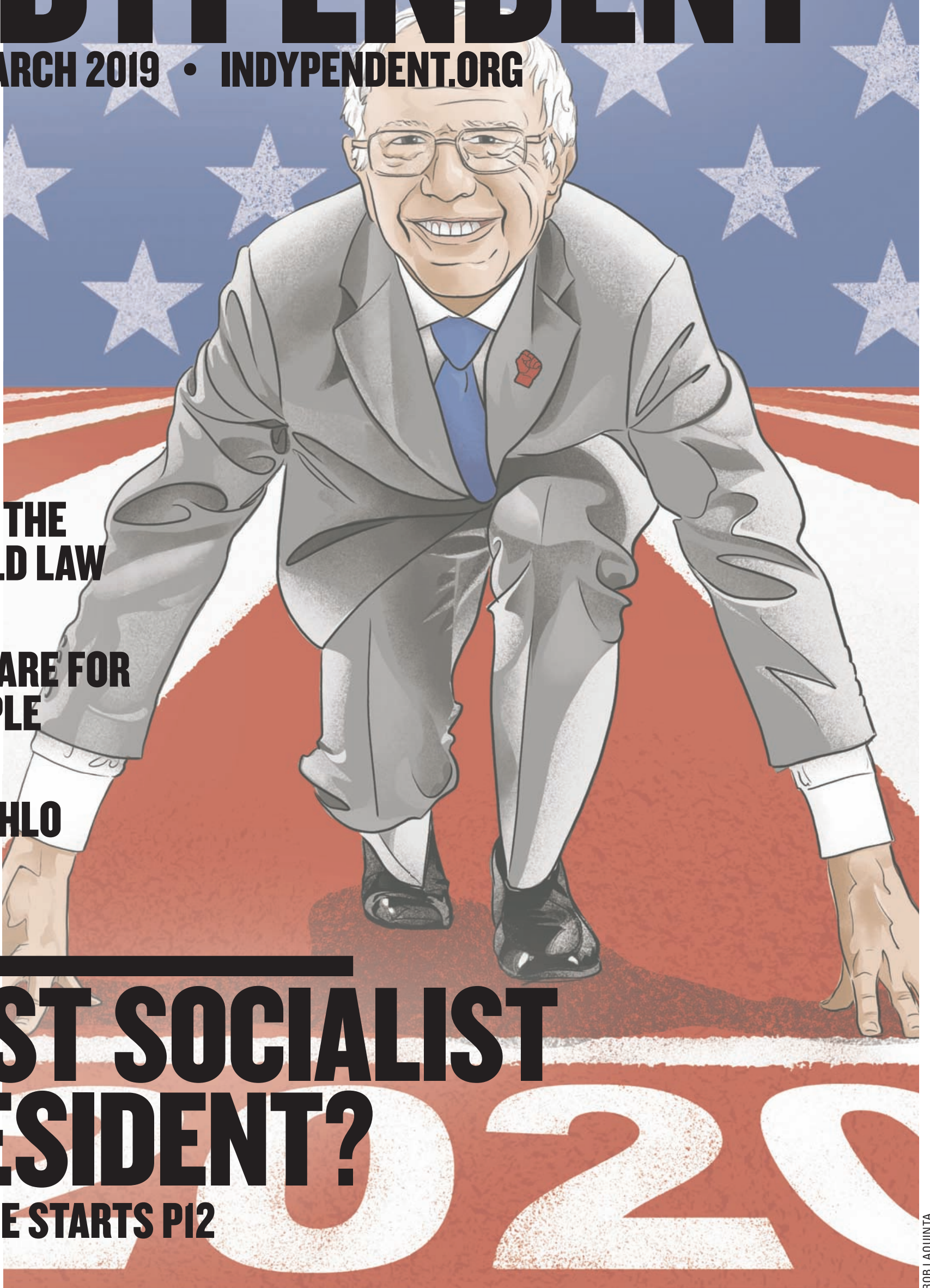


THE

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INDYPENDENT

#244: MARCH 2019 • INDYPENDENT.ORG



**BANNING THE
BLINDFOLD LAW
P4**

**HEALTHCARE FOR
THE PEOPLE
P15**

**FRIDA KAHLO
IN NYC
P20**

FIRST SOCIALIST PRESIDENT?

COVERAGE STARTS P12



THE INDYPENDENT



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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MARCH 4–MARCH 25

MON, 7PM–9PM • \$25–\$35
FESTIVAL: WOMEN'S JAZZ
FESTIVAL

Featuring some of the best-
known and unsung female per-
formers in jazz today in honor of
Women's History Month.
*SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RE-
SEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE*
515 Malcolm X Blvd., Mnhtn

WED MARCH 6

6:30PM–8:30PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: *OUR HISTORY
IS THE FUTURE*

Nick Estes traces the traditions
of indigenous resistance that
led to the #NoDAPL movement.
His new book serves as a work
of history, a manifesto, and
an intergenerational story of
resistance.

THE PEOPLE'S FORUM
320 W. 37th St., Mnhtn

THU MARCH 7

6PM–9PM • \$25
PHOTOGRAPHY: PHOTOGRA-
PHY OF NORTH KOREA

Associated Press photographer
Wong Maye-E will share images
of North Korea and its people,
in conversation with Korea
Society senior director Stephen
Noerper.

THE KOREA SOCIETY
350 Madison Ave., 24th Fl.,
Mnhtn

THU MARCH 7

6:30PM–8:30PM • FREE
WORKSHOP: HOW TO START A
BLOCK ASSOCIATION

Block associations bring neigh-
bors together and help to main-
tain and uplift communities. Join
Citizens Committee for New York
City to learn how to start a block
association or get connected to
an existing block association in
your neighborhood.

*GREENWICH HOUSE SENIOR
CENTER—OUR LADY OF POMPEII
CHURCH*
25 Carmine St., Mnhtn

THU MARCH 7

6:30PM–8:30PM • FREE
HISTORY: RADICAL BLACK
FEMINISM AND THE COMBA-
HEE RIVER COLLECTIVE

Activists like Ella Baker and
groups like the Combahee River
Collective pioneered intersec-
tionality by combining antiracist
and women's liberation move-
ments. Join Barbara Smith,
Keeanga-Yahmatta Taylor and
Barbara Ransby, as they elevate
the voices of path-breaking rad-
ical black feminists and discuss
how to carry their philosophies
for freedom into the future.

*SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RE-
SEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE*
515 Malcolm X Blvd., Mnhtn

FRI MARCH 8

6PM–8PM • FREE
BOOK LAUNCH: *RIGHTS IN
TRANSIT: PUBLIC TRANSPOR-
TATION & THE RIGHT TO THE
CITY*

Is public transportation a right?
asks Prof. Kafui Attoh of the
CUNY School of Labor & Urban
Studies. Should it be? For those
reliant on public transit, the
answer is invariably "yes" to
both. For those who lack other
means of mobility, transit is a
lifeline. It offers access to many
of the entitlements we take as
essential: food, employment
and democratic public life itself.

THE MURPHY INSTITUTE
25 W. 43rd St., 18th floor, Mnhtn

FRI MARCH 8

7PM–9PM • \$5 suggested
donation

TALK: WE'RE NOT GOING
BACK

This year marks the centennial
of the founding of the Commu-
nist Party USA. Join historian
Robin D.G. Kelly, Prof. Leith
Mullings and the CPUSA's
Joe Sims for an evening of
storytelling, poetry and song,
highlighting historic struggles
of our country's labor and

freedom movement.

HENRY WINSTON UNITY HALL
235 W. 23rd St., Mnhtn

SAT MARCH 9

5:30PM–8:30PM • FREE
PARTY: NYC FOR BERNIE 2020
LAUNCH PARTY

Join people from across NYC
to build a movement to elect
Bernie Sanders as the next
president and fight for racial,
social, economic and environ-
mental justice.

KATCH ASTORIA
3119 Newtown Ave., Queens

SUN MARCH 10

3PM–5PM • FREE
SCREENING: *WARRIOR
WOMEN*

The story of Madonna Thunder
Hawk, a leader in the 1970s
American Indian Movement
who cultivated a ragtag gang of
activist children, including her
daughter Marcy, into the "We
Will Remember" survival group.
The film explores what it means
to balance a movement with
motherhood and how activist
legacies are passed down from
generation to generation.

MAYSLES CINEMA
343 Malcolm X Blvd., Mnhtn

THU MARCH 14

6:30PM–8:30PM • \$15
SCREENING: *EL PUEBLO SE
LEVANTA*

In the late 1960s, conditions
for Puerto Ricans in the United
States reached a breaking
point. Produced in 1971, this
hard-hitting documentary
focuses on the poverty and
oppression of NYC's own East
Harlem.

*MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW
YORK*
1220 Fifth Ave., Mnhtn

THU MARCH 14

8PM–12AM • \$10
MUSIC: BIRTH OF THE COOL
SEXTET

This acoustic jazz group lov-
ingly re-imagines the music of
legendary trumpet player Miles
Davis from the 1940s and 1950s.
HANKS SALOON
345 Adams St., Bklyn

FRI MARCH 15

6:30PM–10PM • \$10–\$20
PARTY: YA TAYR AL TAYIR: AN
EVENING OF PALESTINIAN
DABKE AND CULTURE

Want to learn how to dance
dabke? Been wondering how
you can get involved with
the movement for Palestine?
Join this evening celebrating
Palestinian cultural resistance
through dabke, art, poetry,
music, food and more.
THE PEOPLE'S FORUM
320 W. 37th St., Mnhtn

FRI MARCH 15

7PM–12AM • \$30–\$40, 18+
MUSIC: HABIB KOITÉ &
BASEKOU KOUYATE
Habib Koité and Bassekou
Kouyate exemplify the his-
torical, cultural and unifying
properties of Malian music.
One of Africa's most recognized
musicians, Koité is a modern
troubadour with extraordinary
appeal. He performs with fellow
Malian Kouyate, a master of the
Malian lute known as the Ngoni.
(LE) POISSON ROUGE
158 Bleecker St., Mnhtn

SAT MARCH 16

7:30PM–2AM • \$9–\$13
PARTY: TECHNORUZ
A dance party in observance of
the vernal equinox and Iranian
New Year.
TRANS-PECOS
9-15 Wyckoff Ave., Queens

SAT MARCH 16

8PM–12AM • \$5–\$10
PARTY: REBEL! A RIOT GRRRL
PARTY
Feeling Rage? Feeling Nostal-
gic? Feeling like you want to
kick something in a nonviolent

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THE INDYPENDENT

MARCH

and safe way? Come heal your soul and dance our asses off to some riot grrrl punk rock.

DRTY SMMR
1198 Myrtle Ave, Bklyn

MON MARCH 18

7:30PM–9PM • \$20

PERFORMANCE: SMASH THE WALL! (WITH BEAUTY, LOVE AND HONESTY)

The International Human Rights Art Festival, in conjunction with the New Sanctuary Coalition and Immigrant Families Together, presents an evening of music, film, theater and discussion in the service of smashing the wall within! After all, all walls built in the world represent walls that exist in our psyche. **THE PLAYROOM THEATER**
151 W. 46th St. 8th Fl., Mnhtn

SAT MARCH 23

10AM–5PM • FREE

CONFERENCE: FEMINISM FOR THE 99% WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

In the era of #MeToo, women's marches and an increased presence of progressive women in Congress, women's resistance has manifested itself in various forms. This conference grapples with the central question of what it means to be a feminist and a revolutionary socialist fighting for a new society. **THE PEOPLE'S FORUM**
320 W. 37th St., Mnhtn

SUN MARCH 24

2:30PM–5:30PM • FREE

FAMILY: PURIM FAMILY ART

PARTY & PARADE

Kids, youth, parents, stewards of the resistance, lovers of delirious fun, dreamers of new worlds and everyone in between is welcome at this art build that will culminate in a kid-led parade. Celebrate Queens' victory over Amazon and call for the just and democratic city of your wildest dreams.

JEWISH CENTER OF JACKSON HEIGHTS
3706 77th St., Queens

SAT MARCH 30

8AM–12:30PM • \$20–\$35

FITNESS: 2019 GAZA 5K +

DABKE PARTY

Despite the current U.S. administration's decision to defund the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, you can improve the quality of life for refugee children in the Gaza Strip by signing up for the NYC Gaza 5K.

GRECIAN SHELTER IN PROSPECT PARK
Bklyn

SAT MARCH 30

8:30PM • \$25, 21+

MUSIC: THE SOUL REBELS
Brass funk straight outta New Orleans.

BROOKLYN BOWL
61 Wythe Ave., Bklyn

BLOWN AWAY:

Soulful saxophonist Lakecia Benjamin is among the headliners at the Women's Jazz Fest this month, taking place at the Schomburg Center.

SING OUT:

Troubadour Habib Koité is bringing his masterful Malian sounds to le poisson rouge on March 15.

LAKECIA BENJAMIN.COM

THORSTEN KRIENKE

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THE
INDY

PRISONER'S DILEMMA

NY IS ONE OF JUST FOUR STATES WHERE DEFENDANTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SEE THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM UNTIL JUST BEFORE TRIAL.

BY PETER RUGH

It was July 17, 2015, when the cops took Darryl Herring away. It was Dec. 16, 2016 when he was let go. He left Rikers wearing the clothes he'd been picked up in. In shorts and a T-shirt, he ran down to the Legal Aid Society offices for a giveaway coat. He'd just spent 18 months of his life on New York City's notoriously violent prison island. His trial lasted two days — into court on Friday, released from custody on Monday. Case dismissed.

Chattel slavery was abolished in the United States with the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution in 1865. But some days Darryl Herring wakes up and can't leave his apartment in the Soundview housing project in the Bronx, so overwhelming is the fear that he will be disappeared once more.

"Something's got to change," he says. "There are too many people sitting up in jail just like me that are innocent. And I'm not saying that what happened to me doesn't happen to all nationalities, but if you look at the percentage of people in jail, it's people of color. Slavery is no more, but this is a new form of slavery."

It's not like things were coming up roses for Herring at the time of his arrest. He was living in an emergency shelter on Tremont Avenue in the Bronx. But he had more than one set of clothes. He had a few possessions — family photographs, trinkets his late stepmother had left him, and suits for special occasions and job interviews locked away in a storage unit. "When I got out, I had nothing," he said.

A pair of bills before the New York State legislature would help prevent what happened to Herring and continues to happen to thousands like him. One would repeal the state's "blindfold law," which allows prosecutors to withhold evidence until the start of a trial. (New York is one of only four states with such a law.) Another would eliminate pretrial detention for all but the most violent crimes. The governor has provided for similar measures in his budget, which will be hashed out this March in Albany. With both houses of the legislature now in the hands of Democrats, there is little excuse left for stalling these reforms.

• • •

AS THINGS STAND, the legal system creates a near-impossible situation for defendants like Herring to navigate.

First, a judge and prosecutor set bail, often a prohibitively large sum. Herring's was \$75,000. Then it's off to jail, where defendants can wait months or even years before receiving their day in court and seeing evidence against them — assum-

ing they don't plead guilty to a lesser charge. Most do, but not Herring. His case illustrates just how far the legal system can stretch a man without ever convicting him.

A woman on the block whom Herring knew accused him of rape. She said that he coerced her into her apartment at knifepoint at five in the morning. The Bronx District Attorney's office, headed by Robert T. Johnson at the time of Herring's arrest and by Darcel Clark by the time his case was dismissed, had security camera footage in its possession of the pair calmly walking into the building together. They also knew the accuser was on psychiatric medication, which she was not taking when she made the accusation, and that a medical examination did not support her claim.

Darryl didn't know what the DA knew. He just knew he was innocent. He was looking at 15 years in prison, but when they offered him a four-year plea deal to an assault charge, he said "no." When they offered him a year and a half if he pled to rape, he once more declined. By no means a man of means, he went through three different lawyers until he found one he trusted to have the same resolve to take his case to trial as he did from his cell on Rikers Island. He opted for a trial by a judge rather than by jury, because "a judge has to instruct the jury in the law, but a judge already knows the law."

