

The Utopian



Jabberwock, Through the Looking Glass

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&
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Thought

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In this issue...

Reports from activists.....	2
Essays.....	9
Dialogues.....	17
Book reviews.....	29
Articles and blogs.....	31

Editorial Note

We are pleased to provide this first issue of the *Utopian Bulletin*. The new publication is different from the previous *Utopian* journal in two respects: 1) the print version of the journal has been discontinued; 2) the new publication includes reports on local activities, dialogues among readers, book reviews, and more, along with articles and essays similar to those that appeared in the journal. Our new approach is designed to enable more frequent publication and to create greater interaction among our readers and supporters.

Cover art

The Jabberwock is the animal slain in Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem, *Jabberwocky*. The poem and the illustration by John Tenniel appear in *Through the Looking Glass*, Carroll's sequel to *Alice in Wonderland*.

Reports from activists...

Mary's Report ... Work with Bronx Climate Justice North (BCJN)

I began working with BCJN a few months after the Climate March in the fall of 2014, because it was a locally based organization that fought against climate change and for social justice, and because it put me in contact with a number of locally based activists, and has continued to do that. We've established relationships with a significant number of community organizers throughout the Bronx and we have a significant mailing list of people who want to remain connected to our work.

BCJN works with a growing number of groups in the Bronx, especially folks in the South Bronx (South Bronx Unite, Bronx Climate Justice, & Friends of Brook Park) and in Marble Hill (folks active in the Community Association of Marble Hill), some who work in the local gardens, etc. And we've made a number of connections to religious communities during our work to support the NY state farmworkers (Christ Church in Riverdale, St. Stephen's, Church of the Mediator, and Congregation Tehillah), etc. And we also work with a few folks who also work with the NYC parks department (Save the Putnam Trail)...

And we're also connected to groups & organizations that work in parallel to our efforts in other areas of NYC & NY State: 350.org in NYC and Westchester, NYC Grassroots Alliance, Resist Aim, Sane Energy Project, System Change Not Climate Change, We ACT for Environmental Justice (West Harlem), Rural & Migrant Ministry, and The Welikia Project.

In the last year we've organized a number of events that brought various people together.

- In November we co-hosted a public forum: "Made in the Bronx: Green Buildings, Green Jobs", Co-hosted by Manhattan College

Center for Urban Resilience and Environmental Sustainability (CURES) on the Manhattan College campus.

- In February we organized a by invitation forum on the “Welikia Project”, featuring Dr. Eric Sanderson, Senior Conservation Ecologist, Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and invited organizers from around the Bronx.
- In April we organized a forum on farm workers: “Food Justice Forum: Uniting Farmers, Farmworkers and Consumers in the Hudson Valley and Beyond” with Margaret Gray, author of Labor & the Locavore, and Richard Witt, Executive Director of Rural & Migrant Ministries. This was co-hosted by the Community Association of Marble Hill at Christ Church in Riverdale.
- May was a very busy month...
 - On May 1st, we held a film screening & discussion of “Disobedience” at Ethical Culture.
 - On May 14, a number of us drove to Albany to support the “Break Free From Fossil Fuels” protests against the crude oil trains near the Port of Albany, where we listened to speeches and talked with lots of different people. Some folks sat on train tracks and got arrested. This was part of a national campaign that occurred in many different places in the US and other countries.
 - Our main focus in May was our work to support the two-week march for farmworkers’ justice that began on Long Island, went to Brooklyn, up Manhattan along Broadway, and all the way north to Albany. A week before the farm workers’ march we held a film showing of two related films: Harvest of Shame & Harvest of Dignity at St. Stephen’s church in Marble Hill.
 - On 5/21, we participated in the Washington Heights rally & support dinner at the church for those who were marching.
 - On Sunday morning, May 22, as those marching reached St. Stephen’s Church, the minister invited everyone into the service and asked the farmworkers to come forward near the alter of the church where he honored what they did and made a powerful appeal for justice for all as the congregation expressed their respect & support. At the end

of the service we held a rally outside the church in Marble Hill & had prepared bag lunches for those who were marching to Albany.

- On 5/23, a number of BCJN folks marched to Resist the AIM pipeline at 48th Street & 3rd Ave.
- On 6/1, a number of us drove to Albany in support of the farmworkers, as that was the day the farm workers arrived at the capital & they met with politicians about the needs of NY state farm workers.
- July:
 - On July 6th a number of us joined a diverse group of protesters at Mt. Kisco calling on Cuomo to rescind his executive order attacking the grassroots boycott, divestment & sanctions for Palestinian rights.
 - On July 17, we joined together with a number of community organizations at Hunts Point in a march to the 41st precinct to protest the killings and in defense of Black Lives Matter #StopTheViolence#Rage&Love #BlackLivesMatter #NoJusticeNoPeace.
 - On 7/20, two of us went to Albany for a NYRenews retreat that we had been invited to. NYRenews is a growing organization of labor unions, led by SEIU.\
 - At the end of July we also held a meeting of various community activists & religious leaders to talk about building a coalition for social & racial justice in the Marble Hill community.

And we've been active in supporting the struggle of the Standing Rock Sioux against the Dakota Pipeline. On 9/9 we joined a massive rally in Washington Square Park to support Standing Rock in their struggle against the Dakota Pipeline. On 9/15 we organized a protest in their defense at the Riverdale TD bank (one of many banks funding the Dakota Pipeline). Protestors then marched east to the Chase Bank on Broadway to continue the protest, where they met many supporters.

Here's information about BCJN from its website:

Bronx Climate Justice North was born and is being bred in the Bronx. From our earliest origins as a small group of folks

mobilizing the northwest corner of the borough for the NYC People's Climate March on September 21, 2014, we've grown to over 100 members from every corner of the Bronx.

Why work in the Bronx on climate change? Because we believe that acting locally will lead to big changes globally. But not only that... Many sections of the Bronx are legally designated as environmental justice communities. Decade upon decade of environmental injustice, redlining, school-to-prison pipelines, institutionalized food deserts, and more, have created communities that are demanding a better, more just future. We know that climate change is the physical manifestation, the physical embodiment, of economic and political systems, at all levels of government, that are unjust, inequitable, and ultimately, violent. We must be One Bronx, to solve our borough's problems, to meet its opportunities, and to move it, from the bottom up, toward climate resilience, toward sustainability, toward justice of all kinds: environmental, racial, economic, political, social, and cultural. Our roots are here at home, as we work hand-in-hand with allies across New York City, the United States, and the world.

