janet during that parole proceeding.

“It is shocking that Janet and Janine were denied parole. Their circumstances and institutional records are nearly identical to Debbie’s,” stated

Thomson, who attended the press conference with Debbie and Mike Jr.

“The decision to deny Janet and Janine appears arbitrary and it is difficult to understand how the Parole Board could justify it based on the facts that were presented,” noted Thomson of the People’s Law Office in Chicago.

Then again, arbitrariness and abuse riddled the MOVE 9 trial. The judge who convicted and sentenced the MOVE 9 during a non-jury proceeding said he meted out identical sentences

because they “were a family” and that he therefore would sentence them as a family—a stance that made a mockery of the so-called maxim of prison time fitting the crime.

Police testimony during that long trial was that only the four MOVE men were armed and the MOVE women, including Debbie Africa, were merely holding children while huddled inside the basement of the then MOVE compound in Philadelphia’s Powelton Village during that 1978 shootout.

(Evidence furthermore indicates that police gunfire accidentally killed the policeman. Police experts could not match the bullet removed from the slain officer to any of the weapons recovered from the MOVE compound.)

The arrest and imprisonment of the MOVE 9 unleashed a chain of events that culminated in the horrific May 13, 1985 incident where Philadelphia police bombed another house occupied by MOVE members and deliberately

allowed an inferno sparked by that bomb to burn, preventing fire fighters from trying to put it out.

That bomb-triggered blaze incinerated 11 MOVE members including five children. That police blaze also destroyed 61 adjacent homes and left 250 people homeless.

Police snipers drove some MOVE members who tried to flee their burning building back into the inferno where temperatures reached 2,000-degrees. Only one MOVE adult and one child escaped that deadly fire-storm.

One of the MOVE members murdered by police action during that 1985 clash was MOVE founder John Africa. The five youth deaths included the children of Janet and Janine, Debbie’s now former cellmates. No Philadelphia police officer or City official faced prosecution for that incident where an FBI agent supplied the main component for that bomb that Philadelphia police dropped from a State Police helicopter.

Debbie Africa said she is looking forward to strengthening bonds with her children and grandchildren. She will adjust to life outside prison like learning how to use a cell phone, a now ubiquitous device that didn’t exist at the time of her arrest in 1978. And she said she would work for the release of her imprisoned MOVE family members.

—*This Can’t Be Happening*, June 20, 2018

<http://thiscantbehappening.net/print/3914?page=2>



Debbie Africa with son, Mike Jr. and photo of still-imprisoned husband/father, Mike Africa Sr

## Nationalism or Internationalism?

The question is posed by the Russian Revolution

By CHRIS KINDER

### Part 1

*Only the victory of the working class can bring about the complete liberation of all nationalities. —Lenin*

November 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the Armistice that ended the horrific so-called “Great War”—World War I. A brutal inter-imperialist conflict, this war had as its chief purpose the defense of, and the acquisition of colonies and the resources they contained, by the “great” powers. Four imperialist hangovers from times past—the Germany of Wilhelm II, Austro-Hungary, the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire—all collapsed as a result of this war and their own internal contradictions. The victorious Britain, France and the late-arriving U.S. proceeded to restructure Europe and the Middle East, creating new puppet nations out of old empires and dividing up territory between them. But only one country—revolutionary Soviet Russia—had a unique and liberating approach to the colonial/national oppression that continued to plague Europe and the world.

The Russian (Bolshevik) Revolution of October 1917 addressed the question of the rights of nations for self-determination—for liberation from oppression—in a way that was unparalleled before or since. The Revolution defined the connection between the liberation of oppressed nations, and the liberation of all working people worldwide, both in its time, and for today. Its first act was to denounce and withdraw from this unspeakable war. This included publishing the secret treaties by which imperialist powers had arranged and coordinated their colonial ambitions with their allies;

and renunciation of the Tsar’s own imperial designs and interventions, the tentacles of which, like the designs of Britain and France, extended into the Middle East.

### Fundamental law: national rights

The Fundamental Law of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (RSFSR), adopted in July 1918, abolished discrimination on the basis of race or national origin, and affirmed the equality and rights of all national minorities. It also granted full citizenship rights to all working-class immigrants who did not employ the labor of others.<sup>1</sup>

In short, the Bolshevik Revolution dealt with the national question through the prism of the class struggle, which for Marxists is the principle dividing line in a capitalist, and imperialist world. Under the pressures of the need to survive in a brutal civil war, the Bolsheviks made mistakes but on the whole did very well in implementing these principles. A century later, the lessons from this historic revolutionary experience still begs our attention.

