

New York City News

NATIONAL LAWYERS GUILD – NYC CHAPTER



WINTER 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PAGE 2

President's Column

PAGE 3

In Memoriam—Ursula Levelt

PAGE 4

Securing the Rights of the Nonhuman

PAGE 5

Meet Rojia Afshar, New Member of the Executive Committee

Sharing Smoothies with Marc Ramirez in Upper Manhattan

PAGE 6

Bios of Newly-Elected EC Members

PAGE 9

Guild in Action

PAGE 10

Member News

Parole Preparation Project Celebrates its 6th Annual Homecoming



November 21, 2019 Parole Preparation Project's Homecoming Celebration at Riverside Church.

BY ELBA GALVAN

On November 21 2019, the Parole Preparation Project (PPP) celebrated its 6th Annual Welcome Home Party at Riverside Church, a cavernous venue that PPP appeared to fill effortlessly. Every year the event draws more people, to the extent that it's becoming difficult to imagine an indoor venue that will be able to accommodate future crowds. PPP's popularity was further evidenced by a feature article published by The New Yorker in

late November 2019 (www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/12/02/prepping-for-parole). The article reminds us what's at the heart of PPP's success — the ability to harness the transformative power of volunteerism and willingness of participants to see each other's depth and goodness. Now, more than ever, helping each other through community participation serves as an antidote to the intoxication of today's extreme polarity. We look forward to PPP's continued growth, success and infectiousness.

Venezuelan Embassy Protectors Facing Prosecution in Federal Court

BY TU TZE-CHUN

On April 10, 2019, a group of pro-peace activists, later to be known as Embassy Protection Collective, entered the Venezuelan embassy with the permission of the democratically elected and internationally recognized government of Nicolás Maduro. The U.S. State Department had ordered Venezuelan Diplomats to the OAS to leave the United States, thereby facilitating the arbitrary take

over of the Embassy building by self-declared Ambassador Carlos Vecchio and other coup supporters. The Embassy Protectors remained in the embassy to protect it in the absence of the Venezuelan Diplomats and until a diplomatic solution could be reached between the governments of Venezuela and the United States.

In the following days, the U.S.-backed coup [continued on page 4](#)

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President's Column, Spring 2020

BY ANDY IZENSON



Happy New Year, NLG-NYC! Your intrepid Executive Committee is embarking on another year of exciting work together, guiding and stewarding the chapter through its next phases of growth and learning. Every year we keep working to dig out the ways hierarchy and oppression get embedded in our psyches and our organizing; every year we keep working to build the world around us as we want to live in it.

As 2020 lurches into motion, things feel dark. The systems that we work within are so enormous, so powerful, and so violent, and we are so small, so mortal, and so fragile. On Friday, February 7, 2020, I spent the morning outside Maimonides hospital, Legal Observing a protest made up of people trying to protect a pair of community members who had been attacked and severely injured by ICE agents the day before.

The group was spread out around the hospital, covering as many of the exits as possible, doing their best to ensure that they had eyes on whatever happened. They'd been there since the day before, convening instantly when New Sanctuary Coalition put out a call, waiting in shifts, photographing license plates, being ordered pizza by people who couldn't get there in person but wanted to support.

After many hours, agents in windbreakers and scarves wrapped around their faces to obscure their identities led a handcuffed man, Gaspar, out the main entrance of the hospital. The group of protestors began to call to him in unison, "No estas solo! No estas solo!"

If you watch the video, you can see Gaspar make eye contact with some of the chanting people as he's being dragged to the car. Protestors put their bodies in front of the car as it started to move and were shoved aside by agents in plainclothes as the car sped away.

So these two truths exist simultaneously: 1) They took him away, and 2) He heard people say that he wasn't alone. That it mattered what was happening to him, and that we were paying attention.

If we can't stop a car from driving— if we can't stop men with weapons from taking our neighbors — if we can't exert control over the systems that seem to close in — are we then helpless and hopeless?

Or is bearing witness in itself a rebellion? Is learning and growing capacity to disrupt their machines itself a field of battle? Is it possible that when we say "You're not alone," we're building a world where fascism cannot take root?

As lawyers, I think we have a couple of jobs. The most well-publicized one is obviously to study the law, to argue it, and to wield it — to exploit the flaws and glitches in the legal system to protect human interest and individual humans. But when things get harder and scarier, I think our other job becomes even more important: to bear witness. To be with our clients whatever happens. To let them know that what happens to them matters, and nobody can tell us it doesn't, no matter how hard they try. Even when we can't protect them from the state, we can protect them from facing the state alone.

I am continually inspired to continue in this work by my comrades in the National Lawyers Guild. We perform this service for our clients and for each other.

What we do matters and we can, and must, do it together.

Mir veln zey iberlebn,
Andy Izenson

In Memoriam—Ursula Levelt

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

Ursula Levelt (pronounced by her Dutch relatives LEVelt) was a towering figure in the New York legal and labor communities for all of her adult life. She passed away July 7, 2019 at the age of 60. Born in Amsterdam, she came to the US as a young woman. She earned several degrees including a JD from CUNY Law School while nursing her infant son, Yotam. Her companions at the CUNY Grad center where she took an MA in political science organized a memorial for her on November 22. Those present testified how freely she gave of her time, knowledge and emotional support, particularly to young women. She never saw an organizing effort she didn't like. She chaired the Labor and Employment Committee of the National Lawyers Guild for several years. As a member of the Executive Committee, she was unfailingly upbeat and principled. She and Colin Starger were the Guild's Mass Defense coordinators during the 2004 RNC convention, and she managed the chaos of mass arraignments at 100 Centre Street on top of her day job at a very demanding labor law firm. This was a feat of utter dedication. Before she went to CUNY Law School, Ursula worked with the Center for Immigrant's Rights, one of the city's first immigrant advocacy nonprofits, and the model for many more. She spoke so highly and regularly of CUNY Law that Local 100 dubbed her "a roving ambassador" for the school. From 2011 to 2016, Ursula served as the Legal Director of the Transport Workers Union Local 100. She was appointed by the Governor as a Commissioner on the NYS Workers Compensation Board in 2016, where she served until she became ill. She was also active with NYCOSH, the NY Committee for Occupational Safety. Arthur Schwartz, for whom Ursula went to work upon her admission to the bar, said of her, "I will always remember Ursula as a person with endless energy, with a smile on her face even in difficult times. She was smart, principled, easy to



L to R, Ursula with members of the Labor and Employment Committee and supporters of the human rights of workers in Mexico rally outside of the Mexican Consulate, February 22, 2013.

get along with, and a fierce fighter for what she believed in. And she was a good friend. Her death is a real loss for the Labor Movement and progressive politics." Her mentor at CUNY Grad School, John Mollenkopf, said of her, "Ursula was one of those extraordinary people who make it so rewarding to be a professor because it was possible for me to help her to satisfy her evident thirst for a better understanding of her world while also learning a great deal from her. Our conversations always involved her keen insights about the questions and issues and texts we were studying, along with her delightfully mordant sense of humor about what really motivated people, especially if it concerned public bureaucracies. I miss her deeply and grieve for the brilliant work she did not have time to do. Yet we can all treasure the moments that we were able to spend together." Ursula delighted in travel and the great outdoors, which is where she met her husband Bill. Besides Bill and her son Yotam, she leaves behind many devoted brothers, aunts, uncles and nieces.