Yes, even someone who is locked up for months on end for a crime he did not commit has faith in the law. Herring's biggest gripe about Rikers is that younger prisoners would sometimes start fights in order to get out of their mandatory GED classes. They'd instigate a lockdown and older inmates like him wouldn't be permitted access to the law library.

Yet despite Herring's faith, the way the legal system now works is not to determine a defendant's innocence or guilt, but to crack them before a judge or jury can make that determination.

"People have an idea about courts and the legal system being a place where truth is resolved and justice prevails, and that is just not the case," says Nick Malinowski, Civil Rights Campaign director at VOCAL-NY — part of a coalition of dozens of groups pressuring Albany to finally overhaul its cash bail and discovery laws.

Sixty thousand people cycle through Rikers each year, and 200,000 through jails across the state. Some are serving short sentences but, statewide, about 60 percent are trapped in the limbo of pretrial detention. New York State's pretrial detention rate is the fourth highest in the country. Ninety-five percent of those charged never stand trial. In New York City, just one percent go to trial. To get there can take such remarkable resolve that it strains the notion of the right to due process.

• • •

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS LOVE this system. The backlog from the zealous policing of people of color works in their favor. There simply isn't enough time nor enough judges to deliver on the constitutional promise of a speedy trial. Most of the time defendants either rot away or plead out without DAs breaking a sweat.

The District Attorneys Association of the State of New York opposes both the bill to repeal the "blindfold law" and the measure to reduce pretrial detention. The association did not respond to a request for comment for this article, but its members have been actively campaigning, writing op-eds and meeting with lawmakers to either stave off a vote on the bills or to get them watered down.

Many of the reforms' most vocal critics oversee counties with high pretrial detention rates. But with polls showing legal system reform is deeply popular — in surveys commissioned by the bipartisan advocacy group Fwd.us and conducted by Global Strategy Group, 73 percent of New York State voters supported bail reform and 90 percent backed speedy-trial reform — the DAs have had to tread carefully.

"Let me be clear," Onondaga County District Attorney William Fitzpatrick wrote in an op-ed for *Syracuse.com*. "Neither I nor my colleagues in law enforcement across the state are against reform. In fact, we have embraced it."

Fitzpatrick goes on to insinuate that if cash bail and the blindfold law were eliminated, gang members could intimidate or kill witnesses set to testify against them, battered women would be put at risk, and a pedophile could be allowed to depose his victim "in a sickening interview process or, even better, demand that the court allow him to visit her dwelling."

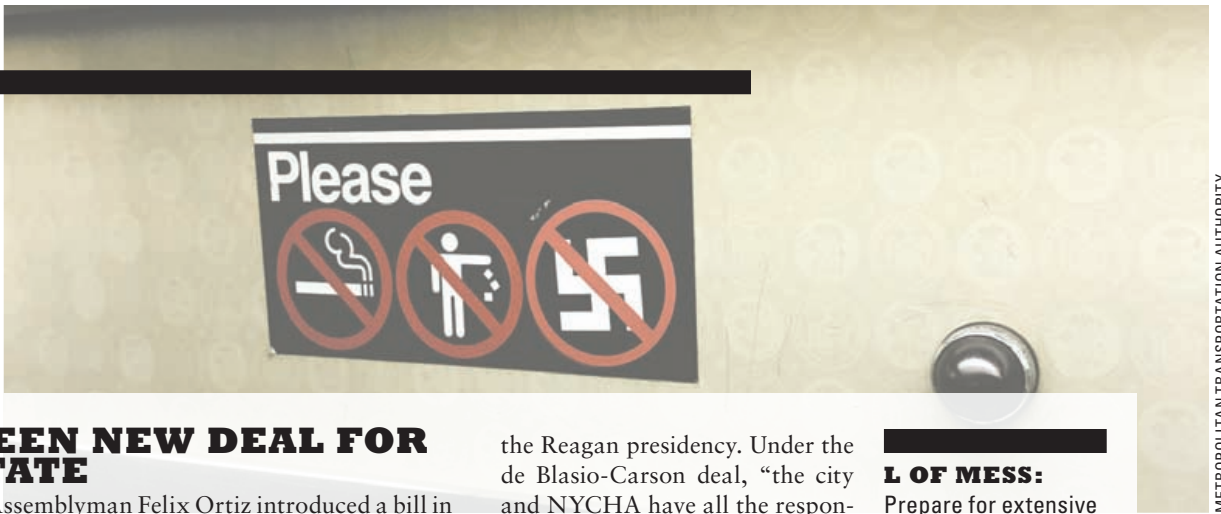
Here's what he fails to mention:

- Under the proposed reform to the state's discovery rules, prosecutors who fear witness intimidation can ask the court to prevent the disclosure of witness identities.
- There are already laws on the books under which prosecutors can file protective orders against defendants. There was a protective order against Herring for the entire 18 months he was locked up in Rikers.

Continued on page 10



LEONARDO MARCH



AIRING THE DIRTY LAUNDRY

New York City has subpoenaed Airbnb for details of more than 20,000 apartment listings as part of a drive to uncover illegal hotels. Sometimes whole apartment buildings are rented through the site. The subpoena is an effort to bypass a ruling issued in January, blocking the city from accessing Airbnb's listing data. The company is widely blamed for contributing to a shortage of affordable housing in New York and other cities.

CUOMO'S COMMUTER CRUELTY

Gov. Andrew Cuomo's plan to keep the L train running while the MTA conducts post-Sandy repairs will result in "on board crowding greater than anything ever experienced on the NYC subway system on a sustained basis." That's according to a Jan. 22 internal memo drafted by the authority and obtained by *Gothamist*. Cuomo's plan calls for keeping at least one tube on the L line running every 20 minutes on weekends. Actual wait times for boarding a train could be up to 40 minutes. Meanwhile, some commuters are wondering if the L train is cursed. An oil spill in February sickened passengers and drove four workers to the hospital. During another recent rush hour, the MTA took a train out of service because an anti-Nazi sticker in one of the cars featured a swastika, leading to extensive delays.

A GREEN NEW DEAL FOR NY STATE

Brooklyn Assemblyman Felix Ortiz introduced a bill in February that would establish a task force to develop a plan for cutting the state's greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2030. The proposal mirrors targets called for on the national stage by Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-Bronx/Queens). Gov. Cuomo said he would support a national Green New Deal but the "problem has always been the how, not the goal." Most engineers and energy experts in fact see achieving zero emissions by 2030 as technically feasible. The political will to do so is another matter.

LONG KISS GOOD NYCHA

The interim head of the New York City Housing Authority was let go after refusing to sign the paperwork on a deal brokered by Mayor Bill de Blasio and federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Sec. Ben Carson intended to rescue the city's dilapidated public housing stock. Under the terms of the arrangement, the city agreed to a federal monitor and to put \$2.2 billion toward capital improvements at NYCHA properties in order to ward off federal receivership. Stanley Brezenoff, whose work as a civil servant for the city goes back four decades, told the *New York Times* the arrangement is "receivership in all but name only." "Where the hell is HUD and money?" he asked. Federal funding for NYCHA has dropped markedly since

the Reagan presidency. Under the de Blasio-Carson deal, "the city and NYCHA have all the responsibility, limited authority and all of the financial burden," Brezenoff said. HUD will have veto power over whomever the city finds to replace him.

L OF MESS:

Prepare for extensive delays on the L train this spring as the MTA begins an estimated 15-month repair job leftover from 2012's Superstorm Sandy.

FROM ROOSEVELT AVE TO K STREET

What's an out-of-work congressman to do? Joe Crowley, who was defeated last June by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, announced on Feb. 19 that he was going to work for Squire Patton Boggs, the same lobbying firm that employees former GOP Majority Leader John Boehner and former GOP Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott. The firm's clients include Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, United Health and Saudi Arabia. Crowley, who has long lived in Virginia where his three children go to school, also stepped down as the Queens County Democratic Party leader.

— INDYPENDENT STAFF



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THE LAURA FLANDERS SHOW

NYC KILLED AMAZON BUT CAN CUOMO REVIVE THE AMAZOMBIE?

BY DEREK LUDOVICI & PETER RUGH

After Amazon abruptly cancelled its deal to build a satellite “HQ2” headquarters in New York City Feb. 14, proponents of the deal blamed local politicians, specifically state Sen. Michael Gianaris (D-Queens), City Councilmember Jimmy Van Bramer (D-Queens) and Council Speaker Corey Johnson (D-Manhattan). Others pointed the finger at gentrifiers for taking a not-in-my-backyard stance.

But if the governor, mayor and the big developers who backed the deal to give Amazon \$3 billion in corporate welfare in exchange for 25,000 promised jobs were looking for someone to point their fingers at, they might have come down to Diversity Plaza in Jackson Heights after Amazon’s announcement. Just after dark, drums and chanting began. Activists held up banners as a children’s mariachi band, followed by Trinidadian tassa drummers, raised a ruckus celebration.

“None of us expected it,” said Anatole Ashraf of PrimedOut NYC, an online group formed to bring Amazon opponents together. “Even when the *New York Times* reported it, we didn’t believe it.”

Few could. Developer David Lichtenstein, whose Lightstone Group owns a 428-unit apartment complex near the planned HQ2 site in Long Island City, called it “the worst day for New York City since 9/11.” Gov. Andrew Cuomo told the *New York Post* it was the “greatest tragedy I have seen since I’ve been in politics.” In a statement issued on Feb. 14, he griped that a “small group of politicians put their own narrow political interests above their community.”

As *The Independent* went to press the governor was working furiously to revive the deal. In an open letter published in the *New York Times* on March 1 elected officials, labor and business leaders, joined Cuomo in pleading for Amazon to return.

Despite catching much of the flack for the original deal’s demise, the Amazon opposition went far beyond the triad of Gianaris, Van Bramer and Johnson. Its numerous antagonists mobilized on-the-ground anger in the community into collective action. They came from a diverse coalition of community groups, union activists, students, tech workers and Queens residents. If city politicians were more receptive to their arguments, it was due in part to the upsurge in left-wing populism that gave the Democrats full control of the state legislature and got socialist Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez elected to Congress from a nearby Queens-Bronx district last year.

Ocasio-Cortez opposed the deal from its announcement and used her national platform to lambaste Amazon. However, “many of the elected officials who ended up supporting the fight against Amazon initially signed on to the letter inviting Amazon,” notes Fahd Ahmed, executive director of Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM), a South Asian immigrant organization based in Jackson Heights. “But once they felt the pressure of communities, they realized the winds had shifted, and that would not be a tenable position.”

Angeles Solis of Make the Road New York said her organization opposed Amazon’s arrival in Queens even before the corporate welfare package was announced. She cited the company’s “exploitative treatment of workers, their long history of tax evasion, especially in underserved communities

[and] their surveillance and data collection, especially on undocumented immigrant communities.”

“We took a no-compromise, no-negotiations position,” said Solis. “This deal would have been a robbery of our communities.”

Rapi Castillo of Progressive HackNight, a group of activist tech workers, said the win against Amazon sent a “good message” to corporations and to tech companies in particular: “You don’t just come into our communities and impose yourself,” he told *The Independent*. “You have to be mindful about what you’re representing, what your technology does. And for us, what Amazon’s technology does is hurting families, hurting immigrants, hurting the community.”

Not that opposition in the community was unanimous. Many local businesses were wildly in favor of the deal, enthused at the prospect of the extra revenue the 25,000 white-collar workers Amazon pledged to hire would bring their way.

The city’s labor unions were divided between those who stood to get jobs from the deal and those trying to organize workers at the notoriously anti-union company. “New Yorkers are the number one reason HQ2 will be built in Queens,” the building-service workers union 32BJ-SEIU said in an evasive, vaguely-worded statement. It had pre-existing agreements with TF Cornerstone and Plaxall, contractors that would have provided services such as security and cleaning at Amazon offices if the deal had gone through. The Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York also backed the deal, after it became clear that the project would be built by union labor.

But the Teamsters and the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which is trying to organize workers at Amazon’s warehouse on Staten Island, were among the loudest opponents. In a meeting the day before Amazon pulled out, company executives refused to agree that it wouldn’t fire union supporters at the warehouse.

Polls showed a 70 percent approval rating for Amazon’s arrival statewide. But at a time when income inequality and gentrification are increasingly on New Yorkers’ minds and the left is resurgent in the city, the \$3 billion in corporate welfare brokered in a backroom deal proved too much for many to stomach. Meanwhile, Amazon didn’t have much of a taste for the publicity war that ensued.

“I think we embarrassed them too much with our constant pushback,” Sabrina Rich, who helped form the student-based CUNY Not HQ2 after

TURNING THAT SMILE UPSIDE DOWN

I had Rachel Schragis and Josh Yoder — the artist-design team that turned Amazon’s smile upside down — on the phone the other day when Yoder interrupted our conversation. Something was happening out his window that illustrated a point they were making. A bundle of Amazon Prime-branded packaging tape was tumbling down the street, blowing in the wind.

The point: Amazon is ubiquitous. Everywhere and nowhere at once. An online entity whose boxes wait grinning on doorsteps the world over to be picked up and carried inside homes.

When Yoder and Schragis first got the idea to stencil an anti-Amazon logo on cardboard boxes, they didn’t know the company was planning on coming to New York. They were working in support of the Primed for Hate campaign, targeting the corporation for selling racist, xenophobic and anti-Jewish merchandise to fans of hate movements.

Yoder said he was asking himself, “How can you touch Amazon? How can you touch something that is this big and this distant?” Then it occurred to the pair how: “To get inside their own branding and their own messaging.”

The two drew inspiration from seeing news reports of striking Amazon workers in Europe who’d carried banners and picket signs with Amazon’s smiley logo turned upside down. “One of our goals was to make the frown more real than the smile,” said Schragis, “so that when you see the smile, you think of the frown.”

They took that anti-Amazon logo and added a pair of eyes, angry slashes that render the frown into a greedy scowl. The two little specks are subtle, but give the impression that something sinister lies behind them, a soulless corporation that abuses its employees, writes code for the surveillance state, peddles bigotry, and puts mom and pop out of business.

Armed with foam rollers, black paint and a pile of cardboard, Yoder, Schragis and a team of volunteers set to work, churning out 200 evil-Amazon logos one night last summer. The emblem made its debut at the Javits Center in July, at a protest outside the company’s annual conference. When Amazon announced plans to build a satellite headquarters in Queens last fall, the logo was featured prominently at opposition rallies in Long Island City.

News reports of Amazon’s internal deliberations suggest that CEO Jeff Bezos and other executives felt threatened by the tarnishing the brand received in Queens. Amazon didn’t anticipate that its grassroots opponents would broaden the public discourse surrounding the company to include its labor practices or its collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Because the mock emblem “looks like them, it became a conversation that they couldn’t back away from,” says Yoder. “They can’t undo their own branding.”

“It takes a neighborhood to beat a billionaire,” Schragis added. “I’m sure there are many other people dreaming of how we can use our creative skills to push back against corporate forces in the world. It’s an all-hands-on-deck moment. The win makes so much possible. It’s time that we figure out how to dream from the win.”

— PETER RUGH

WORKER RIGHTS:

One week after Amazon announced it would not bring its HQ2 to New York, State Senator Jessica Ramos (pictured above) and other critics of the mega-corporation rallied outside the site of a future Amazon warehouse in Woodside, Queens. They demanded that all future workers in the warehouse be allowed to join a union.

MASS TRANSIT

TOKEN EFFORT

BY INDYPENDENT STAFF

Have you heard? New York City is offering half-price MetroCards to an estimated 700,000 low-income straphangers who fall below the federal poverty-line. It's understandable if you haven't. Unlike paid sick leave, the minimum-wage bump and universal Pre-K — initiatives that Mayor Bill de Blasio himself championed — you won't find advertisements on the subway promoting Fare Fairs.

The mayor was never a fan of the program. Perhaps because it was not his idea. It was pushed on him by the City Council. When de Blasio gets behind an something he really gets behind it and lets you know who to thank. Not so in this case.

The most you'll find out there on Fair Fares from the city is a page on its website instructing visitors that if they are eligible they will receive a letter in the mail.