### The counter-revolutionary power in Europe

Like the other soon to collapse empires, the Russia of the early Twentieth Century was a semi-medieval prison house of nations. Ethnic Russians were a minority of about 45 percent within the Tsarist Empire at that time. The empire had been built not as a nation in the modern bourgeois sense, but as a collection of conquered peoples from times past, starting largely in regions obtained by the Rus from the retreating Mongol

Empire. These lands, as well as later conquests in Europe, were colonized by feudal/settler expansion, and expanded through warfare.<sup>2</sup>

In the late-18th and 19th Centuries—chiefly in response to the bourgeois revolution of 1789 in France—Tsarist Russia became a bastion of reaction. Motivated chiefly by reversing the bourgeois-revolutionary gains made in Poland in 1791—just two years after the French Revolution of 1789—the Tsars plotted to reduce Poland to the state of a Russian province in the partition of 1795, which (with Prussia and Austria) wiped Poland off the map for 123 years!<sup>3</sup> Russia fought against Napoleon’s subsequent military advances; and after its defeat of the French invasion of Russia in 1812, the Tsarist empire emerged as the chief bulwark against any further advances of the revolution in Europe. Under Nicholas I, Russia eagerly helped suppress revolts against other monarchs—even when Tsardom had no particular interest itself—by intervening in the Mehmet-Ali revolt in Syria (Ottoman Empire,) the Krakow uprising of 1846, and the Hungarian revolt in 1849, among others.

### War and revolution revealed weakness

In the Crimean War of 1854 however, Russia suffered a setback. Russia had gone to war for its long-sought naval access to the Mediterranean from the Black Sea, through the straits of Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. But it was defeated militarily by Britain and France, which had long since dispensed with the need for Russia as a reactionary ally. These more advanced imperialist rivals also sought to gain from the

decline of the senile Ottoman Empire. This wake-up call prompted the Tsar to modernize by promoting capitalist development, yet the “borderlands,” as they were called—like the rural areas of Great Russia itself—still languished in the background of semi-feudalism.

While Tsardom continued to expand its holdings—Russian possessions reached as far as China and Alaska—the Empire’s acquisition of Manchuria led to conflict with Japan, which provoked the disastrous (for Russia) 1904 Russo-Japanese War. This in turn led to the 1905 Revolution—a mass uprising of working people, and a harbinger of things to come.

A mere nine years later, the “Great War” brought the contradictions of Tsarist Russia to the fore, along with those of Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans. These empires all shared the characteristic of not being nations, but collections of nationalities under archaic monarchies. Unlike the states of Western and Central Europe, which had established coherent nations with a common language and culture, these entities had not gone through completed bourgeois revolutions.

### **Class divisions in the borderlands**

Just as in Great Russia, the borderlands had their own sharp contradictions. In the Ukraine and White Russia (today’s Belarus,) the landlord, capitalist, lawyer, or journalist was Russian, Polish, Jewish or other foreigner, while the rural population was Ukrainian or White Russian, except in Eastern Ukraine, where Russians were more prominent. The Baltic States had German, Russian and Jewish bourgeoisie and landowners while the populations were Lettish (Latvian) or Estonian. In the cities of the Caucasus, Georgia and Armenia, a Russian and Armenian elite dominated; as they did also in Azerbaijan, where there was a major divide with the local Turkish-speaking rural population.

Some Tsarist possessions in the West, such as Poland and Finland, had developed working classes. While economically more advanced than Russia, they were still entwined in its ancient imperial web, and even more class divided. In contrast, most of the central Asian borderlands were relative backwaters, dominated by Russian or Russian-allied privileged minorities such as traders and merchants, concentrated in the cities. Language barriers between the native peasants and the Russian-oriented elites in the cities

---

**...the Bolshevik  
Revolution dealt with  
the national question  
through the prism of the  
class struggle, which for  
Marxists is the principle  
dividing line in a  
capitalist, and  
imperialist world.**

---

were present in most borderlands. The bourgeois elements were generally loyal to the Tsar, while the countryside was the realm of local peasants who were oppressed and not (yet) politically conscious or active in a class or national sense, although hatred of the landlords was simmering as usual. All these contradictions were soon to come to a head.