Some Bronx statistics:

Hunger: 36% of Bronx residents are “food insecure.” The USDA term “food insecurity” is defined as meaning that “consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year.” A significant number of Bronx parents, for example, sometimes forego meals to ensure that their school-age children do not go hungry.

Income: 38% of residents in the South Bronx live below the U.S. poverty line, making it *the poorest district in the nation*.

Gentrification: [South Bronx Unite Principles for Private Development](#)

Population: The Bronx added nearly [240,000 residents](#) between 1980 and 2012, an increase of 20%. Bronx families are choosing to remain in the borough and raise their families there; the borough is a magnet for immigrants seeking a new start.

Health: According to many studies, including the [South Bronx Environmental Health and Policy Study](#) conducted by the Institute

for Civil Infrastructure Systems at NYU in 2004, the Bronx is burdened by some of the worst asthma rates in the nation: “Bronx County has some of the highest rates of asthma in the United States. Rates of death from asthma in the Bronx are about three times higher than the national average. Hospitalization rates are about five times higher. In some neighborhoods in the Bronx it is estimated that 20% of the children have asthma. Within New York City the disparity in asthma hospitalization rates is very pronounced. According to a study, hospitalization rates for asthma in Bronx County and East Harlem are 21 times higher than those of affluent parts of the city.”

In the past 5 years, the number of children suffering from asthma in the Bronx has risen from one in five to one in four.

[Bronx County Indicators for Tracking Public Health Priority Areas](#) (NY State Dept. of Health)

In March, 2016, for the seventh year in a row, the Bronx received the [LOWEST ratings](#) for BOTH health factors and health outcomes, of New York’s 62 counties.

About BCJN (from the website)

BCJN is a grassroots climate justice organization and alliance based in the North Bronx. We work in solidarity with partners in Bronx Climate Justice, a coalition of environmental justice organizations in the South Bronx. We are an advocacy and an educational group, organizing for a transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030 and other climate justice initiatives in the Bronx and beyond. Please explore our Working Groups: Energy Solutions, Food Justice, and Green Vision. We're a local affiliate of 350.org. BCJN stands for One Bronx, United for Climate Justice. Please join us -- we're working for a greener, more democratic and just world.



New York City Report – Bill B.

(1) Following a call coming from Holman Prison in Alabama, prisoners in over twenty states on 9 Sept. refused to work, held demonstrations and engaged in other protests in what is likely the first national prison strike in U.S. history.

Coordinated by the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee of the IWW, it's still going on in some places. In New York I attended a noisy demonstration outside the federal detention center in Brooklyn. The demo was of about 150-200 people, quite diverse and overwhelmingly young. After making a racket outside the jail, the group marched and blocked traffic on several major streets.

(2) My wife and I have started what I hope will be a successful effort on our block to get people to light red lamps on their porches and windows to protest and demand an end to police murders of Black people.

(3) I gave a report updating Mumia's case to my union local. In a nutshell, the judge hearing his demand for the hepatitis C cure agreed that the prison authorities violated his constitutional rights but refused to order them to give Mumia the treatment. Also, a motion has been filed separately to reopen the appeals process based on a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision. This could conceivably lead to a new trial. More on all of this later.

(4) I also have organized a small group of people to work as non-partisan poll monitors to ensure that no one is prevented from voting by intimidation or trickery in November.

Essays...

The Vision of Revolutionary Anarchism

Wayne Price

(The following essay was written for a Greek anarchist publishing group that is putting out a translated selection of my essays. They asked for an original essay, so I wrote this. As you can see, it was somewhat inspired by the discussion among Utopians. The book has not been published yet, but since you asked for something I may have written, here it is.)

There are many approaches to anarchism, but for me the central issue is the vision of an anti-authoritarian, stateless, classless, oppression-less, society. It is the vision of a world based on cooperation, participatory democracy, production for use rather than profit, free and equal association in all areas of life, and ecological balance with the natural world. It would involve networks and federations of self-managed workplaces, industries, communities, neighborhoods, and (so long as they are still needed) militia units (the armed people). These would be managed by direct, face-to-face, democracy—the self-organization of the people. To achieve this, people would organize under the principle of as much democratic decentralization as is practically possible and only as much centralization as is minimally necessary.

This does not mean the end of all social coordination or social defense, but the end of the state. The state is a bureaucratic-military-capitalist socially-alienated machine which is standing above the rest of society. There would be no more masses of professional police, military, politicians, judges, lobbyists, spies, prison guards, and bureaucrats, nor any of the capitalist businesses and semi-monopolies that support and are supported by the state. These are the principles and values of my vision of anarchism. They are consistent with the broad mainstream of the anarchist movement.

They are also consistent with the visions once held by millions of a past Edenic Golden Age, or of a future Messianic End Times when all oppression and sorrow will be gone and people will be free and equal. These myths fit the prehistorical truth that humans lived for tens of thousands of years in small, self-governing, hunter-gatherer groups and agricultural villages, mostly cooperative and equal, without states, or classes, or markets. In a real sense the anarchist vision is of a spiral return to such a society, at a higher level of production—with guarantees of plenty for all and of sufficient leisure, in balance with the ecology.

As a vision, this is different from that of liberal capitalist democracy. Liberals and social democrats just want to expand the “good” parts of capitalist democracy while decreasing the “bad” parts. Gradually, a better world will supposedly come into existence. The liberals do not recognize that capitalism has its own limits. In particular, while most of today’s capitalist states claim to be “democratic,” the rulers make no such claim for their economy. The rationalization for the economic system is that it has a “free market.” Any attempt to “extend democracy” to the capitalist economy would mean taking away the wealth and power of those who own the corporations and business enterprises, large and small. It would mean giving the wealth and power to those who work for those capitalists and work in those enterprises. It would give wealth and power to those who buy the companies’ goods, consume their products, and pay taxes that subsidize their profits. To the corporate rich—the whole ruling class—this would seem like a terrible violation of all that was right and proper, the end of civilization, and a totalitarian attack on (their) freedom.

The capitalists and their agents and supporters would resist any such change—no matter how peaceful, gradual, and popular—tooth and claw, to the last drop of blood (theirs and the people’s). Their democratic (bourgeois-democratic, that is) state would turn out to be not so democratic after all, as they would use it to crush popular resistance (or they would replace it with a more authoritarian state to do the job).

Reforms and improvements for the people have been won and may yet still be won (and should be fought for)—especially in periods of relative prosperity and stability. But when things get bad and the economy goes downhill, the boss class will pull back its benefits, shut down its cooperation with the popular classes, and resist giving any more reforms. This is happening right now. Then the chances for expanding the democratic-liberal aspects of modern capitalism into a better society become virtually nil—without a revolution.

