

## WORKSHOPTALKS

### Air safety pinned on isolated controllers

by Htun Lin

Threatening to fire every air traffic controller who has been "sleeping on the job," Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood said, "We will not sleep" until this problem is solved. It's easy to vilify ordinary workers. The truth is, those who control the conditions of work, like LaHood, are really the ones who have been sleeping on the job for the last several decades.

The problem of acute fatigue among air traffic controllers has been known. It was studied by sleep scientists genuinely concerned about the workers and public safety. Studies have shown that the kind of shift scheduling to which controllers are subjected affects behavior in the same way several alcoholic drinks would.

That is especially true of constant shift changes and stacking eight-hour shifts as close together as possible, like working five shifts in three days. These shifts with breaks of only eight hours in between are known by controllers as "rattlers," because they say they double back and bite those who work them. We who work in healthcare know this all too well.

Many countries like France, Germany, Canada and Australia have taken NASA-sponsored sleep studies in the U.S seriously, and now allow napping by controllers during breaks in their work shifts. But neither science nor workers' pleas on the job have been on the radar of the budget-obsessed bosses in the U.S. government ever since Reagan destroyed the PATCO air traffic controllers union in 1981.

There is a parallel between healthcare workers  
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## VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

### Remembering John Alan

by Robert Taliaferro

John's writings are strikingly poignant and timeless, with a prosody that is uniquely old-school. The body of his work is eloquently instructive and historically prescient.

In reading his columns we are challenged to look upon his words as more than philosophical constructs; there is a timelessness that reminds us that history—if left to its own devices—has a tendency to repeat itself.

One finds John's prose to be honest, sound, valuable information to be used in the fight for the freedoms and equality that are at the heart of News and Letters Committees. In John's case, the greatest honor we can render is to remember his words.

#### WORDS CRITICAL IN FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

In 2000, seven years before the election of Barack Obama, John wrote in *News & Letters*, "To imply that the racial and ethnic composition of a capitalist political party will resolve today's dire economic and social problems and the practices of racism is deceptive and false. It is false, because the essential reason for the existence of today's political parties is to preserve and protect the interests of capitalism, that is the accumulation of capital, which creates at the same time wealth and its opposite, poverty, classism and racism."  
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## Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2011-2012

# Revolution and counter-revolution take world stage

## I. The Arab Spring

Revolution and counter-revolution have forced their way back to the center stage of history. First in Tunisia, then in Egypt, revolutions have opened up tremendous new possibilities and spread the fire of their passion from Libya and across the Arab world to Iran, Europe, the U.S. and China. Counter-revolution has reared its head in many forms, from devious maneuvers aimed at co-opting the initiative of the masses to the bloody orgy of brutality unleashed by Muammar al-Qaddafi in Libya.

While the U.S. has not attained the heights of revolution, battles have spread across the land to resist the far Right's program to roll back the gains made by labor, women, African Americans and all freedom movements in the past century.

Such a moment in history tests revolutionaries and all who oppose the exploitation and violence of this globalized capitalist world—and the test sharpened when the U.S. and its NATO allies were drawn into the armed conflict in Libya.

## A. High points of revolution

Our coverage has detailed the world ramifications of those revolutions and what was achieved by masses in motion. Women, workers and youth opened new struggles at work, in the streets and in ideas. In the process, as we reported, "something new was being created in Tahrir Square [in Cairo]. It was a form of direct democracy, that reached beyond merely formal freedom to genuinely new human relationships."<sup>1</sup>

Many voices of people in Tahrir Square made note of this deeper freedom. "You feel like this is the society you want to live in," declared one youth. Another said after Hosni Mubarak's fall, "Everything is now possible. Horizons have opened up. We must now care for the revolution we have made."

Protesters' pride at their "leaderlessness" reflected a rejection of old forms of representation and an appreciation of the direct democracy they were building. Women reported that, for the first time, they were able to be in a public place free of sexual harassment.

**From neighborhood defense committees to cleanup committees, from medical clinics in Tahrir Square to the form of decision-making practiced there, people discovered through their own self-organization new ways of acting together, before which bourgeois democracy pales.**

Revolution became the determinant, so that, as we put it in our Feb. 3 statement, "What is decisive is not oil, not religion, but masses in motion fighting for self-determination and freedom...."<sup>2</sup> In weeks, the conceivability of revolution and a new society shook off the dead weight of years of ideological assaults.

With the fall of Mubarak and Ben Ali, the battles in Egypt and Tunisia have not ended but widened.

Women are fighting to end discrimination and harassment; in Tunisia, they are contending with fundamentalists yelling, "Women back to the kitchen," and in Egypt women condemned the Army's all-male constitutional reform panel and the amendments it pushed through.

What must be faced squarely is the counter-

1. See especially "Revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya shake world order," by Gerry Emmett, March-April 2011 *N&L*.

2. "Support the revolutions of Egypt and Tunisia!" <http://newsandletters.org/Announce/EgyptSolidarityFeb2011.asp>

*This special issue carries our Draft Perspectives Thesis, part of our preparation for the national gathering of News and Letters Committees. We publish it because our age is in such total crisis, facing a choice between absolute terror or absolute freedom, that a revolutionary organization can no longer allow any separation between theory and practice, philosophy and revolution, workers and intellectuals, "inside" and "outside." Join us in discussing these Perspectives.*

revolution coming from within the revolution, as women experienced in their demonstrations on March 8, International Women's Day. As one demonstrator, Jumanah Younis, described it: "The women chanted slogans that had been used in the revolution itself, calling for freedom, justice and equality." But the women's chants "were drowned out by retaliations [yelled by the mob of men] such as 'No to freedom!'... The men charged the female protestors...and shouted 'Get out of here.'

"Many women were dragged away by small groups of men who attacked them. I remained on the platform with five other women. A small circle of sympathetic men held hands around us to protect us from the crowd, which swelled on all sides....

"As I struggled to stay upright, a hand grabbed my behind and others pulled at my clothes."<sup>3</sup>

Like the women in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, what the Egyptian women demonstrators wanted was a continuation and deepening of the new human relations established in Tahrir Square, where women lived for the first time in their lives, those 18 days, without fear of the streets, without harassment, rape, or degradation. They participated equally in the revolutionary events



Women and children protesting in Change Square in Sana'a, Yemen.

and were treated as comrades.

Labor struggles continued too, and the strikes of the last several years greatly increased its political dimension while demanding better pay and conditions and opposing the neoliberal program of privatization. Nagaa Hamady Aluminum Factory workers held a sit-in demanding the replacement of corrupt managers linked to the Mubarak regime. Workers occupied the Shebin El-Kom Textiles factory to roll back layoffs and increase wages and job security. Employees of Al Azhar University and Cairo University protested working conditions and called for the institutions' independence from the state. Power station employees struck to oust corrupt managers. Thousands of Suez Canal workers began striking and occupying headquarters. Teachers in Alexandria protested to demand permanent contracts.

#### 'WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR REVOLUTION?'

In both Egypt and Tunisia, strikes and demonstrations challenged the military-economic-political elite's domination of "democratic reforms." As the Egyptian Army continued to detain and torture protesters and the cabinet passed a law to ban strikes and protests, some youth began asking, "What happened to our revolution?" They demanded the release of political prisoners, repeal of repressive laws, and an investigation into killings during the protests.

The Army's claims to be the champion of revolution and democracy could not hide their efforts to seize the historical initiative from the masses. They managed to end the occupation of Tahrir Square, and, with support from the Muslim Brotherhood, to force through a referendum on limited constitutional changes opposed by the revolutionary forces. But their February slogan of "The army and the people are one hand" has been

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3. Jumanah Younis, "Egypt's revolution means nothing if its women are not free," *The Guardian*, 3/9/11.

## WOMAN AS REASON Abortion and the Left

by Terry Moon

Our Draft for Perspectives in this issue contains these paragraphs: "It is not only that women's human rights are under siege by the U.S. Congress and state legislators, it is that the barriers put up, the requirements women face, are themselves so grievous, that the entire Left should be up in arms. Given this level of attack, where is the solidarity with women's struggles?"

"In all the demonstrations against Scott Walker's attempt to destroy the bargaining rights of unionized state workers, there was hardly a peep from the unions or the Left about his horrendous stand on the right of women to control their own bodies. He voted to gut \$4 million from the Wisconsin budget for family planning resources and end all funding for Planned Parenthood, among other fanatical proposals...."

**"The point is that women's struggle for abortion rights is not a diversion from revolution, but a freedom demand without which real liberation is impossible."**

The reason, of course, the Left leaves out the demand for abortion rights is that they recognize it as a "divisive" issue. Even the so-called feminist anti-war group, CODEPINK, has not a word to say about abortion rights. But women's right to an abortion should be a part of any group fighting war, if for no other reason than that rape is a weapon of war.

### WAR AND WOMEN'S LIVES

As we fight to end the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as agitating against what is happening in Congo, Ivory Coast, and wherever there is conflict, anti-war activists have to be concerned with women who are raped and especially those who become pregnant. In many countries, those women are shunned and banished. In a war situation, having access to an abortion can mean the difference of a woman's life or death. It can mean the difference of being able to live a full life, and living one in shame, disgrace and poverty.

But one doesn't have to go far from home to comprehend abortion as an issue for the anti-war movement. Rape occurs in the U.S. military nearly twice as often as in the civilian world. Over 3,000 women experienced sexual assault in 2008—a 9% increase from 2007—at the same time as the military claims to be focused on trying to stop the abuse. The rate of sexual assaults against military women in Iraq and Afghanistan increased 25%.

Anti-abortion fanatics made their presence known here too, as, even if women use their own money, they cannot get an abortion in military facilities overseas. Military facilities can only be used for abortion if it is to save the woman's life or in cases of rape or incest. But all studies show how difficult—and dangerous—it is for a woman to report such abuse, as she is often attacked by a military superior. Several women have been murdered by rapist servicemen for daring to report abuse.

### CHOOSE FREEDOM OR PRAGMATISM

Clearly, free abortion on demand for women in war situations should be a demand of the anti-war movement. Failure to make it a demand is simply unprincipled and cowardly. The Left is all for "speaking truth to power," except when that truth is the need for women to have control over our own bodies.

But it is not only the anti-war movement that needs to take abortion rights into account. Given the violation of women's human rights going on now, almost any or-

ganization that claims to be for freedom, social justice, human rights, etc., needs to come out for women's right to abortion. It may be divisive, groups may lose a few members or some funding; but unless you want to bow down to a vicious right-wing reactionary, racist, sexist, pro-capitalist anti-poor movement, committed to ending abortion rights and the right to contraception, then organizations—peace and justice centers, gay rights groups, anti-Tea Party groups, anti-eviction organizations, etc.—need to step up and be counted or lose any kind of freedom credentials they might have had.

The truth is that abortion rights are about women's freedom, because if we don't have control over our own bodies, we don't have freedom. So what's it going to be? Will the Left step up and back a genuine freedom demand; or hide behind pragmatism and single-issue politics and let women fight for reproductive justice as we've been doing now for decades—on our own?

## Hate out of Chicago!



Terry Moon / News & Letters

**Chicago**—Twice in April, Chicagoans took to the streets to protest the presence of hate and ignorance in the Windy City.

On April 2, the Chicago-based, Catholic anti-choice group, Pro-Life Action League (PLAL), hosted a tribute dinner for Joe Scheidler at the Merchandise Mart Holiday Inn. Scheidler is a well-known bigot who is not just anti-choice, but also anti-woman and anti-gay. PLAL's website states their anti-choice views, including opposing contraception, as well as opposing abortion for people who have become pregnant through rape.

They value fetal tissue above all else—even the pregnant person's life. Their main form of "outreach" is to go to clinics that provide abortion and harass people trying to go inside. On their website, they proudly declare that they are responsible for shutting down eight Chicagoland abortion clinics. Ironically, PLAL does not condemn the death penalty or war.

Outraged that such a hateful organization would be honoring work that killed and harmed Chicago-area women, pro-choice activists flocked to the Holiday Inn to protest. Armed with signs with slogans such as, "Congratulations on 30 years of terrorizing women" and "Dr. Tiller saved lives; 'Pro-lifers' killed him," we stood together in the face of religious zealots who hurled insults and lies. Undeterred by anti-choicers shoving cameras in our faces and screaming ridiculous accusations, we chanted "Pro-life, your name's a lie, you don't care if women die," and "We won't forget Dr. Tiller. Anti-choice, you're f—ing killers."

Then, on April 14, a smaller but spirited group of protesters assembled in front of the Chicago Theatre, to protest Fox News host Glenn Beck's stage show. Beck, known for his hate speech and violent rhetoric, is touring the country in "Glenn Beck Live," his "comedy" show that allegedly features "stories and stand-up."

Infuriated that this right-wing extremist was spewing hate and vitriol in Chicago, we once again respectfully but firmly occupied an area near the Chicago Theatre to express our indignation.

Signs said, "I resist fear mongering and stand for social justice," and "Your mission and words are poison and un-American." Taking a jab at Senator John Kyl who tried to avoid responsibility for spreading incorrect information about Planned Parenthood, one clever protester's sign said, "Glenn Beck is awesome\* \*Not a factual statement." We chanted, "Sexist, racist, anti-gay, Glenn Beck, go away" and passed out information about Beck's disturbing rhetoric. We talked with passersby who had questions about Beck and the protest.

This past month Chicago activists sent an important message: hate can come to Chicago, but we will not let it stay, and we will not quietly accept its poisonous presence. It is not just important, but absolutely vital, now more than ever, for activists to make our voices heard against the tyranny of those who would oppress us and the vulnerable among us.

—Cate S.

## Women in Yemen show revolutionary way

by Shatha Al-Harazi

**Sana'a, Yemen**—This is one of the most conservative countries when it comes to how women are viewed. But the current political climate has changed some of this.

Yemeni society has offered limited roles for women in politics. It never expected women to be part of any revolution. Yet the most popular face of Yemen's anti-government movement is a woman: Tawakkol Karman.

As Abubakr Al-Shamahi, a young male protester, said: "The average person looking at Yemeni women will see figures, mostly dressed in black covering their faces, and assume that this is Taliban Afghanistan. It is not. These women shout louder than the men, are more heartfelt, and more politically active. Look at the woman who started the protests, Tawakkol Karman."

On April 14 President Saleh said women should not protest along with men in the street as it's a social shame. The response was huge protests, whether women only or mixed, in many governorates [provinces] condemning what Saleh said.

"My father and mother don't like me to be part of these protests. They try to stop me as they know what kind of cruel regime we have. I know how they feel but I can't stop now. It's the only time to make my children's future better," says Karman about her role.

### WOMEN JOIN THE FIGHT

Anti-government demonstrations in Sana'a comprise four large tents especially for women. It is a stark contrast compared to mid-February on the first day of the sit-in demonstration when 30 men set up camping tents outside Sana'a University. There were no women.

But on the second day a woman joined them and set up her tent. This shocked a conservative society that viewed her as a criminal for daring to sleep in the same area with men she does not know. By now, a few weeks later, more women have joined the sit-in demonstration and are encouraging others to do the same.