Eric Foner: The Second Founding

How the Civil War and Reconstruction Remade the Constitution

REVIEWED BY

AARON DAVID FRISHBERG

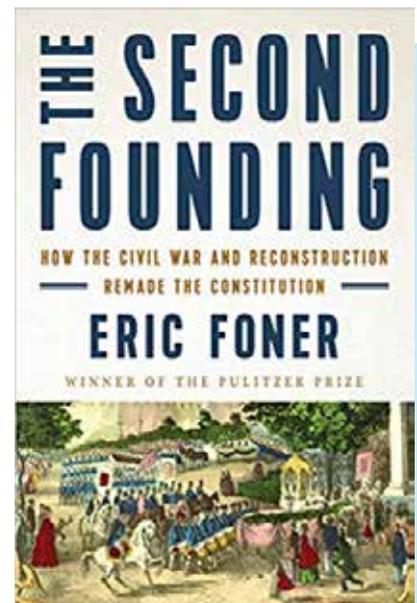
In the interest of full disclosure, I should admit from the beginning that I am a long-time fan of Professor Eric Foner. I read with thorough enjoyment his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Abraham Lincoln, which traces Lincoln's evolving views on race and slavery. I have on my shelf, some day to be read, Foner's comprehensive retelling of WEB DuBois's Black Reconstruction in America, titled simply "Reconstruction." I even had the opportunity to take a course from Professor Foner before Columbia University wooed him away from City College.

So, I bring to the task of reviewing *The Second Coming* a partisanship for the author few can match. That said, I am required to give a warning that *The Second Founding* is not easy reading. In successive chapters, it takes on the history of the enactments of the Thirteenth Amendment, prohibiting slavery

and peonage, except as punishment for crime; the Fourteenth Amendment, guaranteeing equal treatment before the law to the ex-slaves and all other persons; and the Fifteenth Amendment, insuring the right to vote or rather, ensuring that it would not be deprived by states on the basis of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Professor Foner puts each of these amendments into its historical context, with the center stage being taken by the joint congressional committee which shaped the Fourteenth Amendment, plus generous helpings of the thinking of the Nineteenth Century revolutionaries. These radical reconstructionists, having seen the South defeated in its quest to maintain slavery, were determined not to allow white supremacy to rear its ugly head through the politics which still represented a substantial popular current among Southern slavocrats and their followers, and among

[continued on page 8](#)



Securing the Rights of the Nonhuman

BY TAMARA BEDIĆ

There now exists a stalwart, bold civil rights organization, dedicated solely to securing rights for nonhuman animals: The Nonhuman Rights Project. <https://www.non-humanrights.org>

Founded in 2007 by lawyer and author Steven Wise (*Rattling the Cage*), the goal of this legal nonprofit is to change the status of some nonhuman animals from being “things” to being “persons” with rights to bodily liberty and integrity. Their tools are common law, *habeas corpus* and an expanded legal understanding of “personhood”. It’s a malleable concept, after all; a status courts have bestowed on corporations, while withholding legal personhood from large segments of the population: women, indentured servants and slaves.

Wednesday, January 22nd, NLG-NYC



Executive Director Kevin Schneider

Animal Rights committee hosted two guests from the Nonhuman Rights Project: speaker and Executive Director Kevin Schneider and New York Counsel Elizabeth Stein. Kevin’s power point presentation handily refreshed the collective recollection of the dozen or so attendees on *Somerset v Stewart*, *habeas corpus*, and the legal definition of “person”. Then Kevin described how, in December 2013, Nonhuman Rights Project filed three *habeas corpus* petitions on behalf of four chimpanzees: Tommy, Kiko, Hercules and Leo. (The petition for Hercules and Leo, experimented on in Stony Brook University, Long Island is here: <https://www.nonhumanrights.org/content/uploads/Suffolk-Verified-Petition-of-E. Stein-and-S.Wise .pdf>)

Whereas Hercules and Leo now enjoy autonomy in a sanctuary, in Tommy’s case, New York Court of Appeals Judge Eugene Fahey concluded with this striking personal reflection: “*The issue whether a nonhuman animal has a fundamental right to liberty protected by the writ of habeas corpus is profound and far-reaching. It speaks to our relationship with all the life around us. Ultimately, we will not be able to ignore it. While it may be arguable that a chimpanzee is not a ‘person,’ there is no doubt that it is not merely a thing.*”

The bulk of the 75-minutes were devoted to NhLP’s representation of Happy, a solitary Asian elephant captured as a calf and sold to the Bronx Zoo. She gained fame as the first elephant to ‘pass’ the mirror self-recognition test,

considered to be an indicator of self-awareness.

Tragically, for the past 14 years, this social pachyderm has lived alone on a one-acre enclosure. She winters in a concrete, windowless box “about twice the length of her body.” <https://nypost.com/2012/09/30/happy-the-elephants-sad-life-alone-at-the-bronx-zoo/>

The case, however, is not about Happy’s welfare, but rather about her autonomy. That is how it has been presented to Judge Truitt of the Bronx Supreme Court during three days of methodically developed legal argument. You can read NhRP’s Memo of Law here: <https://www.nonhumanrights.org/content/uploads/Memo-of-Law-in-Support.pdf>

One of the many admirable traits of the Nonhuman Rights Project is its generosity and collaboration with attorneys working towards similar goals all over the world. If you want to be among the first to hear the outcome of Judge Truitt’s deliberation, sign up here: https://secure.everyaction.com/8Xy5CL9deUW0_8shqeLwcQ2

NLGNYC’s Animal Rights committee has organized a 3-credit CLE on the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act on Wednesday, February 26, 6:00 to 9:00pm. It will be held at NYU’s Vanderbilt Hall, Room 220. Speakers are Odette Wilkens, Heidi Boghosian and Rachel Meeropol.

FREE to Guild Members, NYC faculty, law students, legal workers, and activists.

To registering go to: nlg-nyc-cle: the animal enterprise terrorism act

Venezuelan Embassy Protectors

[continued from page 1](#)

supporters of the self-declared Venezuelan interim president Juan Guaidó besieged the embassy. They tried to invade the embassy, incited violence, shouted racist and misogynistic slurs at the Embassy Protectors, and, by use of physical aggression, prevented the pro-peace group outside of the embassy from handing food and medical supplies to the Embassy Protectors inside the embassy. As the living conditions inside of the embassy worsened because of lack of food and cutting of electricity and water by the authorities, some 70 activists inside started to leave the embassy. Only four persisted.

On May 16, 2019, dozens of federal agents, along with the D.C. Metropolitan police, raided the embassy without the consent of the Venezuelan government, and took into custody attorney Kevin Zeese, Dr. Margaret Flowers, professor Adrienne Pine, PhD, and retired nurse David Paul. The actions of the

law enforcement agents were in violation of Article 22 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which states, “[t]he premises of the mission shall be inviolable. The agents of the receiving State may not enter them, except with the consent of the head of the mission.”

At the arraignments, U.S. district court magistrate judge Gene Michael Harvey issued the four Embassy Protectors a 100-foot stay-away order from all Venezuelan government officials and properties. The four were charged with a single misdemeanor count of interference with certain protective functions of the U.S. Department of State in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 118. They have pleaded not guilty. Trial is scheduled to begin on February 11th.

Obama-nominee Chief United States District Court Judge Beryl Howell, a defender of the USA PATRIOT Act, presides over the case. On January 10th, the government

filed a Motion in Limine, seeking to bar any mention of the Vienna Convention, any suggestion the defendants had a bona fide belief they could remain in the embassy based on the advice of counsel or the First Amendment, and “the legitimacy or legality of Juan Guaidó administration,” inter alia. In a Court Order and Memorandum Opinion, Judge Howell ruled in favor of the limitations mentioned above, but allowed the defense to argue that the Protectors believed that Maduro is the president of Venezuela. The defense cannot raise the fact that Maduro is the president, however.

If convicted, each of the four face up to one-year imprisonment and \$100,000 fine. At an event last month at the People’s Forum in NYC, they spoke to a jam-packed room of supporters, including Guild members. The New York City Chapter of the Guild endorsed the event.

Meet Rojia Afshar, New Member of the Executive Committee

BY ANN SCHNEIDER

Classically-trained violinist and black belt martial artist, Rojia is happy to serve the National Lawyers Guild in multiple roles.