The anarchist vision both overlaps with and contradicts the Marxist tradition. In the mid-1800s, both anarchism and Marxism developed out of movements for democracy, socialism, and workers’ rights. Marxism, like anarchism, had a vision of a cooperative, democratic, society without classes or a state, ecologically balanced—won through the self-emancipation of the modern working class and its allies. Marx and Engels wrote very little about what communism might be like. Their comments are scattered throughout their works. But of what little they wrote, their goal was very close to that of anarchism.

Following in the footsteps of the early “utopian socialists” (Owen, Fourier, Cabet, etc.), both the original Marxists and the anarchists foresaw the end of the division of labor as developed under capitalism. In particular they rejected the division between order-givers and order-takers, between mental labor and manual labor.

They saw the reorganization of technology and production in such a way as to expand the all-around potentialities of humans. They expected the end of the division between cities and countryside, between industry and agriculture. There would be a new ecological balance.

Having a vision of a libertarian, humanistic, communist society is not the same as having a blueprint of how such a society might work. The early “utopians” wrote detailed accounts of their visions. Marx predicted that a post-capitalist society would go through specific stages. It would first pay workers with labor-notes and later provide full communism (“From each according to their ability to each according to their needs.”) Anarchists, such as Kropotkin, were more likely to use detailed accounts not as blueprints but as heuristic examples of how their principles might be put into practice; for example, going directly to full communism. After Kropotkin, Errico Malatesta argued for an experimental and pluralistic approach to anarchism. He expected different communities, regions, nations, etc., to try out different ways of organizing non-capitalist, radically-democratic, societies, so long as there was no further exploitation.

Between Marx and the anarchists there were some important differences. Marx saw the state of capitalism as being replaced, not by a free federation, but by a new state of the working class and its allies. This workers’ state would be transitional, evolving into a non-coercive but still highly centralized “public authority.” And, while he was for a very democratic form of representative democracy, Marx and Engels did not at all see the need for decentralized, face-to-face, communal democracies at the root of a new society.

And they did not see a role for a moral vision of a new society. To Marx and Engels it was the material historical process that led to the ends of socialism and communism. They specifically rejected relying on the vision of the workers. The workers would fight for socialism because the workers would fight for socialism. The dialectical dynamics of capitalism would develop its internal contradictions. It would build giant capitalist enterprises with huge concentrations of workers and would heat up the class struggle between the workers and bosses. As a result, the workers would automatically develop class-consciousness and self-organization, leading to the overthrow of capitalism. At no time, in their vast body of work, did Marx or Engels write that the workers and others should fight for socialism because it was right to do so, because socialism was good. (Undoubtedly, Marx and Engels were personally motivated by moral passions, but it was not part of their theoretical system.)

Although I am an anarchist, I agree that there are certain dynamics of capitalism, accurately analyzed by Marx, which push in the direction of socialism. These include the growth of industrial capitalism, the periodic and long-term crises of capitalism, and the development by capitalism of the international working class.

But there are also countertrends, some of which were also discussed by Marx. There are certain stabilizing mechanisms within capitalism and its state, which can overcome short-term crises (at least for a while). Also, better-off workers are usually satisfied with the status quo. Worse-off workers may be beaten-down and demoralized. Whether and when these or other layers of the working class will rebel against capitalism cannot be known for sure. Socialist revolution is not “inevitable.”

The historical struggle for a better society is not *something that happens to people*—through historical processes external to them. It is *something that people do*—as they react to historical circumstances. Class conflict is not a mechanical clash of forces, but a conflict of wills. Socialism is not an inevitability; it is a possibility, which will happen only if enough people *chose* to make it happen.

Marxism went from a vision very close to anarchism to become a rationalization for totalitarian, mass-murdering, state capitalism—until the “Communist” states collapsed back into traditional capitalism. I have just touched on some of its essential weaknesses, which contributed to this result (while interacting with objective pressures): its centralism, its “transitional” state, and its non-moral determinism.

I reject the moralistic method of starting from a set of values (which a good society should have) to work out a plan for what a good society should be. This was the classical method of the “utopians,” as well as the authors of “Parecon” (participatory economics) today. I also reject the mechanical conception of capitalism grinding out a new society, with a visionary consciousness playing little or no role. Such a view was dominant in Marxism (and, to an extent, in the work of the great anarchist Kropotkin). The split between these two views is based on a positivist split between values and facts. I do not accept this dichotomy. The struggle for a libertarian socialism, for anarchism, is both moral and based on social forces.

The Vision Could be Made Real

The vision of a free, democratic, and cooperative society is, then, rooted in the ancient visions of humanity. It is the culmination of the values raised by the greatest teachers, philosophers, and religious leaders. It extends the democratic rights proposed in the great bourgeois-democratic revolutions (the U.S. revolution, the French revolution, etc.) and expressed in the early programs of “utopian” socialism. Now these goals are able to be realized. In past revolutions, the people overthrew their old masters, but then most people had to go back to work if they were not all to starve. Only a few could be free to pursue science and mathematics, social coordination, managing waterworks, etc. Unlike pre-historical hunter-gatherer societies, there was just enough to support this non-

producing elite (and its enforcers)—but there was never enough to provide plenty for all.

Now humans have the technology and productivity so that hard but necessary labor can be reduced to a minimum and shared by everyone. It is possible for most work to become an integration between creative, pleasurable, activities and useful labor, as crafts have sometimes been. Socialist communities can decide where to use automation, where to use small power machines, and where to work by hand. Contrary to its present development by centralized corporations and military states, industrial technology can be reorganized to support self-governing communities and industries. With modern means of communication, decentralized groupings could be coordinated from below. There can be enough leisure for everyone to go to meetings to make collective decisions, without taking up all their free time. People will be able to choose their life styles and activities, they will be able to decide themselves how to express their genders and sexualities.

However, because socialist revolution has been so delayed, this powerful technology also poses terrible threats. It is under a social system, which developed in scarcity, which divided social wealth among competing capitalist firms, and divided the world among war-waging national states. It exists in a capitalist system, which is driven to expand, to grow quantitatively, to accumulate ever more capital regardless of social or ecological costs.

The dangerous misuse of modern technology is clearest in the case of nuclear bombs. So far, the capitalist states have avoided nuclear wars. The rulers have feared the results, with good reason. Even a “small” nuclear war (or even a one-sided attack) not only creates local effects through huge blasts, but would throw into the atmosphere radioactive dust and debris, which would affect the whole world. It could cause a “nuclear winter,” blocking out sunlight for years over the whole earth, possibly destroying civilization or even all humanity (and other species).