Farida Al-Yarimi, a 47-year-old mother of five, was that first Yemeni woman to camp in the street in a bid to overthrow the regime. "I knew what I did wasn't expected, but one of us had to start doing something. When I first came here I expected the worst, but it was great. The way the men protected me and secured the tent was good. Even traditional tribesmen don't look down on us now," reflects Al-Yarimi on her experience. Her family joined her two days after she set up her tent, and she has since become a leading female protester.

Most women protesters are older than 40, as many Yemeni families are still preventing their daughters from participating. But women have the same grievances that men hold. Um Ahmed, a mother in her mid-50s in the women's tent at Sana'a University, says the government has offered her no assistance: "They think only of themselves. They never think of their people as human beings. They live in palaces with our money while we can't provide food for our children."

### GIRLS JOIN TOO

Women have found different means to participate in protests. Some young girls who aren't allowed to participate in public demonstrations have started a Facebook group to share their ideas and to ensure that their voices are heard.

Ashwaq Sobaie', a 17-year-old high school student, was warned by her school principal that she would be dismissed from school if she continued participating in anti-government protests. Her reply was that she does not care what her school thinks of her. She continued protesting and also encouraged her school friends to participate.

"I started camping at Sana'a University from the third day of the sit-in. My mother encourages everybody at our house to protest. I put everything that I needed in my bag and ran away from school to the protest. That is where I belong," says Sobaie'.

### WE FIGHT THE REGIME AND OUR SOCIETY

Another young woman protester hid from her family her participation in protests. Yasmin Al-Qadhi, 25, is the daughter of a widely respected tribal sheikh who opposes President Saleh. Although she and her 15 sisters grew up in a political environment, they have to fight for the right to participate in politics. Al-Qadhi was one of three girls who joined thousands of male protesters on Feb. 3. She doesn't camp at Sana'a University, but has an active role as a protest organizer. "We need to revolt twice as hard as men. We have to fight against the regime, but we also have to fight against discrimination from Yemeni men," says Al-Qadhi.

One of her brothers said that women protesters who took to the streets alongside men were "prostitutes." He is not the only person who holds this opinion, as Yemen largely is a tribal society with traditional values that define men's and women's roles.

"I didn't care about what my brother wanted me to do. I'm a citizen of Yemen, just like any male citizen, and I have the right to work for goodness and change in my country. I won't let anyone stop me," says Al-Qadhi.

April 14, 2011

## WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In its annual report, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization recommends giving women full legal rights to buy, sell, and inherit land, borrow money, open bank accounts, sell their produce, sign contracts, and be educated. These rights also need to be enforced and publicized. This could increase global harvests by between 2.5 and 4%, reducing the numbers of undernourished people by between 100 million and 150 million. Increased yields by women farmers would also allow them to buy more food for their families.

\* \* \*

In Syria, 2,000 women and children shouting, "We will not be humiliated!" blocked a major road to protest the action of the security forces of President Bashar Assad, who incarcerated hundreds of men from their villages. This had been Assad's attempt to stifle the movement growing since Feb. 11 demanding political reforms. The protesters succeeded in making the government release 100 of the men and vowed to remain until all had been released.

\* \* \*

After the Food and Drug Administration's approval of Makena to produce a weekly shot for pregnant women at risk of premature delivery, the drug company shot the price of the drug from \$20 to \$1,500 per dose. Women are to take the drug for about 20 weeks. After women all over the U.S. protested, Makena lowered the price to \$650 per dose. The protests continue.

## Militant labor and corporate attacks

**Detroit**—A new militant spirit in labor is now coming into play, sparked by the militant struggle against the onslaught of Wisconsin unionized public workers. This opposition is re-energizing the union movement and producing new leaders who are expressing their opposition to their own union leaders and their concessionary mentality. There is positive promise in these new developments.

Attacks against labor, fueled by the economic crises that have persisted since the economic meltdown in 2008, have taken many forms. They affect not only union workers, but employees in all industries. Huge increases in the use of temporary employees and expanding the two-tier wage system are assuming greater importance.

Temporary workers are under complete control by management. They can't belong to a union, have no benefits—such as pensions, vacations or healthcare coverage—and can be fired at a moment's notice without access to a grievance procedure. They obviously have no job security and certainly can't make plans for the future.

Labor Department data discloses that there were more than 320,000 temporary workers hired in the private sector last year, accounting for more than a quarter of the 1.2 million private jobs added to the employment rolls in 2010.

Corporations inflate their profits by not paying for benefits and save in taxes they pay on permanent employees. Another insidious corporate practice is misclassifying permanent jobs as temporary.

**This is especially prevalent in the auto industry, which now has thousands of "temporary" workers. This practice is so rampant that the UAW targeted it as a major provision to be minimized or eliminated in contract negotiations later this year.**

Corporations are also adding to their profit margins by maintaining or expanding the two-tier wage system, which ordinarily results in new-hires receiving about half the wages of older workers. This is a two-edged sword, with both edges slicing the workers. Not only is the corporation paying the new-hires less in wages, it is also driving a wedge into the principles of unionism that are based on equality of treatment of all

members.

The friction between older and younger workers is very real when a new worker, as in auto production, gets \$14 an hour and the older worker makes \$28 an hour, and both are doing the same job. Moreover, the new worker is also getting less in pension, healthcare and vacation benefits due to concessions made by union bureaucrats.

**In the past, many two-tier wage provisions were limited to the length of that contract. But corporations are now concentrating on making two-tier wages permanent.**

Workers at the Harley-Davidson motorcycle plant in Milwaukee, Wis., approved a seven-year contract last year that extends the two-tier system and also freezes the wages of the workers. Workers will receive bonuses instead of getting wage increases. This means that contract benefits based on wages will not be increased for seven years.

Most startling is that the workers approved the contract two years before it will go into effect on March 31, 2012, when the present contract expires. When the workers protested the advance negotiation, the company intimidated them by threatening to move the work to another state.

—Andy Phillips

## 'We are one' campaign



David M'oto / News & Letters

**Oakland, Calif.**—Dozens of labor groups rallied at Frank Ogawa Plaza on April 4th as part of the nationwide We Are One campaign in support of public sector employees in Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana. It was the 43rd anniversary of Martin Luther King's assassination. King had gone to Memphis, Tenn., to join Black sanitation workers' struggle for collective bargaining rights. The hundreds here went on to a larger march in San Francisco while dockworkers kept the Port of Oakland shut down all day.

—David M'oto

## Remember Ssangyong

It has been two years since the management of Ssangyong Motor Company in Pyongtaek, South Korea, announced layoffs of 1,000 workers. Shortly thereafter, those workers occupied their plant and held it for 77 days, from May to August 2009, when they finally succumbed to a massive police and army assault.

In the aftermath, many militants were arrested. Some were sentenced to years in prison. Most, however, were laid off, some with the hope of recall after one year, which never materialized.

Two years after the announcement, 14 people, both strikers and immediate family, are dead. Five Ssangyong workers committed suicide, and five died from cardiovascular diseases such as heart attack or brain hemorrhage. Doctors believe these were caused by severe stress in the aftermath of the strike and layoffs. Some of the suicides resulted from economic problems following the layoffs. The South Korean daily newspaper *Hangyereh* calls the 14 deaths "social homicides."

In February 2011, one worker on unpaid time off died of a heart attack. Under the pressure of the layoffs, his wife had killed herself in April 2010. They had two children. The worker's bank balance was close to zero.

*Hangyereh* reported that more than half the Ssangyong strikers one hospital saw were suffering post-traumatic stress syndrome, and 80% were suffering severe depression. Almost all the workers have reported a deterioration in their marriages. Their average post-restructuring monthly income, of 822,800 Won (\$757), represented a 74% reduction from their previous salary.

After the defeat of the strike, 462 workers were put on unpaid leave. The promised one-year period has elapsed, yet the company maintains it is unable to begin reinstatement. Workers who retired or were fired are having difficulty finding new employment because of the Ssangyong "scarlet letter," and have been making do with temporary jobs and day-to-day work. Also absent has been any social safety network to address their deteriorating health and financial anxieties.

We must never forget the brothers and sisters who have died in the class war.

—L.G.

## Vetoing city elections

**Flint, Mich.**—Michigan has a new emergency financial manager law that threatens the very existence of local governments and of collective bargaining agreements. This law, effective March 16, is the direct result of the election of a Republican governor, Rick Snyder, and a Republican House and Senate.

Under the old law, the financial manager effectively took over the role of the mayor and city council, or the school board, and could reorganize city departments and renegotiate collective bargaining agreements, but only if the unions agreed. Under the new law, the financial manager can dissolve local units of government and modify or terminate collective bargaining agreements without the consent of the unions.

The Detroit school district and seven local governments, Hamtramck, Highland Park, Flint, Three Oaks, Pontiac, Ecorse, and Benton Harbor have had financial managers under the old law, at various times. The Detroit school district still has a financial manager, as do Benton Harbor, Ecorse, and Pontiac. All except Hamtramck, Ecorse and Three Oaks are majority Black communities.

The new law makes appointment of a financial manager easier by including such factors as not making timely payments of withheld taxes and accounts payable. Many of these criteria would be insufficient to force a city into bankruptcy.

There is a review process and a right of appeal to the circuit court in the state capital, Lansing, but that is of no value if the distress criteria in fact exist. Financial distress can result from conditions beyond the control of a local government, such as a decline in property tax revenue because of plant closings.

There have been numerous protests in Lansing and as yet no Michigan community is threatened with the broad reach of the new law—with one exception. On April 14, the Benton Harbor financial manager who was appointed a year ago under the old law, Joseph Harris, issued an order forbidding the elected city council from taking any action except calling meetings, approving minutes, and adjourning meetings. He has assumed that he automatically has the full power of a financial manager under the new law. Potentially, the Michigan law is more toxic than some of the anti-union laws that have been passed in other states, but Governor Snyder is certain to meet hard resistance if he tries to use it to terminate collective bargaining agreements and local governments.

—Dan B.

## Lift campus wages!

**Memphis, Tenn.**—On April 8, over 75 students, faculty, and staff members of the University of Memphis came out in support of a living wage for campus workers. Some workers have been employed at the university for more than 15 years, and they have not seen a raise in over four years.

The custodial staff only makes \$8.00 an hour! Almost all of the cleaning staff has to work an extra job on the weekends to live just above the poverty line. Workers have no free parking and have to walk several blocks at 3:30 AM with no security protection. Workers have to stay late for events, and are often cleaning in unlocked buildings late into the night.

Despite the fear of retribution and losing their jobs, almost 20 workers were present at the vigil. Professors, students, and workers gave speeches and delivered 1,221 postcards to the University President asking for a raise to \$11.62 an hour. The President agreed to meet with the Progressive Student Alliance at a later date.

—Mario Zuluaga

## Making teachers mad

**Los Angeles**—In the school district where I work, they have cut two hours per day from the non-teaching staff. It affects insurance for employees with a family. A security worker told me, "I lose \$700 per month." Teachers are losing six furlough days per year, and step increases are frozen. That is in an economy where food prices are shooting up, and driving to work is a luxury.

The union is proposing these cuts to save the jobs of 28 teachers. The laborer is making all the concessions, yet the capitalist tells us that we are the cause of the economy's ills. Others think that workers should be thankful to have a job. The system wants people to think that to exist under capitalism is a privilege. After all, see what happened to socialism, they argue. But we are the ones who by our work are making sure the system survives.

There is no money for healthcare, education, and the poor. In the view of capitalists, they are non-productive humans who don't contribute to the system. The draconian federal cuts in social services are indicative of that.

This cycle will continue unless we redefine our social relationship to each other. That will not happen unless we get rid of the capitalistic mode of living. We are the workers and we are the builders. We need to rebuild a new way of life. We need to shut the system down.

—Manel

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and air traffic controllers in how quickly administrative hacks like the Secretary of Transportation and our HMO chiefs scapegoat workers when the source of the problem is systemic and structural. We, too, face growing stress from speed-up, as patients' lives are at stake.

At the same time we are constantly visited by management groups lecturing us about their priorities to increase revenue recovery and limiting use of our time providing care and checking on medical procedures. No wonder a recent study revealed that between 44,000 and 98,000 Americans die each year in U.S. hospitals due to preventable medical errors.

The new head of the HMO where I work has opted for LaHood's line. He wants to "clean house" and do a staff turnover. In a manner reminiscent of Reagan's firing of the PATCO workers, our new hospital chief told concerned nurses and social workers, "If you don't like the way things are here, I suggest you find employment somewhere else." Unions are simply enabling managerial abuse of workers in the shop, because they care more about "dues" process than due process. The union simply leaves individuals to twist in the wind.

A new "Attendance Policy" deprives us union workers of due process as guaranteed by existing labor contracts. If you have three one-minute tardies in a quarter, you will face a first hearing, reneging on their six-minute grace period to sign into their new electronic TIME system. They don't care if you were helping a patient as soon as you put your bags down. They don't care if you had technical problems signing in.

They don't care if you just "doubled back," that is, volunteered for a second shift after only eight hours since you left work. They have even reneged on the contractual obligation to pay us time and a half for doubling back during 12-hour rest periods. Like air traffic controllers, this doubling back means occasionally a few of us may nod out on the job due to sleep deprivation.

Our cowardly union reps are not only going along with this scheme, they are part of the "tribunal" whenever any of us are pulled in the office for another disciplinary hearing. Regional headquarters is now trying to make workers at our hospital scapegoats for all the fines and threatened closures imposed by state and federal investigators in the last couple of years.

Solidarity used to mean "an injury to one is an injury to all," not just an empty slogan. The persistent class war against workers has intensified in this economic crisis. There will be no resolution until we again fight for ourselves over these shop floor issues in our own organizations.

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's Note: This is excerpted from the Jan. 15, 1971, letter to Will Stein and other young revolutionaries in News and Letters Committees who had questions about the relationship of theory and practice, and about the "Subject." The original can be found in the Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, 14110-11. Footnotes are by the editor.*

First, let me take up the question of language. [No word] is more important than Subject. Whether we mean by that the Movement, or a specific group like News and Letters Committees; whether we mean the workers or a single revolutionary; whether we mean women's liberation, Blacks, Indians, "organization," it is clear that "Subject" is the one that is responsible for both theory and practice. Therefore, we must not say, "Subject must unite with its theory"; it is the subject who unites, or fails to unite, theory and practice. In a word, the preposition "with" is wrong.

Perhaps part of the looseness of expression is due to my stressing how crucial theory is, that, as you put it, quoting me, "Philosophy is itself revolutionary." Yes, because the whole point of philosophy, of dialectics, both its point of departure and point of return, is Freedom. The trouble with philosophers, whether they were only thinking of Utopia, the Future, or of Thought as their special province, was that they limited the concept of freedom. That is why Marx says (It is the very first quotation one meets even before turning to a single page of text in *Marxism and Freedom*) that:

*"Freedom is so much the essence of man that even its opponents realize it....No man fights freedom; he fights at most the freedom of others."*

Okay, Marx "took advantage" of this nature of man, and therefore his thought, the striving for freedom, and said of Hegel's dialectics, **the** greatest philosophy produced by bourgeois philosophy, that what we must do is "realize it." For by realizing this talk and thought of freedom we will **have** it, be whole men. But under no circumstances does "philosophy is itself revolutionary" mean it will realize itself. Only living men and women can do that. In a word, it is no substitute for "Subject" any more than history is a substitute, for history, too, means **masses** making it.

