



**NEWS FROM THE NINTH FLOOR**

# **ANTHROPOLOGY**

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**SOCIAL R/EVOLUTION: THE CHANGE WE WANT TO BE IN THE WORLD**

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When *Post-Truth* rips off *Truthiness*—and vice-versa. The Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear was held in Washington, D.C., in 2010. It was intended to feel like a true political rally but was a satirical parody of Glenn Beck's Restoring Honor Rally and a means of asking, *what happens next?*

## EDITORS' NOTE

# What is a Social Movement?

The theme for this issue was conceived in relation to the last. Published in the [Fall of 2021](#), that issue reflected on the anniversary of a cataclysmic crisis—an attack leading to a twenty-year war—marked by a global pandemic. As the international community continues to wrestle with this epidemic, a war abroad has unfolded. This represents an opening for change. We thus posed a broad question to the Anthropology Department and its students: *what is a social movement?* This issue represents an initial exploration of what underlies major social transformations in the context of change forged under unrelenting pressures providing the basis for meaningful change.

G. W. F. Hegel conceived of history as a traceable process moving in a given direction, towards the actualization of freedom. Drawing from Hegel, Karl Marx made the idea of a fundamental need for revolution central to understanding the oppressive conditions set in place by the capitalist system. Oppressive structures must necessarily be countered by social conflict, the element driving history. If as Martin Luther King, Jr. reminded us, the arc of the moral universe is long but bends towards justice, how far away are we from equality and fairness? This is a complicated question with no determinable answer—yet. Hope springs eternal. And so, we struggle on.

This issue features contributions from students analyzing some of the contemporary struggles that are all-too familiar to them as their generation begins to shape our current political landscape. Their assessment of social change is followed by a reflection on the parallels between today's movements and those at the close of the last century which are illustrated in a photo essay documenting some of the vanishing efforts that have nevertheless left behind legacies. The images provide an interlude between the subject of social movements and reflections on the current war and concerns over genocide. An intimate account of the war in Ukraine is written by a granddaughter who is fearful but hopeful. Her essay is paired with analyses of the available tools for safeguarding human rights and preventing genocide. A philosophical essay on what our shared humanity can compel us to do to dispel the threats we face from ourselves at war closes this edition.

The Editors



Capitalists derided in effigy, a consistent feature in protests.

# Moving the Needle from Crisis and Revolution, to Change

By Showayne Bannister



In times of crisis and unrest, a unifying voice can be found in the midst of the crowd. A voice calling for change, with a vision for a just world. We have marched for centuries and fought countless battles, all in the name of creating a new world and leaving behind a shared legacy we can be proud of. We rally and march against the crisis of the time. We become outraged and are triggered to create social movements in the heat of the moment. However, when the burning flame subsides and we develop a sense of complacency, that passion we once had is lost behind the mask we put on to get through our daily existence. It is about time that we move beyond crisis mode and usher in an era of change.



Black Lives Matter Protest in Brooklyn, 2020.

My proud Jamaican mother would always say to me growing up, “If yuh waah good, yuh nose haffi run.” This is true in many ways, as nothing in life worth having has ever been achieved without putting in the hard work. When I look back at the Black Lives Matter movement that garnered so much attention back in 2020, it was a valiant effort to shine a spotlight on the social issue of police brutality and its impact on people of color in order to effect social change. Society marched for days and was outraged. Symbolic gestures were made. Statues were removed to demonstrate attempts to move away from racism, and Juneteenth was made

an official holiday—but no meaningful change occurred.

There were no policies created to address the problems with systematic racism, inequality or disparity which resulted in the protests. As time went on, and the anger that burned like a flame subsided, society moved on and accepted these symbolic gestures as enough to address the crisis. Our ancestors marched and had revolutions so that we could be here today, so I refuse to accept these symbolic gestures as atonement. I am beyond exhausted from being outraged in times of crisis, my shoes are beyond worn from walking in the fight for change. I am tired of my fellow citizens being mere statistics and view this era in our history, as the pivotal moment to evolve these social movements to a point where they can effect substantial change in society.

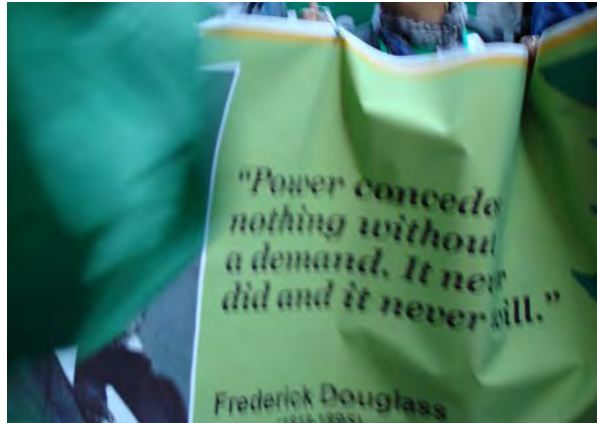
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***I am beyond exhausted from being outraged in times of crisis, my shoes are beyond worn from walking in the fight for change.***

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In November of 2008, Americans elected their first Black President, a defining moment in our

history marking fundamental change and forging a path for a more just future. However, we cannot use this accomplishment to become complacent. We need to see more representation in Congress, in State and Local governments, police departments, in key



Ideals articulated by Frederick Douglass continue to inspire movements for social change today.

leadership positions that can chip away at the foundational social blocks upholding inequality and resisting change. Likewise, to see less censorship of historical information in schools, creating a curriculum not solely focused on colonialism and whitewashing history to fit a particular narrative. Having an accurate representation of

America's historical past is key to understanding the rise of social movements, and a vital step to understanding the crisis, and educating future generations that will effect change in hopes of forging a new vision for society.

Let us no longer accept social movements, protests or marching as our default call to action in this modern era to address societal crises, but rather work tirelessly each day to implement substantive policies that will have lasting effects.