So far the rollout is moving at a loris pace. De Blasio's preliminary budget allocates about half of what advocates say is needed to get the program up and running, \$100 million. But the city isn't even half-assing it. By February, one month after Fair Fares went into effect, barely 100 subway riders were signed up.

Maybe you or someone you know can take advantage of Fair Fares, so here's the lowdown on the anti-poverty program the mayor doesn't want you to know about.

Currently, New Yorkers ages 18 to 64 receiving cash assistance from the city and working at least 20 hours per week are eligible. That's about 30,000 people. There are plans to expand Fair Fares in April to include another 130,000 New Yorkers who receive food assistance. You'll find a list of Fair Fares office locations below, one

in each borough, open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Bring photo identification (an NYCID card works). Dial 311 if you have further questions.

ALONG FOR THE RIDE: Fair Fares offices in Harlem.

The full implementation of Fair Fares can't come soon enough, especially given the MTA board voted for yet another fare hike on Feb. 27, raising the price of a monthly MetroCard to \$127, up from \$121 — a 57 percent increase over what it cost a decade ago. Meanwhile, despite de Blasio reluctance to fund Fair Fares, he's subsidizing the new ferry boat system to the tune of nearly \$9 per ride.

WHERE TO GET YOUR FAIR FARE:

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1309 Fulton Ave.
Bronx, NY 10456

MANHATTAN
413 E. 120th St.
New York, NY 10035

BROOKLYN
444 Thomas Boyland St.
Brooklyn, NY 11212

QUEENS
114-02 Guy Brewer Blvd.
Jamaica, NY 11434

STATEN ISLAND
1 Edgewater St.
Staten Island, NY 10305

members of the City University of New York Board of Trustees wrote a letter in support of the Amazon deal, told *The Indy*.

Many see the victory against the corporate behemoth as just the beginning.

"Momentum for our movement is only going to build," said David Lee of Queens Democratic Socialists of America. "We are still going to fight for things like universal rent control, making housing a human right, fighting gentrification and displacement, fighting big tech and their collusion with the military industrial complex, and all these fascist agencies of oppression."

Others are seeking to build on the momentum of the grassroots victory to end the kinds of corporate subsidies and tax breaks Amazon was set to receive. Legislation to that effect has been introduced in New York and several other states.

Amazon, which already employs 5,000 people in the city, is still expanding operations here, albeit on a smaller scale. Last year, it purchased the yuppie grocery chain Whole Foods. It also opened a distribution center in Queens, and is slated to open another in Woodside in the near future.

The company's continued presence means "the degradation of labor standards across the entire city," said Make the Road's Solis. "They are just driving down worker protections that we fought for for decades."

Teaming up with Make the Road and many of the community groups that beat back HQ2, RWDSU is continuing its union drive at Amazon's distribution centers, including one slated to open at a former watch factory in Woodside.

OFFICE OF STATE SENATOR JESSICA RAMOS

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IMMIGRATION

SAFE HAVEN

TPS RECIPIENTS FEND OFF TRUMP ATTACKS



BY RENÉE FELTZ

In a video by the Massachusetts-based rights group Centro Presente, 10-year-old Gabriella describes herself as a U.S. citizen who dreams of being “an ESL teacher for students who do not speak, read or understand English.” Then she quickly adds: “In order to accomplish my dream I need my mother and family.”

Far from the border, even children like Gabriella who were born in the United States now fear separation from their parents because of the Trump administration’s push to end Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for immigrants who fled war, famine and natural disaster. Her mother is one of some 320,000 TPS recipients who now live and work legally in the United States, where they have built families over decades. About 15,000 live in New York City.

Congress created TPS in 1990 for people who fled El Salvador’s civil war. The list of eligible countries has since grown to include Nepal, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Honduras and Haiti. TPS recipients must pass a background check and pay a fee to apply to renew their status every six to 18 months. Now they also have to fight to keep TPS in place. So far they are winning.

When Trump told the Department of Homeland Security to end TPS in 2017, he immediately faced legal challenges from groups like Centro Presente, National TPS Alliance and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, who argued the change was driven by a “racially discriminatory attitude toward all brown and black people.” Last October, Federal District Judge Edward Chen in San Francisco seemed to agree when he cited “serious questions as to whether a discriminatory purpose was a motivating factor” and ordered TPS to remain in effect for El Salvador, Sudan, Haiti and Nicaragua as the case winds through court.

Closer to home, nine Haitian TPS holders filed another lawsuit to save TPS in the Eastern District of New York. They were joined by the Brooklyn-based newspaper, *Haiti Liberté*, and the Haitian rights group, the Family Action Network Movement, formerly known as Haitian Women of Miami. They too argued Trump’s move was driven by racial animus and pointed to his 2017 comment that 15,000 new Haitian immigrants “all have AIDS.”

Their case also cited emails from Trump appointees calling on offi-

cial to justify ending TPS for Haitians by downplaying health and safety concerns that had been raised by other federal officials. One responded by complaining: “The basic problem is that it IS bad there... We can ... try to get more, and/or comb through the country conditions we have again looking for positive gems, but the conditions are what they are.” Other emails obtained by the UndocuBlack Network and National Immigration Law Center show that instead of focusing on conditions in Haiti, some officials sought information on how many Haitians with TPS received public benefits. A decision in the case could come in March.

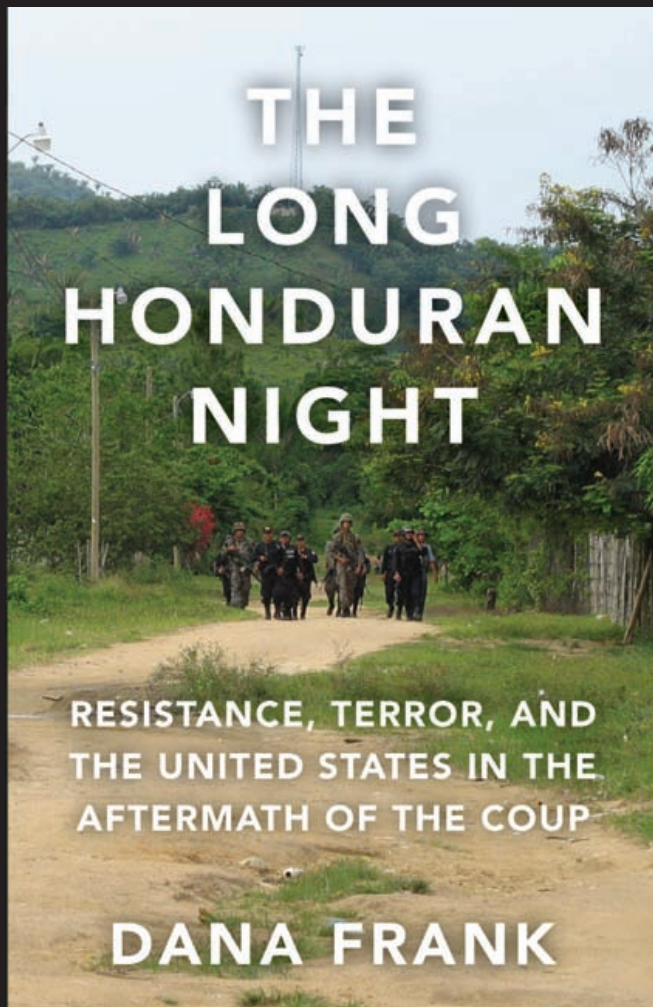
As TPS holders and their loved ones suffer uncertainty about whether the program will be continued, many braved the cold in February to march on Washington with signs that read “Residency Now!” and visit with members of Congress to ask them to take the next step: fight for them to be granted permanent legal residency.

“From Nepal to Honduras, we made a promise that we were going to be a safe haven,” Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of Queens told them at a rally in front of the White House. “We are here to make sure that all TPS recipients become permanent members of the United States of America.”

Here in New York, organizers have launched new initiatives to protect immigrants vulnerable to deportation if their TPS is not renewed. The New Sanctuary Coalition’s Sanctuary “Hood” program is engaging leaders of all faiths to encourage their communities to be safe spaces and raise funds to bond out people taken into immigration custody. The Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University and the group NYU Sanctuary are hosting a conference called “Offering Refuge, Building Solidarity: Universities as Sanctuaries.” Others are calling for New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo to keep his campaign promise and fund healthcare for all residents of the state regardless of their immigration status.

Meanwhile, senior Trump administration officials have reportedly sought to extend TPS to protect Venezuelans in the United States from being deported.

STATUS SEEKERS: On Feb. 12 thousands marched in Washington, D.C. to defend the humanitarian immigration program called Temporary Protected Status.

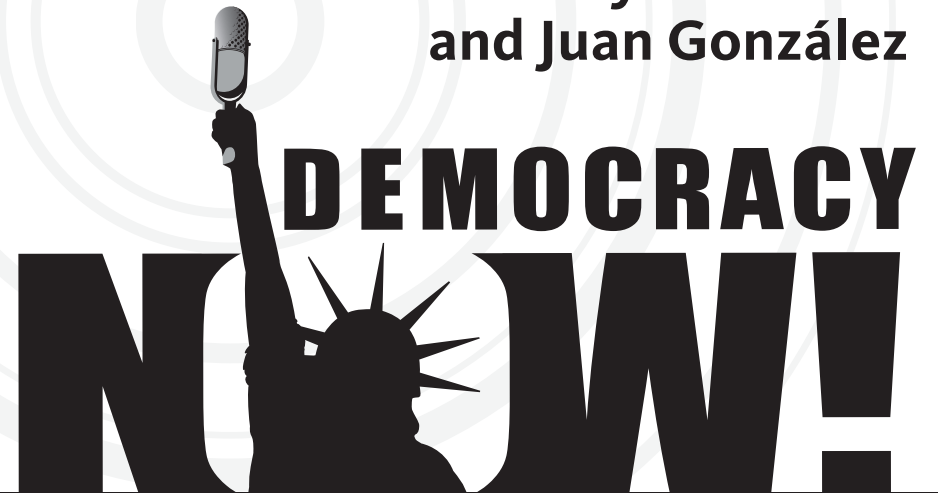


This powerful narrative recounts the dramatic years in Honduras following the June 2009 military coup that deposed President Manuel Zelaya, told in part through first-person experiences. It weaves together two broad pictures: first, the repressive regime launched with the coup with ongoing US support; and second, the brave and evolving Honduran resistance movement, with aid from a new solidarity movement in the United States.



Although it is full of terrible things, this is not a horror story: the book directly counters mainstream media portrayals of Honduras as a pit of unrelenting awfulness and unexplained violence. Rather, it's about sobering challenges with roots in political processes, and the inspiring collective strength with which people face them

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GENERAL PATTON STORMS NYCHA

BY RICO CLEFFI

Lynne Patton has been schlepping an air mattress to the apartments of various New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents since mid-February. A surly character, the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) regional administrator for the Northeast region initially took a media drubbing for her role as Eric Trump's wedding planner. One of Trump's few African-American appointees, Patton is also known for her official HUD Twitter account, an endless fusillade of MAGA spew, where she regularly vomits forth expletive-laden rants in praise of Trump and his wall, and bashes Democrats, the media and haters in general.

Patton has said she got the idea for her NYCHA excursion while watching *Crazy Rich Asians* in her Westchester Trump Plaza apartment with her pet shih tzu. The purpose of the month-long tour is, presumably, to gather information to present to incoming federal NYCHA monitor Bert Schwartz. So far, it reeks of disaster porn — Patton vacillates between referring to residents' "shithole apartments" and sobbing over a hole in a bathroom wall.

Before her stay began, Patton established a narrative of alternative facts. She started with the claim that one million residents reside in NYCHA housing, a made-up figure that doubles the largest estimates. She then set to debunking (with zero evidence) the widely accepted figure of \$32 billion needed to repair NYCHA facilities. Patton claims the \$32 billion figure is vastly inflated, and is only due to the cost of union labor. NYCHA's unionized workforce is likely to be a main target of Patton's report to the incoming federal monitor.

In keeping with HUD Secretary Ben Carson, Patton insists NYCHA does not need and will not get additional funding. The problem, she claims, is mismanagement, not money. It's a trope she repeats

in her regular appearances on *Fox and Friends* and on Twitter, where she insists Bill de Blasio is personally mismanaging the NYCHA budget. Speaking with the *Wall Street Journal* recently, Patton likened concerns over chronic disinvestment in NYCHA to "grievances by a 15-year-old who, 10 years later, is still complaining about an allowance cut at age 5."

The focus on financial mismanagement seems odd, given Sec. Carson's propensity for \$31,000 dining sets or the shady practices of Patton's former employer, the Eric Trump Foundation — currently under investigation by the New York State Attorney General for its financial dealings. And lest anyone buy into Patton's "honest reformer" image, it's worth noting that government transparency group American Oversight obtained records revealing Patton has discussed Trump Hotel business with a developer while in her HUD post on at least one occasion.

Without the necessary funding, no real improvements will come to NYCHA residents. Trump's 2019 budget proposed \$8.8 billion in cuts to HUD. Sec. Carson, who has claimed poverty is largely "a state of mind," recently called for increased privatization of public housing.

NYCHA has scrambled to make repairs in the buildings Patton is visiting, and some desperate residents are pointing to her visit as the only way they have been able to get badly needed work done. Other NYCHA residents who have dared to question Patton have been publicly berated at town hall meetings.

At one point last month, Patton took a brief furlough from slumming it as she and Frederick Douglass Houses residents' association president Carmen Quinones traveled to the White House's Black History Month fête in Washington. Local New York television news touted the "successful" meeting between Quinones, Trump and Vice President Mike Pence. Quinones remarked that she was impressed

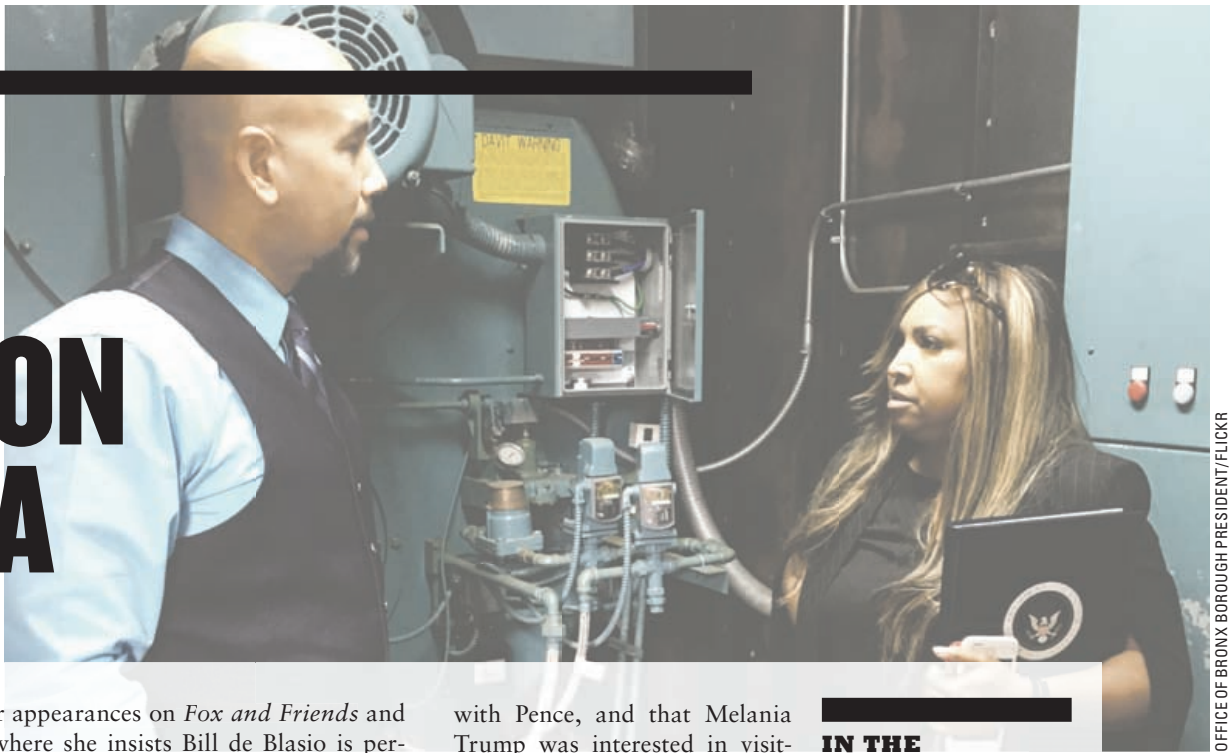
with Pence, and that Melania Trump was interested in visiting NYCHA. Whether she will wear her "I don't care, do you?" jacket is still unknown.