Now then, for us, the great breakthrough came back in 1953 when we discovered in Hegel's Absolute Idea a movement **from practice** not only to revolution, but to theory, to philosophy of liberation. I find that the Existentialists, on their part, and the Maoists, on theirs, never stop talking about being, existence, doing, practice—but the very last word they understand is Practice, for they are under the delusion that when **they** practice theory, that is practice, that is activity. That is, when they "bring" it to the masses, and all the masses have to do is be smart enough to see it and accept it, then all will be heaven on earth. What I've been saying, at least since 1953, is the exact opposite, that practice is masses practicing and their practice is not only the doing of deeds but the thinking of thoughts.

**Therefore**, the two kinds of subjectivity (the note on which I ended the second edition of *Marxism and Freedom*, hoping thereby to indicate what I mean to do in *Philosophy and Revolution*)<sup>1</sup> was **not only** a stress on proletarian Subject vs. Maoist or petty-bourgeois subject **but** to show that **in** the proletarian Subject, in subjectivity, we include man as thought as well as man as being, **and thought, philosophy of liberation, the absolute idea breakdown for our age is itself a force for revolution.**

It is a development—a very critical and high stage of development, but a development rather than a break, as was the case in 1953 from Johnsonism<sup>2</sup> or state-capitalism sans philosophy.

Of course, Marxist-Humanism is itself "subjectivity"; this is what we learned ever since the trip to Africa in 1962 and the trip to Japan in 1965 showed that even revolutionaries closest to us, and even masses, great masses in revolt, will not take from

1. In this section added to the 1964 edition of *Marxism and Freedom*, "In Place of a Conclusion: Two Kinds of Subjectivity," Dunayevskaya wrote: "Two kinds of subjectivity characterize our age of state-capitalism and workers' revolts. One is the subjectivity that we have been considering—Mao's—which has no regard for objective conditions, behaves as if state power is for herding 650 million human beings into so-called 'People's Communes,' as if a party of the elite that is armed can both harness the energies of men and 'remold' their minds....The second type of subjectivity, the one which rests on 'the transcendence of the opposition between the Notion and Reality,' is the subjectivity which has 'absorbed' objectivity, that is to say, through its struggle for freedom it gets to know and cope with the objectively real" (pp. 326-27).  
2. Johnson was the organizational name of C.L.R. James, co-leader with Dunayevskaya (Forest) of the Johnson-Forest Tendency until the formation of News and Letters Committees in 1955.

### Letter to the youth

# Subjects of revolution: theory/practice

our shoulders, our task, working out this dialectic of liberation, **both** philosophically in the book [*Philosophy and Revolution*] **and** practically in our everyday activities.

Of course, it is a task of very great historic dimensions. But do you know anyone else engaged in it? Of course, it is hard labor and blows the mind, especially of the youth, who are first getting used to the idea that they are **revolutionaries**, have broken with their past, both their petty-bourgeois milieu and parents, to begin measuring themselves against history's gargantuan dimensions.

I do not doubt, however, that we can become the catalyst for the revolutionaries who have had all the breaks from their past, but did not think that they must then first create new theoretical foundations as well instead of having found them ready-made, if not in the bite-size Maoist quotations, then at least as Marx did it. But he did it in 1843-1883 and while it remains our foundation, none can do for this age what only this age can do for itself.

Back to one more word on language. When you compare Marx, First International, Paris Commune, Lenin, Bolsheviks, Russian Revolution, and then come to ourselves, you use the expression "one-to-one." I know what you mean, but it just so happens that, for a dialectician, there is no worse expression than one-to-one, for it means mechanical, statistical, **rather than human, alive, and** being able to do so much more than what anyone imagines who is brainwashed by capitalist ideology. So, it isn't only a question of escaping the complexities, but in order to always keep one's eyes on **movement** rather than something static, just avoid the expression one-on-one.

Take Marx's period. Great as the First International was, it was "organized." Therefore for the **new form of workers' rule**—which no genius, not even Marx, no human being, nor God for that matter, can see before it actually occurs—Marx had to keep plodding along, theoretically, in *Capital*, practically, in the First International, until the workers upsurged in the Paris Commune [in 1871]. Then he not only embraced it, as revolutionaries would, but made **it** the departure even of his theory. It clarified the "fetishism of commodities," not just in the manner in which he had already worked it out theoretically—capitalist exploitation of labor and its reification into a thing—but its opposite, the **new**

**form**, the **universal** form of how the workers mean to rid themselves of the fetishism by the creation of the Paris Commune.

The same came to be with Lenin—the Soviets were the new form for his age, and he was well prepared to see it and create the slogan "All Power to the Soviets" because, theoretically, he had already worked out a new universal—"to a man woman and child."

Now then for us, the practice of dialectics, both in theory and in fact, is something that no other "party" ever called upon its members to do, and it is hard as hell. But the very fact that we demand **unity** of theory and

practice compels the two levels, of which the concrete, the daily practice, is of the essence. **But it wasn't only understanding and his return to Hegel that helped Lenin; it was that, to begin with, he was always a practicing revolutionary.** So, insofar as the latter was concerned, were his Bolshevik colleagues. They all opposed his "April Theses" and thought he had been too long an



Artist's rendering of armed women of the Paris Commune, 1871, fighting against the bourgeoisie. Illustration from the *London Penny*, June 17, 1871.

émigré to "understand Russian realities." **But the revolution swept them along. When the revolution is at a halt and you have state power, you (that is, the Stalinists) follow a very different path.** But it isn't only because they didn't "understand" Hegel; it is because of the **objective** compulsion from the existing state surrounded by world capitalism, etc., etc.

One final point both on "troubles" with Part III of *Philosophy and Revolution*<sup>3</sup> and **objective** transcendence. Transcendence has, in academia, both a theological and philosophic meaning far removed from practice. But transcendence as an **historic** category means people abolishing the old, creating the new; indeed it is the only **real** transcendence; all else is hogwash. Because this is so, I try to practice it even in theory, which is why there is so much return to Black/Red conferences, etc.<sup>4</sup> There are no "troubles." I would like the "new passions and new forces" section in *Philosophy and Revolution* to be written by Blacks, by women, even as New Humanism in *Marxism and Freedom* was written by workers battling Automation.

3. Part III of *Philosophy and Revolution*, when published in 1973, would be called "Economic Reality and the Dialectics of Liberation."

4. See N&L January-February 2010 for Dunayevskaya's presentation to "The Black/Red Conference" of Jan. 12, 1969, to Black workers, intellectuals and white activists.

## Selected Publications from News & Letters

### Books by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 30th Anniversary edition, 2003.....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom: from 1776 until Today** 2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. Author's new introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich.....\$24.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future** .....\$24.95
- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx** .....\$24.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$8.50
- Indignant Heart; A Black Worker's Journal** by Charles Denby.....\$14.95  
Includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya

### Pamphlets

- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'** (Expanded edition).....\$5
- American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard.** by Raya Dunayevskaya, 40th anniversary edition.....\$8
- Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy & the Needed American Revolution** by John Alan.....\$8

- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism In the U.S.** by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$5
- News and Letters Committees Constitution**.....44¢ postage
- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog**  
A list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....61¢ postage

### Archives

- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection**  
Full description of 15,000-page microfilm collection.....\$4.50

### Newspaper

- News & Letters subscription**.....\$5/year

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# A Freedom Rider looks back to 'a sort of revolution'

*Editor's note: This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, the effort of Civil Rights activists organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and other groups to challenge racially segregated seating on interstate bus travel. The Freedom Riders were met with physical violence and arrests in the South, and stonewalling from the Kennedy administration. Abraham Bassford recounts his June 6, 1961, ride.*

I remember going to the office of *Liberation* magazine in Greenwich Village, New York, in a basement. A.J. Muste chaired the editorial meetings. Dave McReynolds, the editorial secretary, professor Roy Finch, Dave Dellinger, who printed the magazine, and Bayard Rustin were pretty much the editorial board.

I remember one afternoon they said, "There is a CORE meeting. Do you want to come?" So we went over to Jim and Lula Farmer's apartment in the Village with their little babies running around. And I joined CORE.

We had the Woolworth's sit-ins in North Carolina at the time and I organized the support group at Wagner College, my school on Staten Island. We picketed Woolworth's and wrote letters.

I was a Christian socialist. My thinking was more or less theological.

## JOINING THE FREEDOM RIDES

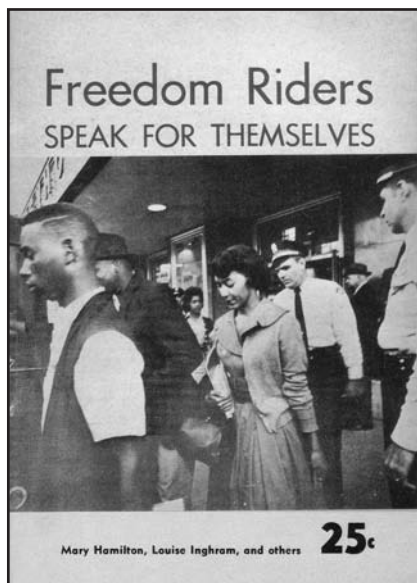
After my semester at college, I could plan for what might come next. My mother was upset and my father was upset because she was upset, and he couldn't do anything. The dean of the graduate school at Wagner called up my parents to let them know that he was supportive. They were a little miffed because they had gotten a postcard with a rifle sight on it as a threat.

In New Orleans we picketed Puglia's supermarket. Puglia's had a lot of Black customers but they were not allowed to work there. We joined the Consumers League picket line and got arrested. They would shift us from one police station to another to avoid our lawyers. I think there were only five lawyers in Mississippi who would defend Freedom Riders. All but one of them were Black. The NAACP Defense Fund found us the lawyers.

We spent a week or so in New Orleans until the lawyers caught up to us and we were bailed out.

Our Freedom Ride was from New Orleans to Jackson, Mississippi. Since we were Blacks and whites, we were integrated and therefore revolutionary in that place and time.

I was sitting on the bus next to Johnny Ashford, who was Black. He got the window seat. We did get to Jackson and we were told by the police that we would have to get off the bus and wait in the Greyhound Bus terminal. So we sat down in the bus terminal.



November 1961 *News & Letters* pamphlet

We were integrating the lily white bus terminal in Jackson and this was theoretically going to cause a ruckus. So we were arrested for disturbing the peace. That was the legal justification for our arrest. There I was being very peaceful, but I was taken for a provocateur.

I asked the judge at our trial if any of the outraged customers were armed. I told him we weren't armed and the customers didn't look very perturbed.

## BEHIND BARS

We were taken to the Hinds County jail. The women Freedom Riders were in the Jackson City jail. We could hear them. They were adjacent. They would sing and so would we.

When I first got to the Hinds County jail the prisoners who were there ahead of us had been fasting out of moral outrage at being arrested. I didn't know how morally outraged I was, but I thought it does show protest. I spent at least 21 days fasting and lost a lot of weight.

There was an initial trial. The sentence was six months for what I would have called a misdemeanor. My draft status changed from 1-O (conscientious objector) to 4-F, because I had been convicted of a felony.

The jails became rather crowded. We were then moved to Parchman Penitentiary in the Delta. We were segregated from the other prisoners because we were agitators.

We were racially segregated.

Jim Farmer recognized me from New York. He had been the spokesman for the people in the cell block and sort of passed the position on to me.

They had us without much of any clothing, in skivvies. Because we were singing at night without any sanction from them, they removed our mattresses and turned up the fans at night. The bunks were steel sheets with holes in them. They are not too comfortable. We made do. There might be two bunks in a cell, but we tried to sleep back-to-back to try to keep warmer.

We were kept in a big barn at the end of our stay. They moved us from the cell blocks, which were maximum security, to the barns, which were lower security.

I'm sure we were an economic burden to them, which we meant to be. I'm not sure we knew how soon we would be bailed out. I didn't know when or whether I was going to get out.

I was released after 40 days and 40 nights. I remember the warden of Parchman wanted to shake my hand and I didn't. I'm not sure that was right or wrong, but they had had some sort of a ruckus with some of us and some young men from Mississippi were hurt. They were brave. I said, "If some of your prisoners are hurt, I hope that they will get good medical attention." I didn't want to shake his hand.

## FIFTY YEARS LATER

It was liberating, showing how you could act non-violently for social change. I thought it was very helpful in getting people to be a little more optimistic and braver, and think about possibilities of change. People cared about each other, even those who were different. A little identification with others helped. People became ready

to speak up and act.

I couldn't not go, because people I knew had already been injured. They were braver than me. I was brought up conscious of discrimination and we didn't want to be that way. One step can lead to another. It frees you to ask, "Where do I really want to put myself? What is important?"

One of my fellow ushers at church is Black and was living in Mississippi back then. He remembers what a sort of revolution it was. He wept when he found out I was a Freedom Rider.

—Abraham Bassford

## California's real history

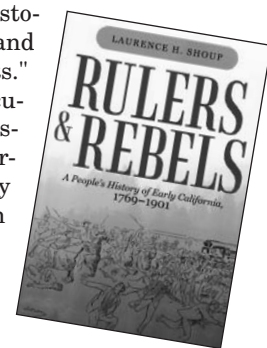
*Rulers & Rebels: A People's History of Early California, 1769-1901* by Laurence H. Shoup.

Laurence H. Shoup presents the history of California from the European incursion of Native America by the Spanish to the Great San Francisco Waterfront Strike of 1901. His interest is agency from below in the form of direct action: "The stories told in this book focus on the fundamentals from the perspective of those at the bottom of society—the rebels."

All of the requisite signposts of California history are here. From the Mission Era, Shoup moves to the Gold Rush and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, then to the transition to industrialization, and, of course, the railroad. He illustrates that the attempts of one group to dominate another are met with resistance, so victories are always temporary, if not incomplete. We meet a diversity of peoples—men and women, Indigenous peoples, African Americans, native born and foreign born Chinese as well as native born and immigrant whites—

"excluded from the orthodox histories, the standard textbooks, and the most powerful media outlets."

Shoup mined church documents, military records, newspaper articles, workers' journals, and many other primary sources. Numerous tables from the U.S. Census Bureau are interspersed throughout, always accompanied by interpretations that bring home the lived reality those statistics represent.



**Protagonists, rulers and rebels alike, speak for themselves, sometimes at great length, with well-chosen quotes like the words of Father Yorke: "If the rich men are all sticking together... what is the duty of the people who earn wages?... You have nobody but yourselves... The rich men unite against you, and it is necessary for them to be united, it is ten thousand times more necessary for every man and woman of you to stand shoulder to shoulder, and be knit together with bands of steel..." Readers feel what it might have been like to live in these times and can assess our distance from this history.**

Shoup's is a compelling history replete with gun battles and shootouts. On one side there are rulers, most often their henchmen including military and other law enforcement, on the other side rebels, Native peoples to white union men. Recounting the scheming and out-and-out thievery that created the great names and wealth of California, he highlights rank-and-file resistance to exploitation. It's messy history, but Shoup doesn't shy away from illuminating the internal battles of the property-less, often drawn along the lines of white supremacy. Here are stories of chilling brutality and great sadness and, against these odds, tales of incredible daring, solidarity, and determination.

Shoup is convincing in his argument that California is a bellwether for both U.S. historical trajectory and future possibility, given that since 1769 peoples from around the world have been meeting there under circumstances of the global political economy.