**Showayne Bannister is a third-year student majoring in Criminal Justice at John Jay College and is enrolled in Prof. Melissa Zavala's class ANT 101-01, Spring 2022.**

# All Marginalized People Must Embrace Intersectionality in Their Separate Quests for Freedom

By Qwalee Summers



We are living in unprecedented times. The world, along with many of the social and cultural constructs humans are used to are changing at such a fast pace. It seems like every time we look, humanity is facing another unforeseen twist, turn, or challenge. Change is necessary, inevitable, and constant. But too many changes happening simultaneously can be disorienting and often UNCOMFORTABLE!

These past two years, our world has changed as a result of COVID-19. We now share many collective traumas, experiences, and shifts in perspectives. These are paving the way for social, civil, and human rights movements.

The internet is a space where we find community, solace, understanding, news—an *Amen!* corner, a metaphorical soap box to stand on and shout our personal sermons to our friends, followers, or folks in the comments sections. I think this is beautiful, but I also see a downside to the way in which we mobilize,

engage, and communicate on hot button issues we feel emotional and passionate about.



Movements can take on a carnivalesque feel to subvert power.

It is so easy to get locked into an echo chamber online, where the only perspectives we hear are ones that either comfort us, galvanize us, appeal to our positive emotions, or those with which we inherently agree with ... As we are all finding ways to stand up for ourselves and our communities, I think it is important that we (especially those of us belonging to marginalized communities) remember to listen to each other, consider each other's pain, needs, and perspectives. Without embracing INTERSECTIONALITY and empathizing with the cross sections of places where people stand in their humanity, we have no chance of improving our situations as a united front over the long-term. We all need

each other and cannot afford to split hairs and exclude one another.



One of the Occupy Wall Street rallies at City Hall, 2011. Assortments of groups protest different issues at once.

The divisiveness between ethnicities, cultures, sexes, genders, complexions, hair textures, and BIPOC, HAS GOT TO GO.

Online I see so many activists speaking only from their perspectives and putting other movements down.

When everyone mobilizes for separate causes, some assume that their cause is the most righteous, pressing, and sensible one. In some cases, causes are being created just to counter the existence of other causes. To this I say, there are relevant, understandable, and even important perspectives to consider on all sides. We need to listen intending to hear, empathize, and think critically. We should not invalidate each other.

Today, much of what becomes news-worthy is simply based on the amount of attention something gets online, not the actual subject matter or its credibility. This means that a lot of cultural taste-making (which potentially becomes society-shifting) is being spawned by those who have the loudest voice with the most followers. Scholars, intellectuals, educated social scientists with integrity, respected writers, true philosophers, and civil rights leaders are no longer the gatekeepers or representatives of popular movements. Very often, our social influencers are just that, influencers. YouTubers and social media personalities, many of whom are very young, have not processed their traumas, and have not arrived at a place to minister to themselves, much less to a large following, are nevertheless truly affecting the way we proceed towards change. But beware of this. Being engaging, charismatic, relatable, likeable, or articulate, doesn't make a person informed, smart, righteous, well intentioned, or a reliable source.

A lot of historical crimes against humanity, genocides, and wars, have happened because of tyrannical leaders, and deeply damaging social constructs have fomented hate and division amongst people globally. Some people have blindly followed charismatic individuals appealing to their traumas or egos.

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***It's about all of us uniting against all forms of oppression and injustice.***

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For people of color especially, please remember that decolonizing minds requires looking at ALL of the ways in which white supremacy has shaped our thinking. As we march on for social justice within our subcultures, we must ask ourselves and each other, do we really want equality, equity, justice, and to revolutionize the world for all, or do we simply want the privileges or positions of those who have oppressed us? If we want real change and not pseudo-white aspirational success, acknowledging the intersectionality that exists for all, especially for those who come from similar oppressed backgrounds, is key.

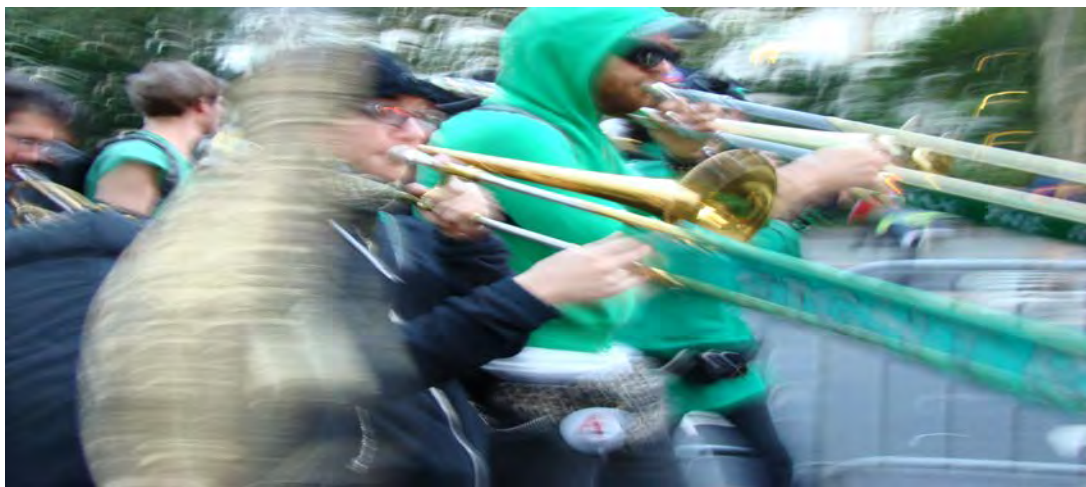
It's not about us being set against each other.

It's about all of us uniting against all forms of oppression and injustice.

We share more in common than that which divides us, and we are more powerful together than we can ever be while separated.

Respect inclusion in all movements and they will flourish ten-fold in half the time. Let's avoid being tricked into creating new social constructs that divide us. Don't be complicit in rhetoric that won't benefit you or other people marginalized in similar ways.