The whole thing brings to mind a reality show, with the half-million NYCHA residents as backdrops to Patton's careerist stunt. Perhaps the defining moment of Patton's visit came when she, her entourage and the news crews in tow overloaded an elevator in the Douglass Houses. One member of the throng accidentally hit the emergency button, causing the FDNY to come and pull everybody out. Patton seized the opportunity to rail against the state of NYCHA's elevators.

After the second week of her NYCHA stay, Patton announced on Twitter that she would be taking a week off for "3-days of mandatory meetings at HUD.gov" (*sic*). In a remarkable mix of witness intimidation and publicity hounding, she turned up at Michael Cohen's Congressional testimony. Rep. Mark Meadows (R-North Carolina) rolled Patton out as a prop to prove Trump can't possibly be racist since she is a Trump hire. Two days later the *Washington Post* reported that Patton was seeking leave from HUD to star in a reality television show. Her appearance at the Cohen hearing was a kind of audition.

As for the NYCHA residents, they are likely to see more federal budget cuts from HUD while Patton continues her career climb at their expense. It's a long way to the top and a few stalled elevators and shithole apartments are a small price to pay when you have a brand to build.

IN THE TRENCHES: "General" Lynne Patton inspects NYCHA boilers with Bronx Borough Pres. Ruben Diaz, Jr.



OFFICE OF BRONX BOROUGH PRESIDENT/FLICKR

PRISONER'S DILEMMA

Continued from page 4

- Witness depositions under the proposed legislation may only be conducted by law enforcement, government employees or experts.

Nor does Fitzpatrick seem to have any of these concerns for victims of wealthy assailants who are able to make bail. Bail is intended to curb the risk of flight, not ensure public safety, but as it stands now, there are two legal systems, one for the rich and one for the rest of us.

"We want to achieve the spirit of the legislative proposals, but we want to make sure it's done responsibly, not at the expense of victims," Albany DA David Soares, who was first elected in 2004 on a platform of reforming the state's harsh Rockefeller drug laws and now heads the District Attorneys Association, told the *New York Law Journal*. "We want to make sure we do it in a way that will be long-lasting." Soares wants the reform legislation to include more funding for local

DAs, and for them to be allowed 30 to 45 days before forking over evidence.

The current version of the bill would give defendants and their attorneys access to the state's evidence within 15 days of arraignment. Even that is too long, says VOCAL's Malinowski.

Arraignment, the first time the accused stands before a judge after being arrested, is "the most significant moment" in a case for most defendants, he says. "People go to jail. They could die. They could lose their housing. They could lose their kids. All these things could happen.

"To us it is a fundamental idea about how the system should operate that prosecutors should have some burden to produce some evidence at the very first [court] date," he adds. "Like you can't just bring somebody in, make an accusation, ruin their life and then say, 'Sorry, we had the wrong person.'"

Prosecutors commonly have police reports, surveillance video, and witness statements at their fingertips upon arraignment.

Malinowski is careful to describe what VOCAL is fighting for as legal system reform rather than criminal justice reform. While VOCAL members are part of a nationwide

movement taking on the machinery of mass incarceration, theirs is a comparatively humbler aspiration. With the federal Justice Department tough-on-crime zealots, they have turned their sights to the local level.

In Boston and Philadelphia, grassroots campaigns have led to the election of district attorneys who have pledged to be more responsive to the needs of the communities they serve rather than narrow interests of police and prosecutors. Philadelphia DA Larry Krasner began refusing to seek money bail in most cases shortly after assuming office last year.

Democrats who have long ridden into office using progressive rhetoric no longer have the Republican-controlled state Senate as an excuse for inertia. Will they bow to pressure from DAs, police and correction officers' unions, or make good on promises of change? Lawmakers must approve the governor's budget by the end of March. We should have a clearer picture when the deal-making dust clears by then or, at the latest, by the end of the legislative session June 19. Until then, the fate of future Darryl Herrings hangs in the air.

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SANDERS FACES NEW HURDLES IN SECOND WHITE HOUSE BID

BY JOHN TARLETON

“Real change never takes place from the top on down,” intones a voice with a familiar Brooklyn brogue as the music swells and a camera pans a cluster of skyscrapers. “But from the bottom on up.”

It’s the opening scene from the campaign video Bernie Sanders released on the morning of Feb. 19 when he announced he was running again for president. What followed was a fast-moving montage of news clips highlighting Sanders’ outsized influence on the Democratic Party as evidenced by growing support for Medicare For All, free college tuition and a Green New Deal. Cheers then go up from 350,000 Amazon workers who celebrate in their warehouses upon learning that their company had agreed to raise their pay to \$15, a cause vociferously championed by Sanders.

In the first 24 hours after he announced his candidacy, Sanders raised almost \$6 million from 225,000 donors for an average of, yup, \$27 per donation. The total dwarfed the first day fundraising hauls of his dozen rivals for the Democratic nomination. A week later, he announced that his campaign signed up its one millionth volunteer and counting.

By the normal metrics of the presidential horse race, Bernie Sanders would be the presumptive front-runner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. He has near universal name recognition. He has been the most popular politician in America since early 2016, according to multiple polls. He has already run one national campaign. His signature policies have gone from fringe to mainstream in the Democratic Party over the past three years. He can raise gobs of money and has a large, passionate following that will dedicate countless hours to his campaign. No other Democratic presidential contender comes close in these areas.

However, Sanders isn’t your normal presidential candidate and will once again be running against the odds. Age is part of it. He would be 79 on the day of his inauguration and despite his energetic appearance, doubts persist. He faces a large and diverse field in a party hungry for more diverse leadership. Legions of Hillary Clinton supporters still resent him for forcing her to compete for the 2016 nomination. But above all, Sanders is detested by the Democratic Party establishment and its wealthy backers such as the CEO of a giant Wall Street bank who anonymously told Politico in January “It can’t be [Elizabeth] Warren, and it can’t be Sanders.”

More than trying to win the presidency, Sanders and his movement are trying to wrest control of a major political party and reorient it dramatically to the left. Sanders is not a socialist in the same vein as his early 20th century hero Eugene Debs who championed the public ownership of industry. However, Sanders does espouse a fierce narrative of class conflict and class struggle (i.e. the political revolution)

between ordinary Americans and their “billionaire class” overlords who have rigged the economy and the political system in their favor.

The last political leader to transform a major political party was Ronald Reagan who narrowly lost the Republican presidential nomination in 1976 to incumbent Gerald Ford but captured the hearts and minds of party faithful even in defeat. The Republicans’ 1976 platform that espoused strong support for the Equal Rights Amendment and tip-toed delicately around abortion is like an artifact from a distant age. Four years later, Reagan cemented an alliance of Cold War militarists, free-market tax cutters and religious fundamentalists. This alliance swept him into power and has dominated national politics for much of the past 40 years but is now running on fumes.

Sanders will have a much harder time pulling off a similar transformation of his party given the divide between the Democrats’ grassroots base and party elites. However, those polling numbers that show him to be the most popular politician in the country suggest an intriguing roadmap forward.

A September Gallup poll showed him with a +15 favorable rating. His favorable rating with nonwhites was 64-21 percent compared to 49-46 among whites. There are similar disparities between younger voters who support Sanders and older voters who tend not to. He also does better with non-college educated whites than any other major Democratic Party figure.

These are the ingredients for a multi-racial working-class movement to compel the government to act in the interests of ordinary people, if Sanders can turn generic goodwill into votes in a crowded field.

The 2020 presidential race will be an ultra-marathon. We’re looking at 20 more months of fleeting controversies and subsequent social media outrage, email boxes clogged with urgent fundraising appeals, candidate debates that feel more like television game shows and so on. So pace yourself. But while the circus drones on, there’s an opportunity here — not a guarantee but an opportunity — to build a massive popular movement that can overcome all the obstacles thrown up by Democratic Party elites and transform politics in this country for many years to come.



I WANT YOU

THE INTERSECTIONAL BERNIE

BY LINDA MARTÍN ALCOFF

In the 2016 presidential election, Sanders was running against a viable female Democratic candidate, and both he and his supporters got grief for not backing out of the campaign, as if this was a sufficient reason. In the ensuing commotion, I was surprised to find myself called a “Bernie bro” despite years of feminist and antiracist activism and scholarship. There is no question that the term was pretty brilliant: any defense of Bernie, any critique he made of Hillary Clinton, even any reference to class politics, became proof that one was a bro who “just didn’t get it” — that is, the need to redress sexism and put gender issues first, for once.

Today Bernie is running against not only viable female Democratic candidates, but a viable black

female one as well. And in the political culture Trump has wrought, racism and sexism are worse than ever. We desperately need to diversify our political leadership. The House is 72 percent white! The Senate is 75 percent male! Almost 90 percent are Christian! These facts are the result of conscious discriminatory practices and stupid ideas that are way past their expiration date.

Yet, I’m voting for Bernie. Is it because I care about class more than race or gender? NO! It’s because I understand their connections. Their deeply intrinsic, intimate connections.

There are both structural and ideological connections between class-based forms of oppression and identity-based forms. Identity-based oppression is the kind that uses your social identity to keep you boxed in, no matter your talent or hard work. And when your identity group is kept silent and demoralized, the “deciders” are generally going to keep

the status quo secure and stable. The structural oppression of identity groups is legitimated by ideologies, and those targeted are in the best position to unravel the false claims. But rational debate will never suffice. No one is given power; as Frederick Douglass and Frantz Fanon argued, you have to take it. That means, we who suffer identity-based oppression need to set our sights on taking power.

Class-based oppressions work similarly: upper classes have more say, and their say is skewed toward protecting their own power. But class is an importantly different kind of identity in two ways: first, you can change your class, unlike (in most cases) your social identity, and second, our goal as progressives is to eliminate or seriously transform class, not simply ensure its proportional representation. So the ugly moniker “classism” has never

Continued on next page

VOTE FOR A MOVEMENT

BY GAN GOLAN

In 2020 I will not be voting for any politicians.

Yes, you heard that correctly. I am not voting for any of the individuals running. An unpopular position when so much is at stake, I know.

That said, I definitely will be voting and what I will be voting for is not any individual with an ego massive enough to believe they should be president, but for a mass movement, because nothing short of a mass popular movement is going to be able to confront the

deeply entrenched forces that need to be overturned if we are going to build a more just society and, frankly, survive as a species.

Personally, I am not interested in the changes these individuals proclaim they will enact once they are in office. If they are not authentically used to working as part of or building popular political movements with enough power to actually impact the system, then there is little that they are actually going to achieve. What’s more, I think they know it. Empty promises are easy to make.

So this election season I won’t be paying much attention to individual personality traits, haircuts,

gaffes, fashion choices, infighting, pundits, scandals, choice in pets, dietary habits, religious affiliation, leaky emails or even recently adopted policy positions.

What I will be looking for is whether any of these folks have a clear strategy for helping to build a movement of millions of people who are willing to go knocking on people’s doors before the election, and then kick down the doors of power after the election.

If any one of these candidates are doing THAT, then I will not only use my vote to build that movement, I will spend my days before and after my vote working my butt off for it.

I have no interest in giving power to people who want it but don’t know how to build it.

In 2020, don’t vote for a candidate. Vote for a movement.

Gan Golan is an artist, cultural organizer and New York Times bestselling author.

A MEME FOR ALL SEASONS

BY NICHOLAS POWERS

Who knew Bernie could dance so well? On the *Ellen Show*, Drake’s “Hotline Bling” aired and an actor playing the senator just got down. He dipped, stripped his jacket off and got spanked. The audience fell out laughing.

In 2015, Bernie was everywhere. I saw Gay Pride Bernie, Burning Man Bernie, Angry Birds Bernie, Thug Life Bernie. No presidential candidate had inspired this feverish popular culture, re-mixing since Obama’s 2008 campaign. People chose Bernie like they chose Obama; he was their mirror.

Now in 2019, Bernie runs again but in a richly diverse presidential race. The field is packed tight with female senators and senators of color. Can progressives, identify with an old, white, straight

male? Isn’t he passé? The answer is yes, we can. Unlike the others, whose liberal identity politics mask a moderate agenda; Sanders strikes fear into Wall Street. The people know it. They won’t care if he’s white, old, straight or male, they will simply transform his image into their own. They’ll own Bernie.

POLITICAL TINDER

“It’s hard to catch lightning in a bottle twice,” David Brooks said on *PBS NewsHour*, “He was the shiny new penny but now there are a lot of people with the same policy positions. You would think a younger, more diverse version of Bernie Sanders would be the ticket.” He’s right. Other candidates lip-sync Bernie’s New Deal platform, they say some form of Medicare for All and free college but add the powerful symbolism of being the first woman or

woman of color or a minority president.

In a warped form of political Tinder, voters can swipe left or right for candidates who look good until you read their records. Here’s Sen. Kamala Harris holding handcuffs, saying, “Want to go to jail?” Swipe left. Here’s Sen. Cory Booker eating a salad made of money saying, “Wall Street has been good to me.” Swipe Left. Here’s Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand lost in a hall of mirrors that give back a reflection of Hillary Clinton. Swipe left.

Bernie’s the last one. In every photo, he’s rages at the machine, his hair flying. In the oldest one, he’s a young man in a black-and-white photo arrested for protesting racial segregation. And then you fall in love again. Bernie. Swipe right.

Continued on next page

WHY I STILL DON’T FEEL THE BERN

BY GERALD MEYER

The right candidate to represent the Democratic Party for president, in 2020, is the candidate who can unify the party while moving it leftward. Bernie Sanders is not that candidate.

Like Sanders, I am a 77-year-old white male who grew up in a working-class home where money was always tight and would go on to become a committed, lifelong leftist. Yet I’ve never felt the Bern. Why is that?

In his mid-20s, Sanders chose

to move to the small, overwhelmingly white state of Vermont. His political career would flourish in that environment, but his inability to connect with Black and Latino voters was painfully obvious when he stepped onto the national stage in 2015 to run against Hillary Clinton.

He started his 2016 presidential campaign without a single African-American or Latino senior staff person and only made half-hearted efforts to correct that blunder. His campaign focused on large rallies that attracted predominantly-white audiences of students and other relatively young people. Evidence of his concern for, even awareness of, wom-

en, gays and lesbians was paltry. As a result, he garnered relatively few votes from the very groups most committed to the Democratic Party.

Sanders’ did best in states that selected their delegates by caucuses. These bodies met for long hours in the evenings and often required public affirmations of participants’ loyalties to one or another candidate. These supposedly democratic institutions effectively excluded mothers with small children, workers on evening or night shifts and the still larger numbers of voters who were intimidated by this process. In those states with caucus systems, on average, only 10 percent of the

eligible Democratic voters participated. It is welcome news that the Democratic Party has changed its rules for 2020 to make it easier for people to participate in the caucuses without having to be physically present.

Sanders’ campaign, like Ralph Nader’s before him, drove a wedge between progressives — especially young, white males — and the great masses of Democratic voters. These divisions carry with them the mutant seeds of internal feuding and factionalism. The left in America should struggle for the maximum possible unity within

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THE INTERSECTIONAL BERNIE

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worked for me: class oppression is not analogous to race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, or other forms of social identities. Some may want to eliminate some of these, but most of us just want to be able to breathe and vote and be taken seriously when we speak and wear whatever we damn well please.

