**Richard Cohen**

**Topic:** "Why Populism-Fascism Now?  Ethics, Power and the Limits of Liberal Democracy."

**Abstract:**

The political philosophy of the Enlightenment, based in the dignity of all persons, enabled proponents of Liberal Democracy to overthrow the feudal privileges of kings, nobles, church and guilds.  The *power* of liberal revolutions lay in the economic success - capitalist - of the rising middle class.  Eventually, however, the economic success of capital increases and concentrates until it displaces and replaces all values except its own: money.   Accordingly, in the words of Rosa Luxemburg (*Reform or Revolution, 1*899): ""Democratic institutions have completely exhausted their function as aids in the development of bourgeois society. ... liberalism as such has become a direct impediment to capitalism."  In this eventuality two paths arise to remedy the inability of liberal democracy to politically regulate big money: Social Democracy as the next step of Enlightenment; or Populism-Fascism as capitalist apologetic nationalist and religious emotional-imaginary rejection of social democracy.