**Qwalee Summers is a Law and Society major in his sophomore year at John Jay College and is enrolled in Prof. Melissa Zavala's ANT 101 class, Spring 2022. He aspires to take his education from John Jay, attend a top tier law school, and become an attorney.**



Music possesses the unique quality of inspiring and bringing people together. As such, it is a regular feature at protests and marches.

# “Bush Lies, People Die!”

By Melissa Zavala



The person referenced in the political slogan giving this essay its title is not a certain president by that name, as one might assume—or at least, not quite. Even while this phrase easily applies to George W. Bush, responsible for the deadly lies that cost many lives throughout the twenty-year war in Iraq initiated by him, this slogan is instead about his father, George Herbert Walker Bush. Despite the revisionist hagiography public figures are often treated to at the time of their deaths, Bush Senior’s legacy is also characterized by his astonishing silence on and inaction towards HIV/AIDS at the height of the epidemic. The toll his administration’s deadly neglect took on the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transsexual (LGBT) community spurred the creation of groups like AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power or ACT UP. Along with other groups, ACT UP forced the government to respond to the spread of AIDS, stemming the loss of lives using direct political action. The radical tactics practiced then were powerful. But with increased successes and change coming about, factions grew, splintering the movement. Using Frantz Fanon to reflect on the parallels between this

case and current movements, this essay asks how present struggles can build a better world following our own public health crisis, an epidemic offering a significant opening for change.



A sample of stickers of the sort that helped activists organize. They were commonly found on lamp posts, phone booths and other street furniture before the age of social media. Of note, the “Bush AIDS Flag” containing skulls instead of stars.

Like the mantra titling this work, that of “Read My Lips: No More Bushit” and others, reverberate in my mind, vague memories of rebellion in the streets of New York City in the early 1990s. These angry chants voiced the outrage and despair of a marginalized community. These emotions underly multiple causes today. This epidemic revealed forms of structural violence the late Paul Farmer dubbed *pathologies of power*, struggles against scapegoating, disdain, neglect, confusion, suspicion, and loss, have left distinctive legacies. Those legacies range from public health measures for improving risk



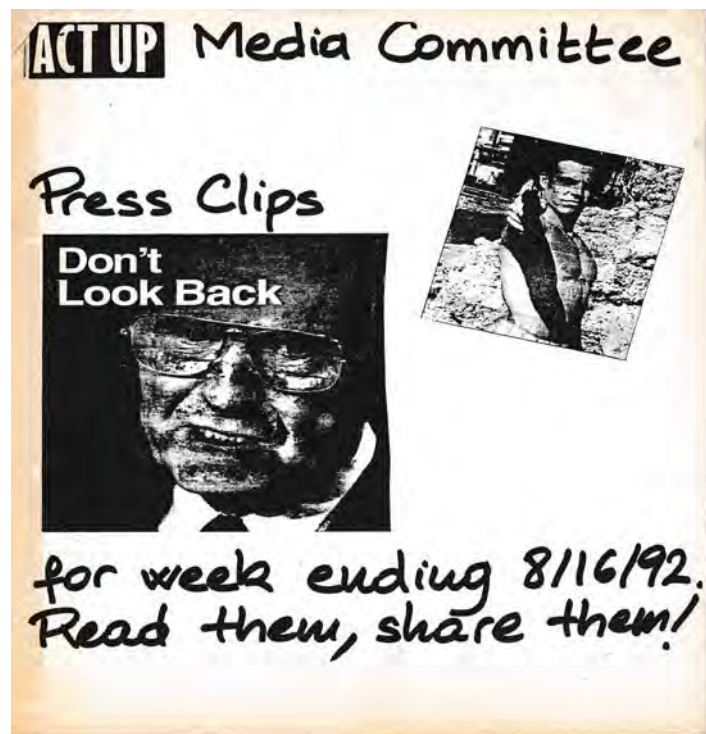
management, to a repertoire of direct political actions. At long last, the spread of HIV/AIDS was brought under control as medical research combined with advocacy, treatment, and public health policies to yield results. But the “silence is deadly” tag frequently said during the darkest days of the AIDS crisis applies to other pathologies of power: deadly silence has surrounded conditions giving rise to the Black Lives Matter movement and other current struggles.

The silence surrounding police brutality in this century came into plain view during a very different epidemic. Despite the risks of contagion posed by an airborne virus rather than one transmitted through intimate contact, rebellion became necessary once again in the streets of cities and towns across the country. So far, however, marches, die-ins, and other forms of protests, have produced narrower results towards advancing an anti-racist agenda to stop the deaths of people of color at the hands of police—a worldwide problem revealed by extreme American cases—and bring those abusing power to justice. Is it too soon to see meaningful change? Perhaps. But how can significant transformations be ensured for the future?

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***What can be done about capitalism?***