Bernie Sanders today, as always, actually represents our best hope for redressing both forms of oppression: those that are class based, and those that are identity based. Like many people here, one of my identities is as an immigrant. And like most, I feel connected to two countries, two nations. Another sadly shared experience I have is that one of the countries I feel attached to was bombed by the other one, during the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989. This was one of the most horrible experiences of my life: my family was in mortal danger, and I was behind enemy lines.

Bernie Sanders has often been the only voice in Congress calling out imperial actions in Latin America. He rejects “American exceptionalism” and has made it clear that the United States cannot expect to dominate the world and then claim to be on the side of democracy. He regularly reminds us about the U.S. overthrow of Iran’s democratically elected president in 1953, Chile’s democratically-elected president in 1973, and brings up the U.S. support for what he rightfully calls “murderous regimes” in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s. Who else does that? In his 2017 speech on foreign policy, Bernie characterized the United States as serving global democracy only some of the time, while at other times undermining it, and he suggested we need to build partnership between peoples, not (just) governments. Further, he linked U.S. authoritarianism abroad with its concentration of wealth at home.

I wish he was stronger at times; I wish he’d call the humanitarian aid to Venezuela the ruse that it is, and demand an end to the sanctions. I wish his opposition to Israel was more robust. But in the past 40 years, Bernie’s vocal, consistent and sometimes emotional criticism of U.S. covert and overt actions in Latin America and elsewhere in the global south has won my trust and my loyalty. And he gets the link between U.S. imperial actions and its economic designs. As a Latin American, I trust him as much or more than any other political leader in my lifetime.

I believe that Bernie’s passionate commitment to end identity-based oppression is connected to his own Jewish identity. His father’s side of the family that lived in German-occupied Poland was wiped out by the Nazis about the time he was born. He grew up unavoidably aware of how your social identity can keep you boxed in, or worse, subject to annihilation. As a friend put it, this is not your average white dude’s experience.

The real reason we aim for better representation of diverse identities in our political leadership is because we know we need better idea representation. We need people whose experiences inform their frameworks and motivations and values. Bernie’s got it all. I’m voting for him.

Linda Martín Alcoff is a professor of philosophy at Hunter College. She is the author of The Future of Whiteness and Rape and Resistance.

A MEME FOR ALL SEASONS

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I’LL BE YOUR MIRROR

“We are all in this together,” Bernie said on CNN, “The truth is ... when you hurt, when your children hurt, I hurt. I believe that’s what human nature is.” In six words, he summed up his philosophy. We are living mirrors, reflecting one another until dehumanizing ideology teaches us to toss away people like garbage. His philosophy was in action in 2016 when he campaigned in the Brownsville Housing Projects in Brooklyn. A reporter asked why, he said, “It is absurd to have 38 percent of African American children living in poverty.”

Bernie’s face, mirrors our reality. His furrowed brow or sucked-in lip reflect the impatience or sarcasm that are etched deep into him by years of anger at a cruel system. His feelings at inequality reflect ours. It creates a magnetism that pulls us over differences in skin color or culture and lets buried hope rise to the surface. You find yourself rooting for a man who looks nothing like you. But somehow looks at the world the way you do.

At the 2016 rallies, I saw thousands of enthusiasts wearing Bernie hats, Bernie shirts, Bernie signs and Bernie hairpieces. They so identified with him, they wore his name and hair like sacred talismans. Politics incites the same passions as sports and religions. Strangers bond over shared symbols. That’s nothing new.

What’s new and strange and wild is the populist turn, people did not just identify with him but remade him into their image. At rallies or on websites or on stickers at coffee shops, I saw Bernie become like Janus, his new faces sculpted by many hands. He was gay Bernie in Rainbow Pride colors. Or Jedi Bernie welding a lightsaber. Or Captain America Bernie, punching Hitler Trump. Or Run DMC Bernie, who is tougher than leather. Or Hip-Hop Bernie where he is photoshopped into gold necklace dangling scenes.

Wherever we lived, however we lived, we made Bernie into us. It’s a small but important reversal. Instead of power coming from identifying with a “leader”, it came from making the leader look like us. Bernie’s political revolution is authentically democratic. It belongs to our imagination, the very place where new worlds are born.

What we see is so far beyond tepid, liberal incrementalism. When we take control of his image, we learn how to take control of a part of the world that with each victory becomes a bigger and bigger part. If we win, we win against no healthcare, against deep poverty, against climate change, against student debt. We win the survival of our species.

LET A THOUSAND BERNIES BLOOM

I thought maybe he wouldn’t run. His age is a factor. His politics demand we unlearn cynicism and dream again. And that’s scary.

Maybe it was too late? Candidates have jumped into the race like sharks that smelled blood in the water. Trump was weakened. The Republicans lost the House. As each one announced, you could see the hunger for power in their smiles.

It felt like business as usual. The new gimmick is minority Democrats who mouth New Deal bromides but will tack center if they get the nomination. How do we know? Wall Street loves Booker and Harris and Gillibrand. Wall Street is terrified of Bernie and Elizabeth Warren. I trust my enemies. If they hate Bernie, we can trust him.

Maybe he didn’t want to run? Every time “Hotline Bling” played on the radio, which is too often, it was like Drake channeled Bernie. He was asking why we were “getting nasty for someone else?” I was like, “Bernie, call us, even if it’s late. It can only mean one thing.”

And then I heard from people in the know that he was going to announce. “Word? Really? No. Can’t be. Really?” I got a warm cozy feeling. Like sipping hot chocolate in winter. “Bernie’s back?”

Then a friend sent a link to me. I opened it. “I am going to run for president,” Bernie said on *CBS This Morning*. No, I thought. We are all running now.

Nicholas Powers is a Professor of African American Literature at SUNY-Old Westbury and author of The Ground Below Zero.

WHY I STILL DON’T FEEL THE BERN

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the Democratic Party. This can be achieved by fighting for those gains that overarch the various groups that belong to the Democratic Party.

Now Sanders is running again. If he is to fare better this time, he will have to show he can win over groups that previously spurned him, especially African Americans, the party’s single most loyal voting bloc. Socialism by and for white people is not a socialism I want to be a part of.

Gerald Meyer is a Professor Emeritus of History at Hostos Community College and co-chair of the Vito Marcantonio Forum. He is the author of Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician 1902-1954.

ANTIDOTE FOR A BROKEN SYSTEM

MEDICARE FOR ALL GAINS SUPPORT

BY STEVEN WISHNIA

“It’s a moral issue,” Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.) declared outside the Capitol on Feb. 27. “Isn’t it time?”

She and Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) were leading a rally to announce the introduction of H.R. 1384, The Medicare for All Act of 2019. The odds are virtually nil that the bill would pass the Republican-majority Senate or not get vetoed by Donald Trump — but if it were enacted, it would create a system far more comprehensive than Medicare.

“Every individual who is a resident of the United States is entitled to benefits for healthcare services under this Act,” the bill states.

The legislation would expand Medicare to all Americans within two years. And unlike Medicare, which covers only about 80 percent of medical expenses, it would have no copayments, insurance premiums, or deductibles for either medical care or prescription drugs. It would cover dental, vision and mental healthcare. And it would also include long term care for the elderly and disabled, with a preference for in-home care rather than putting people in nursing homes, Jayapal said.

“We are the only major country that does not guarantee healthcare,” she told the crowd. “We don’t want you to spend hours on the phone with insurance companies, go to a doctor or a hospital and be told it’s out of network, and then get hit with a \$20,000 bill.”

The bill would eliminate most private insurance, forbidding companies from offering coverage that duplicated Medicare. The system would also negotiate with pharmaceutical companies to bring prices down, which Medicare is currently forbidden to do.

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AMONG THE WORLD’S universal healthcare systems, the Medicare model is closest to those in Canada, Taiwan and South Korea. The government — the “single payer” — pays the bulk of the bills to private providers. The United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark have a more socialist system, in which most hospitals are government-owned and most doctors employees on salary. Germany, France and Israel provide care through a network of private but tightly regulated nonprofit insurance companies. Germany’s dates back to Chancellor Otto von Bismarck’s regime in the 1880s. They are paid for by a mix of public funds and contributions from employers and workers that varies from country to country. People can also buy private insurance to cover additional services.

For the United States, a Medicare-style system is “the most elegant way” to achieve universal care, says Mark Dudzic of the Labor Campaign for Single Payer, a coalition of 14 labor unions. It’s “easy to implement and probably has the greatest efficiency,” as it builds on the existing Medicare system and allows people to choose their own doctors.

Like Britain’s National Health Service and France’s national health system, the current U.S. system emerged

after World War II. But the idea of a universal national healthcare system — proposed in Congress in 1943 by Rep. John Dingell Sr. (D-Mich.), along with Senators Robert Wagner (D-N.Y.) and James Murray (D-Mont.), and endorsed by President Harry Truman in 1949 — was blocked by opposition to “socialized medicine.”

Instead, a system of employer-provided insurance developed. That left out the elderly, the unemployed and the working poor. Those gaps were partially filled by Medicare and Medicaid, enacted in 1965-66 — although President Lyndon Johnson’s original intent that Medicaid cover the lower working class got wiped out by the Vietnam War — and the 1997 Children’s Health Insurance Program, which covered some low-income children.

Rep. John Dingell Jr., John Dingell Sr.’s son and Debbie Dingell’s late husband, regularly introduced single-payer bills during his 59 years in the House. More recently, Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) began sponsoring H.R. 676, which would have set up a single-payer system, in 2003, and Sen. Bernie Sanders made it a core issue of his 2016 presidential campaign. The 120-page Jayapal-Dingell bill fleshes out the concept.

Meanwhile, the Affordable Care Act, signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2010, expanded Medicaid to cover the working poor, and made buying health insurance semi-compulsory, with subsidies for those who couldn’t afford the full cost. But its partial success made clear where it fell short. The United States still spends close to twice as much of its gross domestic product on healthcare as countries such as France. Private insurance’s administration and profits consume 18 to 20 percent of its spending, compared with 2 to 3 percent for Medicare, says Dr. Oliver Fein, chair of the New York Metro chapter of Physicians for a National Health Program.

There are still about 28 million people with no health insurance and more than 40 million “underinsured,” people whose plans have such high deductibles and copayments that they can’t get care. Almost two-thirds of personal bankruptcies in the United States are because of medical bills, and three-fourths of those people had insurance, says Fein.

Ironically, Obamacare attacked the most comprehensive insurance plans by levying a 40 percent tax on coverage deemed too costly, although that surcharge has been delayed from 2018 to 2022.

The for-profit system is the root of the problem, Fein adds. In order to sell their plans to employers at the lowest cost, he explains, insurance companies have to erect barriers to using care: copayments, deductibles, “narrow networks” that include a limited number of health providers, and requiring prior approval for all but the most basic care.

Andy Brodock of Michigan told the Capitol rally that after his late wife was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer at the age of 28, she lost her insurance after she got too sick to work. When he was able to get her covered, she missed chemotherapy because she was arguing with the insurance company about whether it would pay for it.

Taking away the link between employment and

healthcare would be “a huge liberation for both employers and workers,” says Dudzic. Insurance is a major expense for employers that provide it. Richard Master, CEO of MCS Industries, a Pennsylvania-based picture-frame manufacturer, told the Capitol rally the company’s premiums average \$13,500 a year per employee.

Dudzic rejects the argument that eliminating private insurance would hurt people who like their current plans. “My experience is that people hate their insurance companies,” he says. “The only thing they hate more is the fear of going without insurance.”

In any case, he adds, the current system denies most people security. Nonunion employers can reduce coverage unilaterally and union employers regularly demand givebacks.

“Health care has been an issue in every collective-bargaining contract I have seen in the last two decades,” American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten said at the Capitol rally.

The Medicare for All Act has more than 100 co-sponsors, all Democrats. It faces opposition from Republicans, who are ideologically opposed to the government providing for the general welfare, and insurance and pharmaceutical companies, who would lose billions of dollars.

It will also likely face indifference from centrist Democrats who contend it’s a politically unachievable ideal. They offer options such as giving people between 50 and 64 the option of buying into Medicare — but that would not cost that much less per month than private insurance, nor help younger people.

“A majority of Americans are fed up with incremental tweaks to the current broken system,” National Nurses United head Bonnie Castillo said in a statement Feb. 26. Rep. Jayapal told the Capitol rally that given the scale of our health crisis, bold changes are needed to “tackle the deep sickness in our for-profit system.”

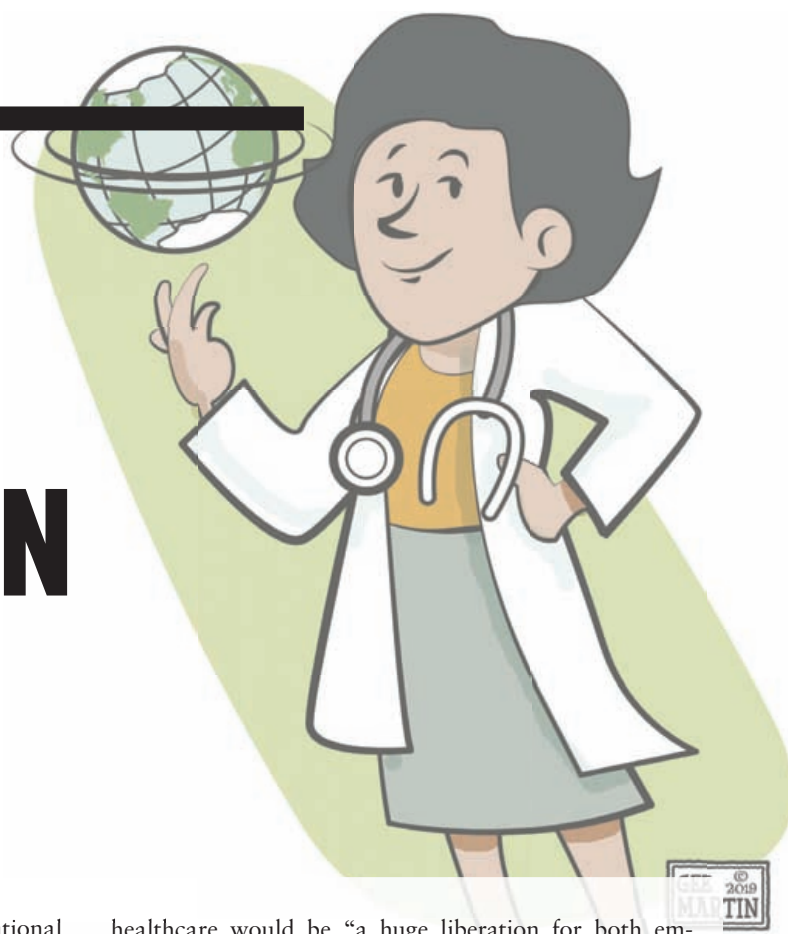
The free market simply doesn’t work in healthcare, where not purchasing a product that costs too much can be life-threatening, Fein argues. “Using price transparency as a way to control costs is not a feasible idea. Not in medicine,” he says. “Therapeutic decisions shouldn’t be made on the basis of cost.”

Doctors, not patients, are usually the ones who make those decisions, especially in emergency situations, he adds.

Physicians for a National Health Program would also like to see the government buy out for-profit providers such as hospitals and nursing homes. “The evidence is that they really do provide inferior care,” he says.

The odds of getting Medicare for All passed may be nil in the current Congress, says Fein, but that could change after the 2020 election. In 1962-63, he notes, “no one thought Medicare would be passed.”

“We’re going to see enormous resistance,” he adds, “so there’s going to have to be a really strong popular movement.”



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'THE NATURAL WAY TO GO'

NEW YORKERS CHILLAXED ABOUT SOCIALIST TAKEOVER

BY ERIN SHERIDAN & DEAN PATTERSON
ALL PHOTOS BY ERIN SHERIDAN

Until a few years ago, socialism was considered a fringe idea in U.S. politics. Now, it's widely talked about, though what exactly is meant by the "S" word is often unclear.

Worker control of the of the economy and its bounty? Or an expanded social safety net and investments in public infrastructure paid for by taxing the rich? Marx and Engels? Or AOC and Bernie Sanders?