Following her law degree earned in Tehran in 2012, Rojia came to the U.S. to take an LL.M. in U.S. legal studies at UCONN Law. While in Connecticut, she interned with the state Attorney General and with the Secretary of State. She was offered an opportunity to intern with the ICC at The Hague but could not travel overseas with her application for asylum pending at that time. Instead, she came to New York.

Rojia's graduate thesis took concepts from Persian philosophy and wove them into support for prison reform and prevention of recidivism through reintegration of offenders back into civil society. This understanding made her keen to volunteer with the Guild's spin-off, Parole Preparation Project.

Rojia has a personal understanding of

the effect of U.S. sanctions on other nations, especially her motherland Iran. Skype enables her to maintain a close relationship with her mother, with whom she reunited after six years, in Greece in the summer of 2018. Rojia's life has been shaped by the story of her older uncle's fight and losing his life for freedom before the revolution, her younger uncle's execution as a political prisoner by the IRI regime, her father's leftist teachings as a professor of political science, and by witnessing her mother's hard work inside and outside of the household.

Leading by example, Rojia went to JFK to offer support in 2017 when Trump blocked visitors from predominantly Muslim nations. She was part of the nearly-successful effort to elect Tiffany Cabán as Queens DA, employing shoe leather and going door-to-door to canvass.

Her past work with the Brooklyn DA's office familiarized her with behind-the-scenes



Rojia Afshar

of criminal prosecution. Now Rojia is transitioning to be a people's lawyer!

It is my privilege to welcome Rojia Afshar to the National Lawyers Guild, NYC Chapter!

Sharing Smoothies with Marc Ramirez in Upper Manhattan

BY ELBA GALVAN

I interviewed Marc at a busy Washington Heights cafe where I was immediately struck by his thoughtfulness as he strategically navigated the tight quarters to minimize any inconvenience to others. Marc is an attorney with the Bronx Public Defenders. He was admitted to the NY bar in 2017 and joined the NLG-NYC executive committee this year to fulfill his ongoing desire to volunteer his time in service of others.

Marc grew up in the Masaryk Towers of Columbia Street on the lower east side. Prior to completing his undergraduate and law degree, Marc served 17 years of a 20-year sentence for a non-violent drug conviction. He calmly recounted how his federal trial judge practically doubled his 10-12 year sentence through "enhancements," a practice that the Supreme Court has since ruled unconstitutional in *US v Booker* (2005) (increases in sentences above the statutory punishment must be based on facts found by a jury to be proven "beyond a reasonable doubt," as opposed to imposed by a judge by a "preponderance of the evidence"). But Marc does not regret going to trial in his case; he believes he more likely would have regretted taking a plea which would have

required governmental cooperation. His attorney was long-time NLG stalwart Lynn Stewart, whom he knew and trusted from the neighborhood.

One of Marc's most fulfilling roles in prison was participating in ROPE (Reaching Out to Provide Enlightenment) which involved at-risk youth being brought into the facility to talk with Marc and his colleagues about what led them to prison. They shared their stories and focused on educational opportunities and positive persuasion as a means of prevention (as opposed to the "scared straight" model). Marc also created the first prison Relay for Life event (to benefit the American Cancer Society, "ACS") with over 1000 participants. It won ACS's National Award for Diversity and continued beyond Marc's leadership.

In his work as a public defender, Marc brings an unparalleled depth of empathy and understanding, qualities often overlooked in today's world. He also looks forward to helping guide other law candidates with criminal records through the admission process; which he navigated so seamlessly, he succeeded on his first attempt.

Pursing a college degree in prison can exponentially reduce the chances of recidi-



Marc Ramirez

vism from almost 50% to 4%, let alone the impact of obtaining a graduate degree. Marc's story proves why, rather than continue the "revolving door" cycle of punishment, people with criminal convictions should be given a chance to fulfill personal and societal goals in more meaningful ways. The EC welcomes Marc, is eager to work with him and hopes to live up to his example.

Bios of Newly-elected 2020 EC Members

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Tamara Bedić received her Master's degree from New York University and her JD from the University of Virginia. A lifelong learner, she is returning now for a PhD.

Tamara has been a member of the NLG-NYC Chapter for eight years. She is Chair of the NYC Animal Rights committee and a member of the Guild's Executive Committee. As a long-time Legal Observer, Tamara has watched many different protests and causes but, most consistently at animal rights actions. Tamara has successfully represented animal rescue groups, pro bono. She is a donor and member of numerous animal rights groups, as well as a dog and cat rescuer.

As an employment attorney, Tamara champions women in the workplace under Title VII, the FMLA and the ADEA. Her special focus is sexual harassment and retaliation claims. She is currently with Pedowitz, Meister, LLP

Alek Felstiner is an attorney at Levy Ratner, PC, a worker-side labor and employment firm. He represents unions and their membership in arbitrations, at the National Labor Relations Board, and in court. Alek also represents individuals and groups of employees fighting to protect their right to minimum wage, overtime, and a workplace free from discrimination and retaliation.

Prior to joining Levy Ratner, Alek clerked for the Honorable Barbara Jacobs Rothstein in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, and served as an Honors Attorney at the United States Department of Labor in Washington D.C, where he represented the Solicitor of Labor in cases ranging from employee benefits to mine safety."

Andy Izenon is an Associate Attorney with Diana Adams Law & Mediation, and is a passionate advocate for queer and nontraditional families and for trans and gender-nonconforming youth. Andy is an activist and educator around gender, sexuality, positive consent practices, and sexual communication, and speaks at various organizations and events on the East Coast about those topics, including the Woodhull Sexual Freedom Summit, Open Love NY, and Columbia University. At New York Law School on a Trustee Scholarship, Andy affiliated with the Justice Action Center, concentrating in Social Justice and Family Law, and chaired the NLG Student Chapter, the Stonewall Law Students Association, and Law Students for Reproductive Justice. Andy's Justice Action Center capstone project, "Radicalizing Consent: Towards

Implementing an Affirmative Consent Model in New York's Rape Law," received the Center's "Outstanding Work on a Capstone" award and was later published on the Yes Means Yes blog. Andy is a trained mediator through the New York Center for Interpersonal Development, and a trained collaborative attorney through the New York Association of Collaborative Professionals, as well as a member of the NYC Bar Association and the LGBT Bar Association, a Legal Observer with the National Lawyers Guild, and is admitted to the First Department of the New York Bar.

Andrew Sawtelle is a staff attorney at the Drivers Resource Center of the Metropolitan Taxicab Board of Trade, where he represents taxi drivers in administrative hearings and assists drivers with civil and criminal legal issues. Andrew is a recent graduate of the City University of New York School of Law, where he joined the NLG as a member of the CUNY chapter and through it became a Legal Observer. He has been an active legal observer since the first anniversary of Occupy Wall Street in 2012, and has organized capacity building and training projects within the program. He worked with the chapter's Mass Defense Committee to oppose the creation of the NYPD's anti-protest Strategic Response Group in 2015. Prior to law school, he was a foreclosure prevention counselor in the Hudson Valley and helped found Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson, a grassroots, multi-issue community organization based in Poughkeepsie.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Miles Ashton Miles is a private practice attorney focusing on protester defense and First Amendment issues. He has been a member of the National Lawyers Guild since his first year of law school at CUNY Law. He was also currently a member of the NYC-NLG Executive Committee.

Elena L. Cohen is an attorney and a doctoral candidate at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Elena served as the President of the NLG-NYC Chapter for two years, and is the current President of national NLG. Elena has been co-chair of NLG-NYC's Mass Defense Committee. She is a partner at Cohen Green PLLC, a small firm focusing on civil rights and serving the needs of the LGBTQ community and sex workers. She is also an adjunct professor of gender and the law and civil rights at in the CUNY system.

