

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Class enemies in union clothing

by Htun Lin

The spreading Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement has gripped the attention of the country. Some signs in these tent cities say "Occupy Everything!" The police continue to look for leaders while city leaders try to figure out a way to remove the tent cities.

The California Nurses Association (CNA) declared its support for the occupiers with its own slogan, "Tax Wall Street, Not Workers." In Oakland, CNA set up a health tent for the demonstrators. While the news focuses on the occupations, it is important not to forget other actions of those expressing discontent from below.

In the East Bay there was a one-day strike of healthcare workers, which included Kaiser HMO as well as Summit and Alta-Bates of the Sutter Hospital Chain. In all, 29,000 workers from multiple unions and various locales were involved in one of the largest healthcare strikes ever. (See "Sutter Nurses Strike," p. 3.)

This strike occurred just before the OWS movement took off in Zuccotti Park in Manhattan. We healthcare workers of California took to the streets to protest the attacks against patients and workers alike. At issue was not only healthcare, pension and sick day take-aways demanded by the employers, but standard-of-care issues for patients.

Management wanted to impose a gag order against nurses who advocate for their patients. The Service

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EDITORIAL Failed Iraq occupation

President Obama's announcement on Oct. 20 that all troops in Iraq would be "home for the holidays" came as a surprise only against the steady leaks from the administration, and the Pentagon in particular, of pressure to maintain a uniformed military presence there. By all accounts, the administration had heard demands from generals to continue to garrison 18,000 troops—nearly half the 40,000 that remain in Iraq—and was pressing Iraq's al-Maliki government to keep 3,000 to 5,000 troops in place.

Facing a political consensus among Iraqis—Kurds, Shia and Sunni alike—who viewed the U.S. occupation of their country as unwelcome, Obama did an about-face: "Today, I can report that, as promised, the rest of our troops in Iraq will come home by the end of the year."

PRESSURE AT HOME TO END THE WARS

It might have been Obama's second choice, but by announcing withdrawal from Iraq he grudgingly acknowledged the strength of U.S. public opinion against war, especially the war in Iraq. There was already a national consensus against Bush's invasion of Iraq and now polls show more than 70% approval for withdrawal from both Iraq and Afghanistan.

There is enough consensus that, even as the names of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan continued to be broadcast weekly, war policy was largely off the table in the 2010 Congressional elections and in the run-up to 2012. Republicans criticized Obama immediately after announcing withdrawal, but in a knee-jerk fashion, since he has faithfully continued George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq for three additional years.

To the consternation of the people who voted for

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Occupy Wall Street strikes deep chord, challenges rulers

by Gerry Emmett and Susan Van Gelder

The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, since beginning in New York City's Zuccotti Park—renamed Liberty Plaza—on Sept. 17, has spread to hundreds of cities and towns across the U.S. and linked with the occupation movements in Europe. On Oct. 15, Occupy demonstrations took place in 951 cities in 82 countries.

The occupations are open manifestations of long-simmering discontent over growing economic inequality, no end in sight to Depression-level joblessness, looming environmental collapse, and a political system totally hostile to the cries from below. Wall Street became a symbol of the unity of economics and politics under the domination of a small elite.

Behind the slogan, "We are the 99%," lies the reality of state-capitalist warfare against the working class that has grown more brutal for each new generation of young people. These slogans represent a widespread, visceral rejection of what exists—a world of dehumanization and pain.

The movement strikes a deep chord in a U.S. society that has suffered under capitalism's ongoing crisis for decades. The brutal police assault on Occupy Oakland, Oct. 25, said it all. In a disgusting editorial "justifying" the assault, in which Iraq war veteran Scott Olsen was critically injured by a police projectile, *The Oakland Tribune* pointed out that the movement's demands were expanding to include justice for Oscar Grant (see "Remember Oscar Grant," p. 10) and support for the Pelican Bay hunger strikers (see SHU prisoners articles, p. 9).

This is the ruling class's nightmare. In response, local governments from Oakland to Atlanta have shown themselves hardly different from Tunisian or Egyptian autocrats. When challenged by their own people, they are informed by no democratic tradition, and respect no human rights.

CREATING A NEW COMMUNITY

Bay Area revolutionary Ken Knabb caught something important about this moment of history in writ-



Ideas are debated at New York City's Occupy Wall Street.

ing about Occupy Oakland's response to the police attacks: "...even under these brutal conditions, the mood was not entirely grim....Somewhat like in the early civil rights movement, there is a feeling that the old order is now on the defensive and that its ignorant and brutal reactions are a reflection of its inability to grasp the new community that we and countless others around the world are trying to create, and that we are already feeling in our hearts." ("Yesterday in Oakland," Ken Knabb, Bureau of Public Secrets, Oct. 26.)

The extension of OWS to Occupy the Hood, Occupy Harlem, Occupy Public Education and support of pris-

oner strikes—the Georgia prison strike, alongside Arab Spring, ushered in this year when revolution returned to the world stage—is an electrifying development. What began as a disproportionately white movement, in contrast to the actual population of cities like New York and Chicago, has become increasingly representative, though it still has a ways to go.

As great as the new stage of activism is, the many contradictions which have arisen in the movements in Egypt, Tu-

nisia and Libya show the need for theory and a full philosophy of revolution. The unity of philosophy and revolution can mean all the difference in creating a long-term, viable movement to humanize this planet, a truly epochal new beginning.

AUTUMN IN NEW YORK

The spirit of Egypt's Tahrir Square continues to inspire Occupy Wall Street. In New York, the self-organization of protesters extends to a tent city with a supply of food, daily General Assemblies at which ideas and activities are discussed and voted on in an exercise of direct democracy, and a newspaper, *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*. In the words of one New York participant, Steve:

"I'm impressed with the self-organization. People are taking responsibility. Sixty to 100 stay all night. What is crucial is the self-activity, the absence of a hierarchy. It will have to become 'sustainable' but in a way different from the party-to-lead. There is a diversity of views on the problems and the solutions. They are now

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Tar sands pipeline vs. human future

The battle over the Keystone XL pipeline reveals two opposite futures. The push to complete the pipeline, which is to carry tar sands oil 1,980 miles from Alberta to the Gulf of Mexico, represents capital's drive to keep expanding production for production's sake, no matter how disastrous it may be to life on earth. The tar sands contain an estimated 1.7 trillion barrels of bitumen, comparable to the total world reserves of conventional oil. Mining the tar sands amounts to stomping on the gas pedal of climate change. The pipeline would also risk spills over the Ogallala Aquifer, source of drinking water for 2 million people and the main source of irrigation water in the High Plains.

A second world, however, is fighting for a future conducive to truly human development, for the well-being of present and future humanity to be the basis for decisions on energy, environment, production, transportation and consumption.

From Aug. 20 to Sept. 3, Keystone opponents held sit-ins at the White House with 1,252 arrests, one of the biggest civil disobedience events in decades. Participants included Indigenous groups from the U.S. and Canada, climate scientists, environmentalists, residents of areas on the pipeline route. Some were former Obama campaign staffers, hoping in vain to shame the President into meeting his 2008 promise to "end the tyranny of oil." The White House sit-in was one of many actions

this year against capital's drive to extract every last drop of fossil fuel from the ground. More actions are to come. Canada saw one of its biggest civil disobedience acts in September, with over 200 arrested at Ottawa sit-ins protesting the exploitation of Alberta's tar sands.

That same month, a blockade by women of the Blood Nation in Alberta led to the arrest of three as they tried to stop fracking (hydraulic fracturing) on their people's land. "The actual people who live on this land were both ignored and lied to," said one of the women, Elle-Maija Tailfeathers. "We are about to kill the one thing that has given us life since the very beginning."

Bowing to the tyranny of oil, both the Obama and the Bush-Cheney administrations let the energy industry make the decisions. The pipeline's owner, TransCanada, picked one of its client companies, Cardno Entrix, to write the U.S. State Department's environmental impact statements, to run its public hearings and to collect public comments. TransCanada hired a former campaign staffer for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, to lobby her State Department. A former lobbyist for TransCanada was hired as a top adviser of the Obama 2012 campaign.

The environmental impact statements claimed that the pipeline would have "limited adverse environmental

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To Yemenis 'rape is worse than death'

Editor's note: "Woman as Reason" is being turned over to Shatha Al-Harazi who has written for News & Letters before (see "Women in Yemen show revolutionary way" May-June 2011). She offered us her important column, excerpted here, which was first published in Yemen Times.

by Shatha Al-Harazi

"I would rather she died than be raped," said Um Ahmed Alam angrily. A woman in her fifties, she fears the chaos the country will suffer if civil war breaks out in Yemen.

Her fear of sexual harassment is bigger than her fear of losing any of her four daughters. "Death is death, we all will die eventually, but the shame of rape is what we cannot handle," she said sadly.

Unfortunately, this is a common worry among Yemenis. Fear that sexual harassment and rape could become a big problem if the state loses control and war breaks out is a growing concern for Yemeni men and women alike.

Mothers have begun to exchange advice on how to protect their daughters from rape if the country slips into civil war. "I would kill my daughter with my bare hands if this happened," said Alam's husband, even though he acknowledged that the girl would be the victim in this situation.

"At the very least we make sure she [the daughter] is covered from top to toe when she sleeps, since the shelling usually starts at night," said Alam.

Nuha Saleem, 23, is a resident of Hail area. She told the *Yemen Times* that her mother wakes up at night when she hears explosions and makes her cover her body to protect her from rape.

BE PREPARED AND COVER UP

Zainab Al-Ahdel, 23, lives in the Al-Hassaba neighborhood, where the warfare between the Hashid tribal confederation and the regime forces has been fierce. She described her own—and her mother's—fears and thoughts when the area was shelled.

Al-Ahdel said that she was in her pajamas, a pair of trousers and T-shirt, when the sound of explosions became closer and more frightening. "I felt the house shaking," she said. Then her mother began shouting at her to wear her abayya (a traditional black dress that Yemeni women wear while out to cover their bodies).

"We were scared, we could become victims of the random shelling and then become one of the daily deaths," said Al-Ahdel. "When our fear reached its maximum, my mother began shouting at us to dress in our abayya—that was not at all logical for us."

In Sana'a, the capital of Yemen—where all women wear an abayya and scarf to cover their face and body—families fear their community's reaction if the shelling forced their daughters to escape without being able to cover themselves appropriately.

"I believe my mother wants us to make it a priority to cover our bodies the whole time in case we need to escape. But by saying so she makes me feel as though I have no value in life other than those society gave us," said Reem Ali, a 25-year-old from Hail Street.

She lives in an area where the regime forces have been fighting the defected First Armored Division. Hail Street it is also at the entrance to Change Square, where the anti-government protests and continued fighting have been taking place.

SOCIETY NOT READY TO FORGIVE

Some girls even do not go to the bathroom during shelling. In a heroic way Samah Ahmed bragged to friends how she managed not to use the bathroom for

five hours while they shelled in Kentucky Roundabout.

"Whenever I panic I need to pee; it is how I am and I cannot help it," she said. "But during the shelling in our area, even though I was scared I might die, I was more afraid of going to the bathroom in case a blast hit and people saw my body."

"Society is not ready to forgive females for being victims. Families will consider getting rid of their daughters, killing them or hiding them from society if they are victims of sexual harassment" said Al-Ahdel.

In the violence in Sana'a in September, two women were shot in the legs by snipers while walking in Hail Street. Although hundreds of men have also been shot, Yemeni society was particularly

offended by these shootings.

"These thugs reached the lowest place you can reach," a female assistant in the field hospital told the *Yemen Times*. "They sniped women—they did not kill them but shot them in the legs so their bodies would be seen by the men rescuing them or the doctors treating them."

The assistant, a woman over 50, cared more about keeping victims' bodies covered than the risk to their lives. Unfortunately she symbolizes the mentality of our society.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

Over 300 people packed the Capitol Rotunda in Harrisburg, Penn., on Sept. 28 calling for the defeat of two bills, one requiring abortion clinics to become outpatient surgery clinics and one banning state-run health insurance providers from covering abortion. Feminist Majority President Eleanor Smeal told the crowd, "This (legislation) is not about protecting women's health. It is about controlling women's lives." The bills would drive the cost of an abortion from \$400 to over \$1,000 and would close most abortion clinics, many that provide birth control and screening for cancer and STIs, putting this out of reach for even more uninsured and poor women.

* * *

The Amazing Meeting, an annual conference for skeptics held by the James Randi Educational Foundation based in Virginia, printed a strong policy against sexual harassment in its 2011 program and announced that over half of its talks will be by women. This is a response to "Elevatorgate," in which prominent skeptic, Rebecca Watson, was sexually harassed in an elevator after giving a speech denouncing the sexual harassment and unwelcoming atmosphere towards women in much of the skeptical movement. Watson continues to be persistently harassed on the internet, but she, and many female commentators, stated that they now consider themselves feminists and will work for change in the skeptic movement.

* * *

In a victory for feminist groups in Afghanistan, President Hamid Karzai's Cabinet approved new draft regulations allowing battered women's shelters to remain independent and not come under government control. The shelters can receive money from donors without government intervention. In February, the government proposed to take over the shelters which are run by nonprofit women's organizations. The regulations would have forced a woman seeking shelter to appear before a government panel that would decide whether to admit her, imprison her, or send her back to her abusive family.

Palestinian women discuss statehood

Ramallah, Palestine—The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWS) organized a political discussion on the UN approach to Palestinian statehood. Mrs. Amal Khreishe, the general director, facilitated the meeting, which hosted Mr. Bassan Essalhi, the secretary of the Palestinian Popular Party, and Mr. Hanna Eissa, an expert in international law.

Khreishe explained that such a political meeting is an important means of spreading awareness among Palestinians on the UN bid. She asked: What is the September battle, and what are our demands? What comes after addressing the Security Council? Why do we address the international community? What do women want from this bid and which kind of state do we seek?

Dr. Francois Dawoud, the president of the PWWS, spoke about Palestinian aspirations and concerns of this approach, pointing out Mahmoud Abbas's speech, which emphasized gender equality as an important pillar on which to build a democratic Palestinian state. She accentuated women's important participation in planning the national strategies, and their significant role in the political life and the decision-making cycle.

—PWWS

Radium girls honored

Ottawa, Ill.—Madeline Piller became interested in the Radium Girls of Ottawa, Illinois, in 2006 when she was 12, for her class project.

She talked to Ottawa leaders and helped raise money for a permanent memorial dedicated on Labor Day, which now sits on the site of the Luminous Processes Factory where the girls had worked.



Madeline's dad, Bill Piller, a Mendota sculptor, designed the statue, a life size figure dressed in the fashion of the day, 1920-1930. The paint brushes in her left hand were used by the women on their jobs and are what poisoned them, and the tulip in her right hand represents rebirth. The figure stands on a clock as the girls painted radium-infused paint on the face and hands of clocks, which is what caused them to become sick. They were known at the time of the trial against the company as "The Society of the Living Dead."