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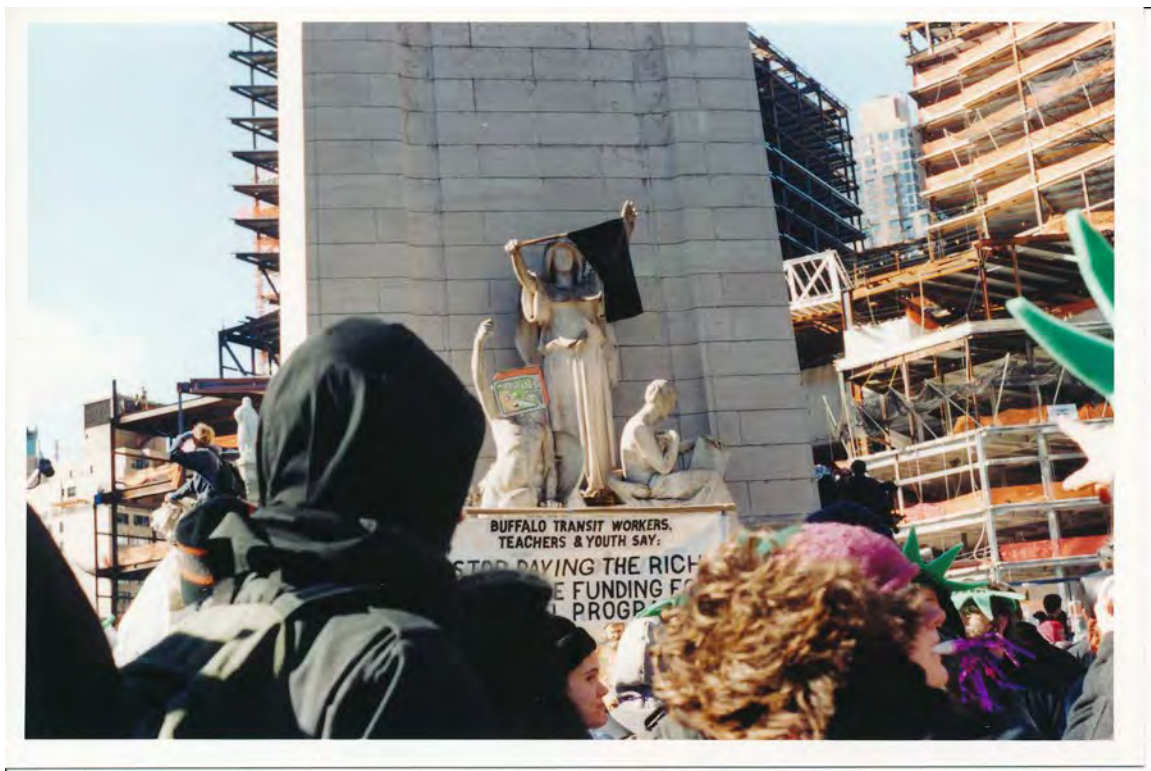
Before social media, there were groups of people collecting press clippings, photocopying them, and circulating them among supporters to spread information and updates on events and news around the world. This is the cover of such a packet.

The radical philosopher of revolutions, Frantz Fanon, conceived of Black liberation in the colonial context as necessarily requiring action at the level of capitalism as well as race. What can be done about capitalism? The matter of race also complicates solidarity because if we are to approach ideas of equality and freedom, we will need to achieve mutual recognition. The strengthening of humanism required to attain solidarity means that people of different racial identities must see themselves in each other. With so many divisions across movements, this poses further challenge. Much like Fanon’s predictions about struggles throughout the colonies failing without a real turn towards social revolution, we are seeing

the veracity of his foresight: without rapid social transformations and an alternative to capitalism, movements are more readily coopted by national (and international) bourgeoisies. Significant and transformative social change can die on the vine. How can we deepen our ties to one another and bring about not just policy changes as older movements have succeeded in doing, but move the revolutionary needle towards a new world altogether? How can we go beyond rallying for change to a new stage?

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## **You Say You Want a Revolution ... We All Want to Change the World – The Beatles “Revolution” (1968)**



The U.S.S. Maine Monument at Columbus Circle, 2004, as major transformations around the city unfolded.



The Economic World Forum, 2004. A growing wealth gap and the intensification of poverty around the world have generated strong critiques led by anti-globalization activists who also point to environmental degradation as outcomes of a skewed capitalist system. Emerging in the 1990s, movements against international economic institutions have since significantly died down.





Zuccotti Park, ground zero for Occupy Wall Street, 2011. Previously, this small square was known as Liberty Plaza Park. Heavily damaged following the attacks of 9/11 in 2001, this site was recreated in 2006, and renamed after John Eugene Zuccotti, a real estate developer who died in 2015 and served in different civic functions for various Republican and Democratic leaders. This park was occupied for two months before Mayor Michael Bloomberg ordered the area cleared, allegedly for cleaning. The Occupy Wall Street movement has been criticized for a lack of clear goals and internal biases. Later movements still bear its mark, however.



Occupy Montreal, Canada, 2011. The central message of the Occupy Movement highlighting income inequality is encapsulated by the slogan, "We are the 99%", a phrase that appealed to a global collective imaginary.



Political rally, or political simulacrum? Led by comedians Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, crowds march and gather on the Washington Mall, District of Columbia, in support of a pushback against fake news, exaggerated political divisions, and to parody right-wing rallies, 2010.



Fighting for a New Deal for CUNY, December 2021. Struggles over wages, income disparity, inequality, access to the city, and the funding of basic services and urban institutions continues. Queens, New York.



Are we finally moving beyond neoliberal restructuring? How can we build a new world and usher in a new age?

## The Strength of My Ukrainian Grandmother

By Yuliya Lesif



*This essay is inspired by my grandmother, Oksana, who is currently living through the war in Ukraine. She has provided me explicit eye-witness details as events there unravel.*

War should never be glorified. It is the enemy of human civilization and nothing admirable nor good can come from it. It brings extreme suffering to those who must live through it and watch their families struggle to stay safe. Currently, the war between Russia and

Ukraine continues to escalate. The people of Ukraine live in constant fear, not knowing what to expect as they wake up in the morning wondering if their last day will be today. I know this firsthand as I witness my family suffer through this war.



Nadvirna, Ukraine in 2018.

