

The convictions of these two officers are the exceptions that prove the rule. In 2012, district attorneys, grand juries and other state agents refused to charge nearly 300 police officers responsible for the extrajudicial killing of Black people. Several recent Supreme Court decisions have reinforced this impunity. [7]

Nor have the Executive or Legislative branches of government done anything to limit the impunity police enjoy. On the contrary, they have supplied police with enough military hardware to wage several wars at a time, passed legislation that strips citizens of the basic rights that protect against all forms of police tyranny, given various agencies carte blanche to monitor citizens' every move and utterance, justified racist profiling and provided infinite funds to maintain a system of mass incarceration. If you think the label of "national security state" for our government and its armed agencies is hyperbole, think again.

Operation Ghetto Storm reported on more than the extrajudicial killing of one Black person every 28 hours. The study of the outcomes of the killing of 313 human beings documented that federal investigations, lawsuits, trials and tweaking laws won't protect our children or prevent the next Michael Brown. Operation Ghetto Storm sounded an alarm that the national security state threatens the survival of Black and Brown people and ultimately negates everyone's rights. The horror of police troopers firing on protesters in Ferguson, hurling curses along with teargas, calling them animals and threatening them with death—all on camera—turned that alarm into a deafening siren.

The actual eardrum-piercing military equipment used against the people of Ferguson spurred their resistance. Their example of massive community

participation gives new energy to a national comprehensive campaign to challenge surveillance, racist profiling, mass incarceration, police impunity—to organize block by block a movement capable of ending military occupation of all oppressed communities so they become self-determining with full human rights to life, housing, health, education and dignified employment.

Arlene Eisen is the author *Operation Ghetto Storm: 2012 Annual Report on the Extrajudicial Killings of 313 Black People by Police, Security Guards and Vigilantes*, published by Malcolm X Grassroots Movement with preface by Kali Akuno, posted at www.operationghettostorm.org

Notes

1. A classic study documented that 76% of officers admitted that they frequently bent the facts to establish "probable cause" and 48% said that judges were correct in tossing out police testimony as untrustworthy. http://www.vice.com/read/testilying_cops_are_liars_who_get_away_with_perjury
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_laws_in_the_United_States_by_state
3. <http://talkingpointsmemo.com/livewire/ben-stein-michael-brown-unarmed>
4. www.operationghettostorm.org pp. 25–26.
5. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/radley_balko/why_is_there_no_good_data_b_2278013.html, and http://www.dallasnews.com/opinion/sunday_commentary/20120810_stephan_salisbury_police_shootings_go_largely_ignored.ece
6. http://www.operationghettostorm.org/uploads/1/9/1/1/9110795/14_09_02_impunity_table.pdf
7. http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/27/opinion/how-the-supreme-court-protects-bad-cops.html?smid=fb-share&_r=0

...federal investigations, lawsuits, trials and tweaking laws won't protect our children...

Building a New World

review by R. Burke

A World to Build: New Paths Toward Twenty-First Century Socialism By Marta Harnecker, Monthly Review Press, New York, 2015, 224 pages, ISBN: 978-1-58367-467-3 \$19.00

Since the election of Hugo Chavez as President of Venezuela in 1998, Latin America has charted a path away from the neoliberalism that has dominated the capitalist world-system since the 1970's. Left wing and progressive governments have come to power in the region promising to provide an alternative path of development. Despite obstacles such as coup attempts, the opposition of the US government, and definite shortcomings, these developments have led to improvements in the lives of the Latin American masses.

They stand as a source of hope both to those in the region, as well as elsewhere in the world, that a truly democratic socialism is possible. In *A World to Build: New Paths Toward Twenty-First Century Socialism* Marta Harnecker, herself a long-time participant in the Latin American left, reflects on events and provides some in-depth thinking regarding the

new forms of socialism which are arising from these experiments.

For Ms. Harnecker, the recent advances in Latin America make the region the pioneer in rejecting neoliberalism. She sees there are lessons to be learned by the wider world-left, as well as indications for successful future development of the movement. What makes the recent history of the

Latin American left important is the way in which it breaks with earlier orthodoxies, draws on local and indigenous traditions, and seeks to avoid the mistakes of twentieth century socialism. She writes of Hugo Chavez's belief that 21st century socialism could not be a "carbon copy" and must be a "heroic creation," leading him to speak of a "Bolivarian, Christian, Robinsonian, and Amerindian socialism."