Even though it was known in 1925 that radium was harmful, the workers painted glow-in-the-dark dials on the clocks. To get a good brush stroke, they placed the brushes in their mouths to make a point on the end.

The workers were dying and were lied to by the doctors. Lawyer Leonard Grossman Sr. represented seven of the women in 1934 when the truth came out. Their case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the workers finally won a modest settlement.

The case affected U.S. labor law, workers compensation, and the creation of radiation safety standards. However, with the Depression, these workers were blamed for job losses and the topic became taboo.

Radium was found in the soil and groundwater around the plant. Clean-up, begun by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency in the 1980s, is still underway.

Survivors joined the hundreds who attended the ceremony including Rose Baima, Pauline "Toots" Fuller and June Menne. Family members of those who died attended, as did the son of the lawyer who represented the girls in their lawsuit.

The ceremony was hosted by Laborers' Local 393 of Marseilles. Many of their members volunteered and worked with city workers to help put the memorial site area in shape with landscaping and a fountain. During the ceremony white carnations were handed out and some were placed at the foot of the statue.

—Sue

Wangari Maathai

"By planting trees, my colleagues in this grassroots movement and I planted ideas. The ideas, like the trees, grew."

—Wangari Maathai (1940-2011)

Dr. Wangari Maathai never forgot the power of ideas or individuals in grassroots movements. In her memoir, *Unbowed*, she wrote, "A tree...tells us that in order to aspire we need to be grounded...a reminder to all who have had success that we cannot forget where we came from...our power and strength and our ability to reach our goals depend on the people, those whose work remains unseen, who are the soil out of which we grow, the shoulders on which we stand" (p.293).

Born in rural Kenya, Maathai became the first woman in Central and East Africa to earn a PhD. A few years later she learned that malnutrition had escalated in her home region, one of Kenya's most fertile. Because so much land had been deforested to grow cash crops, coffee and tea, children were fed white bread and white rice. The scarcity of firewood had made the cost of cooking traditional nutritious foods prohibitive. She founded the Green Belt Movement in 1977, a program to pay rural women to plant trees. Despite setbacks, including strong opposition from Kenya's government, over 30 million trees have been planted.

Maathai's own words honor and perpetuate her legacy: "The rural women of Kenya ... have been key to the success of the Green Belt Movement... women have become aware that planting trees or fighting to save forests from being chopped down is part of a larger mission to create a society that respects democracy, decency, adherence to the rule of law, human rights, and the rights of women....I also have a lot of hope in youth. Their minds do not have to be held back by old thinking about the environment... We are called to do the best we can!"

—Susan Van Gelder

UAW and Big 3 still fear rank and file

Detroit—The new auto industry contract just approved by the autoworkers created a huge well of discontent among the rank and file that will surely manifest itself in many ways during the four-year contract. Indications of this were evident during the ratification process, when it became apparent in the early voting at GM, Ford and Chrysler that many local unions, and some large ones, were voting to reject the contract.

In the national contracts, wages for second-tier workers will rise \$4 an hour over four years, but veteran workers will now go 13 years without a wage increase. Their signing bonuses—\$6,000 at Ford, \$5,000 at GM and \$3,500 at Chrysler—will save the companies millions, since many benefits are tied to wages. Fear of defeat of the contract resulted in an immediate mobilization, by the corporations, the media and, most importantly, the United Auto Workers (UAW) bureaucracy.

They launched an all-out propaganda offensive against the rank and file, emphasizing the "great" gains made in the contract. While the workers rejected the appeals from the companies and the media, the UAW bureaucracy sent out representatives to local unions, and also used social networks like Twitter and Facebook, to convince the workers to approve the contract.

In addition to lauding the gains made in the contract, the union warned that failure to approve the contract at GM and Chrysler would lead to arbitration, since the workers could not strike these two companies under the terms of the bankruptcy proceedings. This meant that everything negotiated would be off the table and negotiations would start from scratch.

Another element that weighed heavily on workers was the current dismal economy that has resulted in more than 9% national unemployment and dim prospects of finding a job that everyone knows. Even with this situation, there was great fear that Ford workers would reject the contract. They could strike Ford since it did not have to go into bankruptcy and was not bound

by the arbitration restriction at GM and Chrysler.

At Ford, there was a serious question about contract rejection until the end of the voting—which was at Ford Local 600, the largest Ford local in the country near Detroit with 6,000 members and a long history of opposition to the UAW bureaucracy. This local vote sealed the contract's approval at Ford.

The approval of the national contract does not necessarily mean peace in the industry. There is still the matter of local contracts with management, which have often been the source of wildcat strikes. It is the local contracts that deal with grievances involving everyday working conditions in the shops. These grievances can be more important to rank-and-file workers than wages.

Many wildcat strikes over local contracts have occurred. With the reservoir of resentment among the workers over the national contract, which is huge, this anger may well express itself in local contract strikes.

The majority of skilled workers at Chrysler rejected the contract, but UAW President Bob King declared the contract ratified since a majority of Chrysler workers, both production and skilled, had voted approval. Angry reactions from the workers indicated that King's declaration of approval might be challenged. When auto executives and the media praise the contracts, the workers got the worst of the deal. —Andy Phillips

Sutter nurses strike



Oakland, Calif.—Sutter Healthcare nurses were joined by sympathizing Kaiser nurses for a rally outside Summit Medical Center on Sept. 22. Sutter nurses called the one-day strike because of proposed cuts in patient staffing, sick pay and other benefits. The Summit administration argued that employee illness/injury is not necessarily work-related and therefore does not warrant as much recompense. One speaker noted that it is the first time she had ever heard that argument but was not surprised it was used against a woman-dominated workforce. Some strikers wore T-shirts reading, "Save one life and you're a hero. Save a hundred lives and you're a nurse."

'I am Troy Davis'

The State of Georgia murdered Troy Davis at 11:08 p.m., Sept. 21. His execution was carried out in the face of world outrage—large demonstrations throughout the U.S. and Europe, which called attention to the wealth of evidence casting doubt upon Davis' guilt in the shooting death of a white police officer in 1989.

Seven of the nine trial witnesses against Davis recanted their testimony, five of them saying it was coerced by law enforcement at the time. There was no physical evidence connecting him to the shooting. As his attorney said, "This night the state of Georgia legally lynched a brave, a good and indeed an innocent man."

The invocation of lynching is accurate. Georgia pioneered the disgusting "three strikes" laws of today with its statute from the 1700s which said that any slave convicted a third time of striking a white person would be put to death. Before the Civil War, simply publishing a paper like *News & Letters* in Georgia, advocating the uprising of the oppressed, would also have been a capital offense. In 1972, it was the *Furman v. Georgia* case demonstrating the racist application of the death penalty which led to its brief prohibition in the U.S.

Troy Davis' execution was part of a long history of racist injustice. The modern history of the death penalty is also a measure of the racist wrong turn this country took in the 1970s. Again, Georgia provides the illustration in the case of Warren McClesky, who was executed in 1991.

His lawyer argued that institutionalized racism made a Black defendant more likely to receive a death sentence than a white—which is supported by all statistics. But the Supreme Court held that McClesky would have to prove that only his individual rights were violated, the absurdity of which was pointed out by Justice William Brennan in his dissenting opinion.

It was a defense of institutional racism that has been used to deal with capitalism's intractable problems in this period, the criminalizing of poverty and the warehousing of millions in the criminal injustice system. The aggressive presence of riot police Sept. 21 to intimidate the peaceful demonstration outside the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison where executions are carried out shows that the State means to continue down this totalitarian path. —Abolitionist

Chicago city workers defy new thug mayor

Chicago—Mayor Rahm Emanuel has made no secret of his contempt for City workers and his desire to weaken their unions. His attitude was perfectly captured in early September when he screamed "F—k you, Lewis!" at Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) President Karen Lewis during a meeting in his office.

Since then Emanuel and his public school henchman Jean-Claude Brizard have gone out of their way to undermine the CTU. They tried to coerce individual schools to break with Union rules by agreeing to a 90-minute extension of the school day without Union approval.

They've done this with vague promises of raises and extra funding that will likely never be seen. This shell game has now been blocked by the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board.

Legislation has already been passed to bring in a longer school day in 2013, so these maneuvers are strictly designed to undercut the City's public workers unions. The Mayor is indicating that he will pull similar power grabs on the Chicago Transit Workers Union as his public bullying campaign begins against bus drivers and mechanics in what promises to be a never-ending series of cutbacks.

When Emanuel screamed at Lewis, she still ended the meeting by hugging him because she is a warm, decent human being. But it would have been preferable had she cut the meeting short and walked out, and the entire Chicago labor leadership demanded an apology before any discussions were held with the Mayor.

If he can't hold himself to the level of civility that would be expected from any public school student or teacher, then he needs to be disciplined.

—Teachers supporter

Farmworker solidarity

New York City—Three young members of the Community/Farmworker Alliance (NYC), a local coalition organized in solidarity with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), spoke at Bluestockings Bookstore here on Oct. 14. They discussed the Campaign for Fair Food.

Fair Food activists are urging Trader Joe's to ensure their tomatoes are picked by workers who earn a decent wage and work in humane conditions. Trader Joe's refusal to sign such an agreement disgusted customers nationwide. Many criticize Trader Joe's usage of the "Wal-Mart Model" of low prices and low wages.

Lupe said 90% of tomatoes from September to April are grown in Immokalee, Fla. Workers earn 45-50 cents per 32-lb. bucket; annual wages average \$10,000. There is widespread sexual harassment, no breaks, wage theft, locking workers into trucks. Our ultimate goal is to inspire other workers to organize and get corporations to be more responsible, she said.

Audrey explained their strategy is to target corporations at the top of the food chain; work on college campuses with allies like Dine With Dignity, which seeks compliance from food-service vendors like Aramark, Sodexo and Marriott, and make the invisible visible.

Loren stated one of their approaches was "Brand Busting"—to deconstruct corporate marketing. "We use 'Traitor Joe's' against Trader Joe's, and 'Tell Publix to do the right thing,' because their CEO has said, 'Don't let profit get in the way of doing the right thing.'"

To support these struggles, visit www.ciw-online.org or www.cfa-nyc.org or call: 239-657-8311.

—Marxist-Humanist supporter

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WORKSHOPTALKS

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Employees (SEIU) opposed the strike, even repeating Kaiser's unlawful threat to discipline employees, including termination, if they honored the picket line.

One of CNA's flyers declared: "Kaiser—Stop Acting like Wall Street, Side with Main Street." The National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) and CNA flyers detailed the multi-million dollar bonuses and salaries Kaiser executives lavish on themselves, while they demand cutbacks from workers and patients, all in the name of cost control. We union workers are offered performance bonuses as an incentive for us to get with their program to restrict care.

Last October, in an historic California statewide Kaiser election, both Kaiser management and SEIU threatened to take away our performance bonuses if workers voted out SEIU in favor of NUHW. (See "Unions battle, workers suffer," Sept.-Oct. 2010 *N&L*.) This September, an NLRB judge ruled that SEIU's campaign of disinformation and fear was so pervasive that she threw out the election results.

SEIU CREATES FEAR AND INTIMIDATION

The NLRB judge said, "SEIU's tactics created a climate of misplaced fear and intimidation...Kaiser unlawfully withheld benefits of NUHW members after NUHW won three elections in Southern California. SEIU then turned the employer's illegal actions into threats."

The judge argued that the "robocalls and flyers were menacing reminders that Kaiser not only could but already had unilaterally withheld benefits when other employees had chosen to be represented by NUHW." A *San Jose Mercury* opinion column rightly called this "election fraud and union corruption," which "puts at risk the integrity of the labor movement, and confidence in union governance."

Union workers at Kaiser lost confidence in their unions long ago. We workers realized that Kaiser management preferred SEIU so much during the election that it was willing to do anything, even break the law, in order to get their partner re-elected.

LET'S RE-OCCUPY OUR OWN LABOR

We workers have known what the NUHW officials are only now coming around to articulate and what media pundits have yet to realize: that Kaiser and SEIU are in partnership with each other, not with us. They promote the corporate interests of the two partners: Kaiser's revenue flow, and SEIU's union dues flow. The corrupt behavior of Kaiser and SEIU during the election was not an aberration, but only revealed who they really are.

Beyond occupying Wall Street, what is at stake is our own relationships with each other and our own labor. It is high time we "re-occupy" our own labor, not just with our bodies, but with our minds. Everything else then will follow: from the labor movement to union democracy to healthcare to economic justice. Only when we re-occupy our own concrete laboring activity can we "Occupy Everything!"

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: As the world experiences a new stage of revolt—from the Arab Spring to Wall Street—and seeks ways to make it a revolutionary new beginning, we present excerpts of Raya Dunayevskaya's Perspectives Report to the 1977 national gathering of News and Letters Committees. Originally titled, "IT'S LATER, ALWAYS LATER—except when spontaneity upsurges and you realize it is here and now, and you aren't there and ready," the full report can be found in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection #5726-5748.

Introduction: Facing reality on the question of the difference between totally new beginnings, and a new stage

Today, our task is overwhelming. We need to work out what to do to uproot this imperialist-capitalist, exploitative, racist, sexist, degenerate system with its dehumanized thinking that declares the latest, most monstrous ever mass killer—the neutron bomb—"humane" since it leaves property intact and kills only people!

More than a mere refusal to think the unthinkable—nuclear war—is needed for this staggering mass job when you have as few as are in this room. And yet the very totality of the task demands each be a whole—mind as well as body, heart as well as grit; in a word, Reason as well as force, that is to say, philosophy and revolution. At the same time, we need to know where we came from—not genealogy, but history; and where we are going to—perspectives of totally new human relations.

In turning to this most concrete year and the one ahead, we need, therefore, to hold before us, *at one and the same time*, the past 25 years in a time when the new epoch of revolts first started in East Germany on June 17, 1953, and then go forward 25 years from today, *not* because we believe in prophecy which Hegel had, some 200 years ago, designated as the "arbitrary caprice of prophetic utterance," but because the year 2000 is what Mao's China (as well as post-Mao China) had, ever since 1975, designated as the year China will be "fully modernized," i.e., become a goliath industrial nation.

NOW, WHETHER YOU TURN the clock back a whole quarter of a century to East Germany, when the first revolt from under totalitarian Communism erupted, or go back only a decade to Paris, May 1968, when the Western proletariat which had been "written off" appeared a million-strong with the students and created that high-point of the 1960s revolts; whether you consider Soweto, South Africa, now, or go back to the Johannesburg demonstration in 1960, when I entitled my description of that great event as "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in South Africa" because "In a society where revolt walks always in the shadow of massacre...change and revolution have become finally inseparable" (*Africa South*)¹—the whole point is that not all great events which mark new stages of revolt are also *epochal* new beginnings, initiating an historic *new* in thought as well as in fact, and cannot be driven out of history even when defeated.

