MORE EXPLOITATION THAN REPRESION
By Harry Phillips

Commentators like Timothy Snyder* miss the mark when claiming that a Trump presidency will equate with totalitarianism. We should beware, of course, that there will be assaults on some human rights, the wage gap will continue to expand, and current environmental regulations will be replaced. But the Trump era, like the neoliberal era, will be more about exploitation and profit than repression. There’s still too much money to be made by keeping things the way they are, by distracting consumers from real issues. And what exactly were liberals thinking when they voted for Hillary instead of Bernie in the primaries? Bernie, like Ralph Nader and many others, recognizes that the corporate culture is our enemy and not a candidate in an overdetermined election.

What to do now. For myself, I’m moving conversations, casual and otherwise, into big picture discussions of the corporatocracy. All the dots connect there. My conservative neighbors and friends don’t disagree, especially concerning health care, education, and big-money politics. I’m living each day deliberately, as best I can, and not waiting for permission. And I like to broach the issue of living, presumably, in a democratic land, where we can forge an activist strategy for an issue we care deeply about. To be sure, it is an affliction of the educated class that understanding an issue, without acting on it, is enough.

* On November 22, 2016, Yale scholar Snyder’s Facebook post listed twenty lessons from the twentieth century, adapted to the circumstances of today. facebook.com/timothy.david.snyder/posts/1206636702716110