A World to Build begins by recounting historical events of the past 25 years in Latin America that have been decisive in the victories of the left there, starting with the "social explosion" of opposition to IMF imposed austerity in Caracas, Venezuela in 1989. The military were called out and a massacre ensued. This was an important event in the radicalization of younger military officers. Another milestone was the Zapatista uprising against the NAFTA agreement in Mexico on January 1, 1994.

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Ms. Harnecker writes that the important lesson to be learned from these mobilizations "is the proven validity of a strategy of a broad coalition of forces that seeks to unite all those who can be united. The concrete objectives for the struggle are to elicit understandings among all these diverse groups, all with their own very different traditions and political practices." One of the great strengths of the Latin American left has clearly been its diversity rather than dogmatic adherence to a monolithic ideology.

Another factor in the recent successes of the left in Latin America has been a more favorable correlation of forces. Overall there has been a decline of the power and prestige of the United States in that region. Latin American governments have become more willing to stand up to the "Washington Consensus" as well as US foreign policies. There have also been greater efforts at regional coordination such as the creation of ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Our America, and UNASUR, the Union of South American Nations. With the creation of the Bank of the South as an alternative to the IMF, and the creation of the SUCRE as a virtual currency used as an accounting mechanism for regional trade, South America has taken the first steps towards economic integration.

Ms. Harnecker examines the different types of Latin American governments in relation to neoliberalism, as well as the more objec-

tive limitations facing left governments. She recognizes that simply winning an election is no guarantee that a government can implement all the policies and measures it favors. An important factor is being able to accurately assess the correlation of forces both supporting and opposing the measures to be taken. In her assessment it is not the pace of change, but its direction, that is of the greater importance.

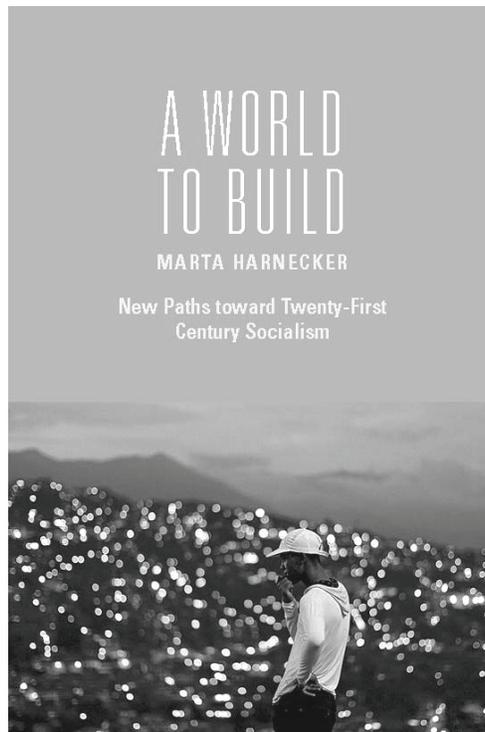
Beyond her account of the recent achievements of the Latin American left, perhaps the most interesting sections of the book deal with Harnecker's exploration of the meaning of 21st century socialism and the development of "a new political instrument for a new hegemony." Hugo Chavez coined the term "21st century socialism" for a new form of socialism that would avoid the errors of 20th century Marxist-Leninist regimes. This of course means a rejection of single-party states and centrally planned command economies in favor of democracy.

To further this approach, Ms. Harnecker thinks it is vitally important to recover the original socialist thinking from which the 20th century movement strayed. For her this means a return to the writings of Marx and Engels. The lessons she derives from this are: Integral human development, human beings as social beings, social property, eliminate the division between manual and intellectual labor, and Society, not the state, must take the reins of economic development.

Ms. Harnecker declares that she believes socialism is something we can move towards, without ever fully attaining it, and defends this as an optimistic viewpoint. She is utopian even, in the positive sense of the word. Many of her proposals agree with those of her partner, Michael Lebowitz (whose books, *The Socialist Alternative* and *The Contradictions of Real Socialism*, this author has reviewed earlier). Thus

Ms. Harnecker discusses decentralized forms of management, workers councils, and the satisfaction of communal needs. One point of reference for her is the work of economist Pat Devine, particularly his *Democracy and Economic Planning*.