Alex Franco is an immigration and human rights attorney in private practice. She pre-

viously worked for Zavala Law Group, an immigration firm in midtown Manhattan. Alex served as a legal observer in the Bay Area and NY for over 10 years. She currently works with ICEFREENYC, a coalition in New York City fighting against ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and police violence against immigrants and communities of color. She was also part of the coordinating committee for Caravan43NYC, which brought parents and relatives of the disappeared 43 students from Ayotzinapa to New York as part of a human rights campaign. Currently, she serves as the Vice Chair for the Mexico Committee, a subsection of the Human Rights Committee of the American Bar Association. She was a Legal Fellow at UnLocal, Inc., where she provided legal services to alien mothers with children, particularly in the Garifuna community in the Bronx.

Alex previously worked with Legal Services NYC-Bronx in the Family and Immigration Unit where she worked on humanitarian-based immigration. She is a graduate of CUNY School of Law, where she engaged in a fact-finding mission in Haiti on sexual exchange and co-authored a report on the findings. She received a B.A. in psychology with an emphasis in cognitive neuroscience from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to attending law school, Alex was a community organizer in the immigrants' rights, drug policy reform, and sex workers' rights movements in the Bay Area of California.

Aaron Frishberg has been a member of the National Lawyers Guild since college, over forty years ago, and helped revive the dormant national committee which is now known as the Disability Justice Committee. Aaron also sits on the steering committee of the national Military Law Task Force. He has lived and practiced in New York City all of his professional life, and has strong friendships with members of National Conference of Black Lawyers, including its first National Director, who had him do legal research for his law firm beginning when he was in the City College Urban Legal Studies program, better known to many NLG members as "Haywood's program."

Elba Galvan has worked as a New York attorney for over two decades. Early in her career, Elba worked as a litigator and appellate attorney in two private firms. Subsequently, she served as special counsel to the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (currently LatinoJusticePRLDEF) and managed a solo practice. She also served as a Law Clerk to

[continued on page 7](#)

Bios of Newly-elected 2020 EC Members

continued from page 6

SDNY Judge Analisa Torres and Judge Laura Johnson.

Elba is a past president of the Puerto Rican Bar Association and recipient of the PRBA's 2011 Excellence in Advocacy Women's Award. She is also a past deputy regional president of the Hispanic National Bar Association. A two-term past president of the NLG-NYC, she currently serves on the executive committee. Elba received her B.A. from Cornell University and J.D. from Howard University School of Law.

Valeria Gheorghiu is an environmental and civil rights attorney integrating restorative justice into the practice of law. As a multilingual contract attorney, Valeria co-founded United Contract Attorneys drawing from her prior work as a global justice organizer, and as a workers' rights attorney at NGOs such as South Jersey Legal Services. She currently practices cooperative, environmental and civil rights law at her office in Kingston, New York. Her more notable cases include representing the Ramapough Nation, Occupy New Paltz and advancing pagan rights in the *Matter of Maetreum of Cybele, Magna Mater, Inc. v. McCoy et al.*

At Vermont Law School, she was an Albert Schweitzer Fellow related to her summer internship with Alburnus Maior's efforts to stop a gold mine in Rosia Montana, Romania. Her 3L summer policy work on farmers' rights at Gene Campaign in India as a Fellow for the Center for World Indigenous Studies resulted in a publication in the Fourth World Journal. She also initiated a legal text drive to several developing country law school libraries worldwide as Co-Chair of the International Law Society.

Joel R. Kupferman is the co-chair of the NLG Environmental Justice Committee (local and national), executive director of the New York Environmental Law & Justice Project and the Environmental Initiative for Haiti. Co-counsel in *Benzman v. Whitman and EPA*, in which the judge held Whitman's statement that the air was safe in lower Manhattan after 9/11 to be egregious. Joel represents tenants, community gardens, public parks, indigenous people, workers' groups on EJ issues from lower Manhattan to the Gulf Coast to Haiti.

Matthew Main is currently a law instructor at CUNY School of Law where he teaches Lawyering Seminar I and II, Core Doctrine and provides academic support for Criminal Law. Matt has also supported recent CUNY graduates as a mentor in CUNY's bar exam

mentor program since 2013. Prior to joining CUNY Law, Matt was an attorney with the Three-Quarter House Project at Mobilization for Justice where he represented low-income New Yorkers who live in unregulated sober homes known as "three-quarter houses." Matt worked with lawyers, organizers and directly-impacted people to build power and promote social change. His practice included direct legal services, affirmative litigation and legislative reform for housing justice and to further grassroots movements led by people with histories of substance use, incarceration, and homelessness. Before entering into practice, Matt worked in the areas of prisoner reentry, employment discrimination, racial profiling, immigration, and housing justice. Matt earned his B.A. at the University of Vermont where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa and Alpha Kappa Delta in sociology. He earned his J.D. at CUNY School of Law where he was a Haywood Burns Graduate Fellow in Civil and Human Rights.

Daniel L. Meyers is a retired Criminal Defense/Civil Rights Attorney. In 1967 he began practicing law and since 1968 has been a member of the NYC-NLG Chapter. From 1974-2001, he was an attorney member of the Attica Brothers legal team who sued Gov. Rockefeller and other state officials for the barbaric consequences of the 1971 Attica Massacre. Danny is a past president of the Chapter.

Milad Momeni graduated with honors from Kenyon College in 2016 with a B.A. in International Studies. In college, he served as the president of Kenyon Students for Justice in Palestine and the Middle East Students Association. In 2017, he began his legal studies at Pace University School of Law. Currently, he is a student attorney at the Immigration Justice Clinic, a Pro Bono Scholar, and the president of both the Muslim Law Students Association and the International Law Society. Over the course of his legal career, he has worked as an intern at the Urban Justice Center, advocating for the rights of NYC street vendors, and as a student attorney at Pace's Neighborhood Justice Clinic, where he represented laborers at unemployment insurance hearings and fought alongside unions and worker centers to push an anti-wage theft bill through the county board. He is the most recent recipient of Pace's Sobie Pasternack Award in Civil Rights and one of Pace's National Lawyers Guild student representatives.

Alex Petkanas is a third-year student at Brooklyn Law School. He has dedicated his time in law school to public interest work, spending his summers doing federal public defense and representing homeless clients in NYC. During his second year, he participated in a Housing Rights clinic and the LGBT Advocacy Clinic. He is very involved with his campus chapter of NLG, which does Legal Observing, participates in the Parole Prep Project, regularly engages in on campus advocacy, and partners with NYC organizations on citywide actions. This year, he and two other Brooklyn Law School students attended the NLG Convention in North Carolina, and he looks forward to taking the lessons he took from that conference into his work with the Executive Committee.

Collin Poirot is an immigration attorney and member of the Mass Defense Committee, as well as the International Committee. Collin joined the NLG as a law student at Harvard, and eventually became co-chair of his student chapter. Collin has a background in organizing in the anti-war and immigrant rights movements, and has been involved in the Palestinian liberation struggle since he was an undergraduate at the University of Texas. Collin has previously worked with attorneys in the Chicago, LA, and Boston chapters of the NLG and is excited to continue building the guild here in New York City!

Micah Prussack is a paralegal at Cohen&Green and frequently works on various civil rights cases with Guild attorneys in NYC. They have no interest in going to law school, but plenty of interest in justice.

Marc Ramirez is a public defender in the Bronx. He earned his J.D. from the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law, with a concentration in Social Justice, Equality & Civil Rights. While at CUNY Law, he interned with organizations that served vulnerable populations, including those with criminal records, the LGBTQQ community, homeless and displaced youth, and undocumented immigrants. Marc is a member of the American Bar Association, the New York City Bar Association, and the Hispanic National Bar Association. He has spoken on panels about careers in nonprofits, and navigating the character and fitness process during bar admission.