Thus, whereas East Germany not only achieved the first revolt from under totalitarian Communism, but also raised the question of the Humanism of Marxism for our age, Paris, May 1968 (which certainly was a dramatic high-point as a near-revolution), did not initiate a new epoch in thought. Rather, it ended the epoch of the 1960s, which held that activity, and more activity, and still more activity, will bring about the new society without any need for "old theory."

The 1956 Hungarian Revolution of those East European Revolts took place as *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* went to press. I immediately included those revolts as well as the Vorkuta uprising in Russia itself and the Montgomery Bus Boycott as the three new pages of freedom. (For that matter, we had turned our eyes to East Europe, specifically Poland, [in the great ghetto uprising of 1943 and] when Stalin's army stood outside the gates of Warsaw and let [the 1944] uprising be slaughtered by the Nazis. It is then that we began talking about the beginning of the end of Russian totalitarian Communism, and the rise of a new generation of revolutionaries to overthrow it.)

THE 1960S SIGNALLED THE BIRTH of a new generation of revolutionaries on every subject, from anti-Vietnam War to Women's Liberation, with the Black Dimension making it global both in Africa and in the U.S. Nevertheless, once the near-revolution in Paris 1968 aborted, it became necessary to draw a balance sheet between what were truly new, epochal beginnings, and what were only new stages of revolt.

The very fact that we had to declare that "1969 is not 1968" meant that not only had near-revolutions

Spontaneity and new beginnings

sans philosophy proven their incompleteness, but that responsibility for unfurling the new banner was ours. The wait for co-authorship of the fusion of philosophy and revolution in all the places—from West Europe to Hong Kong, and from Africa to Japan—was over.

WE HAD TO TAKE revolutionary responsibility for picking up the link with Lenin's philosophic reorganization and height of both activity and theoretic production in 1915-24 that we pointed to in *Marxism and Freedom*. We had to get down to this place, this time, this world, this era, singling out the new not only from the movement from practice (as we had done ever since 1953) but also the development from theory to the philosophy of revolution.

The date of publication of *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, 1973 (which coincided with a new global economic crisis), has led to the internationalization of its publication this year in Spanish, in Italian, in German, in Portuguese, and in Japanese. By no accident at all this internationalization also led to the update with the chapter on post-Mao China which marks also new relations with the "ultra-Left" in China itself, that is to say with the very group—about the only one—we thought could be the co-author, which made us include its manifesto *Whither China?* in *Philosophy and Revolution*. Since, however, as American revolutionaries, we are most intensely concerned with the American revolution, and since this is the mammoth global imperialism (so that its crises suck in the whole world), we will begin with the objective situation here.

A. U.S. imperialism-capitalism in the throes of many crises: economic, political, labor, racial, sexist

So total is the crisis that even the labor bureaucracy, even petty-bourgeois consumer groups, even the Americans for Democratic Action, not to mention churches grouped under the name of National Full Employment Action Council, have felt compelled to plan for a whole week of meetings, rallies, demonstrations, in 300 communities, from Detroit to Newark, from Boston to Milwaukee, from Atlanta to San Diego, and, oh yes, including the State of Ohio that never gives up trying to erase its pro-Vietnam War stand and anti-American youth murderous activities from May 1970 to this very day, trying to bury the whole *historic* revolution under the counter-revolutionary euphemism—a gym!²

The fact that the Employment Action Council still thinks that they could prevail upon the government to recognize, as Irving Bluestone³ expressed it, that since "persistently high unemployment plagues our country, a Government policy of full employment is essential for our national well-being," is their illusion, not ours.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS THAT because the masses aren't taking high unemployment lying down, the leaders *must* at least *look* [as if they are] initiating a movement in opposition to the Carter administration.

From the beginning of the year when we asked "Is A New World Recession Coming?" (Jan.-Feb. 1977 *N&L*) and argued against Ernest Mandel's analysis⁴ that "there can be no doubt that the generalized recession came to an end in 1975" (*Intercontinental Press* 11-24-76), we stressed the fact that not only is this the fifth and worst of the post-War recessions, but, far from its end being generalized, what *is* "generalized" is its non-ending stagnation.

We held that no bourgeois phraseology, like "premature cyclical downturn," could possibly hide the fact of the fully new stage of capitalist disintegration. That is so all-pervasive that, even when the production "grows," it just keeps pace with population growth; the investment drought is so deep that capitalists themselves, despite the high "mass" profits, have begun worrying over Marx's analysis of the decline in the *rate* of profit as the true Achilles heel of capitalist production.

ALONG WITH THIS ACHILLES HEEL is the one that will really bring down capitalism—labor, especially the massively unemployed that by now have become a *permanent* feature of capitalism....

In the Draft Perspectives we showed that there has actually been a fundamental structural transformation of the U.S. economy. First, the longest period of stagnation since the late 1950s demonstrates these hard facts: (1) slower growth; (2) lower investments; (3) higher unemployment; and (4) *hard-core* inflation of 6% as against the 1-2% inflation characteristic of most of the 1960s....

Secondly, and inseparable from that pivotal "investment drought" even when there is some growth, is the rise in energy cost which means that, along with the rising cost of automated equipment, too much value is invested, compared to labor productivity, when so little living labor is being used in production.

Government statistics show good cause for those

1. The quotation is from Ronald M. Segal writing in the journal *Africa South*. "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in South Africa" was reprinted in *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*. See also "Soweto—New Stage of Revolt," by John Alan, May 1977 *N&L*. For Dunayevskaya's assessment of the near-revolution in France, May 1968, see *Philosophy and Revolution*, pp. 273-75.
2. On May 4, 1970, four students protesting the Vietnam War were killed at Kent State University by the Ohio National Guard. When the University announced plans to build a gym annex on the site, students and others who viewed it as a cover-up of that history began years-long protests.
3. Bluestone was a vice president of the United Auto Workers.
4. Mandel was a Trotskyist economist. See Dunayevskaya's critique of him in *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis*.

capitalistic headaches: the biggest increase in poverty since 1959 occurred in 1975 and has persisted—no less than a rise of 10% in the number of the poor, totaling now 25.9 million below poverty level. That means no less than 12% of all Americans—and the government "poverty level" is \$5,500 annually for a family of four!

Thirdly, *they*, on the one hand, keep complaining about the workers', especially the young workers', attitude to labor—"the blue collar blues"—and, on the other hand, admit that, with a massive 34.1% youth unemployment, the very survival of the capitalist system is in question....

What caused the double-digit inflation—the Vietnam War—remains with us in the form of the ever-expanding armaments expenditures which continue along with the decline in the rate of profit. *When all is said and done, profits can come only from living labor, not from dead bodies....*

Raya Dunayevskaya
Detroit, Mich., Sept. 3, 1977

Tar sands battle



Top, part of the Occupy State Department action, Oct. 7. Bottom, Tar Sands Students, a group of high school students, rallying Oct. 7.

continued from p. 1

impacts." In reality no study has been done to determine what effects the tar sands oil has on pipelines.

The oil is more acidic and corrosive than standard oil, and contains quartz sand. Pumped at high pressure, it can sandblast pipes from within.

HIGH PRESSURE, HIGH RISK

Leaked emails revealed that TransCanada had withdrawn a request to use higher pressure than allowed by regulations, in order to sneak the waiver request in after the State Department issues a permit.

Moreover, regulation of hazardous-liquid pipelines is practically nonexistent. Accidents are mounting, such as the gas pipeline explosion that killed eight people in San Bruno, Calif., last year, and the spill of one million gallons of tar sands crude into the Kalamazoo River in July 2010. The first phase of the Keystone project has leaked 14 times since it began operating in June 2010.

Similarly, the Canadian government has effectively abandoned oversight of tar sands operations, according to the Royal Society of Canada. Both the federal and provincial governments act primarily as boosters of the tar sands, prompting Canada to abandon its Kyoto commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It takes three times as much energy to extract and refine tar sands oil as conventional oil. Hence the utter irrationality of bringing in massive amounts of natural gas to burn just to extract oil—a perfect symbol of production for production's sake.

SUICIDE FOR PRODUCTION'S SAKE

The irrationality of capitalism is brought into stark relief by the contradiction between the growing toll taken by climate change and official estimates that oil, coal and gas use will continue to increase every year.

Alberta's energy minister is already calling for two more pipelines comparable to Keystone XL. One would cross the Rockies to the Pacific to be sent to Asia, and is being fought by First Nations along the route in British Columbia, who have declared that they will not allow tar sands oil to pass through their land and waters. That is being built by Enbridge, the polluter of the Kalamazoo River. Further south, a new marine terminal is planned in Bellingham, Wash., to export coal to Asia. That too is being fought by both local residents and the national movement to halt climate change.

What is needed is a transformation so deep as to replace capitalism's never-ending appetite for fossil fuels with a totally different social direction determined by human self-development. That is the basis of the two worlds clashing today.

—Franklin Dmitryev

AS OTHERS SEE US The masses as Reason

This review by Abe Cabrera is excerpted from a Sept. 20, 2011, post on his blog, *The Rose in the Cross*: <http://elblogdelpelon.wordpress.com/2011/09/20/the-masses-as-reason/>

Raya Dunayevskaya's book, *Marxism and Freedom: From 1776 Until Today*, is the founding document of a small political movement, Marxist-Humanism. Opposed equally to the tyranny of "ordinary" capitalism and its counterpart in the Soviet Union, China, and other Stalinist states, Marxist-Humanism states that the Hegelian struggle for freedom is primary in the movements of the masses against oppression. Set against the backdrop of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 as well as the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., this book was Dunayevskaya's call for the masses to arm themselves with philosophy and for intellectuals to genuinely engage in contemplation of the struggles unfolding all around them. I believe her thought is very relevant today in addressing the political tasks of progressive people faced with the current economic crisis.

THE AGE OF REVOLUTIONS

The structure of Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom* is chronological, yet covers historical, economic, and philosophical trends with much depth and acumen. It begins in 1776 with the age of revolutions, which for Dunayevskaya culminated in the birth of the Hegelian dialectic as the "algebra" of revolution and history. From there she tackles the thought and development of Karl Marx, and shows how his thought evolved as a response to the various flashpoints of the class struggle that took place in his lifetime: 1848, the American Civil War, the Paris Commune, and so on.

The book shows Marx to be a follower of Hegel, though eager to correct his mystical distortions. A lack of appreciation of the dialectical heart of Marxism plagued the revolutionary movement even during its apex in Germany and the rest of Europe before the First World War. According to Dunayevskaya, it was only Lenin after the collapse of German Social Democracy in the Great War who returned to the dialectic in his study of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. It is to this that Dunayevskaya attributes Lenin's success in leading the 1917 Revolution. This lack of appreciation for the dialectic made Stalinist counterrevolution inevitable.

DIALECTICS IN HEGEL AND DUNAYEVSKAYA

Here we must pause to summarize what the dialectic is for Dunayevskaya. For her, Hegel's turgid tomes contain the revolutions of real people struggling for freedom. The dialectic is the theoretical distillation of the masses in motion. As she says in one of the key passages: "The masses, to Lenin, were not a 'means' to reach an 'end': socialism. Their self-activity *is* socialism." (Author's emphasis.) There can thus be no liberation or betterment of the conditions of humanity without the free actions of human beings. No system, no party, no god, and no ideology can free humanity without human beings in control, and direct control, of it. The Hegelian dialectic, even in its most abstract, is nothing more than humanity's struggle for freedom, a tarrying with the negative to achieve Absolute Knowledge, or rather, liberation, in which the free development of each is the condition of the free development of all.

As Dunayevskaya explains: "That 'individualistic' element is the soul of Marxism. That is why from the start Marx warned, 'We must above all avoid setting up 'the society' as an abstraction opposed to the individual. The individual *is* the social entity.' [Marx] was always watching what he called the 'spontaneous class

organizations of the proletariat.' With these he aligned himself... The point here that needs stressing, in the development of Marx himself, is that with Marx we touch a new intellectual dimension—an intellectual whose whole intellectual, social, political activity and creativity become the expression of precise social forces."

In proclaiming a new "Marxist-Humanism," Dunayevskaya was not being redundant or flippant in the face of other self-proclaimed Marxists, or what she would later denominate, "post-Marx Marxists" starting with Engels himself. In many of these alternative versions from Engels, and Kautsky's Social Democracy, to Stalin and Mao, the actual agent of revolution was something other than the masses: the vanguard Party, the "workers' party," the People's Army, economic development, the "socialist" Motherland, and so on. Much of the book is devoted to how these leaders would openly distort Marxism in order to usurp the power of people to govern themselves. What often resulted was not "socialism" but merely state-capitalism as a higher stage of exploitation, and even outright regression as in the case of Mao's failed economic experiments. Marxism's humanist side is thus not optional; neglect of it leads to the gulags, genocides, show trials, and mass famines that gave socialism a bad name in the 20th century.

Dunayevskaya recounts how workers' struggle against automation in the early 1950s gave birth to her own small movement. Both in the coal mines and on the automotive manufacturing lines, she found that workers were not merely demanding changes in their material conditions of work, but were asking questions concerning the nature of work itself. Similarly, Black people in the South fighting against Jim Crow were not only fighting for bourgeois "civil rights," but posing questions as to what it means to be a human being under capitalism. For Dunayevskaya, these were not only questions of concrete demands, but philosophical questions—philosophy in the fullest sense of the word.

THE NEW SOCIETY A HUMAN ENDEAVOR

As Dunayevskaya puts it: "What they all forget is that a new society is **the** human endeavor, or it is nothing. It cannot be brought in behind the backs of the people, neither by the 'vanguard' nor by the 'scientific individuals.' The working people will build it, or it will not be built. There is a crying need for a new unity of theory and practice which begins with where the working people are—their thoughts, their struggles, their aspirations." (Author's emphasis.)

As we have continued to pass through the baptism by fire that history has given us since the writing of this book, we can ask, "What went wrong?" Why did the masses not continue to rise up against Stalinism to create an authentic socialism? Why did the workers not overthrow capitalism in the West? The issue has never been one of self-proclaimed Marxists convincing the masses of what they should do, since they always do this badly. The issue is the masses realizing that they must be agents who will determine humanity's fate.

I should reiterate that capitalism does not solve problems, but defers them or moves them around. Our current economic crisis is an urgent case in point. When speaking of crises in Social Security, entitlements, job creation, the national debt, and so on, especially from the U.S. right-wing, the issue is no longer cutting this or that government program or spending bill, it is what sort of society we want to live in. Similarly, in Greece, when they are facing austerity demanded by their international creditors, the issue is one of democracy and national sovereignty: will they let their country fall under the dictatorship of international finance capital? When Chinese factories put up nets to prevent workers from committing suicide when they can't endure working conditions, we are no longer dealing with "quality of life" issues on the vulgar materialist level. Perhaps before, with the relative prosperity of imperialist nations, we could hide it, but increasingly this will no longer be the case. What we need is a new humanism; either human society will be more just, or it will not be. As the old shibboleth goes, "Socialism or barbarism".