### **Enter the “War To End All Wars”**

At the beginning of the war in 1914, the Russian borderlands experienced a wave of patriotism just as did Great Russia and the other imperial powers. Millions of working people fixed bayonets to slaughter each other in the trenches, while their so-called “leaders”—the Social-Democratic parties of the 2nd International—abandoned their verbal internationalism and

endorsed the war aims of their national bourgeois ruling classes. But all three of the aristocratic old empires began to crack, and Russia fractured first. In February of 1917 a mass uprising broke out in Petrograd, mainly over the privations of the war. Soldiers in the trenches and local garrisons—made up of peasants who came from all the nationalities of the empire—soon went over to the revolution. The Tsar’s support dispersed like so much dust in the air, and he fled in disgrace.

As with all other questions of the Revolution, the February Provisional Government led by the bourgeois-democratic Cadet party, and later by the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries who followed them in Tsardom’s Winter Palace, had no clue of how to deal with the national question in Russia. The Provisional Government’s goal right up to its demise in October was to keep all the Russian imperial domains together in the interest of pursuing the still-raging war. Autonomy? Self-determination? We’ll see, they said. Just wait for the Constituent Assembly!

The Provisional Government did proclaim rights such as free speech and an end to discrimination against any nationality, but even under the Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, who in theory recognized the right of self-determination of nations, the Provisional Government refused to declare self-determination of the borderland nations even as a goal, however vague, until September of 1917, just a month before it drew its last breath!

Nevertheless, the fragility of this formerly-Tsarist regime was shown, at least in part, by how quickly local nationalities began both to assert their nationalism, and disintegrate into their linguistic and class components. As requests for recognition of autonomy, local governance, *etc.*, poured into Petrograd following the February uprising, they were just as quickly put off. As Trotsky put it,

“The chief service of the February Revolution—perhaps its only service, but one amply sufficient—lay exactly in this, that it gave the oppressed classes and nations of Russia at last an opportunity to speak out.”<sup>4</sup>

### **The Bolsheviks—under Lenin—had a program**

The program of the Bolshevik Party included the same national self-determination clause as did the Mensheviks, but before Lenin’s return from exile in April, this was just a slogan without much substance. This was the period in which the Bolsheviks, as led by Stalin and Kamenev, were giving critical (“in so far as”) support to the bourgeois Provisional Government, which was vacillating on granting anything to the Russian borderland possessions.

The Bolshevik program on the national question was clear, however. It had been affirmed in 1913, and described by Lenin later in that year:

1) The Bolsheviks were for “full equality of all nations and languages” and recognized “no compulsory official language,” as in instruction in schools, for instance. Such instruction was to include “all the native languages.” This point included the right of “wide regional autonomy and fully democratic local self-government” for nationalities.

2) Opposition to “the division of the educational affairs of a single state according to nationalities.” This was a reference to the plan developed by certain Social Democrats in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to promote “cultural-national autonomy,” which would have replaced national self-determination with separate facilities—chiefly schools—for each nationality/ethnic/linguistic group within this multi-national empire.

3) “The interests of the working class demand the amalgamation of the workers of all the nationalities in a given state in united proletarian organizations—political, trade union, co-

operative, educational, etc.” Lenin’s position on the national question emphasized international working-class unity across national divisions as equally important to the right of self-determination of nations.

### **The right of self-determination equals the right of secession**

4) The Bolsheviks were for “the right of the nations oppressed by the

tsarist monarchy to self-determination, *i.e.*, the right to secede and form independent states.” Lenin went on with, “this is dictated by the struggle of the Great Russian inhabitants themselves for freedom, for it will be impossible for them to create a democratic state if they do not eradicate Black-Hundred, Great Russian nationalism...” Elsewhere, Lenin made it crystal clear that the right of self-determination



applied unequivocally to ALL nations, not just oppressed nations. This point is often missed today.

Finally,

5) The Bolsheviks asserted, most importantly for today's conditions, that, "The right of nations to self-determination...must under no circumstances be confused with the expediency of a given nation's secession." The question of secession must be decided "exclusively on its merits in each particular case in conformity with the interests of the proletarian class struggle for socialism."<sup>5</sup>

### **Lenin's arrival was critical**

After his arrival in Russia from exile, Lenin soon reminded the Bolsheviks as to what their program actually was: no support to the bourgeois government, all power to the soviets, and a program on the nationalities that actually had some meat on its bones. This latter point had to do with Poland particularly, and with its right to secede from the Russian empire.