Ann Schneider has practiced law for 25 years on behalf of union members, specializing in

continued on page 8

Eric Foner: *The Second Founding*

continued from page 3

northern Democrats seeking after power.

A historian's historian, Professor Foner does not forget to call to task an earlier generation of American historians whose misrepresentation of the Reconstruction era and the Black and white progressives who ran the Southern governments for a brief moment in time. The characterization of Reconstruction's era as "misrule" served to rationalize the retreat from black civil rights and fostered a white supremacist revision of the era.

Why, with his encyclopedic knowledge of the era does Professor Foner produce a volume which at times reads with the consistency, of munching fresh mown hay? I can only assume, given the literary milestones brought about by the same author in past endeavors, that he is willing to bore, in the interest of capturing accurately the trends and counter-trends, of one of American history's most complex periods. Thus, the chapter on

The Fourteenth Amendment, of course, has had the far broader effect on constitutional developments of being the vehicle for recognizing the equality of women, and more recently, of same-gender marriage.

the Fifteenth Amendment takes a long look at the hopes of women of the time that Black manhood suffrage would be followed quickly by suffrage for women of all races. This is not a diversion which can be exercised without consequences. Earlier chapters on the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments are similarly full of asides, looking carefully, for instance, at how the Thirteenth Amendment's representation of freedmen was turned into a racially-biased view that Asian "coolies" were incapable of taking a place among the more advanced races.

The Fourteenth Amendment, of course, has had the far broader effect on constitutional developments of being the vehicle for recognizing the equality of women, and more recently, of same-gender marriage. One thing this volume is not, is a key to what is known as "legislative intent" The work of Professor Foner is too detailed with the conflicting push and pull of debate to suggest that a single intent could emerge in support of a proposition. Rather, it is a witness to a birth, or rebirth, of the kind which provides the clues to a jigsaw puzzle, fitting together the intent which informed the radical reconstruction Congress which aimed to do one thing with the three amendments, that is, to safeguard the ex-slaves in the exercise of the privileges and immunities of citizenship, a monumental undertaking which continues to call for the efforts of people of good will even as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century.

Bios of Newly-elected 2020 EC Members

continued from page 7

divorce, housing and consumer law. She is a writer and activist who's been involved in feminist, labor, anti-nuclear, death penalty, and anti-imperialist causes over the years. She was the chapter's unpaid coordinator during our financial crisis of the mid-90's.

Dan Shockley is the senior software developer for the New York Hotel Trades Council, the union that represents about 40,000 hotel workers. He builds custom software solutions that aid the union in its mission to win and maintain strong protections and benefits for members. Dan is an attorney admitted in NY/NJ, and has been an NLG Legal Observer since 2011, as well as a member of the Mass Defense Committee. He is a volunteer street medic with NYC Action Medical, and an art activist with the People's Puppets of Occupy Wall Street. Dan has a Bachelor of Science in Physics from Drexel University and a J.D. from the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law.

Dan is interested in helping the Chapter evaluate and implement technology to better serve its mission.

Franklin Siegel worked in the NLG National Office Collective, held leadership roles in several national NLG projects including the Puerto Rico Legal Project and was on the board of the NLG's Grand Jury Project. He was the N.O. staff member who coordinated the filing of the national NLG's lawsuit against the FBI, in which the Guild was represented by Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman. Was a past president of the Chapter, and is currently a member of the NYC Mass Defense Committee.

Franklin's relatively recent chapter work includes securing the meeting and dormitory facilities when the Chapter hosted the 2016 NLG Convention; organizing a full day CLE in January 2017 on the coming Trump era which was co-sponsored with CUNY Law and the Society of American Law Teachers; and co-organized the June 2017 CLE "Defending Protesters in Criminal Court" with Sarah Kunstler and Susan Howard. He serves on the board of The NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation. On the EC he seeks to promote collaboration between the Foundation and Chapter leadership to build the long-term capacity of the Chapter.

Franklin works at CUNY School of Law where he teaches and is director of the Evening Program. (With a Legal Aid Support Staff shop steward, he arranged for SEIU-1199's Education Fund to provide substantial tuition support for LAS support staff to attend CUNY Law's evening program.) He spent a decade

in private practice, was a Staff Attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights, was CCR's Treasurer at a time of fiscal stress and served on its board for 18 years. He is one of the five class counsel in *Handschu v. Special Services Division*, coming into the case when he was a law student at Marty Stolar's law collective.

Martin R. Stolar has been a lawyer since 1968 He was a member of the original New York Law Commune, a partner of Stolar, Alterman & Gulielmetti and, since 1987, has been in individual private practice.

Starting in 1970, he has represented thousands of arrested demonstrators as part of the Mass Defense Committee including Black Panthers, civil rights activists, anti-war activists, welfare mothers, Young Lords, Vieques activists, RNC, OWS, Black Lives Matter and environmental activists, and just about everyone who comes within the scope of the NYC Chapter's Mass Defense Committee. Other notable cases include The Camden 28, The Attica rebellion, assorted Grand Jury resisters, post-9/11 detainees, the 34th Street Subway bomb plot, and *Handschu v. SSD*, the now almost 50 year-old action regulating the activities of the NYPD's investigations of political and religious activity.

Marty has been part of the NLG since he began practicing law and has been President of the NYC Chapter for five terms. Marty is the current President of the NLG-NYC Chapter Foundation.

KEEP THE CHAPTER ROLLING...

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND GET ACTIVE IN THE GUILD!

YOU CAN PAY YOUR DUES OR MAKE A CONTRIBUTION ONLINE AT

WWW.NLGNYC.ORG/HOW-TO-JOIN

NLG-NYC Animal Rights Committee: *Greetings Animal Lovers! I'm sure you've heard of—and admire—the wonderful attorneys challenging notions of “personhood” in the courts: the Non-Human Rights Project! On January 22 at 168 Canal Street these champions of liberation updated us on their lawsuits—for example the ongoing struggle on behalf of Happy the elephant, currently in solitary in the Bronx. [Bronx Zoo's Happy the Elephant gets day in court in fight over 'personhood'](#)*



The **International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines** (ICHRP) met at About Face on Fulton Street in Manhattan on January 14: *“Come kick off the New Year with International Coalition for Human Rights in the Philippines, ICHRP as we build out our plans to advance our human rights work! We will be uniting on a tactical program for the year ahead, review major thrusts and legislative targets, as well as learn updates to the situation on the ground.”* NLG-NYC is a member of the ICHRP coalition.

The **Labor & Employment Committee** conducted a free CLE December 10: ***Leading the Way: New York Enacts Legal Protections for Farmworkers and Families.*** **Cristina Gallo, Garrett Kaske, and Omer Khwaja** were the presenters. The event was held at Levy Ratner, P.C. on 8th Avenue in Manhattan.

Robert Cini will represent NLG-NYC in the Democratic Party Independent **Judicial Screening Panel** for Manhattan Civil Court. Robert is an immigration attorney and is active with the Animal Rights Committee.

The NLG-NYC **Animal Rights and Mass Defense Committees** conducted a **Legal Observer Training** on November 25.

NLG-NYC's **Parole Preparation Project** (PPP) held its 6th Annual Welcome Home Party & Fundraiser at Riverside Church on November 21. PPP was featured as the **center story** in the November 25 edition of the **New Yorker**. The article follows Richard Lloyd

Dennis and his PPP volunteer team as he faced the Board of Parole for the 13th time. He is 68 years old and has been in prison for more than 47 years.



...continuing to the present day, the NYPD has conducted surveillance of individuals and infiltrated organizations it perceives as enemies of the status quo.

The **New York City Municipal Library** held a screening on November 7 of nine never-before-seen **NYPD surveillance films**. As a result of the 1985 settlement of the **Handschu v. Special Services Division** lawsuit records covering decades of police surveillance of social justice activism were turned over to the Municipal Archives and have now been digitized. Beginning in 1904 with the “Italian Squad’s” focus on anarchists and continuing to the present day, the NYPD has conducted surveillance of individuals and infiltrated organizations it perceives as enemies of the status quo.