NEED FOR NEW HUMAN SOCIETY

I think that Dunayevskaya's thought, in spite of its prose filled with lacunae and self-referencing jargon, is a valuable tool. People need to start disassociating Marxism from its totalitarian distortions, and begin to see it as the inheritor of the unadulterated values of the revolutionary Enlightenment: liberty, equality, and fraternity. The masses need to see in Marxism again the culmination of the long struggle of humankind for Freedom as shown in such works as Hegel's *Philosophy of History* and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. This is a long process that has had many starts and stops along the way, but the idea that all are free and must choose their own fate is the only one by which humanity can prosper and survive. It is the only idea that satisfies the insatiable hunger of the human mind for the Absolute; all else will lead to intellectual and spiritual starvation.

In this endeavor, those who consider themselves intellectuals must be humble in the face of the masses who make history. Either they are Reason, or life is irrational. On this, there can be no compromise.

Portrait of Alice Neel



Book jacket art for *The Art of Not Sitting Pretty* shows Alice Neel in 1940.

by Robert Taliaferro

Alice Neel: The Art of Not Sitting Pretty by Phoebe Hoban (St. Martin's Press, New York, 2010).

There are many ways to be involved in a revolution. Written words defining theory and practice, and mass social protests are two ways. Creating art outside of the norm is another.

Unfortunately, for many years revolutionary ideas in art were often dictated by the male-dominated spectrum that defined a palette of beliefs that colored the vision of those who viewed art. Because of this, we hear very little about women artists and the revolutions they sparked through their creations.

Phoebe Hoban's 2010 biography of Alice Neel is an exceptional book about the artist's life, and also an essential reader on the art culture of the U.S. throughout Neel's life which spanned nearly all of the 20th century.

Up until the late 20th century women artists often had their creativity stifled by the male-driven view that "proper women" should not (and perhaps could not) be artists of substance. It is fortunate that U.S.-born artists like Mary Cassatt were pioneers for change. Even so, the social doctrines of the time were centered on the puritanical concept that Victorian women, even accomplished artists, should be painting things they understood—pretty things like flowers and children.

Neel, born in 1900, was subjected to this banality for much of her early life, and when she decided on art as a career, she was harangued by her grandmother because she was "only a girl." Hoban writes that this criticism only served to make Neel more ambitious.

Neel was known as an iconoclast, and a friend gave her the nickname "Malice Neel" because of her propensity towards a Bohemian lifestyle. A social realist, her approach to art was not subtle, and Hoban gives a vibrant view of her raw style, extraordinary talent, and humanity in a way that is as honest as was Neel.

Hoban writes of three core strands of Neel's painter sensibility: her radicalism, her extensive knowledge of vulnerability and breakdown gleaned from her time in a mental hospital early in her career, and the Depression which reinforced her social conscience. Hoban writes, "Her inclusion in the WPA easel program... would forge these separate threads into Neel's signature style." Around this time Neel was introduced to Marxism and, in 1935, she joined the Communist Party.

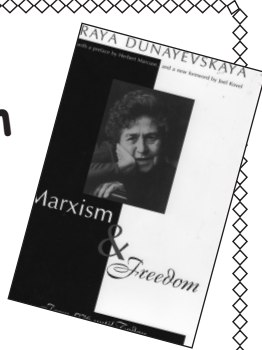
Neel was, Hoban writes, the "de facto artist of the feminist movement" and the first American feminist multicultural artist. She was "[H]ighly conscious of herself as a protagonist in her own drama," and her canvasses were "a membrane through which the artist experienced the world." Hoban makes sure that we arrive back to the reason for the book's existence: Neel, the revolutionary; a human being who, despite her fragility, refused to be considered a victim; a paradigm of the Bohemian, yet a woman with a profound social conscience shared with the world.

The feminist movement embraced Neel in her 60s and 70s for her unconventional paths, even though "Neel's attitude toward feminism was conflicted and complex." Her images of women, mothers and children, and her unprecedented depictions of pregnant nudes were considered pivotal aspects of feminist iconography. Although Neel was fascinated by people's exterior appearance, it was their interior life she sought to reflect. She did this by focusing on individual psychology as it manifested itself in body language and physiognomy."

At 80 Neel created her final self-portrait. It is beautiful and irreverently all about Neel: Neel maintained that honesty and vision in the last portrait of herself at 80. She is nude in a chair, sagging breasts with a paintbrush in one hand and small rag in the other. Despite her nudity, the roles seemed reversed, and one expects her to rise from her chair, step in front of a canvas, and start painting a picture of the viewer. Hoban writes that this painting was "...one of Neel's masterworks, breaking genre barriers, inverting the gaze of subject and artist, and radically subverting the female form."

Hoban's biography is a compelling and poignant portrait of Neel, and 84 years of the 20th century that not only helped to create Neel as an artist, but showed us an in-depth look at the world in which she lived.

Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today by Raya Dunayevskaya



- What happens after revolution?
- What is the philosophic foundation of Marxism in Hegel?
- How is Marxism a Humanism?
- How does the methodology of Marxism speak to the compulsion of our age of total crisis for a total outlook?

To order, see page 7.

QUESTIONS FOR THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT



I noticed, at the Occupy demonstration I attended here, that the crowd was mainly white at the beginning—college students, professors, the Kalamazoo "activist community." But as it progressed, a contingent of Black people joined up. Many motorists honked as they passed, including several semi-trailer trucks, with their big horns, which got the crowd going. The *Kalamazoo Gazette* reported that 400 were there.

**Participant
Battle Creek, Michigan**

I've been visiting your site and reading Raya Dunayevskaya's texts. I like the way she talked about Fidel Castro in 1960. The same applies to Mao in 1966. Both texts have resisted the test of time and remain as bright as ever. I was surprised to find a writer like her. I discovered her in making a search about Marx's *Capital*, Chapter 1, and Hegel.

Well, you have Occupy Wall Street happening now, and I'm sure you are very attentive to them. I consider myself a Marxist, but I think they should try something new. And not Mao deified or mummified, as Raya wrote. Thank you for your site (<http://www.newsandletters.org>), it's very, very good!

**New reader
Brazil**

At the union march and rally in support of Occupy Wall Street here, one of the kids, knowing I was a lawyer, said we need new legislation for a better society. I told him he was asking for socialism, which will not come through legislation. Another voice spoke up: "Socialism is a process rather than a thing. The process which develops free human beings in permanent revolution is socialism." It is certainly much more than simply nationalizing the banks.

**Revolutionary
New York City**

The *Chicago Tribune* recently listed 12 demands that had (supposedly) been made by the Occupiers. All would make for desirable reforms, but all were basically looking at how to continue capitalism. The demands were unattainable today but if you're making demands, unattainable within the system, why not demand an end to the system?

**Occupation supporter
Chicago**

The "99%" expression has caught on, but it is really a slogan, not a theo-

retical analysis. That kind of analysis is needed as is some understanding about where race comes in. There has been a call by Blacks and Latinos to "occupy the hood"—not a rejection of the occupation as too white, but rather a way for people of color to make it their own. What is important is how everything will be developed.

**Participant
Chicago**

I spent Oct. 4 as a legal observer at the Liberty Plaza Wall Street encampment. The self-regulation and organization was impressive. There are committees for public safety, sanitation, food, and medical assistance. All issues are discussed and implemented with a 9/10 vote. The people are trying to develop demands that can be articulated throughout society leading to immediate change. Teach-ins are starting to happen. Solidarity marches happened Oct. 5 and 20 for the Verizon workers and laid-off teachers.

**Steve Katz
New York City**

The Right's effort to brand Occupy Wall Street as "anti-Semitic" is a Big Lie—yes, with all historic resonance intended. Chicago ABC's Chuck Goudie has been a particular offender.

First, he took the right-wing slander campaign at face value; then, he complained of a Palestinian speaker, Hatem Abudayyeh, talking about "destroying Israel" at the Oct. 8 anti-war rally (nothing anyone else heard), which wasn't an Occupy event in any case; lastly he presented a sign, "Bankers = Nazis," as if it referred to Jews. Presuming all Jews are bankers is a vile anti-Semitic canard. Goudie and ABC News should go play in the sandbox with the right-wing creeps who believe that and get the hell out of the news business.

**Fred
Chicago**

Let's not forget that there have been important occupations in Chicago over the last three years, from the Republic Windows and Doors workers' factory occupation to the Latina parents and community taking over La Casita at Whittier Elementary School. One of the challenges the new Occupy movement faces is to forge such deep roots with people of color and labor—rank-and-file workers, not the union bureaucrats—that it blossoms into a new round of workplace and community occupations.

**Occupation participant
Chicago**

We are now starting to see "gurus" respond to Occupy Wall Street. Issue #2 of *The Occupied Wall Street Journal* car-

READERS' VIEWS

ried a speech by Naomi Klein and a short article by Chris Hedges; Noam Chomsky and Cornel West are also being looked to for theoretical guidance. *The New York Times* recently carried two articles on the Left, by Michael Kazin and by Todd Gitlin. Both were New Left participants in the 1960s, and leave out of their histories the power of mass movements such as Civil Rights and Women's Liberation.

It important to engage with the ideas coming into and out of this new movement as part of meeting in theory the movement's challenge. Many may be encountering the ideas or thinkers for the first time, and/or may be seeing them differently than before.

**Marxist-Humanist participant
New York**

Despite following the Oakland Police dispersal orders to Occupy Oakland, I got arrested the morning of Oct. 25 at Oscar Grant Plaza. As the cops were cuffing me, I told them that they may be arresting us and clearing out the plaza but they weren't going to win. I told them that by night, thousands of people would come and take over the Plaza again. On Thursday evening, prior to the General Strike meeting, standing among the masses of people was very powerful. This struggle has only just begun and, truly, the whole world is watching.

**Lisa
Oakland, Calif.**

MUSIC APPRECIATION

I appreciated Paul Geist's article, "Straight, No Chaser" (July-Aug. 2011 *News & Letters*). I saw the documentary but missed most of his points. I remember the scene where Thelonious Monk stands and spins around but I didn't know why. I purchased his CD *The Essential Thelonious Monk*, and gained a deeper appreciation for his creativity. Regarding Theodor Adorno's lack of appreciation for Black music, imagine how dull American music would be without the influences of the African beat and rhythm and the tremendous contribution of Black music—from songs of slavery to Dixieland, and progressive jazz, gospel, rhythm & blues, rock & roll and American popular songs to hip hop.

**Kei
Los Angeles**



BOGUS 'CRISIS CENTERS'



So-called "Crisis Pregnancy Centers" are, in actuality, places set up to talk women out of having abortions,

most often by telling lies, that they really love babies (well, embryos and zygotes), at least until they are born. Then, they could not give a rat's ass about the baby. They'll bend over backwards to ban abortion, and then turn around and back the dismantling of any social safety net. But abortion is "non-negotiable."

**Abe Cabrera
Louisiana**



ONE LAW FOR ALL

The recent murders of Syrian poet/songwriter Ibrahim Qashoush and Iraqi playwright and filmmaker Hadi al-Mahdi, the one year jail sentence and 90 lashes to actress Marzieh Vafamehr, the six-year jail sentence and 20-year filmmaking and travel ban against international award-winning Iranian director Jafar Panahi, all demand serious attention. In the West, while artists are often free to express themselves, many face huge pressure for addressing matters deemed "offensive." Artists Sooreh Hera in the Netherlands and Australians Lee-Anne Raymond and Demetrios Vakras come to mind, raising serious questions about tolerance of dissent, particularly when it comes to criticizing religion.

Open disagreement and the freedom to criticize tradition, culture and religion are essential for social progress. Turning a blind eye to the threats and injustices committed by religion and religious states and laws is unfair to the innumerable people who are threatened and treated unjustly.

**Maryam Namazie
London**



MUMIA

There's some great news about Mumia Abu-Jamal, imprisoned for allegedly killing Officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981. The ruling by a federal court that this death sentence is unconstitutional stands, as the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the Philadelphia D.A.'s request to overturn it. Mumia will either be sentenced to life in prison without possibility of parole or the prosecution will have to conduct a jury trial on the question of the death penalty. This is great news, but I'm sure Abu-Jamal would agree that the struggle continues.

**Kaitlin
Chicago**



DETROIT, THE AAA, AND OWS

Recently, I learned that AAA no longer finds it worthwhile to print a street map of Detroit, though it has detailed ones of every suburb. Yet with over 700,000 people, Detroit is by far more populous than any of the surrounding suburbs. It looks to be race-related.

On Oct. 17 I heard former Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm speak in San Francisco about how she did great things to help the economy. I showed her a copy of the only map available of Detroit, which has only the downtown center. She seemed surprised, and said she would speak to AAA about it.

She said she supports the Occupy Wall Street Movement, but for all her verbal support for OWS, she talked incessantly about the need to compete with China.

**D. Chêneville
Bay Area**

FROM SOUTH AFRICA: OCCUPY GRAHAMSTOWN! RECAPITALIZE THE POOR!

As a movement of the poor we have taken great inspiration from the rebellion that has spread from Tahrir Square in Cairo to Syntagma Square in Athens, the Puerta del Sol in Madrid and now Liberty Plaza in New York.

On Oct. 13 we will occupy Grahamstown. The students will march into town from the Botanical Gardens. We will march from the township and the squatter camps. We will meet on the square at the Cathedral and turn the square into a people's university, a people's kitchen and a space of people's power. Our aim is to bring the rebellion of the poor, that has put thousands and thousands on the streets of South Africa in recent years, into dialogue with this global rebellion.

Tahrir Square showed the world the strength of a united and determined people. It clearly told the bankers that their time of ruling the world is over. It clearly told the politicians that from Cairo to New York people are determined to rule themselves and to build their own power from the ground up.

We will occupy Grahamstown in the name of freedom. We insist that all people have the right to organize themselves according to their own free choices. We denounce the African Na-

tional Congress (ANC) for the murder of Andries Tatane; for the repression of the Abahlali baseMjondolo, the Landless People's Movement, the Anti-Eviction Campaign; and for their attempts to censor the media. We denounce the ANC for continuing to claim that the movements of the poor are a Third Force. The ANC insults us by making us live like pigs and excluding us from all decision-making and then, when we rebel, they insult us again by saying that it must be a white academic that is making us rebel. The ANC is incapable of understanding that poor Black people can, like all other people, think for ourselves.