This has not yet happened, even during the Cold War. But non-nuclear wars are continuing across the world, while atomic bombs still exist, they are spread more widely, and they are being updated. The world capitalist class cannot bring itself to get rid of them. It would only take one nuclear exchange, once, to possibly wipe us out. These states and this ruling class need to be disarmed by the working people of the world.

At the same time, the capitalist misuse of technology is causing ecological catastrophes. These include the loss of species, the pollution of the land, air, water, and food, and worst of all, global warming. In the here-and-now this causes extreme weather, of storms, floods, droughts, and fires. It is tending

towards heat levels, which humans and other organisms have never experienced as a steady condition. Whether our civilization can survive is an open question.

The problem is that capitalism needs to grow and accumulate, or it collapses. But the ecological world has the exact opposite need. It requires a steady, balanced, system not geared to growth—or at least not quantitative growth of expanded production; qualitative improvements and increased complexity are another matter. This is a deep contradiction. Our industrial civilization is built on the increasing use of fossil fuels—which are limited and nonrenewable, polluting, and cause global heating. Neither the oil companies nor the capitalist class as a whole will willingly end this grow-or-die system.

After World War II, the theorists of capitalism claimed that they had solved capitalism's contradictions. There was to be eternal prosperity (at least in the industrialized—imperial—nations), with tamed business (boom-and-bust) cycles. They would do this through moderate government intervention in the economy (financial stimuli, tax and money manipulations). In fact the post-war prosperity lasted for almost thirty years.

Yet the deep crisis of capitalism during the Great Depression was only temporarily overcome. That required massive defeats of the world working class, the rise of Nazism and fascism, the rise of Stalinism, and the Second World War. This was followed by the reorganization of world imperialism (so that the U.S.A. became the main power), expanded military spending (on nuclear arms), the growth of world-spanning semi-monopolies, and the use of “cheap” oil and other natural resources (without paying for their eventual replacement). These forces provided for a new prosperity, which lasted until the early 70s, when they ran out of steam.

Profits come from surplus value, which is nothing but the unpaid labor of the workers. (So says Marx, and I agree.) The very expansion of capitalist production means that there are ever more machines and raw materials being used, so that the labor force becomes a smaller proportion of what the capitalists pay for production (that is, while the number of workers may even expand, they are relatively fewer as compared to the even greater expansion of the non-human costs of production). This causes a relative drop in the amount of labor which may be used to make the produced commodities (and which determines their exchange value). Therefore there is a relatively smaller amount of unpaid (surplus) labor screwed out of the workers. The rate of profit declines for the overall set of capitalists. There are a range of counteracting forces that limit this fall in the rate of profit, described by Marx. But there continues to be a long-term tendency toward the fall of the profit rate.

This basic tendency has reached its long-term expression since about 1900, the beginning of what has been called “the epoch of capitalist decline.” Since about 1970, it has reasserted itself against the apparent post-war prosperity. A major symptom (and, in turn, a contributing cause) has been the expansion of giant corporations: monopolies, semi-monopolies, and oligopolies. Another symptom is the lack of funds to deal with the global warming crisis. Overall, there has been stagnation, under- and un-employment, pools of poverty even in rich countries, expanded inequality, uneven development of the poor nations, increased wars and international conflicts, the growth of financialization (investment in money and paper, rather than in real production), and attacks by the capitalists on the unions and on the working class’ standard of living. The evidence is that the overall economy will continue to decline, with moderate ups and downs, with further, and probably worse, crashes in the future—perhaps a depression worse than in the ‘thirties.

These predictions of capitalist decline are not based on some absolute knowledge, rooted in reading Marx’s *Capital*, or other sources. It is just the best evaluation of probable reality, which I and others have been able to make.

Along with these looming catastrophes—nuclear war, global warming, and economic crashes—are other evils of this system. Capitalism supports—and is supported by—a network of oppressions, including racism, sexism, heterosexism, national oppression, religious bigotry, and so on and on. It continues to be an ugly civilization, crushing the spirit and distorting human potentialities, causing suffering and sorrow in all sorts of ways.

The Alternative

So the vision of new world is possible. It is also necessary, if we choose to avoid military, ecological, and economic catastrophes, not to mention the continuing suffering caused by capitalism as it is. This is what Rosa Luxemburg meant by saying that the alternatives are “socialism or barbarism,” summarizing statements by Marx and Engels. It is why Murray Bookchin, focusing on the ecological situation, upgraded this to “anarchism or annihilation.”

This does not make socialism (anarchism, libertarian communism) inevitable. On the contrary, it means that capitalism has a dynamic which leads to greater and worse crises and catastrophes. As an economic system it is deeply flawed and irrational. It is highly unlikely (I will not say “impossible”) that it can pull out of its current extended crash-landing and return to a period of stability and relative prosperity. The last time it did this, from the late 1940s to 1970—1975, it was at the cost of a Great Depression, a World War, post-war spending on nuclear arms, and the vast use of fossil fuels. To revive itself, even for a time, would

require something similar. It seems unlikely that the system could survive either another world war or a deepened misappropriation of the natural world.

But the people of the world—the working class and its allies among the oppressed—could choose to replace capitalism with libertarian socialism. That is, to make a revolution. While, to repeat, there are forces leading in that direction, this is ultimately a moral choice, made by mass movements of millions of oppressed and exploited humans. The evils of capitalism and its states and oppressive institutions can be rejected and the long-held visions of a new and better world can be created. This does not depend on mechanical historical processes but on moral choice and commitment.

Dialogues...

A conversation on global warming

Ron and Rod,

You may have seen the following, which was reported a few days ago, but in case you didn't:

https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/30/nasa-climate-change-warning-earth-temperature-warming?utm_source=esp&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=Green+Light+2016&utm_term=188701&subid=2298339&CMP=EMCENVEMML1631

I think global warming is going to be very disruptive. It will interact with and intensify various other ongoing problems — drought, famine, territorial conflicts, regional wars, mass migration. It will also create opportunities for profit and recovery — rebuilding infrastructure, conversion to renewable energy, etc. — but also for profiteering (e.g., Italy has very strong earthquake safety construction codes, which are winked at by the racket-riddled builders and the corrupt state “regulators”).