As a participatory act in transformative history, Shoup's work serves as an excellent primer for readers unfamiliar with economic theory and analysis. His work reminds us that history's progression, acquisition and loss, building and tearing down, are about power and not a neutral and natural process: there are winners and losers. That the winning and losing is discussed in terms of alienation and self-actualization makes this work an important contribution to history broadly, and both American and labor history specifically.

*Rulers & Rebels* is an origin story that seeks to instruct and inspire. It accomplishes both. At 495 pages, it is well paced and concise, given its scope. There is a nod of acknowledgement to the environmental degradation wrought by capitalism's drive to exploit and, too, a sincere desire to struggle against white supremacy. As his contribution to what he describes as humanity's struggle toward full democracy and protagonism, his history of California is an antidote to amnesia, participating in "overcom[ing] the historical amnesia so common in our country" so that we can "begin to recover aspects of our own vernacular revolutionary traditions."

—Awa Fall

## VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

continued from p. 1

Writing of Haiti in 1992, and the terrorism exacted on that country's people at the hands of its corrupt U.S.-backed leadership, John noted, "The trouble with outside 'liberation' is that is limited to the goals of the 'liberators.'"

Addressing the Sudan in 2001, John noted the universality of revolutionary thought and necessary support: "Overcoming...retrogression is the task for revolutionaries in this country as we confront our own unfinished revolution and new forms of exploitation and racism."

In an indictment of Afrocentric educational alternatives, in 1993 John wrote in part: "The advocates of Afrocentric education fail to catch the central contradiction when the object of Afrocentrism becomes science.

"In their concept 'science,' and not the subjectivity of African 'cultural identity,' becomes the force of transformation. There is nothing wrong in encouraging Black youth to study math and science, but to project it as the magic language that will open new economic doors for African Americans in a capitalist high-tech society creates an illusion."

Of course, the best one can do in this small space is only share a sample of John's work, but one would be remiss if one failed to include excerpts from his book *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles* as he references Raya Dunayevskaya's discussion of the Black dimension in her book *Marxism and Freedom*.

"In *Marxism and Freedom*," John wrote, "Dunayevskaya...did ground-breaking work to show that

## Remembering John Alan

the Black struggle, far from being external to Marx's philosophy, was intrinsic to it, pointing especially to how Marx's attentiveness to Black struggles inside the U.S. led him to reorganize his greatest theoretic work, *Capital*. Her view was a leap in American Marxism.

"...No ready-made theory, whether from the Communist Party, Trotskyist parties or existentialists was adequate for the new spontaneous movements as they arose in the 1950s and 1960s.

"Completely new theoretical departures had to be made to express the ideas of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. as well as the anti-colonial revolutions in Africa and meet them with a philosophy of liberation."

When we lose the physical presence of someone we love, it is natural that a sense of sadness exists. We can temper those feelings with a celebration of John's legacy: his words, ideas, beliefs. We are much richer with those things that truly count, because of that legacy.

"Freedom," wrote Rosa Luxemburg, "is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently." Those who fight the hardest for freedom do not necessarily carry flags or banners to mark who they are. Sometimes they just wake to the sound of the trumpets and keep time to the drums that define the heartbeat of change.

We are fortunate that John heard the drums of change and rallied to their call, and decades later, his work is as vibrant today as when it was first penned.

We honor Allen Willis a.k.a. John Alan: filmmaker, writer, Marxist-Humanist, mentor, human being, comrade...friend. *Sine die*...and thank you!

## A CALL FROM SOUTH AFRICA

A call by Abahlali baseMjondolo for Madikizela to step down as MEC [Member of the Executive Council of Western Cape] followed a number of illegal evictions and demolitions carried out by the provincial human settlement department he heads. After our Western Cape organization had staged a number of protests calling on Madikizela to resign, we are protesting again in front of the housing department to demand a signed letter of resignation by Madikizela.

For more information on illegal evictions at Gugulethu, please call Mncedisi Twalo, who is the Chairperson of Gugulethu Anti-eviction Campaign and a co-coordinator of Western Cape Anti-eviction Campaign, at: 078 580 8646.



**Abahlali  
baseMjondolo  
South Africa**

## STUDENTS WIN AT USF

The Movement is growing and events are unfolding rapidly at the University of San Francisco (USF). After the secret sale of the community radio station KUSF (see March-April *N&L*), USF planned to evict Upward Bound, a Civil Rights era college-prep program which has served low-income students on the campus for 45 years. The program has allowed thousands of students who never considered college to have access to higher education.

Protests by students, faculty and community members—against the Jesuit university administration's continuing abandonment of its professed ideals of social responsibility and service to the community—have now had a positive result: it pays to fight back. Still reeling from the ongoing demonstrations against the closing of KUSF, the administration reversed its course on April 15 and will continue to sponsor Upward Bound, though it will now be providing an off-campus space for it.

The Movement is feeling its strength. We will fight for as long and hard as it takes to get KUSF back and to make full access to education a living right for everyone.

**Students, faculty, and  
community fighters for justice  
San Francisco**

## THREE HISTORIC ANNIVERSARIES

The enactment of labor safety laws, spurred by the Triangle Waist Company factory fire 100 years ago, was the culmination of the intense labor, feminist and anti-racist struggles that had followed the Civil War. Yet today, despite boycotts of sweatshop garments by college students, and worldwide resistance, sweatshops continue to operate, including in the U.S. Recently in Bangladesh, a sweatshop caught fire and over 20 young women died—some, like the Triangle workers, jumped ten stories to their death.

Today, even organized labor must fight for its right to exist. The attack on the right to collective bargaining is a stab at its very heart. People fought and died to win the power of uniting to resist the domination of capital. While much of the commemoration here in New York this year focused on finding the unknown grave sites of some of the 149 victims of the Triangle Fire, it is understanding the historic threads which led to labor victories in the past that will retain and develop those achievements for

*Thanks to all who have responded to our Appeal for Help in the March-April issue. Have you sent your contribution?*

# READERS' VIEWS

the future. That is the surest means of honoring the Triangle Fire victims.

**Susan Van Gelder  
New York**

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Recent studies of old railroad documents have brought to light grim new revelations about U.S. labor history. In June 1832, a group of 57 Irish immigrant workers arrived at Duffy's Cut, just west of Philadelphia, to work on the Philadelphia and Columbia Railroad. Within two months all were dead and buried in a mass grave.

At first it was believed that they had all died of cholera, but a recent discovery of Pennsylvania Railroad documents and an archeological dig of the mass grave have revealed that most appear to have died from a mass murder by local vigilantes, by blunt trauma to the head and bullet wounds. Rather than treat them for cholera, the contractor considered them to be expendable. The remains that can be identified will be repatriated to Ireland, and others will be re-buried in a nearby cemetery for which a new marker is being prepared in memory of all the workers who died there.

Donations for the marker can be sent to: Duffy's Cut Project, Box 667, Immaculata University, Immaculata, PA 19345 or call William Watson at the university. (610) 647-4400 Ext. 3491.

**D. Cheneville  
California**

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A new book, *1861: The Civil War Awakening* by Adam Goodheart, seems to me to back up Raya Dunayevskaya's view that it was the Black slaves themselves, through their drive for freedom, who brought about a revolution in the minds of Northern whites, and made the Civil War into a revolutionary war of liberation. It's not exactly how the author put it, but he definitely caught something.

He shows that the slaves shook things up from the very beginning of the war just by taking refuge with Union troops, who began to recognize the drive for freedom in people they had little understood. Eventually even President Lincoln's thinking was changed. Goodheart quotes Lincoln's Secretary of State Seward: "The Emancipation Proclamation was uttered in the first gun fired at Sumter, and we have been the last to hear it."

**Marxist-Humanist  
Chicago**

## JUSTICE FOR JOHNATHAN CUEVAS

On March 19, 80 people gathered in the Lynwood suburb of Los Angeles at the spot where 20-year-old Johnathan Cuevas was killed by L.A. County Sheriff's deputies on Oct. 10, 2010. Deputies had confronted Johnathan while he was walking with friends. An eyewitness stated that he was shot in the back while running away, then was turned over by an officer and shot in the front. There has been no information released by the deputies to the family, not even the deputy's name.

Members of Youth Justice Coalition, Southern California Immigration Coalition, Justice for Oscar Grant and the October 22 Coalition were present to support Johnathan's family. "Family and Friends of Victims of Police Violence" protesters held photos of other recent "stolen lives," mostly Black and Brown unarmed youths shot and killed with impunity by police, sometimes with 20 to 40 shots. More than 100 people have been killed in officer-involved shootings in L.A. County in less than two years.

The protesters marched over a mile to an L.A. County Sheriff station/detention center. Inside the lobby we

held a candlelight vigil, chanting, "Stop Killer Cops" and "No Justice, No Peace." We heard poetry and speeches against police brutality and violations of civil rights and human rights. Johnathan's mother said that the deputies claimed he was a gang member, but he wasn't. She said he was loving, that he always let her know where he was and with whom. She wants the Sheriff to answer some of her questions, like why they didn't use tasers or rubber bullets or chase and tackle? Why did it take ten minutes to get him to a hospital only three minutes away?

**Protester  
Los Angeles**

## FROM YEMEN TO THE U.S., MANY VOICES OF WOMEN'S LIBERATION

I was at a "men's" rally where hundreds of thousands of Yemenis

marched through Sana'a's streets. I marched with them. Keep in mind that Yemeni women never march with men for social, cultural and/or religious reasons, but I did it! It was an amazing feeling. I had nothing but looks of respect and care from the men demonstrators. Long live my beloved people and my country.

**Afrah Nasser  
Yemen**

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When the Democrats sacrificed poor Black women in Washington, D.C., to placate Republicans' insane drive to cut all funding for Planned Parenthood, they forbade the district from using its own tax dollars to pay for poor women's abortions. The National Network for Abortion Funds (NNAF) says that, in doing so, 28 women who had appointments for abortions in D.C. found out at midnight before their procedures, that their funding was cut off and their appointments canceled. NNAF was called for help and reported that all 28 were able to have the procedure. To help make it possible for



**Women's Liberationist  
Chicago**

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An emphatic "yes" was the answer by the panel titled "Does Marxism Have Gender Trouble?" at the Left Forum in New York in March. Philosophy Professor Cinzia Arruzza discussed Queer Theory as a challenge to the post-Marx Marxist approach of a hierarchy of oppressions. I was especially interested in the concept of "gender performativity...as a transformative perspective offering a common ground for both Socialist and Queer Theory." I think Arruzza means by performance that women's activities for freedom are inextricably bound to the ideas and concepts of what freedom means, and to constantly re-creating and deepening the idea and actuality of freedom. It sounds to me a lot like what Raya Dunayevskaya found right within Marx's own work: the concept of "revolution in permanence." This idea flows directly from Marx's grounding in the Hegelian dialectic, but most post-Marx Marxists fail to see women's liberation as a concretization of Marx's Marxism.

**Women's Liberationist  
Detroit**

## DETROIT SYMPHONY VICTORY

The Detroit Symphony, under the baton of Leonard Slatkin, was greeted back from its six-month strike on April 9, with a cheering and raucous celebration of what was called by many, "more than the end of a bitter labor dispute." The *New York Times* reporter who covered it noted, "It finally meant some good news in a town so often described as hollowed out, shriveled up, and abandoned."

This orchestra has always been known as the pride of "the blue-collar town" Detroit represents. During the strike, many of the players were invited to fill in as substitutes in other orchestras, in a time-honored tradition. The strike was over the kinds of pay cuts and changes in work rules all workers are facing today, and though they had to accept large salary reductions, they did preserve their health insurance and even improved their pensions. The other major orchestras, including those in Philadelphia, New York and Boston, who will be facing negotiations for new contracts, are all surely studying this one.

**Orchestra Fan  
Detroit**

## FOR JOHN ALAN (ALLEN WILLIS)

I came across the issue of *The Chicago Defender* that carried an article on the passing of John Alan. But it was *N&L's* memorial that focused on his Black/Red View that makes me want to tell him: "Mr. John Alan, your column was just that. From the beginning to the end and every point in between. You made it clear by putting your view in print. Thank you. Forever you will be Black/Red—Noir/Rouge."

**George W. Smith, Jr.  
Chicago**

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The memorial to John Alan in the March-April *N&L* gives a real sense of the important dimension he brought not only to the newspaper but to the ongoing freedom movements in general. Yet Alan never gave the impression that "you're nothing without me." Rather, he would tell us, "The revolution is going to happen with or without you. The question is: what are you going to say about it?" In other words, pay attention, get your thoughts together and be ready to express them.

**David  
Bay Area**

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I was hired by Allen Willis as the first woman camera person at KQED. In an interview for the job I was asked if I had experience as a news camera person. I had just got out of school

and thought this was the end of that job. I said "no"—and his answer was "Great! We don't want anybody who has had that experience, we want to do something new." By hiring me, he gave me a start on my career as a documentary filmmaker. He took a risk. It was at the beginning of the feminist movement, of People's Park, of Haight-Ashbury. It was a fantastic time to be in the Bay Area and participate the way I was able to, because he had hired me.

**Emiko Omori  
California**

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Allen was an extraordinary person. His knowledge of history was not just American history, although that was great. He taught me about my own history. He knew ancient history, modern history, Persian history, Greek and Persian wars. He would teach you about you and yet, for a young intellectual like me who knew not very much about the States, he helped me get grounded in America.

Anywhere there was a movement for freedom, Allen was touched by it. He was not a detached intellectual. He was in touch with reality, with aspirations of people for emancipation. I became the person I am because of my encounters and contact with Allen Willis.

**Raha  
Iranian exile in USA**

# Revolution and counter-revolution take world stage

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turned into "The army and the people are not one hand....The revolution has so far managed to get rid of the dictator (Mubarak), but the dictatorship still exists."<sup>4</sup> On April 8, tens of thousands of people once again packed Tahrir Square, this time calling for prosecution of Mubarak and his top henchmen, some saying that the Field Marshal "dictator Tantawi" is "next." Several military officers in uniform defied a threat of summary court martial to join the protest. Hundreds of troops and riot police stormed the Square at 3:00 AM, arresting eight of the dissident officers and killing two people. The Army had lost its halo.

And yet, with barriers to revolution's continuation coming right from within it as well as from the military, the question arises: Will the Arab Spring be one more series of revolutions unfinished, aborted? Will the high points be lost as the movement stops at first negativity, that is, the destruction of the old and *not* the creation of the new society with fully *human* relationships? The philosophic void is seen in the talk of the need to build democracy, oppose imperialism, build a party, *without* a banner of total uprooting raised as the concrete need for developing the self-activity of masses achieved by the revolution. In short, what is needed to fight retrogression is unity of philosophy and revolution.

## B. Libya's counter-revolution

Libya's civil war began as nonviolent protests, as in Tunisia and Egypt. In mid-January hundreds of poor families demonstrated and occupied vacant housing in the east and west of Libya. After an internet call for "Uprising on Feb. 17," Qaddafi's government stepped up repression, detaining activists. On Feb. 15, days after Hosni Mubarak was toppled, large protests broke out in several cities. In the eastern city of Benghazi, the flashpoint was Abu Salim prison, where weekly protests had been held for two years by families of 1,200 prisoners massacred there in 1996. In the western town of Az Zintan, hundreds of marchers set fire to police and security buildings and set up tents to occupy the town center. Police violence increased the protests. Qaddafi lost control of many areas across the country.