We will occupy Grahamstown in the name of real democracy. We join the people of the world in showing our anger at the way that the capitalists have bought the politicians and the whole system. We will join the people of the world in insisting that democracy will have to be rebuilt from the ground up. Democracy is something that you do. It is not something that you watch on TV. It is not something that experts like politicians or NGOs must do for the people.

We will occupy Grahamstown in the name of justice. South Africa is the most unequal society in the world. The

predatory elite are publicly gorging themselves while the poor are starving. Last week Transnet advertised 30 jobs—30 boring and badly paid jobs. Ten thousand people came to apply. Forty people were injured when the gates were opened.

We are not anti-state. But our state is rotten to the core. Until we can build enough people's power to be able to discipline the state from below, we will have to treat it as what it is, a vehicle from the predatory elite to feed off society. The capitalists in Europe are saying that the people must pay for the banks to be recapitalized. We say that it is time to stop all public subsidies for the rich. The poor were made poor by the same economic system that made the rich rich. Therefore it is only logical that the billions and billions held in the banks on Wall Street must be used to recapitalize the poor. We are calling for a universal guaranteed income.

We are, day by day, building a national movement of the poor, by the poor and for the poor from the ground up. Every day our struggles and our movements are drawing closer.

Sekwanele! Genog! Enough!

**Unemployed People's Movement
Grahamstown, South Africa**

A NEEDED DIALOGUE: EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

The cutbacks in education are shocking. In Oakland several public schools are closing. Tuition hikes are forcing many out of an education, especially in public-funded colleges; private schools are going bankrupt. It is an assault on human development. That it is wars and Wall Street that are funded by cuts in education shows that the struggle against them is part of what makes us human.



I hope the Essay by Erica Rae in the Sept.-Oct. *N&L* becomes an opening to much needed discussion.

Urszula Wislanka
Bay Area

There is a lot of whittling away at the teachers union by Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Jean Claude Brizard, the new CEO of Chicago Public Schools. They're "promising" little perks (like laptops, an extra 2% one-time bonus) to schools that "vote" in favor of charter schools, waiving the union contract and signing on for another 1.5 hours per day.

I'm with those who are saying things like, "We have no working computers, no current books, no A/C in the summer and no heat in the winter, the ceiling is collapsing, etc. Why do we want to have kids sit in that for an extra hour and a half per day?" We'll see what happens but for right now no strike.

Kindergarten Teacher
Chicagoland

Erica Rae did a good job in her Essay on education showing what is wrong with making the failures of students a teacher's problem to figure out.

Supporter
California

There are two kinds of education. Capitalism's attitude is that education is just to develop labor power. But the cuts we are seeing undermine even that. California is last in the quality of education, at the same time Silicon Valley could become another rust belt.

Education is connected to all of life, and can't be reduced to the creation of capital.

Worker
California

TRUTH AND CAPITALISM

Even though the Sept.-Oct. 2011 *N&L* went to press before Occupy Wall Street, the lead article, "Political spectacles cannot hide reality of deranged capitalism," and the column by Raya Dunayevskaya, "Deep recession, rate of profit and the supreme commodity, labor power," spoke profoundly to it. They addressed why we live in an inequitable society. Showing what capitalism is and why it is failing is crucial to grasp. Without that knowledge, as Dunayevskaya pointed out, "there is no way out of the absolute contradiction" of capitalism, and a movement is in danger of trying to reform capitalism rather than overthrowing it and creating something new.

Women's Liberationist
Chicago

As we participate in Occupy Oakland demonstrations and discussions, the question of how a spontaneous organization can reach beyond capitalism is again on the agenda. We saw it at a discussion following an Occupy Oakland presentation on Oakland's 1946 General Strike. People were asking, "How can we not make the same mistakes?" I see this as showing the timeliness of the current News and Letters four-part series of Classes on "Dialectics of organization and philosophy in today's freedom struggles, Karl Marx and Marxist-Humanism."

Ron Kelch
Bay Area

MARXISM AND BUDDHISM

What I call "Engaged Buddhism" is the fusion of Marxist and Buddhist tradition, intended to overcome the beast-like and alienated life under capitalist

relations of social production—a Buddhism that mobilizes the secular wisdom of revolutionary Marxism.

In 1994 I was arrested for violating the infamous "Law of National Security," interrogated and tortured. The agents knew I had lectured to workers and students and had been preparing for national examinations of would-be lawyers. They said they wouldn't prosecute me if I announced the abandonment of Marxism. I refused and studied deeply during detention. One of my life-long mentors is Erich Fromm, a Humanist Marxist who accepted Buddhist teachings.

Marxist tradition is indispensable but not sufficient; the Buddhist tradition is also indispensable and makes revolutionary consciousness wiser and enduring.

Engaged Buddhist
Korea

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE



I'm on death row with no means to purchase a subscription to *N&L*. Could I ask for a donated sub, or send stamps to pay the \$5 price? I just read the Sept.-Oct. 2011 issue with the reports on SHU inmates. I would like to keep updated on this. Women like me don't get the kind of information covered in your paper.

Woman prisoner
Chowchilla, Calif.

I have been in solitary since October 2010 and could remain here much longer. Every time I'm about to get out some misconduct is fabricated. I would greatly appreciate it if you keep sending my subscription although I can't pay anything because of my situation.

Prisoner
Huntington, Penn.

Reading *N&L* gives me a totally different perspective on current events from the disinformation I find available elsewhere. I find your articles objective and totally resourceful. You get to read

the real facts in order to make your own conclusions.

Prisoner
Crescent City, Calif.

You have been very helpful in keeping me connected to being a Human being, while I am still serving a life sentence. Thank you, *News & Letters!*

Woman prisoner
Chowchilla, Calif.

It wouldn't be a bad idea to commit an entire section of "voices behind prison walls," to the struggle out in Babylon, so as to unify those struggles with ours behind these walls. It would be especially appropriate inasmuch as the captive class is an extension of every poor community in Babylon.

Prisoner
Crescent City, Calif.

This paper is greatly needed to help educate inmates on their individual, social and human rights, and to understand the struggle of other people throughout the world. Please do keep this paper coming my way as I look forward to every issue.

Prisoner
Portsmouth, Virginia

READERS, CAN YOU DONATE A SUBSCRIPTION FOR A PRISONER?

I read the letter from the prisoner in Vacaville, Calif., sending thanks for his "donor sub." I was so moved that I am sending a check to pay for four more gift subs. One is for a former student, the other three are for prisoners.

May *N&L* continue to inform with a much-needed truthful, critical and progressive analysis of the world's news.

Gloria Joseph, a comrade in arms
Virgin Islands

I've enjoyed reading *N&L* online and would appreciate receiving it as a paper. I'm enclosing what will become an annual contribution to do that. The sweep of the Occupy Movement seems to support my thought that a critical moment for Raya Dunayevskaya's ideas is here.

Reader
Oakland, Calif.

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*30 years later***AIDS activism and ACT UP Chicago**

Darrell Gordon, long-time African-American Gay anarchist activist, was one of the founders of AIDS activism in Chicago.

Chicago—People in Chicago started dying from AIDS a year or two after the first nationally known cases. I started going to forums dealing with AIDS at City College campuses. In 1985 there was a vigil at St. Clement Church. In the 1980s there were "safe sex" parties that taught about AIDS and how to use a condom. These were common at the beginning of the outbreak.

While dealing with the fight against the disease, we also had to confront the Reagan administration, which used it as a weapon against Gay rights. Since it was then mostly Gay and Bi men who were affected, it was easy to stigmatize people.

The first political AIDS demonstration I attended was organized in 1986. A food store called Evergreen, at Belmont and Broadway, put out a newsletter calling for the quarantine of people with AIDS, and for them to be forced to wear AIDS ID bracelets. That was a common sentiment of people on the Right.

I was a member of the anti-apartheid solidarity committee for South African Moses Mayekiso, formed by Earl Silbar. I decided to join with others to hold a press conference in front of Evergreen. The guy who ran the store also ran an art festival on Broadway. We decided not to boycott the art fair, but to picket the store.

ACT UP grew out of an organization that began in 1984 of Dykes and Gay men against racism and repression. It was started mostly by folks from the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and Prairie Fire. It concentrated mostly on anti-racism work, the Pride Parade and U.S. oppression abroad.

Then in 1987, before a March on Washington, there was legislation proposing mandatory HIV testing and quarantine. People were upset about this, but were still thinking in terms of just writing letters.

We decided to do a 24-hour vigil and civil disobedience action the next day at Gov. Thompson's home in Uptown, which was very successful. Some of the Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force initially said they would support our demonstration, but then decided not to. I guess they thought it would hurt their relationship with the establishment.

ACCESS TO DRUGS

Other activists in New York had similar experiences. So we became an AIDS activism organization, first Chicago For Our Rights, then by spring Chicago for AIDS Rights. We pushed for lowering the prices of AIDS drugs, and the release of more of them. By October and the national action in Washington, D.C., we had become ACT UP Chicago.

Right away there were two factions in the group. One was largely a single-issue group of mostly white Gay men. Prairie Fire also had its own ideology when it came to dealing with race and class. The group refused the idea of bringing more people of color into the group. Their argument was that Blacks and whites should organize separately in their own communities, and that African Americans could go to social service agencies to meet their needs—at a time when the churches didn't want to deal with the issues of AIDS and Gay rights.

Because I argued consistently over race and outreach and class, there was a tension and an attempt to freeze me out. In 1989 I initiated the idea of a People of Color Caucus to do outreach to the other communities. It was geared to both people of color and working class people. It wasn't an ego thing, but in support of the liberation of all Lesbian, Gay, Bi and Trans people, not just the privileged in the Lakeview neighborhood.

Other organizations that started subsequent to this were the Coalition Against Bashing, the Coalition for Positive Sexuality—a guerrilla-style activist group concerned with getting safe sex and birth control information to high school students—and Queer Nation.

ACT UP Chicago ended in 1995. Lots of people in our group died, and others left because of the conflicts. Some just wanted a single-issue movement with a white, Gay, male focus. As AIDS drugs became more available, and Clinton was elected president, the more liberal members of the Queer communities had the idea that a Democrat in the White House would save us, and we could retire from activism. The great message of the 1993 March on Washington seemed to some to be, "We don't need to do this anymore."

By 1994, the only active committee was the prison committee. If the group had continued, we would have had to face the question of relating to communities of color as being increasingly the casualties of the epidemic.

FACE OF AIDS CHANGED

It would have had to become a multi-racial group instead of a predominantly white organization. We could have built on the demonstrations against insurance company policies, and public health issues at Cook County Hospital, where we fought to get more beds.

AIDS, a death sentence 30 years ago, has changed. Many people are living longer. but we still haven't got to the root of the real problem with AIDS, which is hetero-

sexism and homophobia. That is connected to the issue of race, class, sexism and the economy as drug program cuts close off access to medicine.

At times Gay men and women did work side by side, but sexism needs to be addressed. Struggling against a misogynist society's definition of relationships should not be left up to women alone.

AIDS is a global issue today. The Treatment Action Coalition in South Africa was influenced by ACT UP. This time around, I'd like to see an AIDS activist movement that's organized by poor, working-class people.

That is a legacy for reviving the quest for taking control of our bodies as Gay men, too. That movement got co-opted in the late 1970s, but ACT UP essentially tried to reclaim tactics that were initiated by the Civil Rights Movement. No coincidence that it occurred during a lively climate of racism.

—Darrell Gordon

White House stormed over Medicare cuts

Part of the hundreds of concerned people from over 90 disability, aging and civil rights groups which converged on Washington, D.C., for the My Medicaid Matters rally on Sept. 21.

Washington, D.C.—As President Obama unveiled his debt plan, which includes reduced spending for Medicare and Medicaid by \$580 billion, hundreds of activists with disabilities stormed the White House demanding a voice in Medicaid reform. ADAPT, the national disability rights direct action group, is asking the administration to work with them to ensure that Medicaid dollars are invested in cost-saving community supports.

"The President says that he expects all Americans to share the burden of controlling the budget, but Medicaid recipients are already shouldering the burden for balancing budgets at the state level," said Randy Alexander of Memphis ADAPT. **"States have already made significant cuts to Medicaid. How many more people with disabilities and seniors must lose our basic freedoms and lives in order to have done our share?"**

Most states have already reduced or eliminated vital homecare services and forced seniors and people with disabilities into nursing facilities against their will. Bruce Darling, an ADAPT organizer from New York pointed out, "People are already experiencing reduced or eliminated access to basic healthcare, including medications. Jobs have already been eliminated for homecare and direct care workers."

Texas lawmakers underfunded Medicaid by about \$5 billion, a move that homecare advocates say leaves the elderly and adults with disabilities unsure how their care at home will be provided.

California eliminated funding for about 330 adult day centers, a move that will affect over 35,000 seniors who use them for medical care and socializing. Lawmakers are hoping to restore about \$85 million to transition seniors into an as-yet-undetermined alternate program—about half the amount cut from the budget.

Minnesota is considering cuts to home health aides and to a program that allows disabled people to live on their own. In **Massachusetts**, Governor Deval Patrick proposed cutting \$55 million from the state's adult daycare program, two-thirds of its funding, affecting some 5,200 participants.

The ADAPT community has identified four principles for real Medicaid reform: 1. Expand the use of community-based services 2. De-medicalize services 3. Expand consumer directed service options 4. Reorganize Medicaid services to eliminate wasteful bureaucracy.

I applaud ADAPT's efforts and agree that something needs to be done immediately. However, reforms aren't enough. Reforms are not going to result in the kind of lasting, continuous change that is needed; and it is unlikely they will take place under a system where healthcare is for profit.

A capitalistic society that denies people a basic human right like free healthcare will not willingly give up its power. ADAPT's suggestions are based on human needs; to keep capitalism going, basic human needs come last, if at all.

—Suzanne Rose

Fukushima activists testify in New York

New York City—A delegation of grassroots environmental activists from Japan came to share with their U.S. counterparts heart-rending eyewitness accounts of the health impact and continued contamination produced by the Fukushima-Daiichi reactor units that suffered catastrophic damage on March 11. They met with the public at three different venues Sept. 22-23 at events co-sponsored by Shut Down Indian Point Now! (SDIPN), Indian Point Safe Energy (IPSEC), Beyond Nuclear, and other groups.

The immense suffering of people affected by the Fukushima-Daiichi disaster can be given meaning if we learn from this catastrophe and those that preceded it at Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl and elsewhere, said Kaori Izumi, director of Shut Tomari. She appealed to the world to end the age of nuclear power in the wake of Fukushima. Otherwise it could happen again, in Japan, at Indian Point on the Hudson River, or anywhere that reactors are still operating.

Izumi discussed the unhealthy and corrupt pro-nuclear relationship among government, business, the media, pro-nuclear "intellectuals" and the judiciary. The Japanese delegation learned that the complicity of the U.S. Government regulators with energy corporations is just as insidious as in Japan, with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission routinely lowering safety standards in order to keep aging plants in operation.