I'm writing this not so much because I think there are differences among the three of us about the above — as I've said, maybe there are and maybe there aren't, but without a written discussion / dialogue I sure can't say. I'm really writing this because I think that there needs to be attention to the impact that global warming is going to have — not on whether it must spell doom for capitalism, but on its (I think pretty certain) disruptive impact, and how to relate to it.

Jack

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Jack and Ron,

Re: Thoughts on Global Warming

I am writing prompted by the article Jack sent from *The Guardian*, as well as his brief initial comments. My comments are intended to further the discussion of our

political stance in relation to global warming. I am not a scientist, nor am I scientifically inclined, so my understanding of global warming is limited by my (perhaps biased) acceptance of the credibility of various media sources. As a result, I hope such a discussion, in addition to clarifying areas of agreement and disagreement, might also deepen our collective understanding of underlying climate-change processes and the degree to which human activity affects these.

Here are my thoughts:

1. Global warming is a real phenomenon, i.e., the science pointing to a pronounced and accelerating tendency toward worldwide warmer temperatures is highly credible. This rise in average temperatures is causing ever increasing environmental, resource, and infrastructure damage. This includes the melting of ice caps, leading to higher sea levels, massive rainstorms and flooding, (and weather changes more broadly), and other dramatic and potentially devastating effects, some not yet known. If allowed to continue, global warming will cause ever-greater damage.
2. Human activity, primarily in the form of carbon emissions, plays a significant role in global warming. Conversely, reduction of carbon emissions can slow or even possibly reverse global warming.
3. Though there is rarely a single cause for anything, the most significant obstacle to worldwide action to reduce carbon emissions (and take other steps) is the wealth and power of U.S. corporations and the political outlook of significant segments of the U.S. ruling class. While opposition to action on global warming from these elements is not monolithic, it is strong to have been a decided break on agreements and action over the past several decades.
4. Due to geography, economic infrastructure, etc., some areas of the world and some populations will be affected by global warming more than others. As is the case with most social/economic issues, the negative impact of global warming will be felt most deeply by the poor, and least by the rich. Poorer nations will experience crises that in some cases will be devastating; this is already becoming a reality in parts of the world today.
5. As the climate change crisis deepens, the U.S. corporate and political elite will show a greater willingness to take steps against to reverse climate change. Already, there are significant sections of the elites that recognize the need for greater action, and significant corporate elements that recognize the economic opportunities opened up by the need for clean energy sources and supply. These steps, motivated by moral, economic, political and self-preservation consideration, lag far behind those needed to address the growing crisis, and

continue to restrain the action desired by significant sections of world governments and populations.

6. It is difficult to predict the extent and level of future crises connected to global warming. Clearly, the response to global warming lags well behind the threat. In addition, there are dimensions to the impact global warming that are simply unknown; the world is moving into uncharted territory. This includes the reality Jack pointed to (email of 9/3) that global warming “will interact and intensify various other ongoing problems—drought, famine, territorial conflicts, regional wars, mass migration.” Thus, environmentally connected disasters of significant scope are highly likely.

7. As at least partially effective responses to global warming take shape (as we expect that they will), the worst of disasters may be avoided. In other words, ‘the end of the world’ is not at hand, or a necessary future prospect. Capitalism has repeatedly shown resilience in the face of deep economic, social and political crises; it may well show the same resilience here. That said, long-term safety and security are not a given. Just as with the threat of nuclear war (‘limited’ or otherwise), the situation is only ‘under control,’ until it is not. Political, economic and social crises have and will produce extreme responses that threaten seemingly rational process. Political paralysis, miscalculation, and irrational behavior thrive on crisis. The potentially devastating effects of global warming should not be underestimated.

8. The climate change movement is an important arena for progressive activists to be involved in. This flows from the importance of the issue. Activists might consider raising the following in their activities:

a. Capitalism, because it rewards ruthless exploitation of people and resources, bears considerable responsibility for global warming. Significant elements of the corporate and political elite will continue to pursue economic and political policies that harm the environment. A society organized around people’s needs and interests, not corporate wealth and profits, would be far more likely to take strong steps to protect the environment. Thus, the road to lasting protection of the environment is to win people to the idea of creating such a society.

b. The most effective way to fight for climate change in the short run is to organize a militant and independent mass movement. Electoral politics in general, and support for or alignment with the Democratic Party in particular, are approaches that divert and weaken such a movement.

c. The problem of global warming is linked to a broad array of economic and social issues, including but not limited to: poverty, income inequality, racism and sexism, the exploitation of people and resources, war, and, at the most general level, the domination and exploitation of the many by the few. Those affected by these economic and social issues—the overwhelming majority of people—should join together in building a mass movement that links these issues and recognizes a common enemy—the ruling corporate and political elite.

Rod

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Rod, Jack,

I generally agree with what Rod has written. Beyond that, I have three points to make.

1. I do not in any way wish that what I have been saying on the topic of climate change to be interpreted as denying, downplaying, let alone dismissing, the amount of global warming that has occurred and will continue to occur, the amount of damage to our environment that has been done and will be done, and the amount of havoc this has produced and will produce.

2. I am concerned that, in the presentation of our ideas, we avoid extreme formulations that amount to insisting that either world socialism is created or that (capitalism-induced) global warming will destroy the human species. There are two reasons for this:

a. I do not believe it is true, although I admit that it is possible. (One climate change model gives it a 10% chance of occurring.)

b. I believe that such formulations are the latest version of the "socialism or barbarism" slogan, which I consider to be an attempt to sneak in the back door the argument that socialism is the logical and therefore inevitable (or highly probable) outcome of the laws of history, in general, and of capitalism, in particular, that is, to grant socialism an ontological foundation. As I've written, I believe not only that this notion is incorrect but also that it is one of the roots of the totalitarian core of Marxism (and the key to understanding the results of attempting to apply Marxism in practice).

3. I think it is important to recognize that capitalism is capable of addressing, however tardily and, at least at present, inadequately, the challenges raised by global warming. This is not only because there is a significant and growing segment of the global elite that believes that climate change is real and that something needs to be done about it. It is also because the development of renewable energy presents an area of profitable investment. As a result, for example, the banks are refusing to lend funds to the coal industry, which they perceive to be dying, while also, along with other investors, actively investing in solar and wind power, which have become dynamic and rapidly-growing sectors of the economy. At this point, it is at least arguable that the latter dynamic has become more important than the former, in other words, that we have reached the point where market forces will increasingly power a global transition to green energy. One recent pro-environment commentator on PBS's News Hour felt confident enough to claim that even the election of climate-change-denying Donald Trump would not stop or even slow the current dynamic.