His regime struck back, shelling demonstrations from tanks and bombing rebel-held cities. Libya's army contains many mercenaries from other countries, paid with oil money. Since February, thousands of African migrant workers have been coerced into Qaddafi's forces as front-line fighters or human shields. Much better armed and organized than the rebels, the Army retook several cities, at the cost of probably thousands of lives. Qaddafi's son Saif al-Islam threatened the masses in revolt with "hundreds of thousands of casualties."

## UN/NATO INTERVENTION

In the face of this "declaration of war" against the Libyan people, Ibrahim Dabbashi of Libya's UN delegation—which had entirely gone over to the side of the rebels—called on the UN to impose a no-fly zone and cut off supplies of arms and mercenaries to the regime.<sup>5</sup> Even the rulers of the Arab League, none of whom want their own masses to get any help overthrowing them, submitted to the pressure from below and endorsed a no-fly zone. The Obama administration had to give up its resistance, and a resolution for somewhat more than a no-fly zone was passed by the UN Security Council, and NATO became its enforcer.

By the time France started bombing Qaddafi's forces, they had already entered Benghazi, one of the last rebel strongholds. They were on the verge of a massacre that would have been a grave setback not only for the revolution in Libya but for the revolutionary wave echoing across the world.

The U.S.-NATO entry into Libya's civil war disoriented much of the Left. While some groups bowed to Qaddafi as "anti-imperialist,"<sup>6</sup> many other groups and individuals adopted a more sophisticated line of opposing both Qaddafi and intervention, as if that did not mean Qaddafi's victory and a defeat of revolution with global ramifications.

## DISORIENTATION ON THE LEFT

This disorientation reflected the Left's longstanding philosophic void. How is it that revolutionaries are so in awe of state powers, especially the superpower U.S., that revolution itself becomes a secondary consideration, and the real determinant is the urge to oppose the U.S.? Nothing could make clearer the pitfalls of being stuck at first negativity. While many participants dissented, speakers at Chicago's March 19 anti-war protest presented the view that the "core principle" is "anti-

intervention." Libyan state television used footage of the march with calls for "Hands off Libya," as if that were the whole point of the march.

Many such calls did not even mention Qaddafi or the revolutionary mass uprising against him! The U.S., France, Italy and Britain will try to take advantage of the intervention for their own imperialist purposes. But facile comparisons with Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq disregard the existence of an uprising calling for aid. That does *not* mean that our position is to "support the intervention"; it is *to support the revolution*.<sup>7</sup>

**The subordination of revolution once state powers intervene reflects how the activist and intellectual Left is permeated with the capitalistic concept of the backwardness of the masses. That includes those who have broken with the vanguard party-to-lead. Those who cannot grasp "the relationship of theory to history as a historical relationship made by masses in motion" cannot fill the philosophic void.**

It is impossible to confront this morass of disorientation without challenging what Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism and of News and Letters

Committees, called post-Marx Marxism—not as a chronological category but as the way Marxism has truncated Karl Marx's total philosophy of revolution in permanence. For "without a philosophy of revolution activism spends itself in mere anti-imperialism and anti-capitalism, without ever revealing what it is for."<sup>9</sup>

## C. Revolts across the Arab world

The fire unleashed by the revolution in Tunisia has encouraged revolts also outside the Arab world, as in Azerbaijan and Iran, and even spooked China's rulers after calls for a "Jasmine Revolution" there. All of North Africa and the Middle East is feeling the heat.

• **Bahrain's** Feb. 14 Day of Rage, called by youth inspired by Egypt and Tunisia, began days of non-violent protests, which overcame deadly police repression and eventually created a massive occupation of Pearl Square. The movement is overwhelmingly supported by the 70% Shiite majority and finds some support among the Sunnis who are not part of the ruling elite. Despite a few concessions, continuing repression led to ever more radical demands from the youth and a move toward the centers of finance and government. Emboldened by Libya's bloodshed and under cover of Japan's earthquake, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates sent in 2,000 troops to smash the movement, with tacit support from the U.S., whose naval Fifth Fleet is based in Bahrain. King Hamad declared a three-month state of emergency. With hundreds detained, unrest is stymied for now but is still simmering.

• **Yemen** has been rocked by a movement that began as protests of unemployment and corruption, with calls for the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, a brutal ruler long supported by the U.S. as an ally against Al Qaeda, one of whose strongest chapters is in Yemen. Despite shootings, main squares hold protest camps all across the country, and part of the Army has come over to their side. In the capital, Sana'a, what the protesters call Change Square, modeled after Egypt's revolutionary occupation of Tahrir Square, is breaking down divisions between tribes and sects.

As in other Arab countries, women are prominent. (See "Women in Yemen show revolutionary way," p. 2.) Thousands of women marched in Taiz on April 3, calling for Saleh's ouster, and were beaten by police. As one young woman demonstrator, Afrah Nasser, wrote, women are fighting "oppression both at home and in the public sphere." She added, "Usually in Yemen, women get harassed all the time, but in Change Square nobody touches me." When Saleh called women's participation in protests "haram" (sinful), thousands of women took to the streets of Sana'a undaunted, calling for his

7. Not all of the Left made abstract "anti-intervention" their ground of their position. For instance, Richard Greeman, "Libya: Whose Side Are We On?" *Z Net* (<http://zcommunications.org/libya-who-s-side-are-we-on-by-richard-greeman>); Juan Cole, "An Open Letter to the Left on Libya" (<http://www.juancole.com/2011/03/an-open-letter-to-the-left-on-libya.html>). The socialist group Solidarity could not agree, so they released statements by two subgroups of their National Committee, one of which, "The Right to Demand Assistance," is one of the best to come from a U.S. Left group.  
8. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 288.  
9. Raya Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 194.

ouster.

• **Syria** has also conducted a bloody counter-revolution, killing hundreds. The turning point came on March 6, when several boys under 15 were arrested and tortured in Daraa for writing graffiti calling for the downfall of the regime. Daraa became a center of resistance, with march after march, each time in the face of police violence, and by March 15 thousands turned out in cities across the country—even in Hama, where President Assad's father put down a 1982 Islamist revolt by butchering 20,000 and razing the city. The depth of revolt is shown by the execution of several soldiers for refusing to shoot protesters.

• **In Palestine** the ruling Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the West Bank were already on edge after the Gaza Youth's Manifesto for Change last December.<sup>10</sup> Hamas, Fatah, and the Israeli government could all agree that they did not want the Arab revolts to spread to occupied Palestine. What could divert from the revolt is the heating up of shelling and bombing exchanges between Israel and Gaza, threatening another war.

At this very time, Judge Richard Goldstone retracted one assertion from his UN report on the 2008-09 Gaza War, in which hundreds of Palestinian civilians were killed and tremendous destruction was wrought in Gaza. The Israeli government and its ideologues tried to use that to discredit the whole report. Goldstone, however, backed off only from the one

assertion that Israel had a policy of targeting civilians.

He did not retract the other findings: Israel had a policy of collective punishment, targeting the civilian infrastructure; war crimes had been committed by both sides; Israel had tortured detainees and used Palestinians, including children, as human shields.<sup>11</sup> The other three authors of the UN report indicated they had been pressured to sanitize their conclusions but that they stood by them in the interests of justice "to the hundreds of innocent civilians killed during the Gaza conflict, the thousands injured, and the hundreds of thousands whose lives continue to be deeply affected by the conflict and the blockade."

Matters were further complicated by the outrageous U.S. veto of a UN resolution demanding a halt to Israel's construction of illegal settlements in Palestine. In the face of Israel's intransigence—most concretely measured by the steady construction of West Bank settlements—the Palestinian Authority has had to admit the fruitlessness of peace talks and turned to a campaign for admission as a member state of the UN.

**But what both Fatah and Hamas appear to fear most is revolt from the Palestinian masses.** (See "Counter-revolution targets Palestine," p. 12.)

When revolutions struggle under counter-revolution, what becomes clear is the need to work out the philosophy of revolution in permanence as an integral part of revolution and solidarity. This makes urgent a new edition of a Marxist-Humanist pamphlet on the Middle East. That pamphlet highlights the need for philosophy to prevent revolution stopping halfway—a pull that comes from within revolution itself and not only from the rulers. The Marxist-Humanist analyses of the 1979 Iranian Revolution show how philosophy can be a force of revolution, as Marxist-Humanism fought to help women, workers, youth and oppressed nationalities open a second chapter of revolution as against the seizure of power by Ayatollah Khomeini. Learning the lessons of history cannot mean only avoiding the same political mistakes but rather being philosophically prepared for the new and unexpected.

## II. The wars at home

### A. U.S. class war

The revolutionary struggle in Egypt became a part of the consciousness of the massive Wisconsin fightback against Tea Party Gov. Scott Walker's assault on labor. Day after day, thousands and tens of thousands came out to demonstrate in Madison in opposition to Walker's bill and, as signs put it, "Walk like an Egyptian."

The viciousness of the Right's assault on women, minorities and the working class cannot be overestimated. It includes denial of collective bargaining rights for state employees—the majority are women—the last sector of U.S. workers to be unionized in large numbers. It includes cuts in pay, longer hours and the loss of unemployment benefits and pensions. Draconian anti-labor laws have been passed or proposed in Ohio,

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10. See "Gaza youth shout out," Jan.-Feb. 2011 *N&L*,

11. See "On the so-called Goldstone 'Retraction,'" by Omar Baddar, <http://www.aaiusa.org/blog/entry/on-the-so-called-goldstone-retraction/>.



Protesters in Syria call for the overthrow of President Bashar al-Assad, April 2011.

# Revolution and counter-revolution take world stage

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Michigan, and Indiana among other states.

Those who assault labor dream of erasing the very memory of past struggles. In Maine the governor dismantled a mural by Judy Taylor at the Department of Labor, which he deems "offensive to business" because it reflects actual labor history. The budget presented in the House of Representatives by Republican Paul Ryan (Wis.) represents the far Right's vision of state power that won't stop at undoing the New Deal and reforms won after the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire 100 years ago.

**It aims to erode labor relations to the time when strikes for the eight-hour day were punctuated by the Haymarket and Bay View massacres 125 years ago. The whole tenor of the discussion in Congress is not of holding the line, but of severe financial attacks including the dismantling of Social Security and Medicare.**

This viciousness has roots in anti-working-class policies pursued by Republican and Democratic administrations since the 1970s. These policies, in turn, have been a response by the ruling class to capitalism's endemic crisis.

The demonization of people on welfare led up to its destruction in the 1990s. That was exacerbated by today's higher unemployment and new restrictions on food stamps. Food banks and soup kitchens can't keep up with increasing demand and more and more Americans, especially children, go to bed hungry.

The current attacks might seem to come as a shock only if the deep racism of U.S. society is ignored. They bear the character of anti-humanism that has already been manifest in U.S. capitalism's response to its decades-long crisis by the building of the prison-industrial complex.<sup>12</sup> This has borne a racist, neofascist enclave in the heart of U.S. civilization that is spreading further into the mainstream in the guise of anti-labor, anti-immigrant, anti-woman, anti-Muslim and racist rhetoric and legislation.

The resulting contradictions were evident in one aspect of the Wisconsin demonstrations. The presence of the prison guards' union raised the question of *the role of the state*, itself, beside the question of the rights of public workers. The current assault by the Right will not be turned back without coming to terms with the last 40 years of U.S. capitalism's assault upon the Black and Latino working class. In this respect, the mass prisoner strike in a dozen Georgia prisons in December should be seen as the cutting edge of fightback against the Tea Party's ascendancy.<sup>13</sup> It was not only the first mass response, but in many ways the most profound.

The prison strike was multiracial, and represented the voices of the most dispossessed workers. It was hugely significant that the Georgia prisoners used classic language of the labor movement, adopting the IWW slogan "An injury to one is an injury to all." Only when the fightback in the U.S. takes account of this country's racist history, including the Abolitionist roots of Marxism, and makes a point of supporting current efforts like this one, could it open the door to revolutionary stirrings as in Tunisia and Egypt.

## B. Women in the crosshairs

Egypt showed, once again, that a crucial way the face of counter-revolution makes its appearance is by attacking women. In Egypt, it was women in Tahrir Square on International Women's Day who were told that the revolution was not for them. In the U.S. too, the attack on women by Tea Partiers and the Republican Party—often tolerated by the Democrats—reveals the retrogressionism taking deep root in the U.S. What was new about the attempt to destroy women's right and access to abortion, was how completely ruthless it has become with no regard for a woman's integrity, her health, her ability and right to decide whether to carry a fetus to term, or even for her very life!

That the most extreme anti-abortion ideology is being imposed on women is most clearly seen now in Idaho. The Idaho House of Representatives passed legislation banning abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy with no exceptions for rape, incest, fetal abnormality, or the mental or emotional health of the woman. The thoughts, wishes and needs of raped women were completely disregarded as State Rep. Shannon McMillan

12. "We as a society are witnessing the debasement of humanist respect toward fellow human beings with ever-increasing intensity....The criminal has become the dart board at which we throw our frustrations....It has given the ruling class, under a burgeoning 'law and order' climate, full permission to hold jurisdiction over an increasingly revolutionary-minded proletariat."—D.A. Sheldon, *Voices from within the Prison Walls*, p. 6 (News and Letters Committees, 1998).

13. See "Prisoners STRIKE!" Jan.-Feb. 2011 N&L.

decided that, since a fetus was blameless, the woman should be forced to be its vessel; and State Rep. Brent Crane pontificated that women are raped because of God's will, preaching that "He has the ability to take difficult, tragic, horrific circumstances and then turn them into wonderful examples." It seems Crane has the ability to take tragic events and make them even worse.

New legislation would force a sonogram on a woman and make her view it; report miscarriages to authorities and have them investigated as if they were crimes; and make doctors read women blatant lies as medical "fact." The attempt to savage Planned Parenthood, which uses no federal money for abortions, reveals a purely ideological mindset as Planned Parenthood prevents more than 620,000 unintended pregnancies and 220,000 abortions a year.

While the attack on women's right to control their own bodies is the most blatant, it is no exaggeration to call what is transpiring a "war on women"—especially poor and working-class. Many have noted the irony that at the same time women are enduring forced childbirth, the Republicans want to cut 10% from the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, a program that serves 9.6 million each month. Their bill guts \$50 million from the block grant for prenatal healthcare to 2.5 million poor women and healthcare to 31 million children each year. What's more:

- Their budget plan takes \$1 billion from Head Start, throwing 157,000 children out of pre-school.
- Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's plan to destroy



Chicago Walk For Choice demonstration against anti-abortion fanatic Joseph Scheidler in April. Banner reads "Abortion providers save women's lives," signs read "Stop anti-choice terrorism."

the collective bargaining rights of public employees disproportionately impacts women's jobs, including nurses, teachers, healthcare workers, etc.

• The attempt to destroy Medicare and Medicaid also hits women the hardest: two-thirds of the elderly poor are women. Another GOP bill would cut funding for employment services, meals, and housing for senior citizens.