Aileen Mioko Smith, Executive Director of Green Action, spoke about the plight of Japan's children. The Japanese government refused to safely evacuate its citizens, including 300,000 children still in Fukushima, or adequately warn them of the radiation danger.

The delegation delivered the message to the UN at a rally at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza on Sept. 24 that the Fukushima disaster made it clear that the world must shut down all nuclear power plants, and even confronted the Japanese Prime Minister.

They visited the Indian Point nuclear plant to see its proximity to earthquake faults and to the largest concentration of people in the U.S..

Sachiko Sato, an organic farmer from Fukushima and a member of Fukushima Network for Saving Children from Radiation, and her children, 13 and 17, talked of the disruption to their lives. Yukiko Anzai, who lives near the now re-started Tomari reactor, talked about the fate of farmers after the meltdowns.

Strong bonds were formed between the activists of both countries and it was recognized that the struggle against nuclear power must be a global one. A video of this meeting is available at: <http://politube.org/show/3285>.

—Evan Giller and Tom Syracuse,

Chair and Vice Chair, SDIPN www.SDIPN.net

Stop leeches bleeding public schools dry

New York City—"The Trial Is On! The People of NYC are gathering to put the perpetrators of education crimes and human and civil rights violations against our children on trial—in our own People's Court!" On Oct. 15, the Coalition for Public Education (www.forpubliced.org) took testimony from parents, teachers and school aides condemning Mayor Bloomberg's education policies, which supplant quality public education with for-profit charter schools.

One teacher described the transformation of high schools as the surrounding neighborhoods become gentrified. Brandeis High School was one of the first to educate Black and Latino immigrants in a full bilingual program. Prior to breaking it into smaller schools, access to the library and computers was discontinued. Experienced teachers and community-based paraprofessionals were gone, along with knowledge of the history of the struggle to provide relevant education. This kind of phase-out demoralizes the school community.

Now, the 25 police officers—in addition to School Security—who patrol the building are told, "Your job is not to be social workers, but to arrest students." The new young principals and teachers cannot meet the special needs of these students who deserve a just, fair education. A mother, in tears, said, "My special-needs son struggles because of standardized testing...the stupid tests don't prove anything about the quality of these kids."

A laid-off teacher's aide said that while programs like Teach for America pay young people to move to New York, live here and complete their training, there are no monies for paraprofessionals from the local community to move into teaching positions.

State Assemblywoman Inez Barron spoke against mayoral control: "The mayor wants to use our students to get profits. Since when is Wall Street interested in educating Black and Latino kids? Since it became profitable."

To support reform efforts, contact the Grassroots Education Movement at: <http://gemnyc.org>.

—Veteran teacher

SHU prisoners: We want to be treated like human beings!

Pelican Bay, Calif.—On Sept. 26 Security Housing Unit (SHU) prisoners resumed their hunger strike, suspended on July 20, to give California prison authorities a chance to make good on their promises to address the prisoners demands (see "Pelican Bay SHU struggle continues!" Sept.-Oct. *N&L*). Especially important to the prisoners was getting out of perpetual solitary confinement, starting with an objective review of their status as active/inactive gang member.

As one prisoner put it on our Oct. 11 visit, "CDC (California Department of Corrections) has a history of breaking promises. Even when they put policies in writing, prisons violate them. We have no meaningful recourse to address those violations. This time, CDC was to make a good faith effort. They didn't."

"They only conceded to superficial concerns, such as watch caps, sweats, calendars and art supplies, which they will not be giving us anyway, since they have been giving write-ups to everybody (being write-up free was a condition for receiving these 'privileges.')

The officers have too much discretion. Appeal process is a joke. Wardens always side with the guards, they sign off on denials of appeals without even reading them."

The restarted strike again spread through the whole California prison system, with, according to the prisons' own estimate, over 12,000 participants during the first week.

The prisoners' passive resistance against internationally recognized torturous isolation which prisoners call an "extralegal death sentence" was met with a new level of inhumanity. Authorities meted out collective punishment—everyone participating in the strike received a write-up for participating in a "major disturbance," language usually used to designate a riot. The prison canceled medical, visiting, yard time and canteen. Prisoners' cells were searched, all canteen items confiscated and in some instances at least, personal property, especially legal files, maliciously destroyed.

Fifteen hunger strikers were placed in extremely cold Administrative Segregation Unit cells with nothing but a thin layer of clothes. A prisoner in ad-seg said, "This has been a very peaceful protest and we were stripped of everything; cold air is being pumped into already very cold rooms. It is a deliberate form of torture as cold temperatures affect metabolism, al-

ready off balance when you are not eating. They tell us, 'if you don't like the conditions, start eating.'

"We've been getting the shaft for 25 years. In my 10 years here I have never been written up. They have a bunch of comments from informants, but not a single incident. Some have been in the hole for 38 years, all on informants' say-so, with no proof, no corroboration.

"All we want is to be treated like human beings. But they are so far gone, they can't see it...They want me to tell everything about my life. OK, I want to tell it. I am from Watts, I grew up fatherless, surrounded by violence. This is the story of many of us in here. I am happy to tell it all. But I am not going to go into a closed room and tell them things to use against someone else."

The prisoner we saw in the last few minutes was extremely gaunt compared to when we saw him on July 20. The following is part of a crucial message he had for prison authorities from the prisoners' representatives:

"As you are aware the peaceful hunger strike suspended July 20, resumed on Sept. 26. Your response to date has been to retaliate against the PBSP-SHU prisoners willing to engage in a respectful, reasonable dialog with you in July/Aug., in order to resolve issues prior to permanent damage/death.

"We acted in good faith when we agreed to suspend our hunger strike on July 20, and we assisted in getting the other prisoners to end their hunger strike as well. Your retaliatory acts have been to subject us to additional torture by ordering us moved to PBSP Ad-Seg Stand Alone Building on strip cell status, in ice box isolation cells, deprived of our property, including hygiene items, vitamins, beverage items, address books, writing and reading material, and legal material (on Oct. 6, we received some legal stuff, not all of it), as well as denying many of us at least one legal visit, per-

sonal visits, yard, TV, appliances, etc. etc. etc....

"Since arriving here on Sept. 29, Warden Lewis and others told us that you have been honoring your end of our July 20 and Aug. 19 agreements. Our position is you have not done so...the lack of any specifics regarding getting out of SHU is a big problem..."

It was hunger strikers own words seeing the light of day that precipitated new talks between prison officials, hunger strike representatives and their lawyers. The hunger strike was again suspended when prison officials promised to review the status of every SHU prisoner on a new basis starting at the beginning of next year.

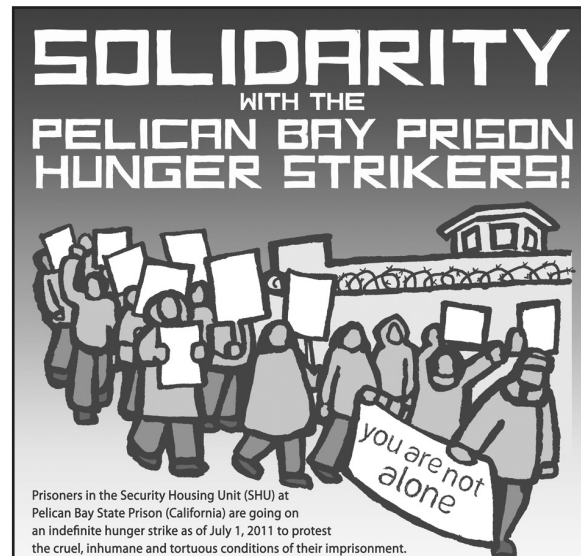
Reflecting on both hunger strikes, one prisoner writes: "There's a struggle in finding meaning in our suffering. In this last strike...prisoners have been awakened in here in solitary and united to the point where they're saying, how come we never

protested this way in unity years ago, to let our voices be heard against the ongoing CDC abuse? You hear this talk a lot now, which is a good thing. In reality we add to our suffering in solitary when inmates don't stand up for our rights, banding together as one, protesting peacefully. We hurt ourselves when inmates resort to do violence against one another; that doesn't solve anything.

"Human progress is measured in prison and outside when every person is treated with dignity and respect naturally, no less. I thought a lot about this during the strike."

Once again prisoners demonstrate the power of their own thinking and demands to be treated like human beings in the darkest corners of a prison gulag of absolute control and arbitrary judgment.

—Urszula Wislanka



Voices from Pelican Bay SHU hunger strikers

September 28, 2011

Revolutionary Salutation,

The SHU prisoners hunger strike started again as of Sept. 26....Apparently the level of prisoner participation surprised California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR)....Despite the attempt to undermine and stigmatize the latest effort, the general consensus of the prisoners is that there is no stopping until some real quality changes are made to the policy that determines the length of SHU confinement. We do not accept the spin from CDCR official Scott Kernan, et. al., as if they intended to actually implement substantial changes.

* * *

October 5, 2011

This is the tenth day of the resumption of the hunger strike here at Pelican Bay SHU short corridor. CDCR is trying to suppress it. They plan to do their best to manage the outside impact of the hunger strike. The strike of July 1 caught them off guard, they were forced into a defensive position attempting to publicly explain their atrocious treatment of SHU short corridor prisoners. It called into serious question CDCR's public trust. Certainly, CDCR cannot allow for an on-going serious public questioning of its capacity to administer the state's prison system.

The CDCR Memorandum dated Sept. 27, 2011, addressed to the general prison population set forth specific retaliatory procedures CDCR will undertake to suppress hunger strikes in general and this hunger strike in particular.

On Sept. 29, the correction staff descended upon one building allegedly to do door maintenance. Several prisoners were grabbed and placed in ad-seg along with other prisoners from the other SHU short corridor building. One can conclude that all those prisoners subjected to the retaliatory action were designated by the administration as leaders. Placing them in ad-seg is extremely harsh treatment: they are denied their personal property, e.g., reading material, writing paper and TVs. **The loss of writing paper and envelopes effectively cuts these prisoners ability to communicate with their loved ones, families and attorneys.** This practice—isolating and denying prisoners the right to communicate with the outside world—is so draconian in nature that it's beyond human imagination that things like this still exist in the 21st century. **The public's right to know what exactly is happening behind these prison walls cannot be overstated.**

On Friday, Sept. 30, a phalanx of correction staff descended upon this building searching every cage—participants and non-participants alike—for all state food items that were not issued that day. All such food was trashed. Clearly, correctional staff were given a green light to continue the practice of collective punishment. This is in total disregard to one of the five core demands, i.e., individual accountability. In addition, hunger strike participants in possession of previously purchased canteen items had those items confiscated. The Department Operations Manual states that canteen items are not to be confiscated, but instead monitored to determine if they are being eaten.

There has not been daily monitoring of the mental and physical conditions of hunger strikers by medical staff. Since the resumption of the hunger strike the medical staff has only made three appearances in this building, two times just asking questions: are you still not eating and are you drinking enough water to stay hydrated. The third time, yesterday, strikers were weighed and measured for the first time. Hunger strikers inquired why they were not given vitamins and salt tablets. The medical staff's response was that he or she isn't aware of procedure or haven't been told anything about it by their supervisors. CDCR has also started denying yard time to all hunger strikers. They will use whatever means possible to punish prisoners merely requesting to be treated as human beings.

There is the parallel between the movement inside

the prisons and movements in the larger society struggling to lift the curse of oppressive capitalist relations.

—Faruq

September 28, 2011

Revolutionary Greetings!

We prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison have restarted our hunger strike, due to bad faith negotiations with CDCR's Sacramento prisonrat officials, that consisted of lies, more lies and broken promises!

I've written an article entitled: "Who Am I???" an analysis of how and why prisoners are validated as prison gang members and thus held in indefinite solitary confinement for 10 to 40 years and counting! (To obtain a copy write to: So. Chicago ABC Zine Distr., c/o Anthony Rayson, P.O. Box 721, Homewood, IL 60430.)

* * *

What you and I need to do is learn to forget our differences...We have a common oppressor, a common exploiter and a common discriminator...once we all realize that we have a common enemy, then we can unite on the basis of what we have in common.

Malcolm X

It is a historical truth that repression breeds resistance, which is why we prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison's SHU/CMU units, took the initiative to come together, and go on a hunger strike, in order to say to our oppressors that: "20 plus years of state sponsored torture and persecution, in which **our human rights have been routinely violated, for no other reason than to keep us prisoners confined in their mad-scientist like 'torture chambers'** as alleged prison gang members is enough!!"

But as we all know, repression evolves and develops in cycles. So on Aug. 2, PBSP-CDCR officials threatened all hunger strike participants with punitive retaliatory measures for the sole act of our hunger strike participation, in spite of the fact that we have a human right to peacefully protest any unjust laws. An unjust law, is no law at all!! The Struggle Continues!!!

—Kijana Tashiri Askari

A caged man is a spirit trapped in steel—leave him alone and his spirit becomes one with his cage—it's all he knows. Motivate him, nurture and socialize him, and his spirit soars. It's only then that the man realizes the difference between him and his cage—the reasons for it. Thus, allowing him to finally be free from it.

—Pelican Bay hunger striker, Oct. 11, 2011

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Occupy movement strikes deep chord

continued from p. 1

looking for people to give 'teach-ins.'"

Another participant, Sharon, described the support from New Yorkers like herself: "The protesters include a lot of unemployed college students. There is construction nearby, and the ironworkers have expressed sympathy for the protest."

This sympathy is widespread and can be expected to grow. For each encamped protester, thousands more sympathize on social media or support it by participating in daily actions and donating generously (over \$400,000 to Occupy Wall Street alone, some of it from as far away as Egypt). Millions are fed up with decades of capitalist crisis which has been addressed only through cuts in every kind of human services, attacks on public education and transportation, and the growth of the prison-industrial complex. The Occupy movements are linking resistance groups together.

The incident in which a Black veteran, Shamar Thomas, stood down a dozen white New York police officers in defense of occupiers is representative of a broad and deep support for the movement. Thomas spoke absolute truth when he said to police officers decked out in riot gear ready to confront unarmed non-violent protesters,

"They don't have guns! It doesn't make any sense.... There is no honor in this! There is no honor in what you're doing to these people!"

The racist Right, the Tea Party, Fox News, the Republicans (and Democrats!), the Koch brothers, and the neo-fascists that have arisen from history's underworld will not be going away soon. While racist and anti-Semitic Ron Paul's supporters have hung around the movement, they don't gain much hearing and are becoming increasingly marginal.

Clarifying our ideas and our vision of a needed new society beyond capitalism is crucial for fending off co-optation from any quarter. It will be important to continue that process. Ensuring the movement's self-development includes holding onto and developing the concept of "leaderlessness" as a way of reaching for a new relationship of theory, practice and organization.

MIC CHECK! MIC CHECK!