At the All-Russia Bolshevik party conference in April 1917, Lenin railed against comrades of the Polish Socialist Party, including Rosa Luxemburg, who refused to recognize the right of Poland—then still largely part of the Russian empire—to secede. Based on her argument that the Polish workers, being dominated by virulent nationalists, and being industrially more advanced than Russians, would do best to unite with Russian workers. Lenin recognized the Polish socialists as internationalists who had broken with mainstream Social Democracy by opposing the war; and he recognized their right to oppose independence for Poland. But he objected to the Polish Socialist Party generalizing its stand on Poland to include the Russians and other Russian-dominated peoples.

"Why should we Great Russians, who have been oppressing more nations than any other people, deny the right to

secession for Poland, Ukraine or Finland?" Lenin asked... "Freedom to unite implies freedom to secede. We Russians must emphasize freedom to secede, while the Poles must emphasize freedom to unite."<sup>6</sup>

The program Lenin hammered home at that conference had been worked out during the last years of his exile, in 1911 through to the outbreak of the war. The question now is, how did this revolutionary program actually work out in the Russian Revolution?

### **The Bolsheviks in power faced the world**

The Bolsheviks came to power in October 1917 not just to save the February Revolution from inevitable extinction at the hands of the Russian reaction, but to carry the revolution forward to working-class power, which alone could complete the democratic tasks thus far left undone, such as the national liberation of the borderlands. And in order to make democratic gains such as this permanent—as Lenin and Trotsky agreed—it was necessary for the working class to proceed with its socialist tasks.

Within its first year, the Bolshevik government achieved a great deal on the national question. None of it was simple, and all of it involved dealing with the class struggle within the borderland countries, and with the imperialist powers, which were constantly attacking Soviet Russia or looking to acquire Russia's former borderlands for themselves.

### **The Duchy of Finland was first**

The allegedly "autonomous" Duchy of Finland, in which the Tsar was the head of state, was the first thorn in the side of the Provisional Government, as Trotsky put it. When the Seim (parliament) in Helsingfors (Helsinki) asked for local self-rule, the "socialist" Provisional Government ministers moved to dissolve what was at that time the only Social-Democratic

majority parliament in Europe, and even sent troops to the doors of the Seim. So much for Finland's "autonomy!" New elections put rightists in a slim majority however, and in reaction to the October Bolshevik insurrection, they decided on full independence of Finland. The Bolsheviks moved toward granting independence in December 1917.

However, the working class, centered in the cities and the industrialized south of Finland, now with soviets led by Bolsheviks, would have none of it. Inspired by the October Revolution, and influenced by the sharp radicalization of the Russian troops who had been stationed in Finland during the war, they rose up in revolt. While the bourgeoisie now sought full independence, the working class fought for its liberation from capitalism. The Bolsheviks tried to help with arms and aid, but were limited in what they could do, having just demobilized the troops. The rural and aristocratic reactionary Whites based in north and central Finland secured the help of German military units, and won the day, in a brutal civil war.

The working class having lost in the Finnish civil war, the Soviets honored Finnish independence. But this pattern, in which bourgeois forces switched from working with the Provisional Government to fleeing Bolshevik Russia after October; while workers and peasants, who at first wanted freedom from Tsarism but then became participants in the Russian Revolution, soon became the norm.<sup>7</sup>

### **"Independence" of borderlands under German diktat**

The Bolshevik principles of support for the right of secession, and of commitment to the international class struggle, were applied in all cases in the former tsarist empire. Yet the war with Germany continued to threaten revolutionary Russia, and necessarily modified the situation. The war had been

renounced by the Bolsheviks, but the Germans—now relieved of an active opponent on their Eastern front—kept advancing. Peace was necessary for the survival of the revolution, but the compromises on the national question were immense. Despite mass opposition to German landowner domination in Baltic nations, exemplified by the famous Lettish (Latvian) riflemen, who were among the first in the borderlands to ally with the Bolsheviks, the Germans dominated in this area.

The Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets in January of 1918 had this to say:

“The Central Empires [Germany and Austria] are getting under their sway the Poles, Lithuanians, half of the Latvians, part of the Ukrainians, Belorussians and Estonians and, depriving them of the right to genuine self-determination, are forcibly affirming in their midst the rule of the privileged and propertied upper crust...[This annexationist policy] will prove powerless to cut off the working people of Russia from the working people of Germany and Austria-Hungary.”<sup>8</sup>

In a grueling internal political struggle the Left Socialist Revolutionaries who were in the coalition with the Bolsheviks opposed signing the German diktat of Brest-Litovsk. While Trotsky, the chief negotiator at Brest-Litovsk, tried to maintain an unviable middle-position, Lenin insisted on it as a vital necessity under the circumstances. The Soviet Government signed the Treaty in March of 1918, which ended the war for Russia (and precipitated the Socialist Revolutionaries’ leaving the Soviet government.) But the treaty required the surrender of the German-occupied territories detailed above, which now included even more of the Ukraine under German-Austrian military occupation than a month previously. As with Finland, the so-called “independence” of most of these nationalities, took place literally at the point of an imperialist gun.