Whatever it is, President Trump vowed in his State of the Union address last month that the United States will "never, ever" be a socialist country. However, when we asked people on the streets of New York what they thought, we found little fear of socialism and a fair amount of acceptance. As for Bernie, opinions were mixed.

BRIAN WALLS, Gowanus-Carroll Gardens

I don't have a problem with democratic socialists. I think socialism gets a bit of a bad reputation. The way the world is headed, I think there's going to be no choice. Government has to be more supportive of the people. The idea that if you take care of the businesses, and then the businesses will take care of the people doesn't exist anymore. So I think that socialism is the natural way we have to go.

Nonetheless, I'm not thrilled about Bernie, to be honest with you. It feels like it's ego driven at this point. I think he missed his shot. I don't think he's really bringing anything new to the Democratic Party. I wish, but it just doesn't feel right to me.

ELIJAH NICHOLSON, Fort Greene

I don't know too much about socialism but I feel like Bernie is just trying to get us to become one. The world is tiresome, we're tired of fighting. We can't do this on our own. For him to come back after what happened in 2016, that says a lot. He doesn't care about all the propaganda. He has a message that he's trying to get across. If he's as strong as he was then, he's going to get it done. As far as taxes on wealthy people go, I feel like that's equal. People working on minimum wage still get taxed significantly but the people who have millions and billions should be taxed more. It has to be fair. Everybody should lose a little bit depending on their income in order to help all of us in the long run. We can do it.

JENNIFER, NYU

I'm definitely interested in the idea of socialism. I think it's clear that the system of capitalism in this country is not working very effectively. I actually saw Bernie Sanders come speak last semester right here. He's a great candidate and I'll be excited to see how the primaries turnout. Socialism means a lot depending on who is interpreting it. I know some countries have enacted it in very different ways. I think the actual conversation is, "What does socialism mean for the United States of America?" Platforms like health-care for all, expanding programs that already exist like the WIC program [Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) | Food and Nutrition Service], food stamps and things like that and creating a net of social security is what that would mean for us.

DEE DEE OUELLETTE, Miami, Florida

I'm probably more for socialism than not. There are a lot of institutional things that all my life have been wrong with the government. Education and health-care are things that should not have to go out and pay for on our own. Over the course of my life, people would say, "You're a socialist." I would say, "OK. If that's what I've morphed into, so be it. It is what it is." I just think that those things should not be run as businesses. Those corporate ideas are not us. You have to separate corporations from the government. The government is supposed to provide for its people. All that said, as much as I like Bernie and his ideas, I think that we need somebody else.

OULIMATA BA, Harlem

Allot of people fear the world socialism. I don't think that it's anything to be feared. I think with socialism comes a lot of benefits for a lot of people, like national healthcare and free college education for everyone. I'm not as frightened by that idea. My idea of socialism goes back to the notion of "everybody is created equal."

SHEILA GOWAN, Upstate

I don't like the idea of socialism. I think it's wrong-headed economically. It's taking from the rich and giving to the poor. I believe in the American way of making your own and hiring people and giving them jobs and "making it." There aren't any candidates in the race who I identify with right now. It's bad all around. Bad. I certainly hope that America will never be a socialist country.



CLASS COMPROMISE

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY SPREADS THE WEALTH BUT IS HOBbled BY CONTRADICTIONS

BY STEVEN SHERMAN

With Bernie Sanders reentering the presidential primary race, expect critiques of social democracy to surface. Social democracy involves the expansion of government to meet needs of working people and to redistribute wealth. As Sanders promotes policies like single-payer healthcare, a higher estate tax, enlargement of Social Security and the Green New Deal (rather than the abolition of profit taking), he can be fairly described as a social democrat.

Three critiques of social democracy are that, first, by leaving intact the power of the business class, it allows them to regroup and wipe out the gains made by the working class; second, as a set of policies primarily viable in wealthier countries, it leaves intact and sustains itself off of global inequality; and third, that it is only viable in countries with racially homogeneous populations where working-class frustrations cannot be redirected downward at minority populations. Put another way, while the New Deal, the closest the United States has gotten to social democracy, could triumph when the working class was largely white, it was undone when the same white workers were turned against African Americans from the late Sixties on.

To break these critiques down, there is something of a sampling problem involved in assertions that social democracy works better in racially homogeneous societies. In the heyday of social democratic initiatives, between the end of World War II and the 1970s, most European countries were relatively homogenous. They were also wealthy enough to sustain such programs and be close allies of the United States. In the more heterogeneous countries of the global South, there have been many coalitions that have come together to support social democratic initiatives, but they are much more politically vulnerable to outside interference, often sponsored by the United States, and more economically vulnerable to steep downturns. The recent experience of Brazil, which was moving in a social democratic direction, and then dramatically reversed course after an economic downturn became a political crisis, is relevant here. Then there is the United States, the most racially diverse wealthy country between 1945 and the 1970s, and also the least social democratic.

A big part of the reason is that U.S. corporations were, for a time, so profitable that social democratic benefits were distributed through corporate

work contracts, reducing pressure for government intervention. The New Deal coalition was indeed fissured along racial and class lines, with many white workers rejecting leadership seen as both too sympathetic to African Americans and indifferent to their own nationalistic and religious priorities, i.e. too grounded in the college-educated professional strata — the terrain of JFK, Barack Obama, Michael Dukakis and Hillary Clinton. Even so, social democratic government programs such as Social Security and Medicare have tended to fair better than the once relatively generous work contracts. It does not seem like so much of a stretch that some of those white workers might be won to a fighting social democratic coalition grounded in the multiracial working class. No iron laws of history need to be invoked one way or the other about those prospects.

In theory, social democratic programs can redistribute the wealth of a country without affecting the hierarchy of the global economic system in the least. If so, it is hard to see why leftists should oppose using the wealth within the borders to pay for health care and education rather than billionaires' yachts. As a practical matter, the period associat-

left untouched by redistributive programs, will rebel when economic downturns and growing popular demands pinch profits too much. Indeed, this is the story of the 1970s and the world we have been living in ever since. Clearly, strategies must be developed to permanently weaken the capacity of the capitalist class to act, on both a global and national scale. In the United States, where public corporations dominate the economy, one strategy might be to halt the practice of conflating shareholders with "owners" and instead demand that other stakeholders — workers, communities corporations are based in and environmental advocates — play a role in corporate governance. Warren's proposal that workers should sit on corporate boards would be a step in that direction, although it would have to be expanded. Other proposals might include imposing a maximum wage, say \$800,000, which would limit the ability of CEOs to amass the fortunes that they employ to exercise political power and expanding the public sector. The latter should include provisions to make public enterprises democratically controlled by stakeholders in order to make privatization difficult. The United States could exercise its

WHEN THE BUSINESS CLASS REBELS, SOCIAL DEMOCRACY IS IN TROUBLE.

ed with social democracy (1945-1970s) was one in which there was relatively more oxygen for national development experiments in countries of the Global South due to the practice of fixed exchange rates. The total effect didn't change global inequality much, but was clearly preferable to the debt-oriented straight jacket imposed once the global business community had gotten its act together to fight back. Today, Sanders is the sole presidential candidate who has talked about cutting defense and pursuing a more cautious foreign policy. Sanders has called for a global progressive movement.

In the case of a Sanders' presidency, the labor movement would likely feel the wind at its back. During the social democratic era, the American labor movement closely aligned itself with Cold War priorities, but over the last couple of decades, it has been more open to international solidarity efforts. One wonders if those efforts might bloom with a strengthened labor movement grounded in the multiracial working class. A social democratic presidency seems like the best thing that could happen in the United States for a movement against global inequality.

A third criticism is that the capitalist class, if

power worldwide to crack down on tax havens that enable capital flight.

The New Deal, the closest the United States ever came to social democracy, offered considerable security to much of the working class and, in ways little appreciated, opened up pathways for the civil-rights and feminist movements. It is tragic that it succumbed to racism, the backlash of business and being tethered to U.S. foreign policy. As a new era of reforms seems near, this should spur thinking as to how to creatively overcome these challenges, rather than dismiss those who have begun to reopen fundamental questions.



HACHENLITTOR/DAVID

LESSONS FROM THE FBI'S SECRET WAR ON ACTIVISM

BY MICHAEL STEVEN SMITH

The Federal Bureau of Investigation tried to destroy left organizations and the black freedom movement during the last major upsurge in radical politics in this country, in the 1960s. It looks like they are trying to do it again.

The bureau's Cointelpro (Counterintelligence Program) was a secret operation carried out against left-wing groups from 1956 to 1971. It first targeted the Communist Party, and was expanded to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1961 and the "New Left" in 1968. In a secret 1968 memo, longtime FBI director J. Edgar Hoover directed his agents to "expose, disrupt and otherwise neutralize the activities of various New Left organizations. We must frustrate every effort of these groups and individuals to consolidate their forces or to recruit new or faithful adherents."

Hoover directed his venom especially at the black movement, writing that "we must prevent the rise of a new black messiah." The FBI and its accomplices in the Chicago Police Department admitted to the 1969 assassination of Chicago socialist and Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton along with his bodyguard Mark Clark. The circumstances around the murders of Martin Luther King, Jr. — who was harassed by the FBI for years — and Malcolm X remain suspicious.

Although Cointelpro was ended after it was exposed in 1971, and the FBI investigation of the SWP ended in 1976, their practices of government surveillance, infiltration and disruption of radical groups have never gone away.

Most of what we know about Cointelpro resulted from a lawsuit, *Socialist Workers Party v. The Attorney General*, which the SWP filed in 1973 through its attorney Leonard Boudin, the finest movement constitutional litigator of his time. In 1986, a federal judge in Manhattan awarded the party \$264,000 in damages. The case is extraordinarily important today, when socialist ideas are growing in popularity and socialists are getting elected to office for the first time in almost 100 years.

The FBI first investigated the SWP in 1940. When the bureau added it to Cointelpro in 1961, a secret memorandum said the party had been "openly espousing its line on a local and national basis through running candidates for public office and strongly directing and/or supporting causes such as Castro's Cuba and integration problems arising in the South."

The discovery aspect of the SWP lawsuit took eight years and yielded an astounding 10 million pages of documents. The judge told Boudin, "You are not going to believe what's in these documents."

The SWP was a Trotskyist group that traced its origins back to the anti-World War I left wing of the Socialist party led by Eugene Victor Debs. It advocated

for a democratic form of socialism unlike what existed in the Soviet Union. At its peak, it had 3,000 members, including its youth group. It had a weekly newspaper, a monthly magazine, an international news service, a publishing house and owned a five-story headquarters in an old ship repair building in the West Village. It had chapters in most major cities and on many college campuses. It helped organize some of the largest demonstrations against the Vietnam War.

The 1986 trial took three months. What was proven? The FBI had used 300 infiltrators and 1,300 informants over a 15-year period, and burglarized SWP offices and members' homes more than 200 times. Wiretaps had been employed for 20,000 days and listening devices for 12,000. Landlords were contacted in an effort to get people evicted and workplaces were visited in order to get people fired.

The agents were also instructed to stir up mistrust in the movement and create antagonistic factions inside the party, such as by sending anonymous letters to a prominent black SWP member insisting that he and his fellow "party monkeys" should leave and join the Black Panthers. Agents tried to get the party to engage in illegal activities, such as by handing out flyers at an antiwar demonstration calling the SWP and other organizers cowards for not want-

ing to get "battle wounds" fighting the "pigs."

The 1986 victory was historic. The federal court decision held that advocating for socialism and being in a socialist organization were legal, ruling that "these disruption operations were directed at the kind of political activities that the SWP had a constitutional right to carry out."

"For the first time the FBI's disruptions, surreptitious entries and use of informers have been found unconstitutional," the *Nation Magazine* wrote. "All in all, it amounted to a domestic contra operation against a peaceful political organization, for no reason other than its ideological orientation."

The FBI had played its role as the "political police of the national government," Noam Chomsky wrote. The federal government, represented by then-U.S. Attorney Rudolph Giuliani, maintained to the bitter end that it had a right to undermine an organization just because of its ideas. No government official who participated in the campaign against the SWP was ever prosecuted, and no congressional hearings were ever held.

In the post-9/11 era, even the modest legal restraints that were imposed on law enforcement surveillance and infiltration of political activity during the 1970s have

been tossed aside. The surveillance state has grown ever larger with the creation of a Department of Homeland Security that works closely with the FBI and local police departments to monitor lawful political dissent.

The FBI has already infiltrated mosques and admitted to a program targeting those whom they call "black identity extremists," that is, black people organizing to oppose police violence. Under Obama, the FBI and Homeland Security worked closely with local police departments in the fall of 2011 to monitor and later break up Occupy encampments in various cities.

We need to build solid organizations that can withstand government attempts at disruption. Here are some key practices to remember:

- *We should not advocate anything illegal, keeping in mind that the government will try to put the onus of violence on us rather on itself where it belongs.*
- *Don't say anything on social media or other electronic communications you would*

not want the government to see. They have access to all of it when they want it.

- *Within our social movements, don't turn political disagreements into personal feuds. Don't engage in needlessly disruptive behavior — and be wary of those who do so on a regular basis. The government has a long history of using infiltrators to sow strife within leftist organizations.*

Socialism is no longer a dirty word. We are growing in numbers and strength. It would be naïve to think that the powers that be are not cognizant of the threats to their power and privilege and are not taking steps to block it.

Michael Steven Smith is a past board member of the Center for Constitutional Rights. He co-hosts the nationally broadcast weekly radio show Law & Disorder with Heidi Boghosian and is the author of the forthcoming book Lawyers For the Left: In the Courts, In the Streets, and On the Air, to be published by OR Books.



PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

LAST TIME AROUND: A Feb. 19, 1970 antiwar demonstration turns violent following the conviction of the Chicago 8.

WE CAN BUILD SOLID ORGANIZATIONS THAT WITHSTAND GOVERNMENT ATTEMPTS AT DISRUPTION.

LOVE VS. HATE

THE SWASTIKA HAS TRAVELED FAR FROM ITS ORIGINAL EASTERN MEANING

BY MANVI JALAN

Growing up, two swastikas drawn by hand in sandalwood orange were painted on the corridor walls of my aunt's home — not unusual in a Hindu household. Swastika literally translates to “well-being” in Sanskrit, symbolising prosperity and balance. But the rise of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalism in India is beginning to give the swastika the darker connotation it carries throughout the rest of the world.

I have always denied Hitler's swastika has anything to do with Hinduism. The sacred symbol has been used not just by Hindus but by Buddhists and Jains, and made its way out of the Indian subcontinent and into the Western imagination as an emblem of prosperity and good luck long before it was reappropriated by Hitler. It was used to sell everything from fruit to Coca-Cola in early 20th-century America. The Girl Scout's magazine was called the *Swastika*.

In Vedic feng shui, known as *vastu shashtra*, the geometry of the swastika is believed to invite balance, life and prosperity in the home. It is commonly painted on the doors of most Indian homes, whether its inhabitants are deeply religious or not.

Growing up in this context, there has always been a marked difference in the Hindu swastika and Hitler's warped version. For me, Hitler's version of the swastika or *hakenkreuz* (hooked cross) symbolized an atrocious moment in global history when the dormant hatred in humanity rose and nearly conquered the world. In stark contrast, the benign Hindu swastika serves as a reminder to me of the love that lives in us all.

This distinction is true even for the Indian Jewish community. Hitler simply reappropriated an Indian symbol. The *hakenkreuz* has never been a representation of our history or culture. Writer and activist, Jael Silliman's personal experience is a testament to this. “As an Indian Jew, I separate the two swastikas entirely,” she writes. “I empathize with the European Jewish experience but it is not my trauma.”

It was not until I moved to the United States that I realized the swastika's power as an emblem of hatred is still very much alive. In Trump's America, neo-Nazis feel safe enough to come out of hiding and the swastika is their

preferred calling card. In one instance, the symbol was spray painted in orange on the walls of a Jewish professor's office at Columbia University. The act betrayed the ignorance of the perpetrators in more ways than one. In Hinduism, orange or saffron — the color of fire — represents purity. The vandals unintentionally blessed the professor if we go by Hindu philosophy.