Indeed she makes practical use of some of the more "esoteric" of his proposals, such as including representatives of local communities, along with workers representatives, on the governing boards of self-managed enterprises. This has been put forth as a way of overcoming the negative effects of sectional interests making decisions that benefit themselves yet ultimately harm the wider community. Harnecker also endorses social ownership, a central element of Devine's participatory planning through negotiated cooperation model.



Of course the new Latin American governments, despite their merits, fall short in many areas. This is why Ms. Harnacker insists in the right of free criticism as a necessity for building 21st Century Socialism. Without criticism there is no possibility for society to correct its mistakes. The vision she holds out is one of decentralized, federated communities and self-managed enterprises, interacting with a government whose policies are designed to promote such developments. Gramsci is another point of reference, and Ms. Harnacker engages with the task of creating a

new hegemony, above all a cultural one, that is necessary for the process of social transformation.

A World to Build is a solid work full of advanced theoretical insights mixed with lessons derived from concrete, world-historical struggles. This is a deeply rewarding book to read on a number of levels. Whether or not the current left advances in Latin America can be defended and extended is something that only future events can reveal. There are still important things to be learned, which can be applied elsewhere. *A World to Build* is a book where one may start learning these lessons.

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Until the Rulers Obey

Learning from Latin America's Social Movements

by Clifton Ross and Marcy Rein

An excerpt from the introduction to *Until the Rulers Obey: Voices of from Latin American Social Movements*, edited by Clifton Ross and Marcy Rein (Oakland: PM Press, 2014).

A wave of change rolled through Latin America at the turn of the 21st century, sweeping away neoliberal two-party governments, bringing calls to refound the states based on broad participation and democratically drafted constitutions. The power and motion of this wave, often referred to as the “Pink Tide,” came from the social movements that had been gathering force for over a decade—rebuilding in spaces opened by the fall of US-backed military dictatorships, rethinking in the spaces opened by the crumbling of the Soviet socialist models.

These movements galvanized long-silent—or silenced—sectors of society: indigenous people, campesinos, students, the LGBT community, the unemployed and all those left out of the promised utopia of a globalized economy. They have deployed a wide array of strategies and actions to some common ends. They march against mines and agribusiness; they occupy physical spaces, rural and urban, and social space won through recognition of language, culture, and equal participation; they mobilize villages, towns, cities and even nations for community and environmental survival. They are sloughing off the skin of the 20th-century bipolar world, synthesizing old ways of working and finding new paths into an uncertain future.

Same story, different century

The Conquest of the Americas continues as an ongoing process of “primitive accumulation,” that is, through brutal dispossession, only changed in detail. The looting, once only of gold and silver picked or shoveled from mines by slaves to satisfy the greed of Conquistadores, has increased exponentially in recent decades to feed transnational Capital. This behemoth has left behind the sword to devastate the region with an arsenal of new tools for plunder: strip-mining “megaprojects” with giant machines

that dig for lithium, copper and gold, laying waste to landscapes; countless drills for oil, poisoning rivers; dams for hydroelectric power that flood indigenous lands; battalions of tractors sowing industrial soy for cattle and biofuel, or cane for sugar and biofuel, or eucalyptus for paper mills, or other monocultures that raze entire ecosystems and steal peoples’ ways of life.

The United States, of course, has played a major role in the modernization of the instruments of domination for plunder, only in recent years so “humanely” refined. During the more savage era of the

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Cold War, Washington fomented coups to dislodge nationalist and socialist governments across the continent—Arbenz in Guatemala, 1954; Goulart in Brazil, 1964; Allende in Chile, 1973—installing military dictatorships in their place. By the mid-1970s, most of Central and South America was under the rule of dictatorships armed, trained, directed and financed by the United States. Hundreds of thousands were tortured, murdered and disappeared, in some cases decapitating an entire generation of artists, writers, intellectuals and activists. [1]

These dictatorships imposed a particularly virulent form of capitalism on the people of Latin Amer-