It is not only that women's human rights are under siege by the U.S. Congress and state legislators, it is that the barriers put up, the requirements women face, are themselves so grievous, that the entire Left should be up in arms. Given this level of attack, where is the solidarity with women's struggles?

In all the demonstrations against Scott Walker's attempt to destroy the bargaining rights of unionized state workers, there was hardly a peep from the unions or the Left about his horrendous stand on the right of women to control their own bodies. He voted to gut \$4 million from the Wisconsin budget for family planning resources and end all funding for Planned Parenthood, among other fanatical proposals.

When abortion is illegal, women die. They die and are maimed from back-alley butcher abortions because, legal or not, women are desperate to control what happens in their own bodies.

**The point is that women's struggle for abortion rights is not a diversion from revolution, but a freedom demand without which real liberation is impossible.**

That women are fighting back is clear in the tremendous outcry against the Republicans' plan to crucify Planned Parenthood. "We stand with Planned Parenthood" signs became ubiquitous, and meant as well: We stand for women's right to abortion.

In Indiana, hundreds of protesters rallied at the statehouse in March in opposition to a proposed law that would require doctors to lie to women about a non-existent relationship between abortion and breast cancer, and would ban abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy unless there is a threat to the woman's life or health.

Perhaps the most exciting development is the nationwide Walk For Choice (WFC) movement that has, like the revolts in the Middle East and North Africa, erupted off of social networking sites like Facebook and Tumblr. WFC demonstrations are taking place across the country. Organizers and participants are mostly women in their early 20s, who, if Chicago is any example, are fed up with established women's rights groups that refuse to use the word "abortion" publicly and with pride. They forgo march permits, and "walk for choice"

with signs, chants and banners, through downtowns, campuses and neighborhoods. That they are strident and unashamed is a shot in the arm to the movement. That they are young proves that the unintended result of the right wing's assault on women's right to abortion is a renewal of the Women's Liberation Movement.

That movement will be needed more than ever as the fight over the U.S. budget is just warming up. Republicans and their fanatical Tea Party supporters held the nation hostage to get their way on budget cuts in April. Democratic leaders vowed that they would "not throw women under the bus," yet women in D.C. got run over. To get the budget passed, Democrats agreed to forbid the District of Columbia, poorer and Blacker than almost any state in the nation, from using its own tax dollars to pay for poor women's abortions.

That makes it clear that Obama and the Democrats are so steeped in pragmatism that all long-fought-for human rights in the U.S. are in jeopardy. Nothing is safe, even rights that Blacks won in the bloody struggle for civil rights, as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides this year, along with the 150th anniversary of the U.S. Civil War. Wisconsin proved that U.S. labor rights are fragile and the class war against workers is so retrograde that it aims at youth too, as several states contemplate overriding child labor laws.

## C. The U.S. wars and nuclear peril

Unseparated from the drive to roll back all the gains made by freedom movements since the Civil War is the stench of war as a permanent element of rotting globalized capitalism.

Even in Iraq, 47,000 U.S. troops are still deployed, months after President Obama declared, "The American combat mission in Iraq has ended." The Pentagon is angling to keep them there in spite of the Dec. 31 deadline for their removal. Even if they are withdrawn, the U.S. embassy in Baghdad—the largest embassy in the world—is projected to have over 16,000 people on its staff next year, including an unknown number of spies and military personnel and 5,500 private security contractors, that is, mercenaries a la Blackwater. And, while at a lower level than the height of sectarian violence in 2006-07, mass killings are still common.

What is all too hidden from the public eye is the ongoing resistance within the military. The state's determination to crush it is just as much a point of continuity between the Obama administration and the Bush administration as is the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan. Bradley Manning, a 23-year-old intelligence analyst who was stationed in Iraq, languished for months in solitary confinement in the Marine prison at Quantico, Va. He is accused of leaking a classified video that showed American troops shooting Iraqi civilians from an Apache helicopter in 2007, as well as involvement in the WikiLeaks exposure of thousands of secret documents from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and of secret diplomatic cables.

Those who perpetrated the crimes, from Bush's invasion of Iraq in 2003 to the 2007 shootings in the video, are not likely to be punished, but for revealing the truth Manning is facing life imprisonment.<sup>14</sup> Without having been convicted, he has been held in conditions criticized by Amnesty International and denounced as "degrading and inhumane" in a letter signed by 295 U.S. legal scholars. A senior United Nations representative on torture, Juan Mendez, protested the military's refusal to allow him access to Manning.

In Afghanistan the U.S.-led war rages on, now after nearly ten years the longest war in U.S. history. The July 2011 date for "beginning" to withdraw troops seems to have less and less meaning as the occupation drags on. Afghan President Hamid Karzai is pushing "reconciliation" with the Taliban, holding a meeting April 16 with Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani together with many other military and civilian leaders from the two countries. At the same time, Karzai's government is competing with the Taliban's oppression of women, by, for example, undermining women's shelters. About half the women in the country's prisons are there for fleeing domestic violence. The Taliban are even worse, destroying girls' schools, using stoning to punish "vice," and attacking women in myriad ways. But no real participation by women is foreseen if negotiations with the Taliban come to pass.

In Pakistan, U.S. drones and special forces are aimed attack areas where the Taliban takes refuge. However, since a CIA agent was arrested after killing two Pakistanis—in self-defense, he says—there is a "fundamental rift" in relations, as Pakistan demands an end to drone attacks and a reduction in the presence of U.S. intelligence agents.<sup>15</sup> Pakistani fundamentalists are increasingly able to harass and even murder secularists with impunity. Looming over this tense situation is Pakistan's nuclear arsenal, growing at a rate that may soon make it the fifth-largest in the world, exceeding Britain's, while divided Kashmir

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14. See <http://www.bradleymanning.org/>.

15. Jane Perlez, "U.S. Rift With Pakistan Grows Over Drone Strikes," *New York Times*, 4/17/11.



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remains a flashpoint with nuclear-armed India.

**North Korea's** recent shelling of a disputed island, killing South Koreans, reminded the world of the threat of war once again. North Korea's gradually accumulating nuclear arsenal greatly compounds the ramifications. Kim Jong-il's regime is often described as "socialist," but in reality it is characterized by harsh exploitation of workers and militaristic nationalism. A well-fed army and an elite wallowing in luxury hold down masses living in deprivation, with perhaps millions facing the prospect of starvation.

As shown in our Jan.-Feb. 2011 editorial, "Back to the Nuclear Brink," the nuclear buildup and aggressive moves from various sides not only raised the specter of World War III but underscored the urgency of the Marxist-Humanist perspective: *the opposite of war is not peace, but revolution*. The constant recurrence of wars and threats of wars demonstrates the insufficiency of opposing war without raising a banner of a society on new human foundations that would abolish the roots of war in social relations—a banner of revolution in permanence.

## III. Japan: earthquake, tsunami and meltdown

Nuclear power—which came into being to mask the genocidal nature of the nuclear arsenal first used by the U.S. to decimate Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan—is a key dimension of the tragedy tormenting Japan since the March 11 magnitude 9.0 earthquake and tsunami. By mid-April, close to 14,000 were counted dead and 14,000 missing. Survivors came together in the best human spirit to help each other in dire conditions. However, the already gargantuan toil of rescue, relief and reconstruction has been infinitely complicated by the hazards presented by the ruined Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant. Radioactive materials released by its damaged reactors disrupted fishing, agriculture and even emergency operations at the plant itself.

The one-two punch of the earthquake and tsunami caused what Japanese had been told "can't happen here": the emergency cooling systems failed. A series of explosions, fires and partial meltdowns hit the plant's six reactors and their storage ponds

for highly radioactive, hot and toxic spent fuel. Pieces of the dangerous fuel rods were scattered up to a mile away. In the weeks since—with no end in sight—the plant has spewed radioactive steam and water into the air, ocean, groundwater and soil. Regulators have found vegetables, milk and meat—and drinking water as far away as Tokyo—exceeding legal limits for radiation. Concentrations of radioactive iodine up to 7.5 million times the legal limit were measured in nearby seawater.

The task of trying to keep the reactors and spent fuel ponds from exploding in a much worse way—like Chernobyl in 1986—will continue for months. What little can be done to clean up the area and contain the materials will take even longer. The contamination goes well beyond the government's official evacuation zone, which has been criticized as much too small by the nuclear-friendly International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.S. government, and a coalition of 168 Japanese

citizens' groups.

Both the government and the plant's owner, TEPCO, were totally unprepared for the situation, as is evident from their bumbling efforts in trying to prevent further explosions and meltdowns and stem the leak of radioactive water. The failure of one improvisation after another, together with the stream of misinformation, were reminiscent of BP's panicky response to its oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico one year earlier. However, in the midst of the confusion, TEPCO did manage to submit to regulators its plans to build two more reactors at the devastated plant!

**The situation would be far worse if not for the heroic efforts of the nuclear workers—many of whom are low-paid, temporary laborers who perform the most dangerous jobs. They are thrown into unknown radiation levels, because so many measurement instruments were knocked out by the explosions or by levels of radiation they are not designed to withstand.**

Documents obtained from the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission contradicted its public reassurances that this country's nuclear plants are better prepared for catastrophic events like earthquakes, hurricanes and bombings than Japan's. Moreover, last year U.S. nukes had 14 "near-miss" events—including some emergency cooling system failures, a key factor in Japan's current troubles. Meanwhile, the discovery of radioactive contamination of water in South Dakota, including in a number of Native American reservations, highlights the long-lasting threat from abandoned uranium mines, which are but one step in the nuclear cycle.<sup>16</sup> Yet President Obama is still pushing a "nuclear renaissance"!

After each industrial disaster, capitalism seems to take more steps to repeat than to prevent that type of disaster. One year after BP's Gulf of Mexico oil spill, two protests called attention to how it is still harming people

and the environment, while deep-water oil drilling permits are again being issued with only minor changes in protective measures: 1) an April 14 protest by Louisiana victims of the oil spill, together with locked-out construction workers, at BP's annual shareholder meeting in London, England; 2) an April 18 sit-in by 50 young activists at the U.S. Department of the Interior, with 300 more protesting outside, demanding a

clean energy future, and denouncing the Department's routine approval of deep-water oil drilling and massive coal mining, including the destruction of Appalachian mountains.

**The disasters wrought by state-capitalism keep pointing to the truth of what Marx wrote long before human beings had learned to split the atom: "To have one basis for life and another for science is a priori a lie."**

Like the BP spill, each nuclear accident reveals that lie manifested as the fetishism of science. The glorification of "infallible" science, as opposed to the human being, as the repository of all truth and creativity, is the natural outgrowth of a society where living labor is dominated by dead labor (capital) incorporating science within itself. Science appears to have appropriated all the attributes of life, and human beings must serve its dictates. The ideology is perpetuated not just for its own sake but because it serves to hide capitalism's total dependence on exploitation of labor.

Opposition to nuclear power has surged once again since the Fukushima Daiichi accident, with demonstrations in several countries. That includes Germany, where the government quickly reversed its policy, now promising to close all nuclear reactors by 2020; and India, where one protester was killed during an attack on a police station close to a proposed plant site in an earthquake-prone area. In Japan itself, not only have there been weekly demonstrations calling for all the country's nuclear reactors to be shut down, the same call has for the first time come from the National Japan Fisheries Union, while activists appealed to stop schools in contaminated zones from opening.

The truth is that state-capitalism's drive for ever greater production compels production of ever more energy from whatever source, flouting all scientific findings on the threat posed to humanity, whether from radiation or from climate change. Truly, the only solution can come, not from a new energy technology

but from what Karl Marx called "human power which is its own end." That can become the real principle of society only when it is no longer ruled by the law of value, the domination of dead over living labor—when revolution succeeds not only in overthrowing the old but in creating the new, truly human society.

## IV. Revolution, organization and philosophy

*"The question of 'What happens after?' gains crucial importance because of what it signals in self-development and self-flourishing—revolution in permanence. No one knows what it is, or can touch it, or decide upon it before it appears. It is not the task that can be fulfilled in just one generation. That is why it remains so elusive, and why the abolition of the division between mental and manual labor sounds utopian. It has the future written all over it...."*

*"In a word, as opposed to the Party, we put forth a body of ideas that spells out the second negativity which continues the revolution in permanence after victory....Full self-development of Man / Woman that leads to truly new human relationships remains the goal."*

—Raya Dunayevskaya,

*The Year of Only 8 Months*

The way the world's crises and struggles call out for revolution in permanence makes it imperative to dig into the dialectics of organization and philosophy. History shows that organization bereft of philosophy of revolution leads at best to yet another revolution stopped halfway—and once the forward motion is stopped, the backward motion takes over.

The crises wracking the U.S. and Japan make it abundantly clear that the new society struggling to be born out of the Arab revolutions cannot be achieved by copying the "advanced" industrial lands' democracy and science, shackled and perverted by capitalism.<sup>17</sup>

The pressure to halt halfway to liberation does not come only from the rulers. Even some of the Egyptian movement's leaders called for it to halt after Mubarak's fall. Amr Ezz of the April 6 Youth Movement said, "Now, the role of the regular people has ended and the role of the politicians begins. Now, we can begin negotiations with the military in order to plan the coming phase."<sup>18</sup>

It is not that Ezz is one to settle for bourgeois democracy out of disregard for the struggles and demands of workers. The April 6 Youth Movement began in support of textile workers in Muhalla al-Kubra who had called for a national general strike in 2008. Nevertheless, the pull to stop short makes itself felt, whether from fear of provoking the counter-revolution or from fear of the totality of change that revolution reaches for—or from ideological obfuscation that portrays counter-revolution as revolution, whether that is Stalin's state-capitalism or Khomeini's Islamic Republic.

Ezz and others had to modify their position after the Army's treachery culminated in the April 9-10 attacks on protesters in Tahrir Square. It is this situation that led the youth to ask, "What has happened to our revolution?" On April 10 the Revolutionary Youth Coalition, including Amr Ezz, condemned the military's violence, suspended talks with its Supreme Council, the junta running the state, and threatened more sit-ins.

At the same time the military, hand in hand with the Muslim Brotherhood, has been working to funnel everything into the "normal" channels of the bourgeois state: negotiations with the junta and preparations for elections.

**In this situation the revolution's "leaderless" character was called into question. "Leaderlessness" did make clear that masses of people in motion are not seeking yet another leadership, and are reaching for self-determination in their own lives. And yet, leaderlessness could not substitute for theory. As long as the movement's meaning is not grasped and made explicit as a category on whose basis the revolution acts, it is in danger of being lost.**

The passage of the Army's constitutional referendum by more than 75% shows how little a new parliament will represent the revolution. History long ago showed that elections within the old state form, even if it has been reformed, are the road to the

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On March 20, nine days after Japan's earthquake, 1,000 people gathered next to the National Assembly building in Paris, France, to protest nuclear power.

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16. See "NRC's Record in 2010: A UCS Assessment," report by David Wright for the Union of Concerned Scientists, and Talli Naumann, "Radiation high on South Dakota reservations," *Native Sun News*, 3/31/11.

17. On Europe, which is stumbling from one national bailout/austerity program to another as it fails to emerge from the Great Recession and wallow in anti-immigrant hysteria no less toxic than the North American variety, see "European revolts confront economic and political crises," by Ron Kelch, Jan.-Feb. 2011 N&L.