Meanwhile, Modi's ascent has forced me to reconsider the swastika's meaning in my home country. His virulent religious nationalism has deepened the divide between Hindu and Muslim communities, with rates of violence and hate crimes against minorities rising after he came into power in 2014.

It is convenient for the Hindu elite to ignore the chain reaction of systemic hate because it affects the poor the most. Their defense for Modi is based on the argument that his policies are designed to strengthen the Indian economy. But the plight of the poor has far from improved under his reign, particularly that of the rural poor.

To distract from his disastrous economic

British colonial rule in 1947 but it has never truly been free. The British manipulated our people, pitting Hindus and Muslims against each other just as Modi's government is doing now.

Mainstream Indian media is wrought with propaganda. Journalists who have actively spoken out against Modi have found themselves targeted by the government, living in fear. More than one has shown up dead.

Extremists have been emboldened to act in Modi's India, just as white supremacists here in the United States have been emboldened by his ally, President Trump. Critics have drawn comparisons between Hitler's fascism and Modi and Trump's policies. While it is highly improbable that either Modi or Trump are capable of mass genocide, their brand of politics instills fear and hate of the ‘other’ in the popular mind, just as Hitler's did.

Hinduism has historically been a peaceful religion. But Modi's nationalism and its adher-

HINDUISM HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN A PEACEFUL RELIGION.

policies, Modi as implemented a series of discriminatory laws meant to make the Hindu feel superior and stoke hatred, such as a nationwide beef ban enforced in 2017. The government claimed that the consumption of beef is ‘against India’ as cows are considered holy to Hindus. Meat smuggling has now become a profitable but dangerous trade. Muslim smugglers crossing conservative borders were being attacked by Hindu mobs, beaten and slaughtered like the meat in their trucks.

In another instance of violence, an 8-year-old Muslim Kashmiri girl, Asifa Bano, was found strangled to death with her skull bashed in last year. She had been tied up in a Hindu temple and gang-raped for days, police — who only began looking for the missing child after public protests — have said. A government minister and four police officers are among those who were eventually charged in the case. The child's family were forced to bury her on non-Hindu occupied land, miles away from their home, as right-wing Hindus cried out in defense of the perpetrators.

India may have gained its freedom from

ents have cast our religious symbols, including the Indian swastika, as props in a game of hate. Hindu extremists are rising and are out for blood.

Modi and Trump will one day leave office and Hitler is long dead. But the people who so deeply buy into their narratives of hate seem to be increasing in number and that's what I'm afraid of. I am afraid of how far fear will drive us to madness, to war. Where once the bells and chants of temples were a peaceful sound to my ears, they now serve as a reminder of the terror the so-called righteous are capable of.

The swastika is no longer an innocent symbol to me and if other Hindus are honest with themselves they will agree our sacred emblem is coming closer to overlapping Hitler's.



ADAM COHEN

ONE EMBLEM, TWO MEANINGS:

In Narendra Modi's India, ancient religious symbols are taking on new significance amid the rise of Hindu nationalism.

COMMUNIST, FEMINIST, ARTIST, GLOBAL COMMODITY

Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving
THRU MAY 12
BROOKLYN MUSEUM

By Lauren Kaori Gurley

Long before the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo was a global commodity, she was a communist. As a precocious teenager, she joined the Communist Party of Mexico and in her twenties, she led union rallies with her husband, the muralist Diego Rivera. It is said that she decorated her headboard with images of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In 1954, 11 days before she died from an arterial blood clot at age 47, Kahlo marched in a protest against U.S. involvement in the coup that deposed leftist president Jacobo Árbenz Guzmán in Guatemala. At her funeral, a red flag bearing a sickle and hammer was draped over her casket. “I’m more and more convinced it’s only through communism that we can become human,” she wrote in her diary during an extended stay in New York and Detroit in the 1930s. Kahlo’s radical politics built on her experiences as a mixed-race, disabled, bisexual, polyamorous, Jewish feminist who suffered from chronic pain, which she alleviated with tequila. Of her condition, she wrote, “I am not sick. I am broken.”

The Brooklyn Museum’s blowout exhibition “Frida Kahlo: Appearances Can Be Deceiving,” the largest show dedicated to the artist in U.S. history, is a testament to Kahlo’s political and artistic life in all of its complexities and contradictions. Over 350 objects — from her eyebrow pencils and her favored pink lipstick to her Oaxacan ceramics and shawls — overshadow less than 15 paintings. The exhibition does not seek to challenge Kahlo’s rise to global stardom as a massively profitable cultural commodity — Bank of America, Delta Airlines and Revlon, Kahlo’s preferred lipstick brand, sponsored the exhibition — but for the most part, corporate sponsorship does not distract from Kahlo’s political and aesthetic vision.

The exhibition begins with a series of videos and photographs documenting the Mexico that Kahlo grew up in during the Revolution and its aftermath. Kahlo was born in 1907 — when Porfirio Díaz and his aristocratic regime still ruled Mexico, but later she fudged the dates, claiming 1910 as

the year of her birth in alignment with the start of the Mexican Revolution. She grew up in a lower-middle class household, the third of four daughters, in Mexico City suburb of Coyoacán. Her Jewish father, a photographer, immigrated to Mexico from Germany in 1892, and her mother — of Spanish and indigenous P’urhépecha descent — was from Oaxaca. A series of black and white silver gelatin prints taken by her father depict Kahlo posing for her father at a young age wearing the stoic, inscrutable expression that she would return to in her self-portraits later in life.

The photos progress from Kahlo at age two to her early adulthood in the post-Revolution years, when progressive political reform and a series of public works programs swept the nation. We see Kahlo at a march for the Union of Mexican Technical Workers, Painters and Sculptors; Kahlo dressed as a communist comrade with her classmates at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria; Kahlo with braids and a rebozo shawl talking to peasants in the

countryside; Kahlo in a wheelchair at a protest of the CIA’s involvement in Guatemala in 1954.

In Kahlo’s social circles, the appeal of socialism went hand-in-hand with the rise of a resurgent Mexican nationalism. The aftermath of the Revolution led to a period of national identity building, spearheaded by the minister of public education, Jose Vasconcelos — and joined by artists like Kahlo and her husband, Rivera. The movement celebrated Mexico’s multi-ethnic heritage, or *mestizaje*, in particular, by appropriating indigenous culture from southern Mexico for an identity that could unite all Mexicans — white, brown and mestizo into a “cosmic race.” In one gallery, curators recreate Kahlo’s Mexico City home, the Casa Azul, with displays of pre-Colombian ceramics, vases and sculptures dating as far back as 200 B.C.E., as well as votive paintings and folk art from the Brooklyn Museum’s collection.

Kahlo took political, aesthetic and sartorial inspiration from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec — Mexico’s narrowest point, which connects the Pacific Ocean to the Gulf. It’s where Kahlo’s mother had roots, though Kahlo herself never visited. An ex-

tensive set of cases display Kahlo’s wardrobe drawn from matriarchal Tehuana culture — lace headdresses, embroidered floral skirts, woven shawls, cotton and silk tunics in magenta, golden yellow, and azure — at times with Chinese and European flourishes. Another section is dedicated to the orthopedic corsets, prosthetic legs and plaster casts (some painted with the communist hammer and sickle) that she wore beneath the colorful dresses to support her injured spine. “Appearances can be deceiving,” a nearby charcoal sketch is titled, revealing the medical devices hidden beneath elaborate costume. (The exhibition was named after the 1946 drawing).

The show reminds viewers that for much of Kahlo’s life, Diego Rivera and his sweeping murals depicting agrarian reform and campesino struggles overshadowed Kahlo and her self-portraits. A 1933 article from the *Detroit News*, printed on one gallery wall, shows Kahlo painting in her studio with the accompanying headline: “Wife of Master Painter Gleefully Dabbles in Works of Art.” A demeaning *Time Magazine* review from 1938 of a Kahlo exhibi-

tion in Manhattan reads, “Too shy to show her work before, black-browed little Frida has been painting since 1926, when an automobile smashup put her in a plaster cast, ‘bored as hell.’”

When I visited the show, I overheard several young women quietly remarking that they always considered Kahlo a more compelling artist than her husband Rivera. Indeed, today — Kahlo stands as icon for all sorts of marginalized groups as well as cultural elites. Unlike her husband, her reach extends far beyond her paintings into the worlds of high fashion, queer and Chicano identity politics and both grassroots and corporate feminism. (As one egregious example, Britain’s Prime Minister Theresa May wore a Frida Kahlo bracelet to give a speech at a Conservative Party conference in 2017.) For better or worse, the expansive Frida Kahlo exhibition at the Brooklyn Museum leans into all of these narratives at once, allowing the viewer to take home what they will.



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AN ICON FOR ALL SORTS OF MARGINALIZED GROUPS.

Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907–1954).
Appearances Can Be Deceiving, n.d.
Charcoal and colored pencil on paper,
11¼ x 8 in. (29 x 20.8 cm). Collection
of Museo Frida Kahlo.

Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907–1954).
The Love Embrace of the Universe,
1949. Oil on Masonite, 27½ x 23¾
in. (70 x 60.5 cm). The Jacques and
Natasha Gelman Collection of 20th
Century Mexican Art and the Vergel
Foundation.

Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907–1954).
Self-Portrait with Monkeys, 1943. Oil
on canvas, 32 x 24¾ in. (81.5 x 63 cm).
The Jacques and Natasha Gelman
Collection of 20th Century Mexican
Art and the Vergel Foundation.

THE UNFEMININE EMOTION

Rage Becomes Her: The Power Of Women's Anger

BY SORAYA CHEMALY
ATRIA BOOKS, 2018

Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger

BY REBECCA TRAISTER
SIMON & SCHUSTER, 2018

By Isobel van Hagen

Soraya Chemaly's new book begins with a description of her mother and father's beautiful white-and-gold wedding china that was only used in her household on very rare occasions. "That's why, one day when I was fifteen, I was dumbfounded to see my mother standing on the long veranda outside our kitchen, chucking one china plate after another as hard and as fast as she could into the hot, humid air." Her mother never discussed it with anyone.

Rage Becomes Her: The Power of Women's Anger and Rebecca Traister's new book, *Good and Mad: The Revolutionary Power of Women's Anger* both center around the supposedly unfeminine emotion: anger, and its repression in women.

Much of what both Traister and Chemaly address in their books is a catch-22: We live in a time where there is plenty for women to be mad about, but responding to the feeling comes with its own negative consequences. When a woman shows anger, Chemaly discerns, "she automatically violates gender norms. She is met with aversion, perceived as more hostile, irritable, less competent, and unlikable." On the other hand, other kinds of self-assertion by women are often labeled as anger, and are therefore dismissed as an emotion impossible for a woman to legitimately feel.

They also both examine the double standard associated with all forms of anger, as men's anger is often seen as forceful and righteous, while women's anger is often dismissed as bitterness, and as being "overly emotional" or even as "unhinged." Young girls are taught to prioritize other kinds of feelings, taught that anger is undesirable.

Good and Mad focuses specifically on the intersection of politics and anger. It scrutinizes historical and current feminist political action, particularly in response to the 2016 election and the #MeToo movement that followed shortly thereafter. *Rage Becomes Her* takes a more open-ended approach, focusing less on the consequences of the emotion of anger itself and examining a wide range of social norms that create the disparities that should make us angry.

Rage Becomes Her opens with the idea that women actually rarely even learn how to feel anger, "Sadness, yes. Envy, anxiety, guilt, check,

check, check. But not anger." Sadness — a more 'feminine' state — is a "retreat" emotion, the opposite of anger which is an "approach" emotion, an emotion that requires action.

While sadness often means thinking more deeply, its downside is that it "can easily turn into paralyzing rumination, lowered expectations and costly impatience. Sad people accept and are satisfied with less."

In order to counter this, Chemaly — in a long polemic, almost textbook-like format — methodically takes the reader through a woman's life, from girlhood to adulthood, highlighting the systemic sexism that should make them feel angry, rather than sad. She covers healthcare, sexual assault, how women have been written out of history and much more.

One of the main concepts Chemaly focuses on as a key reason for subconscious female rage is what she refers to as "The Caring Mandate." You guessed it, women are taught, groomed and expected to take care of everyone else. She invokes an economic argument, that women's unpaid and undervalued care stands as the single greatest wealth transfer in today's global economy — and it is basically ignored as legitimate "work."

At the heart of the Caring Mandate is the particular entanglement of "woman" and "mother." Societies glorify motherhood and not the mothers themselves. Every 90 seconds, for example, a woman dies from a preventable pregnancy-related complication. What could be more infuriating?

She offers a pertinent suggestion, an antidote to the suppression of anger that women face — using anger as a form of connection, particularly between women. This is also a key ingredient of empowerment according to *Good and Mad*. In fact, solidarity among women is as important a theme in Traister's book as anger itself.

In what feels like a string of essays rather than a single narrative, Traister, a *New York Magazine* writer, deftly focused her writing on the specifics of rage in the context of American politics, and how this newfound feminist anger could and should be revolutionary. The main impediment to this pending feminist political revolution, she argues, is women's habit of hiding and minimizing rage. Like Chemaly, she illustrates the many ways American society stresses that women's anger is impolite, unfeminine and unattractive. But she specifically chooses to spotlight anger because it is politically important, despite being underplayed in the history of female political activists: "Anger has rarely been acknowledged as righteous and patriotic when it has originated with women..."

Good and Mad was borne from the 2016 election, and more specifically from the Women's

March. It starts with a look at the recent reemergence of feminism, after "decades of a feminist deep freeze." Feminists no longer seemed to be angry, so "mainstream feminism was funny, hip, enthusiastic about sex ... and kind of cool." Not to mention, she added dryly, as Hillary Clinton geared up for the presidency, what was there to be angry about?

The Women's March sparked a newly awakened rage of white women that was, as Traister brilliantly puts it, "just that: newly awakened." Traister makes a concerted effort to honor the leading roles of women of color in resistance movements, and urges newly awakened white women to educate themselves about the struggles of women "who have never not been angry."

The election of Donald Trump produced raw fury, disillusionment and political activism, and Traister paints this new anger as a specifically progressive and good force for women, but where do we go from here?