Several articles that have appeared recently reflect this. (I'm sorry I don't have the direct links.)

- a. Washington Post, 1/1/16, "Wind, Solar Power Soaring in Spite of Bargain Prices for Fossil Fuels."
- b. The Economist, 3/16/16, "The World's CO2 emissions have stabilized."
- c. NY Times, 4/4/16, editorial, "A Renewable Energy Boom."
- d. NY Times, 8/22/16, "America's First Offshore Wind Farm May Power Up a New Industry."
- e. Wall Street Journal, 8/28/16, "Which State is a Big Renewable Energy Pioneer?"

Ron

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Rod and Ron,

This article by NASA (I include a link below) is from 2007 -- arguing that even if co2 emissions had stabilized back then (and hey, they didn't) that global warming would proceed. I send this FYI in advance of writing up my comments, because I think that this is the nub of the problem -- even if we

grant (of which I am skeptical) that co2 emission really have stabilized for keeps. The co2 is out there, and the ideas for reversing the greenhouse effect are semi-crackpot geo-engineering schemes likely to have really bad, unforeseen consequences. Like seeding the stratosphere with sulfuric acid to simulate the cooling effect of a volcanic eruption -- which is being seriously proposed and is perhaps the leading contender at this point. Besides the fact that the cooling effect would only last for a few years, I don't need to explain how dangerous this is. But it illustrates how horribly complex a problem reversing global warming is.

I of course don't absolutely rule out that someone(s) will come up with a solution that will be implemented within the next decade or two. But it's not likely. (To be clear: this doesn't mean socialism or barbarism, that capitalism will collapse, etc. It does mean that global warming is going to be very disruptive and very destructive. Capitalists will profit from switching to renewables and, sorry, nuclear power, and from rebuilding infrastructure. Hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, will be forced to migrate -- goodbye Bangladesh, Pacific islands, Gulf Coast, etc. Goodbye Himalayan glaciers, hello Asian drought and water wars and famine.)

More later. Meanwhile, here's the link to the 2007 NASA article:
<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/blogs/climateqa/stabilize-gg-emissions-effects/>

Jack

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Rod and Ron,

I've been trying to figure out whether or not I have substantive differences with Rod's eight points or Ron's three additional points. My conclusion: I don't disagree with any of the points, but I don't find them fully satisfactory. Partly, I think, it's that a sense of urgency doesn't come through those eleven points. Partly, I think, it's a question of approach. And, there may be a difference on the emphasis to be placed on warning against the danger of the "Socialism or Barbarism" advocates. I'm going to start with the last ("Socialism or Barbarism") and work backwards.

1. Socialism or Barbarism: I think that the biggest proximate danger — and the likely course for many in the movement is not "Socialism or Barbarism" but "Bourgeois State, Do Whatever's Needed to Save The Planet".

Reformism is the dominant trend in the movement — it is the ideology of the labor bureaucracy, bolstered by "experts" like Bill McKibben (who has

called for the U.S. to go to a war footing a la the state mobilizations and control in WWI and WWII); and of the social democrats of the DSA, etc. And many of the “socialists” active in the movement will call on the state to ramp up its intervention, falling in behind the labor bureaucrats. Climate change, then, will likely be used to stampede the masses into accepting hardship, deprivation, and massive growth of state surveillance, control, and denial of basic civil liberties. In my opinion, this is the likely danger, and to repeat, it stems not from “Socialism or Barbarism” but from “State, Do Whatever’s Needed to Save Us from Catastrophe”.

2. On approach: If the main danger is indeed reformism acting as a Trojan horse for a massive increase in state control and revocation of what remains of civil liberties, then explaining it and preparing to combat it and provide alternative paths for taking on global warming ought to be key components of how we approach climate change and the environmental movement. Furthermore, it seems to me that we want to emphasize the point on which we all agree — that climate change is going to be very destructive and very disruptive, with its most devastating effects falling upon those least prepared to deal with it. We all agree that unless capitalism is overthrown, it is likely to survive the climate change crisis — but at great cost to the world’s masses. As I’ve said in a previous email, hundreds of millions, if not billions, will be forced to migrate because of rising seas. Drought and famine are likely going to increase, and water wars (especially in Asia) are very likely. Catastrophic weather events are already more common, and will become far more so. This is very grim, and it raises the question of how we intervene. Because, again, I think that they’re going to try to stampede the masses not so much with “Socialism or Barbarism” but with “State, Do What’s Needed to Mitigate the Damage.”

3. On Urgency: Following up on my preceding paragraph: I find Rod’s points and Ron’s points to be too qualified — or, maybe more accurately, too optimistic about the capitalists reducing emissions and substantially limiting or even reversing global warming. In an email I sent to Rod and Ron a few days ago (which should be appended to this piece if it’s published in the bulletin) I included a link to a piece published by NASA in 2007, which argues effectively that even if global co2 emissions were stabilized, more carbon would be pumped into the atmosphere than is removed by natural processes (photosynthesis, absorption by the oceans). Emissions didn’t stabilize in 2007, but for the next few years increased as capitalism binged. Now, the bourgeois press proclaims that emissions have finally stabilized. Even if that’s true, it’s not going to reverse global warming or even keep the amount of co2 constant. That would require substantial reduction in emissions. And the clock is ticking. And have they

really stabilized for keeps? Well, let's look at the emerging economy of India, where Prime Minister Modi has made two commitments on energy: one is to keep emissions under control; the other is to massively increase coal-powered plants to accelerate India's economic growth. Or look at China: after spending most of the past quarter century mining and burning vast quantities of coal, China is trying to reduce coal mining and consumption. But Chinese mining companies are exporting their equipment abroad, especially to Africa. Carbon won't remain in the ground if it's more profitable to extract it and burn it. There will have to be substantial subsidies to discourage poorer nations from relying on carbon-based sources as long as they're cheaper. And to keep the petro-states from continue to drill (environmentally conscious Scotland, for example, is subsidizing new North Sea oil exploration.) (And even in the U.S., there are the tar sands pipelines; the hazardous shale oil trains; etc.) So while I think capitalism will survive, I don't think it has yet finished making the climate change problem a lot worse. We know that the fact that the capitalists say that they want to do something — even if they really mean it — doesn't mean that it's going to happen soon. And when it comes, it will usually come with a high price tag (loss of civil liberties; dispossession; disenfranchisement; etc.)