18. Outside Egypt, many on the Left held that the masses "need to acquire the kind of political education that can be achieved only through a long-term practise of democracy." Quoted from "Whither Egypt?" by Gilbert Achcar and Farooq Sulehria, Feb. 5, 2011, <http://www.zcommunications.org/whither-egypt-by-gilbert-achcar>

# Revolutions take world stage

continued from p. 9

destruction of the forms of power the masses were beginning to build for themselves. New parties being organized are not "leaderless," and are in great danger of being incorporated into the state system.

Some Marxist groups, in Egypt and elsewhere, think they have the answer: build a revolutionary socialist vanguard party. History has also shown how vanguard parties that take power are prone to transform into opposite. The problem is not, as these parties believe, finding the right leaders. What is needed is not an individual or a party to be leader, but philosophy as the key—the philosophy of revolution in permanence, functioning as an integral part of revolution.

## RESISTING HALFWAY REVOLUTIONS

The pull to stop short was also expressed in the desire to make the revolution "non-ideological." That is supposedly the only way to unite all the forces of revolt, and at the same time it is an effort to avoid a takeover by Islamists.

Confusing ideology with philosophy, the "non-ideological" approach was a manifestation of the longstanding theoretical void, which robs the revolution of any banner of total transformation. Without such a vision of new human relations, it is left entirely up to the spontaneous actions of the masses to resist the pull to stop halfway. That means settling for some concrete gains but giving up the real achievements of the revolution: the self-activity and self-development of the Subject, the new relations established, and the forms of organization the masses created spontaneously.

It is that self-activity that creates the basis for workers' control of production, for breaking the law of value, for establishing a new society in which the division between mental and manual labor can be broken down. Without it, a new democracy cannot break out of the serious crises plaguing the world. With it, a banner of freedom can encourage the rest of the world to move to break away from capitalism and its crises.

The dialectic of revolts and counter-revolutions shows that a banner of total freedom that roots itself in the self-activity of the masses demands an organizational expression. Dialectics of organization and philosophy is not only about mass associations arising from the struggle, nor the elitist party, but about the kind of group that is with the masses and is organized around the movement from theory.<sup>19</sup>

Without organizational responsibility for the philosophy of liberation, the high points of revolution can be lost, rather than being expanded, deepened, and raised as a banner to engage the strongest solidarity from the masses around the world.

To address this historic problem, we are completing a new edition of selected writings by Dunayevskaya on Karl Marx. Key in this is the significance of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, and how that significance was lost on post-Marx Marxists. The 1875 Gotha Program was the basis for unity between two organizations, one Marxist and one Lassallean, to form a new socialist party. It is not the specific doctrines so much as the approach to organization and to revolution that makes it so revealing of the fundamental flaws of today's organizations as well.

Marx's critique exposed the limitations, not only of the Lassallean theory underlying the Gotha Program, but of the way principles were compromised to achieve unity. He raised a concept of organization as inseparable from theory, from a vision of the new society, from revolution in permanence—as opposed to the Lassallean conception of organization that became accepted by Marx's followers.

The fact that Marx's concept did not become the basis for post-Marx Marxist organizing—even by the greatest revolutionaries such as Lenin, Luxemburg and Trotsky—impelled Dunayevskaya to work on dialectics of organization and philosophy. It began with digging into the meaning of the *Critique of the Gotha Program* with her "Philosopher of Permanent Revolution and Organization Man," which will be one of the key writings in our new edition of selected writings by Dunayevskaya on Marx.

In contrast to the way post-Marx Marxists had separated their concept of organization from Marx's concept of revolution, this writing grasps his *Critique of the Gotha Program* as a return to the dialectic of negativity, worked out as revolution in permanence; what is crucial is the perspective of a totally classless society, which "concretely...arose from the critique of the supposedly socialist program," and "what would be required to make that real." The *Critique* does not provide a formula, but rather holds up a vision of second negativity: what is achieved by revolution necessarily begins as an incomplete transcendence of capitalism and existing society's many alienations. It must continue the transformations until the antithesis between mental and manual labor breaks down, and labor becomes no longer a mere means of life but its prime necessity. No post-Marx Marxist had grasped

19. See *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, pp. 9-10, 23-40, 42-43.

this as showing the principles on which revolutionary organization needs to be based.

This year's moment of revolution and counter-revolution initiated by the Arab Spring raises a crucial aspect of Dunayevskaya's work on dialectics of organization and philosophy: what happens to the new forms of self-organization that spring from spontaneous mass actions. These forms "are correct, as against the elitism and ossification of the Party," yet they are not the *absolute* opposite of the Party-to-Lead.<sup>20</sup> One way this is seen is when these forms get "taken over" by political organizations such as vanguard parties. Dunayevskaya's examination found that there is more to it.

The history of revolutions shows that masses are not satisfied with spontaneous action but "look to be taken over" in the sense of searching for an organization to bring together theory and practice against the tendency to stop dead with the conquest of state power. But the kinds of organization of thought that are ready to offer themselves to take over the movement fall short of a unity of theory and practice measuring up to the altogether new beginnings sought from below.

The concept of revolution in permanence, and what happens after the conquest of power—which has not yet come to pass in any of this year's revolutions—actually impinges on questions of organization and struggle now. The vision of liberation and what is needed to make it real are a concrete challenge to tendencies in thought and organization who would have the movement stop halfway and are ready to take over the forms of organization that issued from spontaneity.

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER?

The revolutions and counter-revolutions of 2011 bring new urgency to the questions that begin another of the writings that will be in the new collection of Dunayevskaya on Marx, "A Post-World War II View of Marx's Humanism, 1843-83; Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s and 1980s":

"The two-fold problematic of our age is: 1) What happens *after* the conquest of power? 2) Are there ways for new beginnings when there is so much reaction, so many aborted revolutions, such turning of the clock backward in the most technologically advanced lands?"<sup>21</sup>

What is developed in this essay, and in the context of the whole collection, is the dialectic of human development, on what kind of labor human beings should do, on the Man/Woman relationship as well as "the relationship of party to spontaneity, of mass to leadership, of philosophy to reality," on Marx's multilinear approach, which allowed no blueprints for the future, as against the unilinearism of post-Marx Marxism. Thus, new illumination is cast, not only on the Humanism of Marx, but on the world today.

Therefore, at the forefront of our tasks for 2011-2012 is publishing this collection. Both in itself and as a new vantage point on the whole body of Marxist-Humanist writings, it gives us a fresh start toward working out dialectics of organization and philosophy, which is of the essence of the current moment of world development, and yet no one, including us, has worked it out.

## V. Marxist-Humanist Tasks

1. We begin with completing the collection of Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx. In publishing this book for the world, we present it as our intervention in the freedom movements and today's battle of ideas.

2. The revolutions and counter-revolutions in the Arab world bring new urgency to the production of a new edition of a Marxist-Humanist pamphlet on the Middle East, as discussed in Part I.

3. We will continue *News & Letters*, the only Marxist-Humanist journal in the world, as a print publication and on our website. The challenge is to work out a *unity* of theory and practice, in which the voices of workers, women, youth, people of color and LGBTQ people are unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. In those voices we find the new passions and forces for the reconstruction of society, which can enrich our ideas if we practice the breakdown of that most monstrous class division, the division between mental and manual labor. We will endeavor to increase access to the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya on the internet.

4. The most urgent task is membership growth to make possible carrying out our perspectives on the way to revolution and the creation of a new world on truly human foundations. Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy, which involves the integrality of organization of thought with organization of living revolutionaries, remains abstract if it becomes separated from organizational growth.

—The Resident Editorial Board, April 20, 2011

20. See *The Year of Only 8 Months*, p. 11; *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, pp. 14-15.

21. "A Post-World War II View of Marx's Humanism, 1843-83; Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s and 1980s," *Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'* (News and Letters, 1996), p. 93.

# South Africa: 'No Land! No House! No Vote!'



*Editor's note: Zimasa Lerumo is coordinator of Abahlali baseMjondolo-Western Cape Youth Project and involved in the "No Land! No House! No Vote!" campaign. Their campaign for South Africa's 2011 elections declares: "No! to Capitalist Democracy. No! to ANC, DA, ID, COPE, UDM policies that lead to water cutoffs, electricity cutoffs, and forced evictions." They will no longer support the politicians who continue a new form of economic apartheid. Seventeen years since the fall of the old regime, the shackdwellers' movement declares: "We are still struggling for real freedom, a freedom that will recognize the equal humanity of everyone."*

I was born Sept. 27, 1990, in Cape Town and I grew up in Eastern Cape in a small rural area called Ediphala. Life was easy but things changed when my parents got divorced and my mother went to Johannesburg so that me and my brother could have a better life.

She left me with her younger sisters who treated me well but life was not easy. When I was in fourth grade, mother called me to Johannesburg. We lived in suburbs, in a flat, and went to a white school. When I started high school mom lost her job and life started to be difficult, but I finished eighth grade.

My aunt told my mother that I must come to Cape Town and live with her. Life in Cape Town was horribly difficult because I was not used to the situation. Five of us lived in a small shack, in a very small area called QQ Section in an environment where you can not even go to the toilet, you have to use a plastic container. We threw our dirt in a place called a dirty place (inyhunyu) across the street and got sick because the environment isn't clean—especially for kids, who play next to it.

I met new friends. They were quite good but weren't going to school. We did bad things, e.g., we used to drink while we were writing our exams, go to parties and sometimes not study. Sadly, I got the drinking results: I failed my matric, but luckily got a chance to write the two subjects that I failed.

While I was waiting to rewrite my supplementary exam, I used to sit the whole day, unemployed but for the Abahlali baseMjondolo (ABM) organization. ABM works to make a better life for people who live in shacks. We are trying to push government to do the work that people expect them to do: building houses with electricity, clean water and toilets, in a safe environment. That's a good thing for me because I'm also trying to make a change in people's lives and my own life, too.

The only thing the government tells us to do is vote. I told myself that I'm not gonna 'cause I don't see the reason of voting because it doesn't make a difference in my life. It's making it worse. The only thing they do is lie, and at the end of the day nothing is happening. They give us hopes that will never be true.

I will never vote while I still live in such a state, while the people of South Africa are still living in hell. It's not like the government doesn't have money. They're wasting money on unnecessary things like building new stadiums or Gautrain [the high speed train that serves the wealthy].

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## Immigrant rights are workers' rights

**Los Angeles**—At a March 5 gathering sponsored by the Southern California Immigration Coalition (SCIC), over 60 people gathered to address immigrant workers' concerns, such as stopping the attacks on and the abuse of vendors, the need for "Legalization now," abolishing H.R. 1070, and ending police harassment and brutality.

An LAPD officer shot and killed Carlos Jiménez, a young unarmed Guatemalan, last September, which resulted in days of mass protests. A Latina asked for support because her son Johnathan Cuevas was killed by L.A. County sheriff's deputies Oct. 10. A Latino said, "Keep the police out of the community, they never solve our problems. Gang members give police the excuse to abuse the community."

A Guatemalan spoke of 36 years of U.S. intervention including creation of death squads starting in 1954. He said 46 million people live in poverty. "We have a right to a job, to education, to think for ourselves."

Another Guatemalan said the long history of extreme poverty is why 10% of Guatemalans live in the U.S. and the right to migrate for economic reasons is a human right under the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

A few weeks later on March 26, 10,000 workers and their unions marched and rallied to stop layoffs, furloughs, and cuts in salary and benefits. On that same day, the SCIC hosted a national organizing gathering for immigrant rights with the theme "Immigrant Rights Are Workers' Rights."

Criminalizing undocumented immigrants is a fundamental problem. A day labor organizer said that the "Secure Communities Program" (SC) is racial profiling. Under SC, police act as immigration agents, supposedly targeting criminals. In Riverside County, 45% of immigrants detained had committed no crime. A Latina said there's a lack of legal defense for those in detention and 80% of the deported are Mexicans.

SC is an attack on the immigrant communities just as Los Angeles's "Safe Cities Initiative" is an attack on the homeless on Skid Row. In both cases, it is criminal-

### 'Man in a cage'

**Amarillo, Texas**—The people in charge of this prison unit's law library (which is in charge of providing indigent inmates with supplies and postage) flex their supposed power on the poor prisoners. They are known to openly and willfully interfere with inmates' legal work and appeals, while being free to abuse the poor who are incarcerated at this unit.

My mind is on the Devil's Work, the written law of this land called Texas. And since I am self represented, poor, not schooled in the law, or have the right last name and am an inmate of the prison system, I just don't stand a chance in the face of the level of corruption in this state, or the amount of open bias of the federal court system. But I refuse to just lay down and take it.

For example, I was raped on May 8, 2007 at the TD-CJ-CID Neal Unit in Amarillo, Texas, by state employees. They digitally recorded the whole thing. I filed a § 1983 civil rights complaint and told the federal court (and later the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals) that a video existed of the whole episode and that it clearly shows criminal acts, torture and rape. I begged the Court to not only preserve the video through a court order but also to order the video to be produced and entered into the record so that all of the "he said, she said," BS could be set aside and the Court could make a determination of whether there were constitutional and criminal violations.

The corrupt court refused to grant my motion for production and denied my motion to preserve the records. Since I'm poor, a nobody, an inmate—no one cares and law enforcement refuses to act.

—Man In A Cage

### \$31 'crime' = 10 years

**Lawton, Okla.**—Patricia Marilyn Spottedcrow, a 25-year-old nursing home worker and mother of four children, from Kingfisher, Okla., was arrested for selling \$31 worth of marijuana to a police informant in December of 2009 and sentenced to 10 years in prison.

"It just seemed like easy money," said Spottedcrow, "I thought we could get some extra money. I've lost everything because of it." This is her first offence.

Cases like this are evidence of how capitalists are cracking down on working people across the board. Wages are brutally low in many industries and some workers need to supplement their income any way they can. Sometimes this can involve illegal means such as selling drugs.

Such a harsh sentence by the Oklahoma courts for such a small sale of a largely harmless drug suggests the real intent: crack down on those workers who do not accept the going standard of living and do not acknowledge the legal limits on self-help. A support site has been set up on facebook for this case.

—K.H.

izing poverty created by the capitalist system itself. As a Latina stated, the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Central American Free Trade Agreement have resulted in much migration. One man said, "They call blaming the victims of their plight 'democracy.' Boycott Arizona!!"

Other demands were: stop the ICE raids and the separation of families by detention or deportation; issue regular drivers licenses, not special ones for immigrants; end Bracero (guest workers) programs; recognize the rights of workers (including day workers) to organize; stop the militarization of the border where there are privatized armies; tear down the border wall and prosecute racist vigilante groups. In summary, end criminal charges and prosecution based on a person's immigration status.

One way to stop the worldwide imperialist economic policies is for the workers of the world to unite. A start would be a show of solidarity with immigrants on May Day.

On April 6, 500 Latino immigrant workers and their supporters marched and rallied in high spirits in downtown Los Angeles for full rights for immigrant workers.

Among the participants were Laborers' International Union of North America, Full Rights for Immigrants Coalition, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights-L.A., Full Rights for All Field Workers, Southern California District Council of Laborers, and Left groups including News and Letters Committees.

The demonstration focused on women's rights and opposed "ripping apart" families. There were chants, "Obama! Escucha, mujeres en la lucha!" (Listen, Obama, women are in the struggle!) There were many picket signs with photos of a little girl in tears and the words, "Janet Napolitano, don't take my parents away, stop deportations!!" Other signs read, "Timothy Bishop—don't take my parents away" and "Tom Harkin—don't take my parents away."