I was born in Ukraine, in the small town of Nadvirna where most of my family still resides. Every day, I call my grandmother to make sure she is safe, and I savor every conversation just in case one of these days I never get to hear her voice again. My grandmother is one of the most inspiring women I know. Despite everything that is happening, she remains hearty and assures me everyone will be safe. She reminds me that I need to be strong, although I should be the one comforting her. She recounts everything every time in explicit detail as she witnesses the horrors of war. She describes the fear that takes over her when the sounds of sirens and tanks rumbling outside drive out any noises made by nature or human life. As soon as the sun goes down, all lights must be turned off—streetlights, porch lights, house lights. My grandmother tells me how eerie it is being in complete darkness and how seemingly, as soon as all lights are off, everything dramatically

quiets down. Darkness ensures people's safety. It makes it difficult for any jets posing threats to navigate and find potential places to bomb. Multiple places throughout Ukraine have been bombed. There is no shame in targeting the homes of citizens and completely destroying surrounding areas. A kindergarten was bombed. Airports have been bombed. Hospitals, too, leaving newborn babies to be transported to bomb shelters where they are fighting to stay alive. A jet crashed only 10 minutes away from my grandmother's house. She said the sound was so intense, she thought her home was close to being bombed. All she could do was pray and hope she could reach shelter. In case of an emergency, she has stocked up food, candles, and water. She shares these items with our next-door neighbor, whose sons are off training with armed weapons. Guns and rifles are given out to all civilians willing to fight to protect their homes. Children are in

these programs, too, learning basic survival and self-defense skills.

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***Throughout this war, we remain stronger than ever.***

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Hrebeniv, Lviv in 2018.

I have multiple friends who are actively fighting. One of them updates me daily and sends videos of him riding in tanks, with a rifle always in his hands. I can't imagine being in their situation, having ordnance surrounding me as I learn to handle machinery and weapons, recruited into training programs while knowing I am putting my life at risk. They are beyond

strong. Their work to protect their country is astounding. No one is forced to fight: citizens are willing to stand up to the invaders. They march proudly, singing the Ukrainian national anthem as they do so. They wear normal clothing, no military uniforms in sight, just an everyday outfit with a firearm for accessory.



Ukraine, 2022.



I'm beyond proud to say I am Ukrainian as I fondly remember beauty of the land, its courageous people, the freshness of the air, and the smell of our delicious food. Ukraine is a country that is beyond beautiful, and I know that its beauty will never wither. My grandmother sends me pictures of my home almost daily. Throughout this war, we remain stronger than ever. It has stripped us of so much, but it has also unified us and given us the power to keep fighting back to reclaim our country. War is ruthless and cruel. It should never be a solution. Greed and power obliterate

the fact that we are all compassionate humans. Power-hungry people forget our shared humanity. Barbaric acts lead to the suffering of those caught in the crossfire. Ukrainians will not falter, knowing that if we were to back down, our country will cease to exist. We are proud of the beauty of our Slavic roots. Our culture is one of a kind, with traditions that bring us together and remind us of who we are. I want everyone to recognize and admire the determination and endurance of the Ukrainian people, the strength profoundly represented by Grandmother Oksana.



Ukraine, 2022.

**Yuliya Lesif is an undergraduate student in the program for a BS in Criminal Justice and is enrolled in Prof. Sofija**

**Grandakovska's class ANT 230-09 Culture and Crime.**

# The Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

By Jakob Waidhofer



On February 24, 2022, the world was turned upside down for many Europeans, especially the citizens of Ukraine. War again came to the very doorstep of a continent which had for the last few decades enjoyed relative peace and prosperity.

For many young Europeans like me, war was for the history books, not to be played down, but to serve as a reminder of what could never happen again. When thousands of refugees from the Middle East streamed in back in 2015, it was our first time witnessing the immense suffering resulting from armed conflict. Still, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan were comfortably far away, calming us into a false sense of security.

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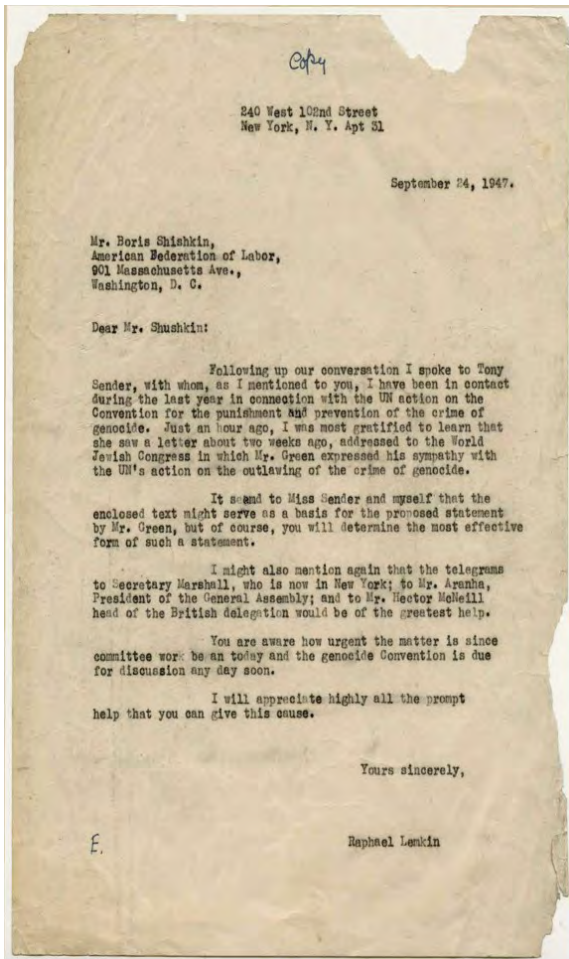
***... [T]he nations with the biggest military might on the planet and some of the darkest histories still seem untouched by [the Convention on the Prevention], contributing to its ultimate lack of strength.***

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The truth is that the institutions we have set up after the Second World War are still feeble. Divisions in the European Union during the aforementioned refugee crisis and the lack of a unified response after the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea just a year before perfectly convey this fragility. Humanity is never truly safe from war, and I don't doubt that the phrase "Never again" has been uttered countless times in the history of *Homo sapiens*. Sadly, with every witness who dies, the memory of the horrors they observed is lost; the succeeding generation grows up trying to learn from the mistakes made thinking they can do better.