Finally: while I agree with Rod's point that U.S. capitalism / imperialism has been at the root of the problem, I think it's also important to anticipate that less affluent countries (e.g., India) will be vilified by the U.S. government (and capitalists) as the real problem. Having gotten there first by guzzling carbon-based energy, the U.S. (and the EU countries) will announce that this path is precluded, without providing an alternative path forward for the vast majority of the world's people, thus condemning the latter to poverty and suffering. I think that something about this ought to be incorporated into the statement.

Jack

Jack and Ron,

I think one of the reasons it's hard to know whether we do or don't have differences is that there is a speculative nature to a fair amount of the discussion. That said, here are my thoughts on Jack's most recent email:

1) *'Socialism or barbarism' vs. 'State, Do Whatever's Needed to Save Us from Catastrophe'*

I think you may be mixing two different issues here. In my mind, the discussion around 'socialism or barbarism' involves a theoretical issue that has arisen within *The Utopian* milieu, one that has implications regarding the rejection of Marxism. Global warming becomes linked to the discussion to the degree that it is projected as part of the 'epoch of capitalist decay' and an expression of the 'inevitable collapse' of capitalism. The pursuit of theoretical clarity in relation to Marxism within our milieu *at the present moment* is not meant to suggest that this issue frames either the danger to the climate change movement or our intervention in it. (Marxism itself is likely to prove a threat to future movements, but only to the degree that they break in a revolutionary direction.) When separated from this counter-position, I agree with your main point--reformism is the dominant threat to the climate change movement (and movements for social change, generally), and the one we need to address within the movement.

2) *Urgency*

I find it difficult to further calibrate the impact that global warming will have (as an already set-in-motion physical phenomenon), or to project the degree to which the political elites will need to impose draconian measures in order to respond 'successfully' within a capitalist framework. We seem to be trying to balance between two stools: a) avoidance of complacency; b) adoption of an 'the end is here' outlook. I am not sure that this can be resolved absent continued assessment of the data and events. As a practical matter, I think we can explore the specific agreement or disagreement we have around our approach to the movement, and I have taken another stab at this below.

3) *Approach* (These thoughts incorporate/build on your comments):

a) Capitalism, by its very nature, is prone to rape and plunder for profit. With reference to climate change, this has brought the planet to a dangerous and potentially devastating tipping point

b) Great damage has already taken place. This includes rising sea levels, floods, and increasingly destructively harsh weather events. Given a continued lack of effective response, further damage is highly likely. Absent an effective, longer-term response, the impact of global warming could become catastrophic.

c) Hardship and suffering result from climate change. As the effects of global warming grow, we are likely to see mass migrations from rising sea

levels, drought-induced famines, water wars, and more. Suffering may be felt worldwide, but poorer nations and peoples will suffer disproportionately. They are already bearing the major brunt of global warming,

d) The richest country in the world--the USA--contributes disproportionately to global warming, due to its economic/industrial output. The USA has also been the most powerful opponent on the world stage to more aggressive steps to curtail carbon emissions and take steps to reverse climate change more broadly. The role of corporate wealth in creating adverse climate and in blocking efforts to reverse it should be clearly identified.

e) As the climate change crisis deepens, that U.S. ruling class, along with elites around the world, will be increasingly willing to commit to more effective steps to reverse the effects of global warming. Self-preservation, morality and the profit opportunities of investment in clean energy will intertwine to drive this change; there is already some evidence of this. While there will be resistance to greater action from sectors of the ruling class, it would be seriously misleading to suggest to the movement that capitalism/capitalists 'can't' or 'won't' address the issue. That said, the response is already tardy, and further climate change, with additional negative impacts on people's lives, is certain.

f) It is important to stress that, as the US ruling class and corporate elites take steps to address climate change, they will do it in a way that reaps enormous profits for sections of the capitalist class. And, through taxation, budget cutbacks, etc, they will place a disproportionate burden of the cost to 'clean up' on poor and working people. In other words, while their 'solution' may stave off deeper crisis, it will come with new forms of exploitation and inequality. In addition, the effects of global warming may spark significant conflict between and among peoples and their rulers. 'Solutions' in this context will likely bring a curtailing of political rights and various levels of repression.

g) The best hope for a world free from the threat of environmental catastrophe is the creation of a independent, militant, mass movement that views global warming as one front in a related series of battles against the destruction, degradation and dehumanizing impact of corporate elites. Electoral politics in general, and support for or alignment with the Democratic Party in particular, are approaches that will divert and weaken such a movement. The road to lasting protection of the environment and the earth is to win people to the idea of creating a society organized around people's needs and interests, rather than around corporate wealth

and profits. Such a society would be far more likely to take strong steps to protect the environment than the existing profit-oriented, corporate dominated world. Short of the creation of such a society, a movement that confronts the ruling elites, militantly demands meaningful action, aligns with other social movement of working and oppressed people, refuses to align with or politically support one wing of the ruling class versus another, exposes all actions in the name of 'reform' that shift the burden of response from the rich to the poor will create the most effective bulwark against environmental destruction and possible catastrophe.

Rod

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Rod and Ron,

From the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, with conclusion that climate change is irreversible for the next 1000 years. Of course, they could be wrong. Something that appears to be a potentially catastrophic crackpot geo-engineering scheme might pan out. Nothing is certain. But I wouldn't bet on it.

Jack

<http://m.pnas.org/content/106/6/1704.full.pdf>

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Just a brief reply:

On Socialism or Barbarism: As I have said in the past, I don't agree with it. By the way, it's not an accident that Rosa Luxembourgh formulated it in that way. She believed that capitalist growth came from imperialist expansion, and they were running out of territory. Lenin argued against this in his Imperialism, asserting that capitalism would always find some way to resolve immediate crises unless it was overthrown. Not to embrace Lenin, but Socialism or Barbarism doesn't really draw the line. I know many anarchists who embrace that slogan (or at least believe that the choice is revolution or cataclysm), while I know several Marxists who believe that capitalism can survive if not overthrown. The question, as I understand it, is whether Marx was a determinist and whether his positing inevitability of socialism flows from that. I think he was, and it does, and I reject this. Still,

I am not an anti-Marxist -- see my review of Ron's book for my thoughts on this.

I am glad that you agree with my main point: the danger of reformism, stampeded by climate change, acting as the Trojan horse for massive usurpation of power by the state.

2 and 3. If you agree that climate change will be extremely destructive and disruptive, will displace large numbers of people, will cause more devastating weather events, will fall hardest on those least able to cope with it -- then how can you not have a sense of urgency?
As far as waiting for more data, the discussion being speculative -- the data is there, the scientific community overwhelmingly asserts that climate change will have a huge impact. I have forwarded a few such articles -- there are many, many more.