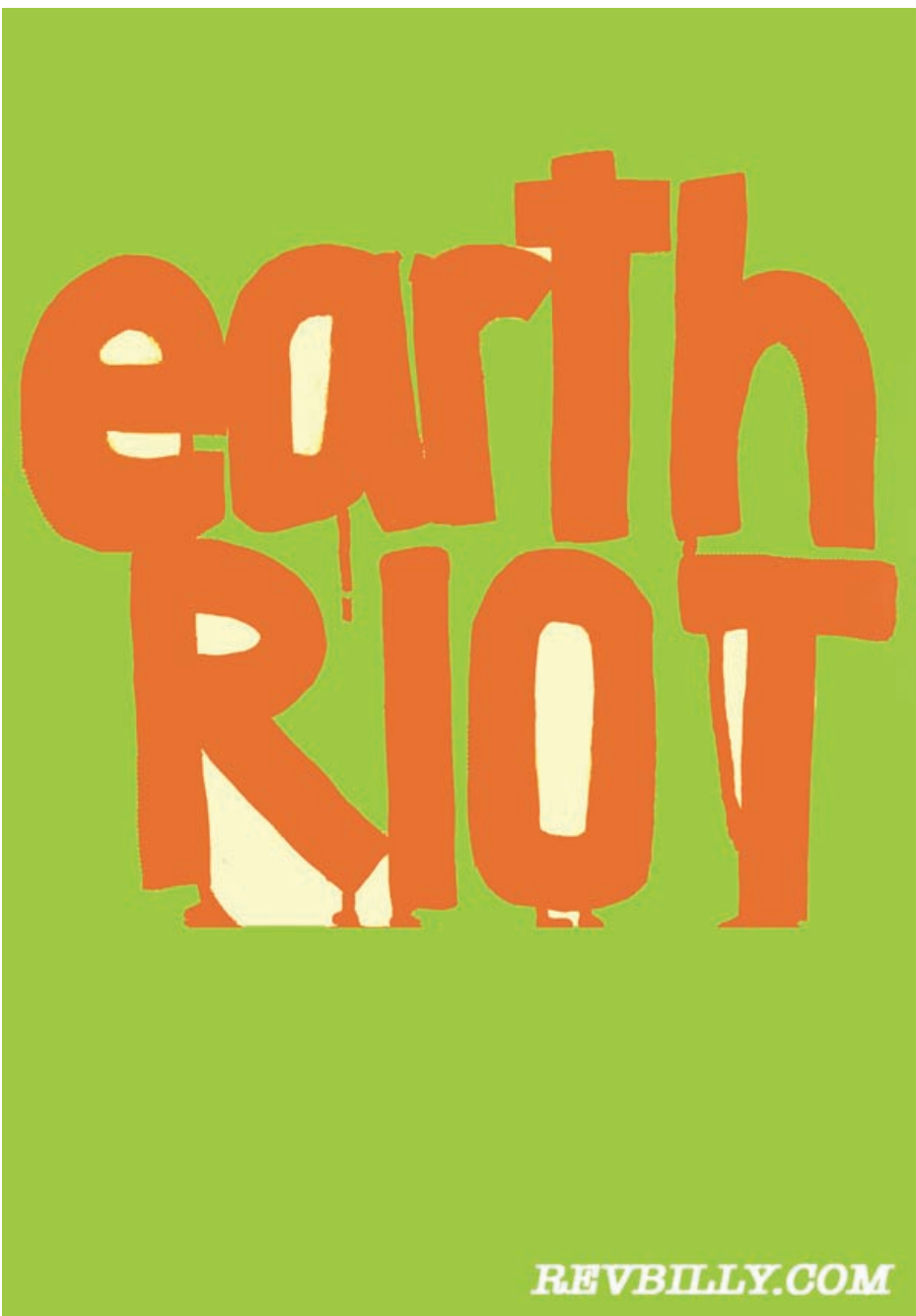
There are many different forms of anger — resentment, rage and disillusionment, to name a few, and neither book takes much time to carefully define the emotion. Perhaps the assumption is the specific kind of anger doesn't matter, and long as it is funneled into something politically or socially progressive. But is all unadulterated anger virtuous? That occasionally feels like the suggestion when reading — whether it is meant to or not.

So, while the exact definition of productive anger may need more addressing, there is something positive about the acceptance of "pure" female anger, no matter the type — it allows for an acknowledgement of that specific emotion (no it's not sadness, it's not hysterics, you're not "crazy") and knowing that action must be taken.

So when the world comes to tell you that you shouldn't get mad again, writes Traister, "because you were kind of nuts and you never cooked dinner and you yelled at the TV and weren't so pretty, and life will be easier when you get fun again... I say to all the women reading now: What you're angry about now — injustice — will still exist, even if you yourself are not experiencing it ... others are still experiencing it ... Stay mad for them. Stay mad with them."



SIXALEXIS


FILM

FEMINIST FRAMES

BY RENÉE FELTZ

Not one woman was nominated for Best Director in the 2019 Academy Awards. But this month many festivals in NYC feature work by women, trans, non-binary and gender non-conforming filmmakers. You can binge watch with a pass, or grab individual tickets and enjoy some of these highlights.

NEW YORK INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FILM FESTIVAL
Thru March 17
nyciff.org

Women directed about half the films shown over four weekends at this 21-year-old festival. It includes popular short film series such as "Girls' POV" and the new "Boys Beyond Boundaries," which attempts to redefine "how boys can feel, think and be." The "Heebie Jeebies" series promises "mind-bending fantasy." Two superhero films that are tributes to the power of imagination put girls at the center. The first feature by Likarion Wainaina, *Supa Moda*, centers on a 9-year-old Jo, who is terminally ill but her Kenyan village helps convince her she has special powers. "The Shadow of Cairo," directed by Tara Shehata, tells the story of 14-year-old Maya after she decides to avenge her mother's death.

NYC FEMINIST FILM WEEK
March 5-10
nycfeministfilmweek.org

This is the third annual edition of a week of carefully curated programs organized around the theme of feminist film genealogies. The series asks: "How do feminist film practices function as forms of political and critical intervention? What strategies do they employ to unsettle and dismantle racism, heterosexism, transphobia, classism, and stigmas around sexuality, illness, and dis/ability? And how do feminist film and media practitioners articulate queer, trans, POC, working class, immigrant, dis/abled, and other marginalized experiences and identities?" On International Women's Day there are two programs, including one that examines the role of sexual politics in films by the pioneering and prolific director Alice Guy-Blanché. The next day you can see Laura Mulvey's classic 1983 documentary, *Frida Kablo* and *Tina Moditti*, about the two radical artists in post-revolutionary Mexico.

BLACK WOMEN'S FILM CONFERENCE
March 17
momaps1.org

This inaugural gathering offers a space to focus on Black women's voices and experiences in a white, male-dominated film industry. Hosted by MoMA PS1 in Long Island City, the mix of film screenings and talks is co-organized with a collective of Black women filmmakers called The New Negro Film Society.

CHALLENGING STEREOTYPES:

Konkona Sen Sharma in *Lipstick Under My Burkha*, screening at the NYC Feminist Film Festival this month.

SOCIALLY RELEVANT FILM FESTIVAL NEW YORK
March 15-21
Ratedsrff.com

The SRFF was launched by actor and filmmaker Nora Armani in 2014 to uplift new and compelling socially relevant narratives told without resorting to gratuitous violence and violent forms of filmmaking. It offers industry panels and most screenings include a Q&A with directors. This year kicks off with *The Man Who Mends Women*, about 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Dr. Denis Mukwege. An all-women panel following the film includes Pramila Patten, the United Nations Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

QUEENS WORLD FILM FESTIVAL
March 21-31, 2019
queensworldfilmfestival.com

Everyone can find something to watch among the more than 200 films from 31 countries screened here over the course of 11 days. The program has blocks with names like *Worldly Vision*, *Cyber Alarm*, *It Gets Better*, *Local Express*, *Surviving Displacement*, *Power to the People*, *The Hate Card* and *Who Knew?* A documentary by Jackson Heights native Melanie J. La Rosa called *How to Power a City* shows communities on the front lines of the clean energy revolution from Astoria to Puerto Rico. *The Washing Society*, by experimental filmmakers Lynne Sachs and Lizzie Olesker, portrays a day in the life of laundry workers past and present and draws its name from the 1881 strike by African-American laundresses to win higher wages and gain more respect.

WAR AND THE GREEN ECONOMY

Keynote speaker:
MEDEA BENJAMIN
co-founder of CodePink

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27TH 7-9PM

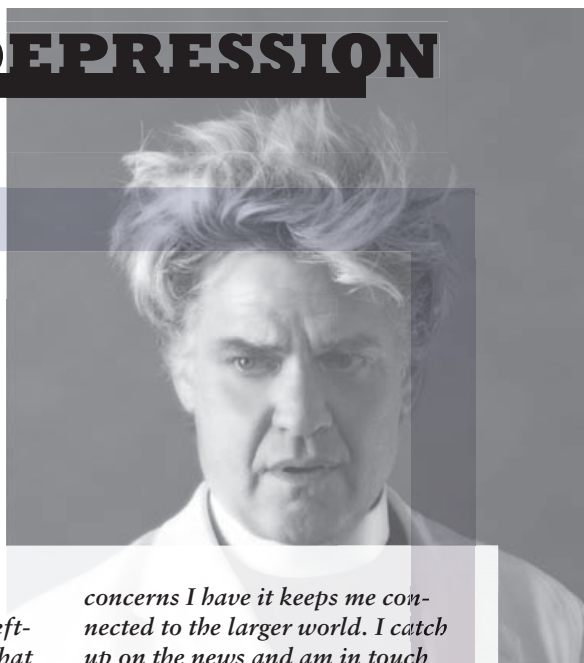
Come learn about the war economy, its impact on the environment, and how we can redirect Pentagon spending to green initiatives.

WHERE: Brooklyn Friends Meeting House
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TRUMP DEPRESSION HOTLINE



JON QUILITY

Dear Billy,
I think my friend is joining a left-wing cult. You know the kind that sell their newspapers at protests, get in ideological arguments with strangers on the street, act like they have all the answers and they're going to wake up early and lead the revolution tomorrow. It's almost like she repeats everything she picks up at their meetings. Should I orchestrate some kind of intervention?

— JOHANNA, Elmhurst

You've got to be kidding. Interventions are for saving lives. You are against something that you only vaguely understand, as if its style embarrasses you.

You have an idea of a cult that you believe to be improper, and yet the only behavior that will save us from imminent fascism and outright extinction is exactly that — crazy, over-convinced fearless behavior. Vague puritanism is the bane of American culture.

We need more crazies. We need screamers and cussers and orators back in the Union Square. Fortune favors the bold. Power can only be met by power. Let's make a practice of radical interventions on our own selves. Let's face our social conditioning as an obstacle, a Trumpian wall. Let's go outside and shout what we believe.

• • •

Dear Billy, I enjoy spending time on social media. I feel like for all the data collecting and privacy

concerns I have it keeps me connected to the larger world. I catch up on the news and am in touch with friends and family who are all over the place. Then I look out the window and see cars and pedestrians moving about in the sun. When do you know when to step away?

— DEREK, Midwood

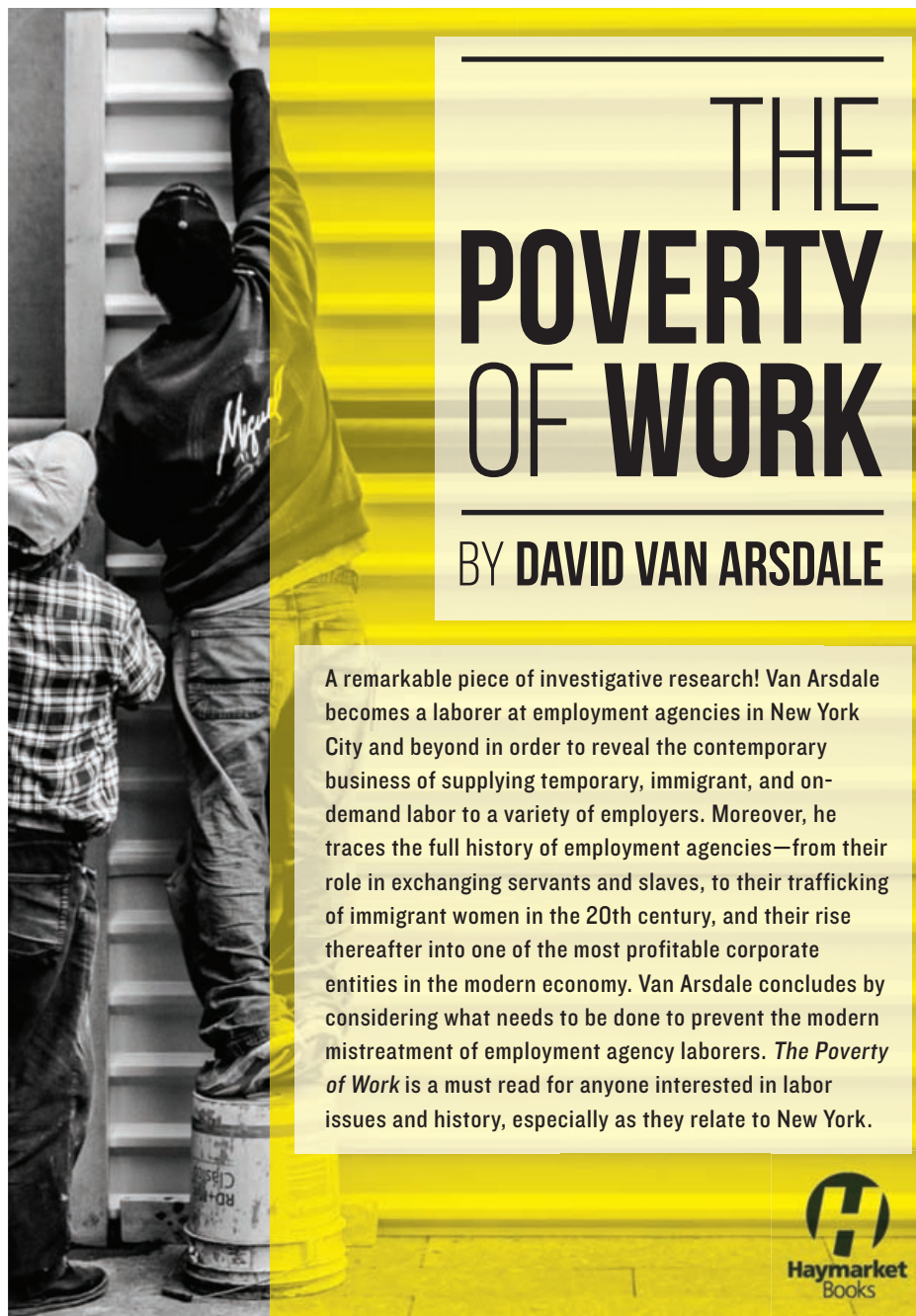
The computer, iPhone — these devices do not offer a logical pause. You don't get a message like, "You can go now," from the screen. The screen has devoured the world. Addiction to it has built the biggest companies. Here's a simple act of resistance.

First, breathe deep. Exercise that NO muscle. Shut the computer on purpose, even if it feels arbitrary. While you do so, sing these words to yourself: "I am not a pixel, yeah!" Repeat. Inhale the meaning of these six words each time you escape.

"I am not a pixel! Yeah!"

The words become stronger and stronger and your freedom easier to achieve. You can control the sensual aggression of corporate, artificial intelligence. Use the screen. Build your mighty ritual-power against the screen. Don't let it use you.

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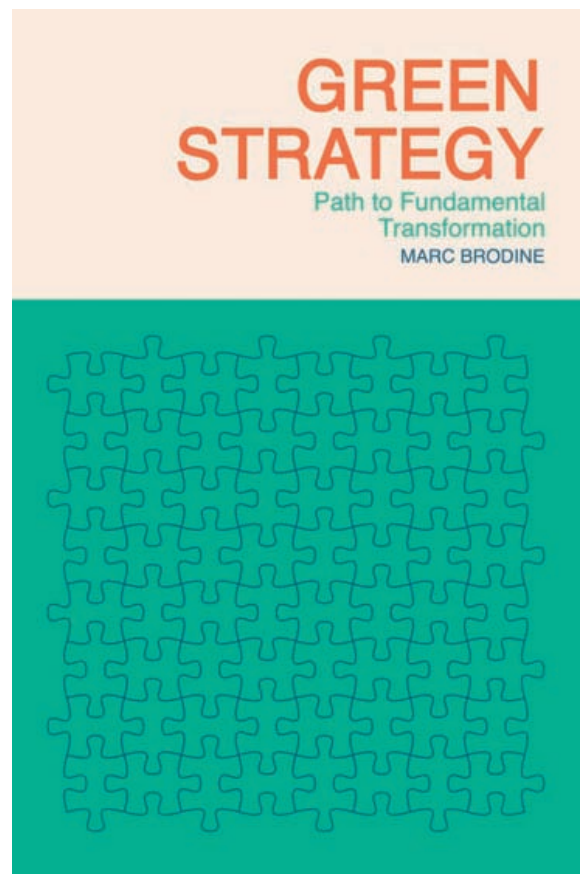
THE POVERTY OF WORK

BY DAVID VAN ARSDALE

A remarkable piece of investigative research! Van Arsdale becomes a laborer at employment agencies in New York City and beyond in order to reveal the contemporary business of supplying temporary, immigrant, and on-demand labor to a variety of employers. Moreover, he traces the full history of employment agencies—from their role in exchanging servants and slaves, to their trafficking of immigrant women in the 20th century, and their rise thereafter into one of the most profitable corporate entities in the modern economy. Van Arsdale concludes by considering what needs to be done to prevent the modern mistreatment of employment agency laborers. *The Poverty of Work* is a must read for anyone interested in labor issues and history, especially as they relate to New York.



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