Globalization and Internationalization have borne organizations such as the International Criminal Court to prosecute the gravest crimes committed by mankind. Furthermore, the Internet has allowed us to follow wars more closely than ever before. In a constant feed, we can observe videos and images of the atrocities committed in Ukraine. Kyiv wants to classify these events as genocide, but what grounds does it have for this accusation, and what can ultimately be done about it? There is one

international treaty trying to provide an answer to these questions, albeit a rather unsatisfying one, as we will find.



The Proposal for Ratification of the Genocide Convention at the UN found at the Center for Jewish History, New York City.

Upon first examination, the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, presents an unprecedented push to finally define and make punishable the international crime of genocide. The incredible atrocities committed during the Second World War against Jews were a wake-up call for the world, and with the formation of the United Nations and its organs, an instrument was available to create a binding resolution for its signatories.

However, on further inspection of the document, notably the “Declarations and Reservations” attached to it, reveal its weaknesses. Such reservations are numerous, especially for Article IX of the Convention, where the existence of disputes relating to the responsibility of a State for genocide requires submission to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Arguably the two great powers of our modern era, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the United States of America (US), do not feel themselves bound to this specific article, effectively nullifying the impact of the Convention as a whole.

For instance, the US has declared that before being party to any dispute submitted to the ICJ, “... the specific consent of the United States is required in each case”. The PRC went even further by noting that, “The People’s Republic of China does not consider itself bound by article IX of the said convention”. Rightfully, opposing opinions on those reservations were issued by Member States like the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which stated that the restrictions were “... incompatible with the object and purpose of the Convention ...”. Other nations such as the United Kingdom, Sweden, and Italy share this view.

The PRC, the US, and the Russian Federation are members of the P5 and therefore wield immense power on the international stage, but all three of them have tarnished histories. One example – the genocidal campaign waged on Native Americans during the western expansion – happened before the ratification of this document and accordingly, there can be no *ex post facto* applied here. However, many other recent events expose the unease of these countries with a universal jurisdiction,

demonstrating that they still want to operate on their own terms. Even today, we are witnessing events in Xinjiang that must be investigated; but if a nation state facilitating these grave crimes is not part of the International Criminal Court and has veto power on the UN Security Council, it is hard to believe that there will ever be real consequences for its actions.

For the all-powerful perpetrators, it is therefore easy to condemn smaller nations like Rwanda or former Yugoslavia; but as soon as the world looks upon the big international actors, innocence and sovereignty is the prevailing credo. This is not to say that the Convention is not an important piece of our history. Indeed, its creation was a step forward to possibly prevent abuses in the future and it has already been applied to unravel some atrocities of the last few decades. However, the nations with the

biggest military might on the planet and some of the darkest histories still seem untouched by it, contributing to its ultimate lack of strength. Simply put, genocide is usually executed by state actors; if those States are too powerful, the Convention sadly falls short of its capacity to have a truly transformative influence.

**Jakob Waidhofer is majoring in International Criminal Justice at John Jay College and is enrolled in Prof. Sofija Grandakovska's class ANT 230-09 Culture and Crime, Spring 2022.**

## **The Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide as a Way of Mediating War**

**By Vincent Huang**

*The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* is the official statement by the United Nations which at its core considers genocide an international crime deserving punishment. Its deeper meaning underscores that conceiving of genocide, as much as committing the act, are reprehensible to the world. Following through with this act makes an enemy of the world at large. The convention provides further meaning as a resolute statement that the world won't

tolerate acts of discriminatory violence deemed genocidal. For centuries, ethnic and religious groups have gone through persecution and acts of genocide without intervention, and now the world at large is determined to condemn it.

Upon further breakdown, the Convention refers to the consolidation of the ideas and opinions of the United Nations, representing the world at large; everyone agrees on the listed articles towards genocide. Prevention and punishment

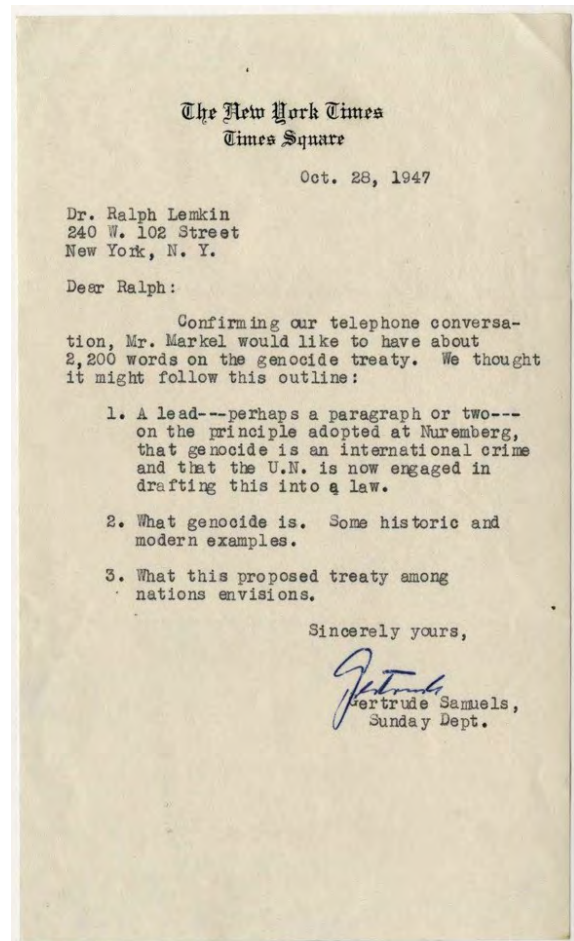
refer to the actions of the United Nations incentivizing people or groups to refrain from committing genocide. This is done by listing the specific punishments in the articles outlining how a party committing genocide will be processed. Finally, the crime of genocide is the act of targeting violence towards a group of people (ethnic or religious for example), for which the articles provide further details on the scope of actions the United Nations will recognize and perceive as genocide and will therefore punish.