At different periods, the focus has been on labor leaders, Nazi supporters, socialists, communists, Black Panthers, Women’s Strike for Peace, the Young Lords, Youth against War and Fascism, Nation of Islam, anarchists, immigrants, and Muslims. The original plaintiffs included chapter member **Barbara Handschu**, who now practices matrimonial law in NYC.

After the 9/11 attacks, the guidelines were weakened to the extent that Barbara unsuccessfully sought to have her name taken off the rules. Nonetheless, the Handschu decree remains one of the few tools in the ongoing struggle to establish judicial limits on NYPD interference with constitutionally-protected political activity by progressives and people of color. **Marty Stolar** and **Franklin Siegel** were among the original co-counsel. The Municipal Library has put approximately 1,200 films online for public viewing. **[NYPD Surveillance Films—NYC Department of Records & Information Services](#)**

On October 30 NLG-NYC's **Animal Rights Committee** hosted **Nora Constance**

Marino, the attorney who led a long fight to ban the ultra-Orthodox Jewish ritual of **Kaporos**, during which practitioners swing six-week old chickens around their heads while reciting a prayer to symbolically transfer their sins to the animal before it is slaughtered. In 2018 the NY Court of Appeals held that, although the practice may possibly violate various animal abuse and public health laws, NYC agencies have discretion with respect to the laws they choose to enforce. The decision unanimously upheld lower court rulings dismissing the lawsuit which was brought in 2015 by a group called **The Alliance to End Chickens as Kaporos** seeking an order compelling the NYPD and city Health Department to enforce the laws. <https://www.nydailynews.com/new-york/ny-pol-court-of-appeals-kaporos-chickens-20181114-story.html>

Suzanne Adely and former NLG president **Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan** were presenters at an October 17 CLE: **Human Rights for the People: The Gig Economy, Precarity and the Right to Healthcare** at the National Lawyers Guild’s annual **Law for the People Convention** in Durham, North Carolina. The CLE explored contemporary legal strategies for advancing human rights in the “gig economy” amid rising precarity, including current cases challenging companies like Uber, and unique legal strategies to confront precarity. It addressed ongoing work around a range of labor issues, including the right to healthcare, migration, prison labor and the right to organize. The CLE was presented by the NLG’s **International Committee and Labor and Employment Committee**.



The **National Conference of Black Lawyers—New York Chapter** sponsored **An Intergenerational Conversation with Dr. Angela Y. Davis** at Riverside Church on September 23. *“The purpose of this gathering is to begin a process of passing on the wisdom and experiences of yesterday’s activists to a new generation. The need for radical legal support in the struggle for Black liberation is as important today as it was in 1968 when NCBL was*

continued on page 13

Kenneth Reams has been in solitary confinement for the last 25 years on Arkansas's death row. Nonetheless, Kenneth has pushed back the walls of his cell to become a painter, a poet, the founder of a non-profit, and an art event organizer – while fighting at the same time for justice. Several chapter members have been involved with his defense. (See www.nlg.org/guild-notes/article/kenneth-reams-opening-the-art-event-on-capital-punishment-from-death-row/)

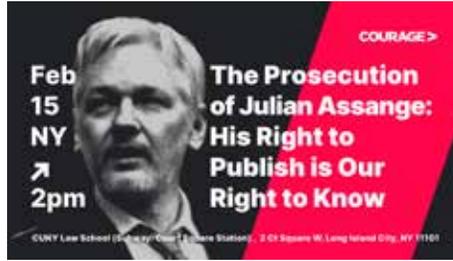
FREE MEN, a film by Swiss film maker Anne-Frédérique Widmann tells his story. See the NY Premier on March 13 at Thomasina's Catering Hall, 205-35 Linden Blvd. JA. RSVP required. Contact Wanda Best at #917-412-7889.

On February 17 Strand Books will hold a book signing for **Big Black: Stand at Attica**, a graphic biography of Frank "Big Black" Smith by **Jared Reinmuth**. It tells the story of Big Black Smith (1933-2004) and the 1,281 Attica prisoners who were the victims of the state orchestrated massacre at Attica Prison on September 13, 1971. There will be a second book signing on February 22 at the Grand Central Branch of the New York Public Library on East 46th Street in Manhattan. www.boom-studios.com/archives/the-true-story-of-four-days-that-changed-the-course-of-history-in-big-black-stand-at-attica-from-boom-studios/

Danny Meyers was part of the NLG legal collective that spent three decades in litigation

seeking justice for the Attica Brothers. Jared Reinmuth is Danny's stepson.

The **Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizations** (IFCO), a long-time Cuba solidarity organization, one of whose projects is the annual Caravan to Cuba, had its 501(c)(3) tax exempt status restored on December 22. **Marty Stolar** was their lawyer. **Victory! IFCO has our 501c (3) back!**



In Defense of Julian Assange, co-edited by **Margaret Kunstler**, is a collection of 38 essays documenting the work of Julian Assange and the efforts of the US and UK governments to silence and imprison him. **Michael Steven Smith's** review appeared on *Portside* on November 20: "What is at stake in his upcoming trial is the future of free journalism, here and abroad ... He never set foot in the United States. He never published untruthful materials. Yet the Trump administration wants to reach across the ocean, have him extradited to the United States, try him and put him in solitary in a maximum-security prison for the rest of his life. If the government can get away

with this, it will have established a precedent that could lead to the destruction of free journalism. It is the most significant challenge to a free press in our lifetimes." portside.org/2019-11-20/trials-julian-assange

A panel on the Assange extradition will be held at the CUNY Law School auditorium on February 15, featuring Renata Avila, Max Blumenthal, Glen Ford, and James C. Goodale, with video statements from Noam Chomsky, Daniel Ellsberg, and Alice Walker. To register: <https://nationallawyersguild-nycchapter.wildapricot.org/sys/website/system-pages/?pageId=18008>

Nathan Fuller of the Courage Foundation and **Deborah Hrbek** were interviewed by **Michael Smith** and **Heidi Boghosian** on this subject for their weekly radio broadcast, *Law and Disorder*. The show aired on Pacifica's WBAI radio on February 3. You can hear the broadcast on this link:

Listen To Radio Show at: lawanddisorder.org/

Hillary Exter spent several weeks in late fall in the Tucson area with **No More Deaths (NMD)** who mission is to end death and suffering in the Mexico-US borderlands through civil initiative: people of conscience working openly and in community to uphold fundamental human rights. She responded to the national call of the defense committee for **Dr. Scott Warren**, who was facing federal felony charges, harboring, for providing humanitarian aid in the Sonoran desert where more than 3,000 migrants have died over the last two decades, to do community outreach in the counties which the jury pool was drawn. "We're thrilled that Scott was acquitted in November by the jury. Humanitarian aid is never a crime!" Hilary was interviewed about her experiences assisting immigrants on The Lilith Blog: www.lilith.org/blog/2019/02/what-its-like-to-help-immigrants-at-the-border-right-now/

On August 12 Five Fordham University students won a landmark legal victory against Fordham University which sought to prohibit them from forming a **Students for Justice in Palestine** (SJP) club at the university. *Awad, et al. v. Fordham University* was the first lawsuit in the country challenging institutional censorship of students advocating for justice in Palestine, and this win marks the first major legal victory for free speech for advocates of Palestine on college campuses. **Alan Levine** appeared in NY Supreme Court as cooperating counsel with lawyers from the **Center for Constitutional Rights** and **Palestine Legal** representing the students. They argued that [continued on page 11](#)

Holiday Party 2019



Chapter members gather at Surrogate Rita Mella's courtroom, at our Annual Meeting/Holiday Party 2019



In January **Abdeen Jabara** traveled to Camaguey, Cuba's third largest city, with a group that was largely from Madison, Wisconsin, including twelve members of Latin music bands in Madison. "We spent nine intense days of immersion in Cuban history, culture and music which included a visit to Camaguey Ballet Company and a moving gift of a tuba to the 60 person Camaguey marching band. A truly remarkable experience that glowed with the steadfastness and warmth of the Cuban people."

continued from page 10

Fordham has deprived them of their freedom to advocate for causes in which they believe without arbitrary censorship by college officials, a right guaranteed by Fordham's own policies.