The experience of freedom and self-determination found in the Occupy movement includes a tremendous sense of fun such as the "human microphone." Begun to cope with a New York City ordinance against amplification, hundreds of people repeat what General Assembly speakers say so the larger crowd can hear it. As Denise, a poet and participant in Chicago, said, "There is something really beautiful about people formulating their thoughts that way. And sometimes it falls into total chaos, and that can be a wonderful thing, too."

That sense of adventure and playfulness was evident on Oct. 16 when the Chicago police were closing in to arrest hundreds of people from Occupy Chicago who had moved into Grant Park "after hours." Suddenly, hundreds of people were singing Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" at the police lines: "Is this the real life, is this just fantasy...?" A beautiful way to put what was happening in perspective. It was a measure of how deeply humanist the movement is—its refusal to be "scripted," like its insistence on "leaderlessness," marking an important advance in consciousness.

The predominance of young people expresses anew what the Constitution of News and Letters Committees holds: "...even though the youth are not directly involved in production, they are the ones whose idealism in the finest sense of the word combines with opposition to existing adult society in so unique a way that it literally brings them alongside the workers as builders of the new society."

The police brutality shown in New York, Oakland and elsewhere will dispel illusions about the role of the police as part of "the 99%." Paul of Occupy Memphis was harassed simply for reaching out to the city's homeless. He said: "They provided no reason for our detainment other than that we were with 'them,' so we were getting checked out too. That's how many of our homeless brothers and sisters in the downtown area are treated by police all the time."

REALITY AND THOUGHT

The experience of radical freedom and self-determination has been the root of all revolutionary, dialectical critique of the modern world. While many have criticized the Occupy movement for not having concrete demands, it would be truer to say that the movement has—to its great credit—refused to be limited by any

particular demands. Thus it comes together with the struggle of prisoners, with the homeless...with no limits but those of the imagination. While the movement is in part about reclaiming public space, it is also—in an even deeper sense—about reclaiming history.

At the same time, occupations in different localities, which are networked and yet autonomous, are debating specific demands. At Occupy Chicago the debate has touched on whether the road to universality moves through particular grievances, demands and goals. So a debate on an anti-war resolution becomes a discussion of slavery and racism in U.S. history. Most important is to continue the process of self-development that does not allow any list of demands to be a limit or endpoint.

Participating in the democratic debates at the General Assemblies is a revolutionary experience. As one participant told *N&L*:

"This is a different way of running an organization, partly because of the commitment we feel to being truly democratic. We are all a part of this, my voice is important, I'm part of making the decisions here. There is no hierarchy and we try not to separate any of this from discussing ideas. All of this becomes part of making the decisions."

The participation of the occupiers in labor and peace demonstrations reflects a search for a total change. The Oct. 5 march of tens of thousands in New York was the first in which large contingents of labor union members joined occupiers. There and elsewhere, labor marchers have been inspired by the new possibilities they saw opening for workers. In the words of Paul Geist, a Marxist-Humanist from New York,

"Today the unemployed person says, 'I'll take any job.' The worker speaks of the meaninglessness of her work. Teachers are being treated like children, made less human as people try to quantify their work. Each element of society is affected differently, so dialectically there is no one magic word. But the moments are meeting up, these as well as gender and race—how can they be united? Each one's experience is part of the Universal that has to concretely include all those moments. How do we make a totality, a concrete universal?"

'ITS OWN WORKING EXISTENCE'

It is necessary to see what is new. The importance of a happening like Occupy Wall Street is not bound by any specific demand that might be made, but by the experience of new human relations that it embodies, which can open pathways to a future beyond capitalism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and all the oppressions and bondages of class society. The dialectic of the needed American revolution depends on the coalescence of Black freedom struggle with labor's struggle against capitalism, and, as the desperate acts of Oakland's police have shown, even the authorities know that that coming together is now possible.

This experience of new human relations is the same way in which Tahrir Square embodied a radical challenge to world capitalism that cut to the heart of modernity itself. (See "Revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya shake world order," *News & Letters* Mar.-Apr. 2011.) Far from merely hypothetical, this challenge is embodied by headscarved young women from places like Yemen and Somalia who imagine the ending of capitalism and sexism; it is found in the words of Mitch from Occupy Chicago, who said, "What we're really dealing with is all the oppressiveness of 10,000 years of history. We're trying to work out a new way of living in freedom."

In this sense, the significance of the Occupy movements is expressed in their own working existence, as Karl Marx wrote of the 1871 Paris Commune, "The great social measure of the Commune was its own working existence. Its special measures could but betoken the tendency of a government of the people by the people." Raya Dunayevskaya pointed out the same thing of the 1955 Montgomery Bus Boycott, another experience of human beings seizing their own freedom.

While Occupy Wall Street isn't a repeat of the Paris Commune, nevertheless, the deep affinity is real. For it to flourish, we must resist all the forces that would stifle our movement, from police attacks to the idea that the masses are backward. We need no condescending "saviors." Self-emancipation is the task of the masses alone. It is equally important for the Occupy movement to recognize that the masses' self-development and search for deep social transformation, new organizational forms and philosophical grounding are reaching for so totally new a relationship of practice to theory as to forge a unity of philosophy and revolution.



Mohammed Maree: <https://twitter.com/H/Maree>

Protesters marched in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, Oct. 25 supporting Occupy Oakland. This sign says, "From Egypt to Wall Street, don't afraid. Go ahead. #Occupy Oakland, #OWS."

Remember Oscar Grant

Oakland, Calif.—The Oscar Grant Committee held its first public forum on Sept. 13 at the main hall of Niebyl-Proctor Marxist Library to a packed audience of activists and family members-turned-activists. The following is a summary of statements made there.

Organizers **Gerald** and **Lesley** said: Oscar Grant was shot in the back while he was lying on the ground of a BART platform on Jan. 1, 2009. What made a difference was that other BART riders took pictures of the incident. The response from police everywhere to the semi-successful prosecution of the shooter has been to prevent people from taking pictures of them.

A couple states passed laws that make it illegal to take pictures of cops. So far all those laws have been overturned when challenged in court, but given the Supreme Court we have, they could find it legal.

When the International Longshore and Warehouse Union struck for a day last October to protest Grant's murder, it was the first time in recent memory that a labor union went on strike for a Black person killed by police. Families of other police victims came together during Officer Mehserle's trial. They inspired us to make Grant's commemoration an ongoing movement.

Cary Downs told how his stepson **James Rivera, Jr.**, was killed by Stockton police a day before his 17th birthday in July 2010: There were 48 rounds fired at our son, of which 16 entered our son's small body. He posed no threat. He was unarmed. The police were seen to be high-fiving each other after the shooting, as though they thought what they did was an accomplishment. We need to come together, to speak about police violence, not just in Oakland, but many other places. Too many times the police are found "justified" in killing our children. We the parents, we the people, will not stay silent anymore while police kill our children! We stand united with many other families who mourn the death of their loved one at the hands of the police.

Sharena Curley spoke on behalf of her brother, **Antoine Thomas**, who was wrongly convicted: Police gunning people down, she said, is not the only injustice they commit. My brother was framed. He was sexually assaulted by police while being arrested. They stomped on his head. The gun he supposedly used had someone else's fingerprints, not his. Security cameras showed it was not him. His whole trial was a miscarriage of justice. It lasted three days and resulted in a 65-year sentence! He is filing an appeal, but if it does not work, he'll spend a lifetime in prison.

Anita Wills spoke about her son and grandson, both victimized by police: My son, **Kerry Baxter, Sr.**, was in a bar fight in 2001 with Jones, who had a blanket immunity for testifying for police. Jones has been coming up from Merced, robbing people, etc., because he had this blanket immunity. He has no strikes, though he recently beat his wife almost to death. They blamed Jones' crimes on my son! A public pretender (can't call him a defender) said, "take the 40-year plea or we'll go after you!" He was set up and is now in prison for 65 years. We're fighting it, but we can't do it alone!

My grandson was killed in January 2007. The same officer who accused my son is in charge of investigating this murder. He refused to give me any information and called my grandson's mother to tell her I am impeding the investigation! There has not been any investigation in my grandson's death. Police are getting our tax money, but they don't protect us. They are killing us!

Rosemary Duenez spoke of her son **Ernest Duenez**, who was killed in Manteca on June 8: He was fighting drug addiction, but was also achieving his dream: he was married and had a one-year-old son. Police hated him. He tested dirty on June 8. Police pulled in behind his car. He would have done 90 days for a dirty drug test. But as he came out of the car, with his hands up, they emptied their guns into him.

Police claimed he was advancing on them, but their own report tells that they had to cut a seat belt, in which his foot was entangled as he was trying to leave the back seat. They handcuffed him as he lay on the ground. They did not administer any first aid, just waited. We know there is a police video of the incident, but they won't release it. The police took my son! He was not garbage, none of our children are. He loved his child. He was a human being.

Verbena of Cop Watch in Eureka spoke of **Martin Cotton**, beaten to death by Eureka police in 2007, in broad daylight, in view of 40 people: It's as though they were saying, "Look at what we can do! Nothing will happen to us." [A federal jury awarded his family several millions ten days after the event.] **Martin Cotton, Sr.**, said: We are all one. We got to stick together. Power to all of us.

During the discussion some appreciated that the families humanized the persons who were not perfect. They may have done bad things, but it does not give the police the right to kill them. Future meetings of the Oscar Grant Committee will continue on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the library.

—Marxist-Humanist supporter

Occupy everywhere, the whole world is watching!

Occupy Oakland

Oakland, Calif.—As part of the autonomous but connected "Occupy Wall Street" movement, we organized here on Oct. 10, a rainy Monday evening. About 500 people, the great majority under 30 years old and a very diverse group (race, gender, age, etc.), met in a general assembly and collectively decided to occupy and camp



Frank Ogawa/Oscar Grant Plaza, Oakland, Oct. 26

out in a small park in front of City Hall. Over the next five days, this park became packed with many dozens of tents, with an unknown but large number of (mainly young) people camping out. A wider circle of supporters visit regularly, coming with various material and other expressions of solidarity.

The Occupy Oakland movement is, like those around the U.S. and the world, arguably the beginning of a new and exciting revolutionary movement of class conscious youth who want fundamental change. They are a part of the hundreds of millions of unemployed and underemployed people worldwide who want a completely new and democratic political, economic and social system, one that is the opposite of the current hierarchies operated by a corporate capitalist system run by and for a small ruling class of top income and wealth holders. A main chant is: "We are the 99%."

Participatory and transparent democracy is the practice, with no formal leadership; general assemblies and committees run the encampment and its activities. Anyone who shows up can participate. This example threatens all existing hierarchies, pointing out that democracy is a verb, not a noun, it is something we all do together or it is not real.

One is reminded of how all great revolutions began with the uncompromising actions of relatively small groups of people, completely fed up with the existing system and sick to death of the "same old crap." No one can say where this will go, if the movement will spread, and if the U.S. working class, a class in itself, is rapidly becoming a class for itself with nothing to lose but its chains. But we can all hope and begin to act on the belief that the age of acquiescence in an unjust, alienating, and corrupt capitalist system is finally over and that we are all the revolutionaries that we have been waiting for.

—Larry Shoup

* * *

Early morning Oct. 25, a massive police contingent, at great cost, came to tear down the orderly assemblage of occupiers camped on the plaza in front of Oakland's City Hall. Eighty people were arrested and all equipment trashed by police. Later that day Occupy Oakland

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Queer rights activist Frank Kameny died at the age of 86. He had sued the U.S. Civil Service Commission for firing him in 1957 from his astronomer position as "automatically a security risk" and a "disruptive personnel factor" because he was Gay. The Supreme Court affirmed the discriminatory firing. Kameny later founded the Mattachine Society of Washington, one of the earliest Gay rights organizations, was a participant in the LGBT rights protest in 1965, and was the first openly Gay candidate for Congress in 1971. Mr. Kameny was finally issued an official apology from the U.S. government.

* * *

Frank Mugisha, advocate and activist through his organization Sexual Minorities Uganda, will receive the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. Mr. Mugisha puts his life on the line by working tirelessly for Queer rights in Uganda. Uganda's legislature is considering a law to imprison and even put to death LGBT people.

* * *

The Netherlands insults human dignity by demanding in their Civil Code that, in order to have their gender reassignment recognized by law, Transgender people must take hormones, have their bodies surgically altered and be permanently sterilized.

—Information from Human Rights Watch

reassembled at the Oakland Public Library and several thousand marched to City Hall, determined not to let officials wipe out their presence. The police rioted against the demonstrators, firing rubber bullets, sand bags, flash-bang grenades and lots of tear gas canisters directly at the marchers. One projectile hit Scott Olsen, an Iraq war veteran, in the head, critically wounding him. Vigils were held for him across the country. Occupy Oakland retook the plaza and a General Assembly of over 1,500 put out a call for a solidarity general strike on Nov. 2.

—Urszula Wislanka

Occupy Minnesota

In Minnesota, winter is setting in very early this year. And winter here is severe. In Duluth, we occupiers have been marching back and forth from Civic Center Square and a very old statue of "Patriotism"—which for generations was the traditional place for protests and demonstrations—and Lake Superior Plaza, which we've been trying to make a new place for protest.

The big building of Minnesota Power (MP) sits beside Lake Superior Plaza, and MP has gone berserk with all this public talk of the **greed** of corporations. MP has been broadcasting a lot of ads describing themselves as "responsible," "good environmentalists," etc. The son of a friend of mine was killed several months ago in a workplace accident involving one of MP's power-plants. They denied any responsibility. There were indications that they had the time and liberty to tamper with the death scene.

Union members have joined the occupiers in Duluth. Mike Kuitu, the president of the Carlton County Labor Assembly, has shown solidarity with the occupiers very publicly. Tom Gilliam, of an old Garment Workers local, has been active with the occupiers on a daily basis and some days around the clock.

In Minneapolis, we occupiers were herded off to a privately owned park to get us out of the way. Now the park owner is trying to evict us. The occupiers have been sleeping overnight in tents, refusing to be removed. Every day there have been public statements against the bankers and corporate greed. In both Minneapolis and Duluth, the protests have been continuing around the clock. In Siberian Minnesota, you really have to mean business if you engage in meaningful protest!

—Séamas Cain

Occupy Memphis

Memphis—The Occupation here officially started on Oct. 15 in coordination with many other solidarity occupations going on throughout the U.S. Most Memphis occupiers are new to activism. Many attended direct action training. It's encouraging to have new activists from the working class getting involved with the struggle.

Tennessee has some of the lowest corporate taxes in the country, but the jobs have not shown up. Most Memphis police and firefighters have seen a pay cut of 4.6%. The occupiers have symbolically taken over the park in front of the City Government building. It's refreshing to see the city's unions are joining in solidarity.