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***The convention provides further meaning as a resolute statement that the world won't tolerate acts of discriminatory violence deemed genocidal.***

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This document will help save lives around the world. From its definition we understand that discrimination towards a group of people will not be met with the same compliance as it once did; the United Nations, representing the whole world, will work to prevent and punish genocide. While prevention is the aim, there is no means of actually preventing the crime except for using fear and intimidation to deter it. The other part of its meaning, the punishment of the crime of genocide, lists the consequences faced by any parties willing to commit atrocities. The fear of punishment, globally, will deter people from committing genocide and thus save lives.



From the Collection of Documents, Raphael Lemkin, Archives of the Center for Jewish History, New York City.

However, the power of the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* is only preventive and does not deal with actual times of war. By its meaning the Convention also serves as an intermediary during war, and as cautionary. In recognizing and categorizing the conditions of war that would make genocide a classification, the convention can distinguish when armed conflict escalates to a degree of targeted violence fitting the definition of genocide. Then, by its meaning a convention or union of agreement across global nations and powers will unite together in

an effort to neutralize the crime of genocide before it continues, and if necessary, it will aim to punish offenders. While the Convention does not have any specific enforcement to prevent the beginnings of a genocide, it aims to prevent the crime from escalating or spreading. In that sense, the meaning of *The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of*

*Genocide* not only deters wars and genocide but helps when one does arise.

**Vincent Huang is an undergraduate student at Criminology BA at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and is enrolled in Prof. Sofija Grandakovska's class ANT 230-09 Culture and Crime, Spring 2022.**

## World as a Second Sun

By Sofija Grandakovska



The individual is ephemeral, races and nations come and pass away, but man remains.

–Nikola Tesla

We have become a global community united in time, but not in space (at least not as we currently know it). Such a community could be called a *Teslian community*,<sup>1</sup> united via wireless transmission and connected by a shared global brain. These new conditions of global human emancipation have produced another novelty, epochal and transparent. In the past, breaking down the atom was revolutionary. Today, it is breaking down the old, seemingly solid structures of the so-called *chronotope*, or the old notion of the commonality of time and space—synchronicity. Rooted in new

anthropological notions of morphology, this new *Teslian community*, shares a common place of remote control. It continues to follow and participate in world events – electing new presidents, joining virtual marriages, attending virtual concerts at the Metropolitan Opera, on to the nocturno of death and the formation of new geostrategic divisions and military alliances favoring nuclear weapons. This new *Teslian community* is again witnessing new catastrophes, squeezed by a grip generating bloodshed. As we continue to count the bare bones of victims of past wars and genocides, and discovering new mass graves, the only anthropological remnant of what life was is then ruthlessly turned into lasting silence – war – which

control, fluorescent light, robotics, the laser beam, and more, are based.

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<sup>1</sup> This name is based on that of the father of electricity, Nikola Tesla (1856-1943), who discovered the wireless transmission of electrical energy, on which wireless communications, remote

again proves itself to be a lasting rule rather than an exception. Algebraic formulas of destruction and precise geometric centering of civil spaces inevitably turn into sums of human death – is part of our everyday reality. Available knowledge about life and civilizational values compel us to take a long pause before exploring how we can conceive of humans and the meaning of life. Without seeking an elevated anthropological answer to questions about humanity, the troubling question points towards new orientations of human life itself.

Humans – life itself – have no fixed roots. Investigating these is challenged by the singularity of our endangered human reality, leaving us feeling like naked morphological units, devoid of *being* when we should feel alive. We can begin with what is inhuman as the dominant position, assuming humans are understood from a position of artificial power. This starting point alienates humanistic aspects like emancipation and celebrations of life. Reality is transformed into the instrumentalization of what is *inhuman* through reference systems defined by artificial entities: cold machines, armies, armored and nuclear weapons, to name just a few. These have proven to be the most dangerous colonizing tools where humans are measured *against* other humans, and against human life itself.

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### ***Life is not dictated from above.***

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How can we resist the instrumentalization of the inhuman? How can a power that swallows and robs the lives of others be countered? Worth remembering is this: the inhuman is humanity in the final stages of degradation. It is a potential creator of a new Balkan Auschwitz – Jasenovac camp, or Auschwitz itself. Some of the great minds of

philosophical anthropology in the 20th century proposed a name for this: catastrophe. Universal humanity turned out to be an empty ideal. The radicalism of the inhuman represents the greatest defeat to the essence of humanity. What of the conscious and responsible individual? This essence is radical. It is not just discursive but pertains to actual human survival.

Nikola Tesla, wanted to illuminate the whole Earth, for it to become the second sun.<sup>2</sup> The sun as archetype is also at the very beginning of the creation of the world, as some of the oldest manuscripts teach us (Genesis, 1,4: Let there be light, and there was light.). Metaphors of light are at the root of the age of Enlightenment. From that movement, we inherited secular translations of theopolitical notions like nation-state, race, blood, and territory. All of these hinted at what each subsequent war would look like. They continue to show us that representation.