Jack

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Additional articles on global warming suggested by friends and supporters of *The Utopian*

<http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/04/science/flooding-of-coast-caused-by-global-warming-has-already-begun.html?smprod=nytcore-iphone&smid=nytcore-iphone-share>

http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/09/new-york-future-flooding-climate-change.html?mid=facebook_nymag

<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/07122015/global-carbon-emissions-rising-decades-decline-2015-study-climate-change-paris>

Book reviews...

***Fresh Fruit, Broken Bones*, Seth Holmes *Lettuce War*, Bruce Neuberger**

Sandy Y.

The passage of California AB 1066 was an historic victory for California farmworkers. With all of its limitations of not being fully effective until 2022, the undoubted loopholes which exist or will be created, the fact that only 1.000.000 California farmworkers will be affected and not struggling farmworkers in other states, let alone Baja California and elsewhere will be covered, it is nevertheless a hard-won and much celebrated victory among California farmworkers. Hundreds of them took time off to travel to Sacramento to voice their support for this bill. Be no mistake—unlike the presentation in the press, this bill is not due to the 40+ years of shameless capitulation and waffling of the UFW, which is being given credit for its passage. I think that this is a great time to look back and forward to the agricultural industry in the US and Mexico. I'd like to recommend to those interested two very different books that shed a lot of light and perspective on the issues of farmworkers in today's world.

The first is "Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies" by Seth Holmes, an anthropology and medical student (now tenured professor) at UC Berkeley. This author embedded himself with a community of Trique (indigenous from the Mexican state of Oaxaca) farmworkers in the Skagit valley in Washington, through their border crossing to the United States and their migration to the Central Valley of California's "salad bowl". This book does not have a revolutionary perspective—in fact it is quite apolitical. But to me, that was a major part of its strength—as an anthropologist, he attempted (and largely succeeded, in my opinion) to remove himself from the story except in the literal, narrative sense, and present the story of indigenous farmworkers in the US agricultural industry. What is clear, even if unstated, is that there is no difference between the "refugees" acknowledged by the US from various devastated parts of the world today, and indigenous workers from Mexico, whose migration is no more voluntary or desired than those from Syria. Indigenous Mexicans are people faced with the choice of starvation (due to multiple factors including ecologic devastation and NAFTA's decimation of subsistence farming in Mexico) or migration to Baja California or the US.

Seth Holmes presents the story of this representative group of immigrants in a straightforward, insightful and compassionate way, which, I hope, has and will appeal to health care providers, academics, and policy makers as well as those radicals interested in fundamental social change. In particular, the devastating

chapter documenting what it is like for indigenous farmworkers to try to access the Western health care system, even its most well-intentioned segment—is heart stopping. I would urge anyone with an interest in this critical issue—Baja farmworkers have led some of the most militant and brave struggles in the world over the past year for even a subsistence wage and basic human dignity—to read this gripping and important narrative.

After reading *Fresh Fruit Broken Bodies*, Jack Gerson suggested I go back and read “Lettuce Wars”, a 1984 narrative by Bruce Neuberger. As an old Berkeley radical who spent my obligatory 5 years industrialized in the auto industry before reentering the middle class as a medical professional, I was skeptical. And much of the narrative journal part of the book documenting Bruce’s own experience in the working class prior to re-entering academia, left me frankly cold, even though his partner in this venture was my absolute freshman Berkeley crush Frank Bardake (whose academic work “Tramping Through the Vintage” is still on my to-read list.) Here, I was feeling, was another self-congratulatory “I was a real worker” saga, not helped by the fact that his politics were shaped by Bob Avakian and his Maoist-elitist RU. But the more I read in this book, the more I learned, and the more I was drawn in to his excellent narrative of how the UFW devolved from a workers’ movement for radical social change to a bureaucratic capitulatory puppet of the Democratic Party. I do remember when the UFW, whose boycotts and marches I had so ardently supported as a young radical, turned into calls for ICE raids against the undocumented and fomented racism and classism against the newly arrived indigenous farmworkers of the 1980s, who presided the large wave of indigenous immigrants from Oaxaca and Guerrero who arrived (at the bidding of US labor contractors) in the 1990s and early 2000s. But to experience second-hand every union meeting, every repressing of radical thought, every sellout of the radical farmworker movement in the Salinas area through Bruce’s eyes was enlightening and enraging.

From 15 years’ experience working with the indigenous farmworker community in Oxnard California, I can tell you that there is no love lost for the UFW. They were and are perceived by a large percentage of indigenous workers as a bureaucratic machine that exists only to collect wages and make back deals with employers. There are instances in which local UFW organizers have played a positive role in strikes and organizing drives. Radical thinkers need to support actions such as the Sakuma farmworkers unionization struggle, boycotts of mega-distributor Driscoll’s berries, etc. But as Bruce’s companeros realized, and farmworkers everywhere are still realizing daily, the real power to better their lives and actuate meaningful social change lies in the hands of the workers themselves.

Articles and blogs...

Here are 2 articles and 1 blog post. The blog post points out a reality about 'crime' that is tough to talk about, but arguably an essential reason that some people want the police to stick around. Furthermore and more provocatively the blog post argues that it is women and older people in the hood/ working class neighborhoods who tend to want more, but better policing.

Blog Post: <https://alexbelkins.com/2016/08/05/james-baldwin-on-police/>

This article by Heather Thompson (a liberal at U of M) is arguing that it is the war on drugs that is root cause of all the violence in the inner city as it has created an economy that ultimately rests on gun violence. Her liberal prescription (can be ignored, but also worth thinking about as an intellectual exercise) is to get poor Black/ Latino people to the policy table. One question we could ask is would gun violence drop in the inner city if cocaine and other drugs could be bought cheaply at Wal-Mart?

Thompson article: <http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/10/inner-city-violence-in-the-age-of-mass-incarceration/382154/>

Lastly, an article that discusses the Sinaloa Cartel. If I remember correctly, this piece points out that Chicago is experiencing a spike in violence because of Chicago's central role in the drug trade. There are some other controversial points about the relationship between gangs and drugs, which I am not sure about, so if others have insights would appreciate it.

<http://www.chicagomag.com/Chicago-Magazine/October-2013/Sinaloa-Cartel/>

I send these pieces cuz many of us in NYC are trying to understand why gun violence in some cities has jumped up. Talking to criminologists, long time revolutionaries, prison activists, etc., it is tough to figure out. The ultimate purpose of all of this being, what does it mean for revolutionary politics and Black liberation?

Shemon