About 25 people maintain the occupation nightly and many supporters drop in and out throughout the day to bring supplies and/or participate. Nearly 150 are in attendance throughout the weekends. Memphis was supported by many visitors from the Gandhi-King Conference Oct. 20-23. Occupiers were even treated to a free concert by David Rovics.

—Mario Zuluaga

Occupy Los Angeles

Los Angeles—Inspired by Occupy Wall Street, Occupy L.A. started on Oct. 1 on the south lawn of Los Angeles City Hall. Over 350 tents and 700 occupants are camped out on the south and north lawns. The occupation is made up of a wide range of groups, including anti-war, immigrant rights, women's rights, Black, environmentalists, anti-capitalists, Chicanos, many young whites, anti-police brutality and individuals fed up with their situation. Many committees were formed, to keep the occupation running smoothly, and

to discuss various topics such as education and politics. Many protests link with or originated from Occupy L.A. For example, on Oct. 15 15,000 people, mostly immigrant workers, demonstrated in a "We are the 99%" theme. On Oct. 18 "Occupy Los Angeles Unified School District" protested against the layoff of 1,200 teachers.

From Arab Spring to Wisconsin to Spain, a lot of people are starting to realize they're not alone. We see things happening all over and it inspires us to act locally.

—Basho

EDITORIAL Failed U.S. occupation of Iraq

continued from p. 1

an avowedly anti-Iraq war candidate, Obama will have withdrawn troops not one month earlier than Bush agreed to do in 2008 in the Status of Forces Agreement with Baghdad. He has continued indefinite detention at Guantanamo for prisoners that Bush had rounded up, and he renewed the Patriot Act.

ASTONISHING 13 YEARS AT WAR

Obama put in writing that the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan will last an astonishing 13 years. The consensus for endless war among political leaders, regardless of party, has so far trumped the consensus among the masses to bring all the troops home now.

In Iraq he will continue one of the worst practices of Bush-Cheney: the proliferation of a private for-profit corporate army. Some of the same contractors with insider ties will employ 6,000 mercenaries out of the bloated embassy in Baghdad, and thousands more in other consulates.

Republicans like Romney have thus had to resort to blaming Obama for whatever happens in the future. They view with alarm the threat that they won't approve the next Iraqi government. What alarms them more is their lack of control over contracts for exploiting Iraq's estimated 150 billion barrels of oil.

U.S. OUT OF IRAQ—IS IRAN NEXT?

Neoconservatives pretend—after over 4,000 U.S. and 100,000 Iraqi lives lost—that Obama is withdrawing from an Iraq that was a bastion of U.S. influence for transforming the entire Middle East. They are now building up Iran as the ultimate threat.

Iraq appears to be untouched by Arab Spring, nor is it likely to be while still under the stifling U.S. occupation. Deputy Prime Minister Shaways calls it unlikely that Arab Spring could find a foothold even after U.S. withdrawal. But very few are happy with the blatantly corrupt al-Maliki government, and every uprising, from Tunisia to Egypt to Libya to Yemen and beyond, has been unlikely.

The right-wing war drums are now beating for confrontation with Iran. War is probably the only way that the mullahs could crush the forces of revolt, the youth, women and workers whose voices have not been totally stilled since 1979, even under the most brutal conditions. The Iranian masses still seethe, even since a new crackdown in 2009. War with the U.S. would give Iran's rulers an excuse to wipe out those who oppose them. Given the bloody history of the U.S. ruling class, we cannot dismiss its drumbeat for war with Iran. This is no time for anti-war voices to be silent.

Stop all wars!

Chicago—Thousands demonstrated against U.S. wars and occupations on Oct. 8, the tenth anniversary of the Afghanistan war. Speakers included Mary Dean of Voices for Creative Non-Violence; Hatem Abudayyeh of the Arab American Action Network; Alejandro Vilatoro of Iraq Veterans Against the War; Bruce Dixon of Black Agenda Report; Vicky Cervantes of La Voz de Los de Abajo; Andy Thayer of the Gay Liberation Network; and Joe Iosbaker, one of 24 anti-war activists targeted by FBI raids and the threat of grand jury subpoenas.

When Occupy Chicago showed up en masse it was like, this ain't no business as usual! At that moment the chant "This is what democracy looks like!" felt very true.

It was another sign of the times that besides the usual Chicago police, there were some obnoxious, aggressive armed bozos walking around with cameras taking people's pictures. After the march I challenged them, "Hey, what's your story? Are you real police officers?" One of them said, "No, we're fake police officers." His partner said, "We're the police that disappear."

Oh, how spooky! Checking further, they represent a private 501(c)(3) agency called Illinois Law Enforcement Alarm System that receives Homeland Security funds to do various things, including sending personnel to the 2008 Republican National Convention protests and the 2009 Pittsburgh G-20 summit protests.

In other words, they are paid with taxpayer dollars to harass citizens exercising the right to dissent. Way over the line into a police state. We'll see more of them in the lead-up to 2012's NATO/G-8 summits in Chicago, according to the Chicago police.

—Oct. 8 organizer

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WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

As Greek lawmakers passed a new austerity package on Oct. 19, rage boiled over in cities and towns throughout the country. A two-day general strike saw hundreds of thousands demonstrating against measures demanded by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund. Protesters included public workers and those already involved in occupying the squares.

The Greek economy has contracted by 12% since 2009. This will continue, driven further by these austerity measures. (See "Greece, democracy and the economic crisis," July-August *News & Letters*.) Unemployment has continued to increase, now at 16.5%, and will worsen as the government lays off state employees. The Papandreou government has shown itself committed to further, endless rounds of severe cutbacks. The



Greek youth confront austerity and riot police in Athens in October.

Greeks fight austerity

anger in the streets indicates how deeply the pain of capitalism's debacle has inscribed itself on the Greek body politic.

Dimitris Kotzaridis, 53, a secretary in the Construction Workers' Union, died Oct. 20 of a heart attack after being tear-gassed during clashes outside Parliament between police and demonstrators. At first the Communist Party blamed his death on alleged attacks by "anarchists," which brought this statement from the popular assembly of Syntagma Square:

"...Reality once again came to reveal the role of a party that systematically betrays popular struggles....This is what they did yesterday....

They guarded the smooth operation of Parliament and instead of surrounding it they acted even more barbarously than the police, cracking skulls open and handing over demonstrators to the forces of repression. The worst of all that they did was that they legitimized the state, which murdered one of their comrades, blaming the murder on some para-statist violence.

"From yesterday on...the so-called 'Communist Party' is no more than a barrier against the attempt to bury the parliamentary corpse....This proposition should not be read as a split in the movement. We might have common problems and common targets with the plain voters of the Communist Party, but the politics and the practice of the leadership...follows the orders of the government and the envoys of the IMF, EU and European Central Bank...the Communist Party will act as a fifth column of the dictatorial regime, hoping once again to grab some crumbs off the parliamentary table....

"From May 25, when we first gathered at the square, we revealed direct democracy as the capacity of each one of us to participate, to consult with one another, to shape ideas together autonomously....*We are taking our lives into our own hands! Direct democracy now!*"

Switzerland's racism

Last year, Switzerland was disgraced by an election campaign that demonized its Muslim inhabitants. Ironically, most Swiss Muslims have been refugees from genocide and persecution in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Now the Federal Commission Against Racism has accused some Swiss communes (municipalities) of introducing forms of apartheid against asylum seekers, many from Nigeria, Eritrea and Tunisia. In Birmensdorf, Zurich, some streets are closed to them, and in Zug politicians want to introduce a restricted zone.

Commission head Georg Kreuz said, "Though these measures may not be apartheid *per se*, they're definitely stigmatizing and starting to isolate what we consider as 'the other.'"

This is in line with the rise of European racism and religious bigotry that finds expression in attacks on Roma across Europe, and exploded in anti-Muslim-motivated mass murders in Norway. Expect a new Libyan government to be pressured to continue Qaddafi's restrictions on African immigration to Europe, which was one of his well-paid services to Europe's rulers.

Kenya in Somalia

Reportedly backed by French and U.S. air strikes, Kenyan troops entered south Somalia to attack positions of the Islamist al-Shabaab militia which controls much of the region. Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG) forces and allied militias have also taken part. They aim to attack Kismayu, a coastal city controlled by al-Shabaab. Kenya blames the group for recent cross-border kidnappings and firefights.

The al-Shabaab are notorious for their cruelties against women, aid workers and traditional African elders. They have even outlawed the centuries-old staple food, the *sambuza* (samosa), claiming its triangle shape is a reference to the Christian trinity.

Despite recent losses they are still estimated to control over 10,000 fighters. Kismayu is a center of their power and finances, and they will be unlikely to give it up without a fight.

Coupled with some U.S. forces being sent to Uganda, ostensibly aimed at the equally insane Christian terrorist group, the Lord's Resistance Army, this has escalated direct involvement in East African conflicts to a new level which should be closely watched.

Cherokee freedmen

A minority among the Cherokee Nation has pushed to exclude the descendants of the Nation's Black freedmen from tribal membership. It is a move long in the works, since the Reagan era, often accompanied by crudely racist arguments. It is being challenged in court. Previously such moves have been overturned legally.

The current effort involves a bureaucratic 2006 rewriting of the Cherokee Constitution to accept the racist 1887 Dawes Commission's definitions of tribal membership, and a low-turnout 2007 vote—in which only 6,702 out of 35,000 registered voters voted to disenfranchise their fellow tribal members.

U.S. history leaves a continuing opening for this, as the Dawes Commission (itself designed to destroy tribal self-government) counted freedmen separately from both full-blooded Cherokees and intermarried whites.

The effort to exclude Black Cherokee tribal members is reflective of the unique position the Cherokee occupy in U.S. history. As a "civilized" tribe, wealthier Cherokee were sometimes slaveholders; but, as Native Americans, they were also subjected to the genocidal Trail of Tears on which thousands died when they were uprooted from their Eastern homes and marched to Oklahoma. Many of their slaves made the same trip, facing the same hardships.

During the Civil War some Cherokee became allies of the Confederacy. But on Feb. 18, 1863, the pro-Union Cherokee National Council abolished slavery in the Nation. This division has continued among the Cherokee just as it has continued in the U.S.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the Cherokee Nation was a cultural and economic influence on working-class Black culture. The essence of whatever it means to be an American will continue to be haunted by the great Black Cherokee Charlie Patton's angry words: "I feel like choppin', chips flyin' everywhere / I went to the Nation, Lord, but I couldn't stay there."

Many great blues singers, in fact, had some Cherokee roots, from Leadbelly to Scrapper Blackwell and Champion Jack Dupree. The minority of the Cherokee Nation who voted to exclude the freedmen shows an amazing lack of understanding of one of the great contributions the Cherokee have made to world culture. In the words of Cherokee David Cornsilk, who supports the freedmen, "We as a people must look back to where we have been to know where we are today."

Bolivia's two roads

Indigenous protestors from the Bolivian Amazon won a victory when they forced President Evo Morales' government to cancel a road-building project through the Isiboro Sécur National Park and Indigenous Territory (TIPNIS), a supposedly protected region in eastern Bolivia. The victory was won after a 300-mile, two-month march from TIPNIS to La Paz by the Guarani people and people of the Chaco and Beni regions.

They were attacked by police on Sept. 25, with many arrested and injured. Government officials spread rumors of a right-wing plot to take advantage of the marchers. But outrage over the bloody confrontation spread across the country, with Bolivia's main trade union, Central Obrera Boliviana (COB), declaring a 24-hour general strike in protest. Roadblocks were set up in La Paz. Several officials resigned over the incident.

The government promised a consultative referendum on the road-building project, but insisted it would continue. The Indigenous marchers occupied the central square in La Paz. Only after the occupation continued did Morales announce the project's cancellation, saying he would "lead by obeying," though it took two months of protest, injuries and arrests for him to do so.

The struggle posed the dilemma facing Bolivia since the downfall of the old oligarchy and Morales' election: Neo-development or an alternative to capitalism? How can a small impoverished country, the second poorest in Latin America, construct an independent path? A mass rebellion of workers, peasants and the urban population led to a more representative elected congress, an Aymara-speaking Indigenous president and a new constitution, but has not changed the social system nor stopped its continued integration into the capitalist world market.

Indigenous groups in the Amazon know development is necessary. They oppose the kind of development—done without consulting those who live where it will occur—that continues centuries-old extractive practices for foreign enrichment, while leaving impoverished peoples and despoiled land. For the moment they have stayed the hand of capitalist neo-development that Morales and his government have been seeking to impose in TIPNIS.

—Eugene Walker

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

News and Letters Committees is an organization of Marxist-Humanists that since its birth has stood for the abolition of capitalism, both in its private property form as in the U.S., and its state property form, as it has historically appeared in state-capitalist regimes calling themselves Communist as in Russia and China. We stand for the development of new human relations, what Marx first called a new Humanism.

News & Letters was founded in 1955, the year of the Detroit wildcat strikes against Automation and the Montgomery Bus Boycott against segregation—activities which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself a form of theory. *News & Letters* was created so that the voices of revolt from below could be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation.

Raya Dunayevskaya (1910–1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the

National Editorial Board and National Chairwoman of the Committees from its founding to 1987. Charles Denby (1907–83), a Black production worker, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, became editor of the paper from 1955 to 1983. Dunayevskaya's works, *Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today* (1958), *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao* (1973), and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982) spell out the philosophic ground of Marx's Humanism internationally, as *American Civilization on Trial* concretizes it on the American scene and shows the two-way road between the U.S. and Africa.

This body of ideas challenges all those desiring freedom to transcend the limitations of post-Marx Marxism, beginning with Engels. In light of the crises of our nuclearly armed world, it becomes imperative not only to reject what is, but

to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the present. The new visions of the future which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s are rooted in her discovery of Marx's Marxism in its original form as a new Humanism and in her re-creation of that philosophy for our age as Marxist-Humanism. This is recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half-Century of Its World Development*.

Dunayevskaya's philosophic comprehension of her creation and development of Marxist-Humanism, especially as expressed in her 1980s writings, presents the vantage point for re-creating her ideas anew. Seeking to grasp that vantage point for ourselves and make it available to all who struggle for freedom, we have published Dunayevskaya's original 1953 philosophic breakthrough

and her final 1987 Presentation on the Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (1989), and donated new supplementary volumes to the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. News and Letters Committees aims at developing and concretizing this body of ideas for our time.

In opposing this capitalistic, racist, sexist, heterosexist, class-ridden society, we have organized ourselves into a committee form of organization rather than any elitist party "to lead." We participate in all class and freedom struggles, nationally and internationally. As our *Constitution* states: "It is our aim...to promote the firmest unity among workers, Blacks and other minorities, women, youth and those intellectuals who have broken with the ruling bureaucracy of both capital and labor." We do not separate mass activities from the activity of thinking. Send for a copy of the *Constitution of News and Letters Committees*.