### **Class struggle vs. nationalism in the Ukraine**

Of all of Russia’s borderland nationalities, the Ukraine was not only the most important in Russia’s over-all economy, but also one of the most internally conflicted on both the class and national questions. Ukrainians and Byelorussians were largely Russian in ethnic composition, going back as far as the medieval kingdom of Kievan Rus’. The population of these areas became divided however as some moved north, and the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth dominated all of Byelorussia and most of Ukraine. In the middle ages in the West, in a large South-Western swath of the Ukraine known as Galicia, Polish occupation lasted more than a hundred years, and included both large Polish landholdings as well as Polish nationals forming a majority in Kiev itself.<sup>9</sup>

The Ukraine, in fact, was so divided up that for most of its history, Ukrainian nationalism was not an issue. A mostly academic, petty-bourgeois nationalism did develop in the 1800s, and after the February Revolution, a nationalist Central Rada (Council) was formed by Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, headed by Vladimir Vinnichenko, and an Socialist Revolutionary journalist, Symon Petlyura, who would soon play a devastating role. The Rada struggled with the Provisional Government for autonomy within Great Russia, but as soon as the Bolsheviks took power, this bourgeois body was all for independence at any cost. And that cost was heavy.

The Rada refused to cooperate with the Soviet government’s attempts to fight the reactionary White armies mobilizing to the East and South of the Ukraine, which were for restoring Tsarism throughout the former empire. Newly-formed Red Guard units moved in, and following a workers’ uprising in Kiev, they took the city. Realizing it had no support in the country, the Rada under Petlyura made a deal with

the Germans: “independence” (so-called) for Ukraine in exchange for Germans driving out the Reds! During the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations in March, the Germans had occupied virtually all of Ukraine, and the Soviets were forced to sign onto this “independence” in the final treaty. The Germans appointed a puppet government under a wealthy landowner and former aide to the Tsar, Pavlo Skoropadski, who declared himself “Hetman” and protector of landowners; and who was soon to be forced to flee the Ukraine. So much for “independence” under alliance with imperialists!<sup>10</sup>

### **German occupation prompts resistance**

Just as in Great Russia, peasant soldiers streaming home from the front in the Ukraine spurred a peasant rebellion, land seizures, and armed opposition to the occupiers. Peasant-based partisan bands fought the Austrian and German troops, who were conducting grain seizures to feed themselves and populations at home. But the occupying army was also crumbling. “In Austria-Hungary revolts were shaking the government; and in the Ukraine, crowds of Austrian troops mutinied, killed their officers, and started for home, ‘selling their arms and ammunition to the local population.’”<sup>11</sup> With the defeat of the Central Powers in the European war in November, these troops were already streaming out of the Ukraine.

This left Ukraine with armed partisan bands who were peasant-based, and tinged with nationalism to varying degrees. Some were more left than others, but all were determined to defend peasant smallholdings, and to achieve some sort of independence for Ukraine. These movements were petty bourgeois in nature, opportunist, and prone to seek alliances with White reactionaries just as easily as with the Bolsheviks.<sup>12</sup>

Workers soviets were developing, mainly in the industrialized areas of the

East, such as Kharkov (where a communist government was briefly formed,) the Donbas region, and in Kiev; but these had been driven back by the German advance in early 1918 and were still relatively weak. Many Ukrainian Social Democrats gravitated away from socialism all together and toward a peasant-based independent Ukraine.