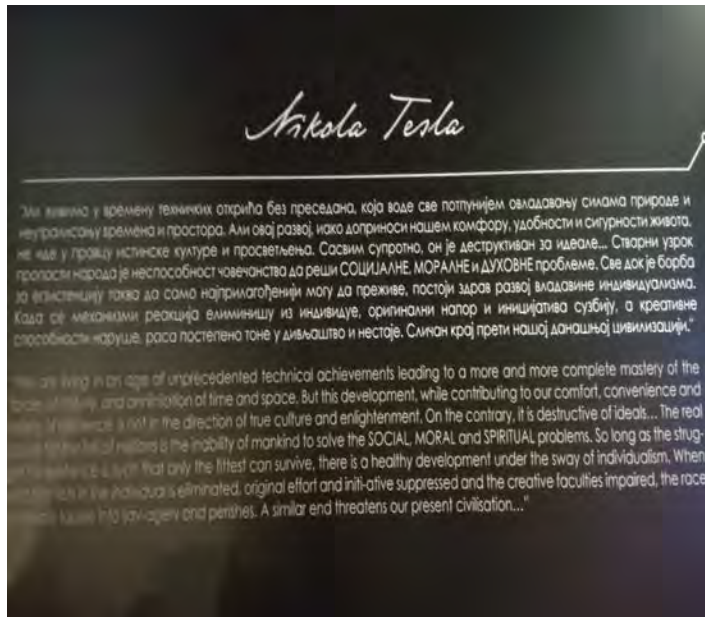


**Nikola Tesla's instruments used in his scientific discoveries. From the Nikola Tesla Museum in Belgrade.**

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<sup>2</sup> Никола Тесла, *Моји изуми* (Београд, 2011)[Nikola Tesla, *My Inventions* (Belgrade, 2011)].

Returning to Tesla and the Earth as a second sun, at the center of this syntagm stand humans.<sup>3</sup> At the core of it, the Earth as the second sun, above all as a deep, human, humanistic and healing message for all. It is about the voice of the human soul, its enlightenment as it grows, inseparable from life itself. It alone sets the soul into action. Life itself.



Wisdom from Nikola Tesla: it is very difficult to find a person who has all the three qualifications - knowledge, fairness, and selflessness, *ibid*.

## From the Chair's Desk



Life is not dictated from above. The question remains: how do we treat life? Each of us should begin with the self, from the experience and frequency of that inner sun. From that spark, that warmth of a kind of fire that does not stop burning in our hearts, the principle of our lives, life itself, our sun.

**Professor Sofija Grandakovska teaches comparative literature and anthropology of genocide in the Department of Anthropology. She is also a poet and the author of three books of poetry: *Seal*, *The Burning Sun*, and *The Eighth Day* - [sgrandakovska@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:sgrandakovska@jjay.cuny.edu).**

The Anthropology Department's Curriculum Committee (Profs. Kim KcKinson, Atiba Rougier, Anru Lee, and Avi Bornstein) continues to improve on our exciting curriculum by updating and revising our Anthropology Core Courses and Electives. Our newly revamped **ANT 315 Systems of Law**,

<sup>3</sup> As inseparable from other people, animals, herbs, water, nature, and life as a whole.



**Justice and Injustice** and **ANT 330 American Cultural Pluralism and the Law** recently became part of **John Jay's Justice Core** offerings. ANT 315 focuses on how humans solve conflicts across time, space and place, and students learn the integrated cultural aspects of systems of injustice such as gender exploitation, racism, and colonial and post-colonial forms of domination as well as cultural movements and transcultural legal concepts such as human rights, that try to resist them. In ANT 330 students study legal and ethnographic cases, to examine the anthropological concept of cultural pluralism and the ways in which different racial, ethnic, new immigrant, LGBTQ and other identity groups struggle to assert cultural and legal claims in the context of United States law. Prof. Anru Lee is developing two new courses about Asian American and Pan-Asian cultural experiences of identity, history, culture, and community. These courses are just a few examples of our program's rich focus on diversity, inequity, and power at the nexus of culture in local and global contexts.

Additionally, Anthropology's Prof. Kim McKinson has teamed up with Africana Studies' Chair and Prof. Teresa Booker and Political Science's Prof. Shreya Subramani to bring us the incredible symposium series in contemporary Black Studies, **Live from the Ninth Floor**. This Spring 2022 program, which has already included presentations by Prof. Chris Harris (UC Irvine) and Prof. Steven Thrasher (Northwestern U), aims to foster conversations with visiting scholars on processes of racialization, Black diasporic life, Black death, transformative justice and the limits and possibilities of resistance and repair. Be on the lookout for two more events!

Ed Snajdr

Spring 2022

**Ed Snajdr is Professor and Chair in the Department of Anthropology - [snajdr@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:snajdr@jjay.cuny.edu).**

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## DEPARTMENT NEWS: JOIN US FOR A NEW SEASON!

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SEEING  
RAPE

Join us for the all-new production of  
**SEEING RAPE  
2022**  
written by John Jay College students

Performance dates to choose from:  
**APRIL 6, 7:00 PM**  
**APRIL 7, 1:30 PM**  
**APRIL 8, 7:00 PM**  
**GERALD W. LYNCH THEATER**  
524 West 59th Street, New York, NY

Conversations with playwrights, actors and special guests immediately following. Non-students pay \$25, but FREE for students with valid ID who register at [seeingrape.com](http://seeingrape.com)

ANY QUESTIONS email Shonna Trinch at [shtrinch@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:shtrinch@jjay.cuny.edu)

JOHN JAY COLLEGE CUNY  
LIVE FROM THE NINTH FLOOR

**Seeing Rape** performances are the dramatic results of the course “Sex, Gender, and Justice: Seeing Rape,” taught by Professors Shonna Trinch and Barbara Cassidy. The plays are all treated as works of fiction even though several are based on real-life, personal situations.

This project consists of a collection of short plays written by John Jay College students and performed by professional actors.



R/evolutionary changes of all sorts alter the course of history.

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### *News from the Ninth Floor*

Spring 22, Vol. 5 No. 1

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

Stay tuned for upcoming **Live from the Ninth Floor Symposium** events!

Do you like learning about new cultures and diverse human societies? Join the Anthropology Department's anthropology club! This is a student-led and student-run project. To get involved, contact the two Anthropology Majors heading the club, Marco Alba and Natasha Santana at [marco.alba@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:marco.alba@jjay.cuny.edu) and [natasha.santana1@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:natasha.santana1@jjay.cuny.edu) and participate!

The Faculty Advisors for the club are Veroni Antoniadis, Anru Lee, and Department Chair, Ed Snajdr.

## NEWS FROM THE NINTH FLOOR

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the anthropology@johnjay newsletter

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