On July 19, the 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a decision that Pennsylvania Corrections Department employees were not immune to being sued over their decisions denying hepatitis C drugs to **Mumia Abu-Jamal**. Mumia, now 65, is serving a life sentence for the slaying of a Philadelphia police officer. His case has been riddled with prejudicial errors including a fabricated confession, denial of the right to represent himself, racist jury selection, and the participation in post-conviction review hearings by the racist judge who had presided at Mumia's trial and was later appointed to an appellate court. **Bob Boyle** represented Mumia, now 65, who is a former Black Panther and past NLG Jailhouse Lawyer Vice President.

Former NLG president **Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan** was featured at a July 9 CLE on the

ongoing US warfare against Cuba. The Trump administration plans to enforce a provision of the **Helms-Burton Act** signed into law by President Clinton in 1996 which permits U.S. citizens to file lawsuits in US federal courts against businesses that operate on property appropriated by the Cuban government after the 1959 revolution. The program was presented by the SDNY chapter of the Federal Bar Association and co-hosted by Winston & Strawn LLP.

Executive Committee member **Marco Conner**, co-deputy director of **Transportation Alternatives**, was quoted in the July 3 *New York Times*: "New Yorkers on bikes are being killed at an alarming rate. It is clear that Vision Zero is in a state of emergency and Mayor de Blasio is in denial about his signature program faltering under his neglect." Transportation Alternatives has called on the Mayor and City Council to make streets safer by overhauling truck and freight regulations, expanding enforcement efforts to keep vehicles out of bike lanes, and targeting reckless drivers. www.nytimes.com/2019/07/03/nyregion/nyc-bicycling-deaths.html

Several chapter members participated in panels and workshops at the **Left Forum 2019** held June 28-30 at Long Island University in Brooklyn.

- **Joel Kupferman**: *The Politics of Pesticides: Some Things Too Many Leftists Don't Think about and Should*, sponsored by The No Spray Coalition
- **Suzanne Adely**: *Food Sovereignty in the Global North and Global South*
- **Marty Stolar**: *Mueller and Me and Bianca Make Three* (Bianca is the name of the dog of Randy Credico, Marty's client)
- **Natasha Lycia Ora Bannan**: *Disaster Capitalism, Colonialism and Climate Change: Puerto Rico in Crisis and Resistance*, sponsored by LatinoJustice PRLDEF
- **Abi Hassen**: *Vulgar Complexity: How Can Complexity Science, Computation, and Evolution Inform Left Political Strategy?*
- **Marina Sitrin**: *Conversations on Strategies for Total Transformation: moving towards a non-patriarchal and non-racist society and movement – as well as with our eyes on eliminating capitalism*
- **Ken Montenegro**: *Technology and Revolution: the U.S. Left's Program for Action*

Holly Maguigan and **Abdeen Jabara** hosted a book party for **Michael Steven Smith** at their Manhattan home on May 23. Michael's new book *Lawyers for the*

Left came out in April. It features profiles of NLG greats such as Haywood Burns, Victor Rabinowitz, Lynn Stewart, and Mara Verheyden-Hilliard; 23 significant lawyers in all, many of them women, many of them leaders of the NLG, who "put their values above their wallets". www.orbooks.com/catalog/lawyers-for-the-left/

On May 20, the United States Supreme Court declined to review the June 2018 Second Circuit ruling in *Edrei v. City of NY*, which rejected an NYPD appeal and held that police use of the Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) sound cannon for crowd control purposes can constitute excessive force. National President **Elena Cohen**, former Chapter President **Gideon Oliver**, and then Executive Committee member **Michael Decker** are representing **Black Lives Matter** protesters, observers, and bystanders who were demonstrating in response to a Staten Island grand jury's decision not to indict NYPD officer Daniel Pantaleo for the death of **Eric Garner**. The city had sought to have the case dismissed, and sought immunity for NYPD Lieutenant John Maguire and Officer Mike Poletto who are accused of using the sound cannon on the plaintiffs. The case is now in discovery.

On May 16 **Chelsea Manning** was jailed for a second time for refusing to testify before a grand jury in Alexandria, Virginia which is investigating WikiLeaks founder [continued on page 12](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/16/us/politics/chelsea-manning-arrested.html)



Proud parents **Molly Knepfel** and **Gideon Oliver**, and sister **Alfreda Attica Oliver**, welcome future Guildie **Zelda Josephine Oliver**, born 8/23/19

continued from page 11

Julian Assange. Manning told the federal district court that she would “rather starve to death” than testify. Manning previously served seven years of a 35-year prison sentence that was commuted by President Obama in 2017. She was convicted in 2010 of leaking to WikiLeaks materials which documented human rights violations and war crimes by the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since 2010 she has come out as a transgender woman after her early life as a queer male in Oklahoma, the son of heavy-drinking parents; military service in Iraq; solitary confinement; seven years in an all-male prison; and multiple suicide attempts; all while transitioning. Manning’s lawyer, **Moira Meltzer-Cohen** believes that prosecutors are “abusing grand jury power,” and that “the likely purpose of her subpoena is to help the prosecutor preview and undermine her potential testimony as a defense witness for a pending trial.” After the May 16 court hearing, Meltzer-Cohen, said, “In 2010, Chelsea made a principled decision to let the world see the true nature of modern asymmetric warfare. It is telling that the United States has always been more concerned with the disclosure of those documents than with the damning substance of the disclosures.”

Former Chapter VP **Pooja Patel** is a Staff Attorney at **CAMBA Legal Services in Brooklyn**, where she practices consumer and housing law. The CAMBA staff are newly unionized members of the Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (ALAA) - UAW Local 2325. On May 10 after a nearly four week strike, they successfully won a contract! Pooja managed picket line support and the ALAA strike Facebook feed. The NLG-NYC chapter endorsed the strike. From the ALAA - UAW Local 2325 announcement: “It took nearly four weeks for CAMBA management to recognize the value of their workers and finally offer a contract that provides improved parental leave, reduced health insurance contributions and a step structure that will provide regular salary increases to support staff. This is in addition to the job security, grievance process, and workplace protections that come with working in a union shop. Perhaps most importantly, all 38 of our members stood together in solidarity while organizing, bargaining, and ultimately, striking. They supported one another in every way imaginable and worked incredibly hard under difficult circumstances, always treating each other with respect and dignity. We can all be so proud of what they achieved and are thrilled to welcome them as full-fledged, contract-bearing members of the ALAA and UAW families!”