### **Pogroms, and the Poland-Ukraine connection**

The “Directorate,” the nationalist center, which came to displace the Rada after the collapse of the German-backed “hetman,” Skoropadski, soon came under the leadership of the rightist Petlyura. The Directorate restored the rights of small peasant landholders, which the German occupation government had suppressed; but under Petlyura, deadly pogroms against Jews took place. Pogroms were endemic in Ukraine; the Bolsheviks had to devote forces to stopping them. Petlyura’s defenders claim that he tried to curtail them, but his efforts were weak and inadequate. Some tens-of-thousands were killed and half-a-million left homeless in Petlyura’s genocidal rampage.<sup>13</sup>

The Bolsheviks were busy fighting the Whites in the Ukraine during most of 1918-19, defeating Denikin by autumn 1919. Now a powerful force in Ukraine, they began to close in on Petlyura’s forces. Facing defeat, this “nationalist,” who had earlier allied with the Germans to drive back the

Reds, now made an alliance with Polish forces who, under the soon-to-be dictator Marshall Pilsudski, sought to re-establish centuries-old control by the Polish in Galicia and Western Ukraine. Some nationalists opposed Petlyura’s Polish gambit, but this underscores the weak and confused nature of Ukrainian nationalism. Little more than a 19th Century academic construct originally, nationalists were now united only by anti-Semitism, anti-communism, and peasant property rights. The ramifications of this confusion persist in today’s Ukraine, where anti-Polish sentiments thrive under a monument to the pogromist Petlyura as a national hero.<sup>14</sup>

### **A tactical misstep by the Bolsheviks**

In negotiations between the Soviet and Polish governments in late 1919, the Russians offered generous boundaries to the new Polish state, but the Poles refused to sign a treaty. The Poles feared the Russian Whites more than the Bolsheviks, but with the winding down of the Civil War, that fear evaporated. The British, who were done with interventionist adventures against Russia, even urged the Poles to accept the Soviet’s peace offer, but the Poles would have none of it. Then, with Petlyura’s plea for Polish help in Ukraine, and arms supplied by the Entente powers, Pilsudski saw a chance to restore Poland’s imperial greatness. He invaded Ukraine, and took Kiev

within a week in May 1920. Petlyura, specifically gave up Galicia to its former feudal ruler, Poland.<sup>15</sup>

Now it was the Bolsheviks’ time to have none of it. The Red Army intervened, and quickly drove the Poles out of Ukraine. This then set up a discussion within the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, which was meeting in Petrograd and Moscow in July-August 1920: should the Russians take their offensive into Poland itself to spread the revolution? Trotsky was against, but Lenin became convinced, and the invasion commenced. A June Communist International executive manifesto had earlier set the context:

“Workers of all countries: ...Who is responsible for these hostilities? ...the Soviet Government recognized the independence of the Polish Republic from the very first day.... You know that to spare the lives of Russian and Polish workers [the Soviet Government] was ready to make territorial and economic concessions. You know that, firmly convinced that the Polish workers, allies of the Russian proletariat, would sooner or later take power into their own hand, the Soviet Government was even ready to transfer for the time being to the Polish ruling classes the territory which, by the composition of its population, should not belong to Poland. ...Poland replied to the Soviet Government’s peace proposals by a treacherous attack on the Ukraine.”<sup>16</sup>

The Soviet invasion of Poland approached Warsaw, but then failed because the Polish working class did not rise up in sufficient numbers. The Bolsheviks had miscalculated. Russia had been for centuries the chief imperial oppressor/occupier of Poland, which had only just been reestablished as a nation; and the Red Army recruits, while willing defenders of the Revolution in Russia against the White armies, were not enthusiastic about taking the war into another country. This was a tactical, but not a principled



error: the Soviets were correct to try to spread the revolution, but mistaken as to the readiness of the Polish workers in 1920.

### Trotsky's permanent revolution characterized the national struggles

Even though Soviet-inspired revolutions had failed in Finland in 1918, and Poland in 1920, the dynamics of the national question remained the same: bourgeois nationalists, acting in the name of "independence," allied with any and all imperialist powers to prevent workers' revolution from exploding into "their" domains. The working masses of these nationalities on the other hand, like the workers of Great Russia itself, put their class interests first.

As Trotsky explained,

"The irrevocable and irresistible going over of the masses from the most rudimentary tasks of political, agrarian, and national emancipation and abolition of serfdom to the slogan of proletarian rulership, resulted not from 'demagogic' agitation, not from preconceived schemes, not from the social structure of Russia and the conditions of the worldwide situation. The theory of Permanent Revolution only formulated the combined process of this development."<sup>17</sup>

Oppressed nationalities of Russia, as well as targets for Tsarist colonization, all went through this process, with differing outcomes. In Part 2, we examine developments in the Trans-Caucasus, the Middle East, the relevance of "cultural nationalism" among Russian Jews, and the light this sheds on the phenomenon of nationalism today.

1 *First Decrees of Soviet Power, November 1917 to July 1918*, Lawrence and Wisheart, London, 1970, p. 154.