A speaker said, "We are in modern slavery. Immigrants suffer the most in an economic crisis. Women are not the problem, they are the solution." A speaker protested that Obama is continuing Bush's policy. A banner quoted M.L. King, Jr.: "Justice delayed is justice denied" and a speaker quoted Malcolm X: "This country isn't a democracy, it's a hypocrisy."

—Basho

## QUEER NOTES

by Elise

Middle school student Noah Hornik of Palo Alto, Cal., is organizing the "It Gets Indie" benefit concert in San Francisco's Great American Music Hall to raise awareness and support prevention of Queer youth suicide. Noah was motivated by suicides of Queer youth, witnessing numerous incidents of harassment, and the passage of Proposition 8.

\* \* \*

As U.S. Congressman Barney Frank announced plans in early April to reintroduce the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA)—this time gender identity inclusive—Transgender woman Meghan Stabler gave powerful testimony in favor of the proposed Texas ENDA introduced by Representative Mike Villareal. Her demotions, and the pay reductions that came with them, forced her to struggle to maintain her home and pay child support. One of her friends was fired after announcing plans to transition to being a woman, and had to leave Texas to get work.

\* \* \*

Prime Minister Igor Luksic will provide police protection to the participants at the May 31 first-ever Pride parade in Montenegro, a conservative country which has shown hostility towards Queer people. Luksic said, "Let the people take a walk and we will show that we are civilized." Civilized enough, Luksic hopes for Montenegro to become part of the European Union.

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## Anti-Eviction Campaign



CAEC media team

**Chicago**—Cook County's Anti-Eviction Campaign activities include rallies, meetings with Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, door-to-door canvassing in Chicago neighborhoods where there are many foreclosures and talking to people who come to foreclosure court.

On March 24 we rallied at Bank of America with a pink pig made of wire and tape that was filled with gold coins (fake ones filled with chocolate). We whacked the pig and "got back our money." Then we marched to the Illinois Attorney General's office and delivered a letter demanding that banks be prosecuted for their illegal foreclosures and that people being foreclosed be given relief. Madigan has promised us a meeting. We have contacted her office for an appointment, but so far no commitment.

We begin by asking the people being foreclosed to help us organize, talking to them about their situation. Sometimes we explain the credit default swap to them and, for the first time, they understand why banks won't renegotiate their mortgages and how much money the banks have to gain by stonewalling and aggressively evicting them from their homes. But a plaintiff's lawyer handed our literature to the sheriff's deputy on duty who made us leave. People who are going through very tough times show up unable to afford legal representation, while the courthouse is crawling with well-paid plaintiff's lawyers. We are not lawyers. Our purpose is to organize people so they can help each other resist being thrown out of their homes. Standing together in large number is the key.

Now we are appealing to the Chief Judge, Timothy Evans, for status as an "approved group" so we can continue to talk to people, organize them, help them cope and give some hope. We have drafted a statement for anyone who wants to vouch for us and request that the Judge approve our group.

Fisher Shapiro, attorneys for Fannie Mae, were recently cited for 1,700 robo-signed mortgages and foreclosures. At the Anti-Eviction Campaign we are sure this is just the tip of the iceberg on illegal doings. However, the Attorney General gave them a pass, by allowing them to admit their "error" and re-file their foreclosures. Thus, the homeowner comes to court, the foreclosure is vacated and Fisher Shapiro files it legally the next day.

It's not news to most readers of *News & Letters* but it must be said: these goings on are very much against the working class and the unemployed. Closing down a house disrupts even a stable family. Ultimately an entire neighborhood is scattered and destroyed. But we will keep trying to organize the poor and fight our detractors. Results will come, but it will take longer than we want it to.

—January

## CUNY student walkout

**New York**—Over 100 students at Queens College City University of New York (CUNY) walked out of classes on March 31, protesting state budget cuts that would affect not only the cost but the quality of their education. Students are alarmed at the impending teacher layoffs and the curtailment of curriculum. The students marched onto one of New York's busiest highways, the Long Island Expressway, completely stopping traffic.

A participant said: "Cynicism is very widespread. U.S. schools teach that revolution begins moderately but then becomes radical. U.S. cynicism is seen even in TV satires, which deep down express belief in Margaret Thatcher's statement 'there is no alternative' to capitalism. Even in 2008 people went along with capitalism. The myths of the Tea Party harness the anger against capitalism. There are few capitalist ideologues on campuses but many accept the idea, 'It sucks, but it's all we've got.' Consciousness is a big problem.

"I have been working with student organizations since 2008, with disappointing results. The Tea Party has taken the advantage. But today's demonstration reminds me that only after the worst of the Great Depression was over was there the most fight and the greatest gains for labor."

—Brian

## WORLD IN VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

The arrest of former President Laurent Gbagbo by NATO and Ivorian opposition forces will not solve the problems that plague Ivory Coast. Gbagbo's rise and fall does represent, in microcosm, the long tragedy of Africa's unfinished revolutions.

Gbagbo's fall began in earnest when he falsely claimed victory in last year's long-delayed presidential election (supposed to have been held in 2005). Despite losing the popular vote, Gbagbo had himself sworn in as president once again on Dec. 10. Since then, thousands have died and up to a million people have become refugees from violence as Gbagbo's forces fought militias loyal to his challenger, Alassane Ouattara.

There has been vicious fighting with atrocities committed by Gbagbo's forces, but also by Ouattara's militias—the worst single massacre killed up to 900 residents of Duékoué, inhabited by Gbagbo's ethnic group, the Bété. Despite new President Ouattara's promises of reconciliation, the longstanding divisions between South and North, Catholic and Muslim, have again been exacerbated.

### GBAGBO FAILS HIS 'IDEALS'

Gbagbo's rise was of another order. He was a union activist with socialist sympathies opposed to the regime of President Felix Houphouët-Boigny, who was close to the former colonial power, France. With his wife Simone, also a union leader and "Marxist," he founded the Ivorian Popular Front, with ties to the French Socialist Party. At that time, Alassane Ouattara was a part of Houphouët-Boigny's right-wing government.

After Houphouët-Boigny's death in 1993, Gbagbo rose to electoral prominence and won a disputed presidential election in 2000. A pro-Gbagbo revolt in the military allowed him to take office that October. In addition to his avowed "socialist" agenda, he adopted the utterly reactionary idea of *Ivoirité* that his predecessor had initiated: Muslims, members of certain tribes, and immigrants weren't "true Ivorians," thus watering with blood the roots of the current crisis. (An important aspect of the Muslim Ouattara's electoral victory is its challenge to "Ivoirité.")

His rule, however, did nothing to change the conditions of exploitation that Ivory Coast's workers and farmers faced. Ivory Coast is a major world producer of cocoa, and its farmers are wildly exploited by huge agribusiness like Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, and Barry Callebaut. In an important article in *The Nation*, James North describes the economic background to Ivory Coast's tortured politics: Ivory Coast "has done just about everything mainstream Western economists suggested—and it remains trapped in poverty. The country concentrated on growing and exporting products it was 'good' at, cocoa and also coffee, instead of trying to industrialize. But the chronically low world prices for these products kept the country poor" ("The Roots of the Cote d'Ivoire Crisis," April 25, 2011).

While Gbagbo had some issues with France, he did nothing to change Ivory Coast's exploitative relations with world capitalism. He did, however, cultivate friendly relations with the fundamentalist Christian Right in the U.S., leaving Pat Robertson as one of his few prominent cheerleaders as state power slipped away. That Gbagbo's last foreign supporters were a bizarre mixture of the Right and Left (Workers World Party, for example) shows the basic incoherence of much of the Left's attitude to Africa and its revolu-

## China clamps down

State security forces in China have widened their crackdown on public dissent begun Feb. 17 after online calls for a "jasmine revolution" in China on the model of Tunisia and Egypt. Because calls for anti-government demonstrations each Sunday had originated outside China, in the U.S., the authorities used that as a pretext for ferreting out dissenters and electronically attacking access to websites.

More than 50 activists and artists are known to have been arrested or disappeared since February. Police have detained over 100 lawyers, those who have represented peasants, workers and activists in the past, to chill their ability to defend dissenters.

The most prominent opponent of the regime arrested so far, artist Ai Weiwei, is known not only for his design work on Beijing's 2008 Olympic Stadium, but also as the son of poet Ai Qing, who spent decades jailed or exiled under Mao Zedong.

The forces of freedom in the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions haunt the Chinese regime as well. It has long demonized ethnic Uyghurs in Xinjiang as "Muslim extremists" and executes opponents for "terrorist" acts. Repression continues over the young workers—including the unemployed—whose production has enriched the ruling class worldwide. Revolutions do not break out just because somebody sets a date for it, but the stifling of dissent indicates that the Party fears the timetable of the Chinese masses.

—Bob McGuire

## Gbagbo's last stand

tionary history. A good example of what Frantz Fanon called the laziness of intellectuals.

### AFRICA NEEDS SOCIAL REVOLUTION

It is true that Gbagbo has traits in common with other African rulers who have abandoned their earlier ideals, like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe. But Ivory Coast's deep-rooted economic and social problems are also shared by countries like Nigeria, where the recent election of President Goodluck Jonathon saw fighting between North and South, Christian and Muslim, with tens of thousands rendered homeless.

The lesson of all the unfinished African revolutions is clear enough: African democracy will be revolutionary democracy, or it will not be. The Gbagbos or Mugabes who attempt to create halfway houses will only produce greater misery and chaos. Intervening in Ivory Coast's chaos, NATO and France are only trying to empower new creators of halfway houses, in a vicious circle. What is needed is social revolution.

In this regard, it was truly strange to meet with Gbagbo's stepdaughter Marie Antoinette passing out free books and CDs of her parents' speeches at the Left Forum in New York in March, attempting to claim "anti-imperialist" credentials. In reality, she had only become the "poor stepchild" of reactionary state power, which knows no mercy either coming or going.

## Chicago in solidarity!



"Syria! Syria! Raise your voice! It's our time! It's our choice!" Hundreds marched in Chicago's Loop on April 16 in support of the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and across the Middle East. Participants included members of many different communities in Chicago, including Palestinians, Egyptians, Yemenis and Libyans, as well as members of News and Letters Committees, CODEPINK, and the International Socialist Organization, among others. One young woman from Yemen said, "It's wonderful to see people from the U.S. here supporting us." Similar demonstrations have taken place in a number of cities across the U.S., an expression of young people's desire to support and participate in these historic revolutions.

## Mexico protests inhuman drug wars

On April 6, from Mexico City's main square, the Zócalo, to dozens of other cities throughout the country, thousands marched against the violence of Mexico's drug wars. In Mexico City alone, 15,000 marched chanting, "Not one more!" and "No more blood!"

The demonstrations were sparked by an open letter by journalist and poet Javier Sicilia. He targeted the Mexican government and the drug cartels, writing of "the rotting of the heart that has been wrought by the poorly labeled political class and the criminal class, which has broken its own codes of honor." Sicilia's young son, Juan Francisco, was recently murdered along with a number of his friends in Cuernavaca.

To the Mexican government: **"We have had it up to here because you only have imagination for violence, for weapons, for insults and, with that, a profound scorn for education, culture, and opportunities for honorable work, which is what good nations do. We have had it up to here because your short imagination is permitting that our kids, our children, are not only assassinated, but, later, criminalized, made falsely guilty to satisfy that imagination."**

To the cartels: **"You have become cowards like**

## Counter-revolution targets Palestine

Something is becoming more apparent in the Middle East. Whenever counter-revolution raises its head, it begins looking in the direction of Palestine.

The governments of both Jordan and Syria have made efforts to blame the Palestinians for the freedom demonstrations that have broken out. Jordan's King Abdullah has tried to deflect the demands on his regime by blaming both Israel and the Palestinians for fomenting trouble. He has gone so far as to appoint as his Minister of Culture, a journalist who threatened Jordan's Palestinian majority with civil war.

In Syria, government spokesmen have claimed that Palestinians were taking part in the mass freedom demonstrations and had burned down government buildings in Daraa and Latakia. These statements shocked the large Palestinian community.

### MURDERS IN WEST BANK AND GAZA

In Palestine itself, shock and outrage followed the West Bank murder of actor/playwright Juliano Mer-Khamis, 52, in Jenin, April 4. He was shot five times near the entrance to his Freedom Theatre. His pregnant wife was also wounded.

Mer-Khamis was the son of a Palestinian father who was a leader of the Israeli Communist Party, and a Jewish peace activist mother who worked with children in the Jenin refugee camp. He considered himself to be, in his own words, "100% Palestinian and 100% Jewish."

Suspicion in Mer-Khamis' killing falls upon religious fundamentalists who objected to the liberating and liberalizing impact his Freedom Theatre had, especially on the youth of Jenin. Mer-Khamis saw his work as promoting creativity as a model for social change, and the Theatre had been attacked a number of times before.

In Gaza, shock also followed the murder of Vittorio Arrigoni, a well-loved Italian activist with the International Solidarity Movement. In this case, the killers were a fundamentalist group aligned with Al Qaeda who demanded the release of one of their own leaders in return for Arrigoni's life. But Arrigoni's body was found the next day in an abandoned building.

### 'TAHRIR SQUARES' SPRING UP

Meanwhile, in contrast, there has been a growing movement—particularly among youth—inspired in part by the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. "Tahrir Squares" have sprung up on the West Bank in various cities, and demonstrations have called for an end to the fighting between the ruling parties of the West Bank and Gaza. In the words of West Bank activist Rami Liddawi, " Hamas and other organizations are not interested in changing the reality of the division." He also said, "The settlements are turning into an obstacle that threatens any future arrangement. Even the youth in Israel, which believes in peace, must join our battle against the settlements, so we can live together. We don't want violence, and are seeking to reach an arrangement through peaceful means, through negotiations. This is our message."

The true voice of Palestinian youth is making itself heard now—pained, carrying unconscionable burdens but not cynical; a vital part of the young revolutions in the Middle East.

In a grim historic irony, Palestinians today find themselves in a similar situation to Europe's Jews in the 1930s. A victory for world reaction—of the kind represented by a war between Israel and Iran, with which both states have been flirting, rhetorically and militarily—could profoundly endanger the Palestinians' very existence.

**the miserable Nazi *sonderkommandos* who kill children, boys, girls, women, men and elders without any human sense. We have had it up to here because your violence has become inhuman—not animal, as animals do not do what you do—but subhuman, demonic, imbecilic."**

As if in proof of that verdict, even as the marches were taking place, mass graves were discovered holding 59 bodies in Tamaulipas.

Many in Mexico agree with the protester who declared, "We need to end this war, because it is a senseless war that the government started." But Mexican and U.S. government spokesmen have adopted the line that increasing violence is really a sign of success in their "war on drugs," and the innocent victims are acceptable "collateral damage."

Javier Sicilia's voice in this open letter is more than a voice of rage. Like Orozco's great mural of an angry Jesus chopping down the cross, it is an echo of the profound humanism of the Mexican revolutionary tradition, the voice of *el pueblo* at its work of humanizing its world. Ultimately, the tradition of Zapata will take precedence over that of *Santa Muerte*.