FROM CHAPTER PRESIDENT ANDY IZENSON:

Re-Imagining the Story of Your Family, May 5

What if we imagine that the things that we’re told we’re supposed to want for our lives aren’t necessarily what’s right for us ... A lot of us feel viscerally that there’s something wrong with the families and communities that we’re trying to live in. Things feel fractured, diffuse ... You don’t need to be satisfied with the stories you’ve been told about what your family should be. You get to make up the story of your own family, and you have a whole lifetime to tell it.
medium.com/@AndyEyeballs/re-imagining-the-story-of-your-family-62540e35c2c3

On restorative and transformative justice and building resilient communities, September 30

www.dawnserra.com/ep221/ (audio)

On Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court nomination, October 5

radiokingston.org/en/broadcast/source-hillary-harvey/episodes/andy-izenon (audio)

For Cis People on the Trans Day of Remembrance, November 19

There are 370 names [of innocent women and girls who were executed because they are trans] for 2019. ... What I’m asking you to do is love them. That’s all grief is — it’s love whose beloved is gone. Love them and mourn them and let them matter to you. Let this mean something to you. Just for a minute, don’t protect yourself from it. Let yourself really feel in your body that every single one of these three hundred and seventy people is a person, in exactly the same way that everyone you love is a person, that you’re a person, and that they deserve to be mourned the way you’d mourn them if they were your beloved.
<https://medium.com/@AndyEyeballs/for-cis-people-on-the-trans-day-of-remembrance-f88997452119>

Executive Committee member **Marco Conner** was quoted in a May 8 New York Times article on the New York State practice of arresting drivers for unpaid tickets. Agreeing with complaints that the state is acting more as a collection agency than as a defender of public safety, Marco, the co-deputy director of Transportation Alternatives which advocates for safer streets, said he would like to see license suspensions employed even more liberally for motorists who have driven recklessly — but not to compel people to pay fines. “We do not support, in any way, license suspensions for anything unrelated to dangerous driving.”
www.nytimes.com/2019/05/08/nyregion/suspending-licenses-minor-offense-money.html

Beware of former prosecutors as judges: The New York Times published a Letter to the Editor from former NYS Supreme Court Justice **Emily Jane Goodman** on May 2: “As David Lat’s review of Emily Bazelon’s **“Charged: The New Movement to Transform American Prosecution and End Mass Incarceration”** (April 14) makes clear, the weight of prosecutors on criminal justice is enormous. As great a weight on the other side — and not necessarily as “neutral arbiters” — are judges, likely former prosecutors with prosecutorial points of view, leanings and outcomes. While they may tell jurors that

they must presume innocence, it’s been my experience that prosecutorial judges themselves too often presume guilt. This will be particularly true of new conservative judges who have been prosecutors. They lack empathy and can be expected to be heavy-handed in their rulings and sentencing.” www.nytimes.com/2019/05/02/books/review/letters-to-the-editor.html?searchResultPosition=1

Chapter President **Andy Izenon** appeared on WBAI Radio on April 23 to discuss *Braschi v Stahl*, the 1989 New York Court of Appeals case that held that the surviving partner in a same-sex relationship counts as “family” under New York law, and is thus able to continue living in a rent regulated apartment belonging to a deceased partner. “A family includes two adult lifetime partners whose relationship is long term and characterized by an emotional and financial commitment and interdependence.” Former Chapter President **Judy Levin** represented the tenant-plaintiffs in *Braschi v Stahl*.

The new law firm of Executive Committee member and NLG National President **Elena Cohen** was featured on the **Fashionably Femme** website on April 17. In addition to queer family planning and end-of-life planning, “we do various work, largely litigation for queer or other politically left-leaning”
 continued on page 13

MEMBER NEWS

continued from page 12

clients. We spend time suing the police, and seeking accountability for various institutions that are traditionally not held accountable.” fashionablyfemme.me/2019/04/17/queer-spaces-cohen-and-green/

Executive Committee member **Joel Kupferman** spoke on *Necessity: Oil, Water, & Climate Resistance* at John Jay College’s 6th Annual **EcoCinema Film Festival**

Marathon on April 16. Joel also appeared on WBAI Radio’s **Earth Day Special** to discuss environmental justice on April 22.

On April 8 **Judy Rabinovitz**, deputy director of the ACLU’s Immigrants’ Rights Project, obtained an injunction from a federal judge in San Francisco blocking a Trump administration policy requiring asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while their cases make their way through the U.S. immigration court

system. Judy is a past leader in NLG-NYC immigration work, and a recipient of the NLG’s Carol Weiss King Immigrant Rights Award.

www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/federal-judge-blocks-trump-administration-program-forcing-asylum-seekers-to-remain-in-mexico-while-awaiting-court-hearings/2019/04/08/68e96048-5a42-11e9-a00e-050dc7b82693_story.html?utm_term=.0b99cb14da12

GUILD IN ACTION

continued from page 9

founded. Organizations like Black Lives Matter have highlighted that. While some issues are similar, others call for new visions and perspectives. NCBL hopes that this conversation will be the beginning of creating the intellectual space and dialogue to learn from one another.” Participants, in addition to Dr. Davis were **Vincent Warren**, Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, **Derecka Purnell** of The Advancement Project, and **Amanda Alexander** of the Detroit Justice Center who served as moderator. NLG-NYC was a co-sponsor of the event.

The New York City Chapter and the **NLG Cuba Subcommittee** sponsored a reception for **Alexis Ginarte, President of Cuba’s national bar association**, the Union Nacional de Juristas de Cuba (National Union of Cuban Jurists), on July 22 at CUNY School of Law’s Community Room.

On June 28 the **Ramapough Lenape Nation** and the Township of Mahwah reached a settlement in all their pending lawsuits. The settlement with Mahwah dismisses all fines levied, which had run into the millions of dollars. It also acknowledges the Ramapough may continue to have gatherings and conduct religious activity on their land, and ensures that Mahwah will not seek to disturb or remove existing religious items on the land. **Valeria Gheorghiu** and **Jonathan Wallace** have done the majority of the work representing the Ramapough in this litigation, which has been supported by the NLG-NYC Foundation and assisted by the Center for Constitutional Rights with pro bono help from Weil, Gotshal & Manges LLP.

The **Mass Defense Committee** held **Legal Observer Training** on June 26 at the NLG-NYC Canal Street office in preparation for the **Queer**

Liberation March and Rally on June 30.

On June 12 at the Chapter office, the NLG-NYC **Labor & Employment Committee** presented a CLE: **Representing Trans and Gender Non-Conforming Workers**. The panel covered employment protections for trans and gender non-conforming workers at the city, state, and federal level. Panelists addressed challenges faced by these employees, and offered guidance and best practices for legal advocates. Panelists: **Kyle Rapinan**, NYC Commission on Human Rights; **Micah Wissinger**, Levy Ratner, PC; and **Nikki Vega**, LGBT Center (Transgender & Gender Nonconforming Support Services)

At “A Celebration of Progressive Lawyering” **Brooklyn Law School** honored the NLG-NYC’s **Parole Preparation Project (PPP)**: with **Anthony Dixon** accepting the award on behalf of PPP, and alumnus **Gideon Oliver** on April 17 at BLS’s Subotnick Center.

NLG-NYC MASS DEFENSE REPORT

The Mass Defense Committee (MDC) of the NLG-NYC Chapter continues to provide legal observers at public demonstrations, volunteer attorneys to represent protesters at arraignments, and other essential legal support for the activist community.

LEGAL OBSERVER TRAININGS 2019

April 16 – Fordham Law School NLG (trainers King Downing, Susan Howard and Zack Struver)

June 26 – Chapter-wide in advance of the Queer Liberation March (trainers Susan Howard & Andy Izenson)

August 14 – NYU Orientation (trainers Susan Howard and Zack Struver)

September 16 – CUNY Law NLG (trainers King Downing and Susan Howard)

September 18 – Fordham Law NLG (trainers King Downing and Susan Howard)

September 28 – NLG-NYC City-wide Law School Disorientation (trainers King Downing, Susan Howard and Zack Struver)

November 6 – Seton Hall/NJ Chapter (trainers King Downing and Susan Howard)

November 14 – St. Johns NLG (trainer Susan Howard)

November 25 – Animal Rights and Mass Defense Committee (trainer Andy Izenson)

LEGAL OBSERVING AND PROTEST DEFENSE

The Mass Defense Committee provided Legal Observers for 78 protests and legal representation for over 700 protesters, including direct action groups Extinction Rebellion, Close the Camps, Movimiento Cosecha, Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, Decolonize this Place, and FTP.



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