2 The Rus' were an ancient people at least partly derived from Viking colonization, who settled in what is now north-central European Russia, and built the Medieval kingdom of Kievan Rus'. The Mongol Empire of Genghis,

Kublai, and other Khans, conquered the lands of Rus', Central Asia, and moved into Europe, before breaking up in the mid-late 1300s. The Khans left spin-off communities behind, such as the Turkic-speaking peoples of Anatolia, Azerbaijan and others, many of which eventually came under Russian dominance.

3 There had been two earlier partitions of Poland, which enabled Great Russian landowners to move in and ally with the Polish aristocracy against the encroaches of "Jacobinism." This alliance set up and secured the final partition.

4 Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Haymarket Books edition, Chicago 2017, p. 648.

5 Lenin, "Resolutions of the Summer, 1913, Joint Conference of the Central Committee of the RSDLP and Party Officials," *Collected Works* vol. 19, March-Dec 1913, p.419. See also, "Theses On the National Question," same volume, p. 243.

6 Lenin, "Speech on the National Question," at the 7th All-Russian Conference of the RSDLP (B), April 29th 1917, in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 24, Moscow 1964, p. 297.

7 See Trotsky's chapter on "The Problem of Nationalities" in *History of the Russian Revolution*, op.cit., vol. 3, for more on this history.

8 Resolutions on Peace Adopted by the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets, (Bolsheviks), in *First Decrees of Soviet Power*, *ibid*, p. 81-82. The SRs also passed a resolution at this Congress, which projected that "...staunch defense of the Russian revolution's formula of peace will frustrate [German annexationism]."

9 Kiev lies on the northern right bank of the Dneiper River, which roughly divides the Ukraine along East-West lines. Prior to the partitions of the 1700s, Poland had been a large aristocratic kingdom, incorporating Lithuania and much of Ukraine, among other territories.

10 "Hetman" means "chief." See Trotsky, *How the Revolution Armed*, New Park, 1979, p. 552.

11 Arthur E Adams, *Bolsheviks In the Ukraine, the Second Campaign, 1918-1919*, Yale University Press, 1963, p. 13.

12 Nestor Makhno's anarchist movement was an exception: revolutionary in intent, it refused to ally with the Whites, and did ally with the Bolsheviks against Denikin's reactionary "volunteer army." But Makhno opposed all authority, including that of the world's first workers state, which soon necessitated a break between his movement and the Bolsheviks.

13 See [jewishcurrents.org](http://jewishcurrents.org). These numbers may be high estimates, but pogroms were in fact endemic in Ukraine. In exile in Paris in 1926, Petlyura was assassinated by a Jewish anarchist who had lost 15 family members to Petlyura's pogroms in Odessa.

14 During German occupation of the Ukraine in World War II, Ukrainian fascist/nationalists slaughtered both Poles and Jews in genocidal attacks in Western Ukraine.

15 Petlyura explicitly recognized Galicia as part of the lands of the Crown of Poland. Despite on-going discussions with Moscow over establishing trade relations, Britain and France still supported reactionaries like Pilsudski as a bulwark against the Soviets. See EH Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917-1923*, vol. 3, Pelican, p. 160.

16 "Extracts from an Executive Committee of the Communist International Manifesto on the Polish attack on Russia," 18 May 1920, in *The Communist International Documents*, vol. 1 1919-1922, Jane Degras, ed, London, 1971, p.90.

17 Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, *ibid*, p. 655.



# SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT

Where to find us:

[www.socialistviewpoint.org](http://www.socialistviewpoint.org)

[info@socialistviewpoint.org](mailto:info@socialistviewpoint.org)

(415) 824-8730

## EDITORS

Carole Seligman, Bonnie Weinstein

## GRAPHIC & WEB DESIGN

Mykael

## BUSINESS MANAGER

Carole Seligman

The Socialist Viewpoint Publishing Association publishes *Socialist Viewpoint* in the interests of the working class.

The editors take positions consistent with revolutionary Marxism. Within this context the editors will consider for publication articles, reviews or comments. The editors may publish comments to accompany these articles. Photographs and cartoons will be appreciated.

*Socialist Viewpoint* reprints articles circulated on the Internet when we deem them of interest to our readers.

No limitation will be placed on the author(s) use of their material in their subsequent work provided acknowledgment is made of its publication in *Socialist Viewpoint*. The Socialist Viewpoint Publishing Association retains for itself rights to reprint articles as collections, educational bulletins, and similar uses. With the inclusion of an acknowledgment and a notice of the copyright ownership, permission is hereby given educators to duplicate essays for distribution gratis or for use in the classroom at cost. The author(s) retain all other rights.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of *Socialist Viewpoint*. These views are expressed in editorials.

*Socialist Viewpoint* is printed by members of Local 583, Allied Printing Trades Council, San Francisco, California.

### ***Special Introductory Subscription Offer!***

One year of *Socialist Viewpoint* for \$20.00,

Bargain rate: \$35.00 for two years;

(Regular rate: \$30.00/International Rate: \$50.00)

Make your check payable to: *Socialist Viewpoint*, & mail to:

### **SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT**

60 29th Street, #429

San Francisco, CA 94110

Please include your name, address, city and zip code.

To help us know who our subscribers are,  
please tell us your occupation, union, school,  
or organization.

### ***Note to Readers:***

*Socialist Viewpoint* magazine has been edited and distributed by revolutionaries who share a common political outlook stemming from the old Socialist Workers Party of James P. Cannon, and Socialist Action from 1984 through 1999.

After being expelled from Socialist Action in 1999, we formed Socialist Workers Organization in an attempt to carry on the project of building a nucleus of a revolutionary party true to the historic teachings and program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

What we have found is that our numbers are insufficient for this crucial project of party building. This problem is not ours alone; it is a problem flowing from the division and fragmentation that has plagued the revolutionary movement in capitalist America and the world since the 1980s.

What we intend to do is to continue to promote the idea of building a revolutionary Marxist working class political party through the pages of *Socialist Viewpoint* magazine. We continue to have an optimistic outlook about the revolutionary potential of the world working class to rule society in its own name—socialism. We are optimistic that the working class, united across borders, and acting in its own class interests can solve the devastating crises of war, poverty, oppression, and environmental destruction that capitalism is responsible for.

We expect that revolutionaries from many different organizations, traditions, and backgrounds will respond to the opportunities that will arise, as workers resist the attacks of the capitalist system and government, to build a new revolutionary political party. Just as we join with others to build every response to war and oppression, we look forward to joining with others in the most important work of building a new mass revolutionary socialist workers' party as it becomes possible to do so.



Kevin Cooper is an innocent man on San Quentin's Death Row in California. He continues to struggle for exoneration and to abolish the death penalty in the whole U.S.

Learn more about his case at: [www.kevincooper.org](http://www.kevincooper.org)

Write to Kevin Cooper:  
Kevin Cooper C-65304, 4 EB 82, San Quentin State Prison, San Quentin, CA 94974

Artwork by Kevin "Rashid" Johnson

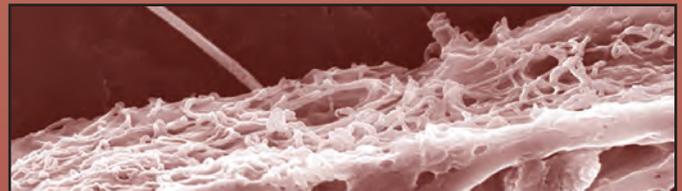


Dogs guarding a site under the M1 motorway on June 11, 2018, in Bedfordshire, England. Read *Dogs as a Tool of Racist Repression* on page 17.

On the Front Cover: Children protesting U.S. immigration policy. Read *Unprecedented Cruelty Against Immigrants and Their Children* on page 8. ▶



Senator Chuck Schumer and other Democratic leaders in the Senate. Read *Democrats Out-Right the Right* on page 15.



Nanopollution does not only come from deliberately created nano materials but from many industrial processes which often escapes into the atmosphere. Read *Small Particles with Big Problems* on page 48.



### Attention Prison Mail Room:



Prisoners retain their free speech rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. That means you cannot legally suppress the expression and consideration of ideas. Prison walls do not form a barrier separating prisoners from the protection of the Constitution, according to the *Turner v. Safely* ruling. [482 U.S. 78, 107 Sct 2245 (1987)] If you exclude printed matter on an improper basis, or give a false pretext or rationale for its exclusion, because of the ideas expressed in it, you are breaking the law. The prisoner denied access to material he wants to read can bring a civil rights lawsuit against you with cause for seeking punitive damages. In the case of *Police Department Chicago v. Mosley*, 408 U.S. 92, 95, 92 Sct 2286, 2290 (1972) the court found that “[A]bove all else, the First Amendment means that government has no power to restrict expression because of its message, subject matter or content.”