

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

Vol. 56 No. 5

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2011

\$1

WORKSHOPTALKS

ER certainties: death and co-pays

by Htun Lin

A patient shows up in the emergency room, expecting care, and wanting to be seen by a doctor. But the gulf between the patient's expectations and the reality of HMO practice is right out of "The Twilight Zone."

Even before the patient gets to see the doctor, a healthcare worker like me walks in as part of a whole army of HMO personnel, setting in motion a battery of incomprehensible protocols—just doing our jobs as they were designed by the HMO bureaucracy. "Sir, we have a few questions..." the interview begins. Big questions before admittance are, "What other insurance do you carry? How are you going to pay for your co-payment?" The befuddled patient often asks, "Can't you just bill me?" "No sir, our policy is that your co-pay is due at the time of service, which is now."

No sooner than a whole gamut of admitting questionnaires is completed, in comes a discharge planner. "Sir, do you have a living trust?...If your heart stops or breathing stops, do you want us to resuscitate you?"

The patient, sometimes not even fully conscious, often looks bewildered, as if to ask, "Gee, I guess so. Doesn't my coming to the emergency room speak for itself? Of course I want something done. And why am I being discharged before I'm even admitted?" We tell them this is just required protocol. That protocol puts discharge ahead of diagnosis and treatment.

continued on p. 3

EDITORIAL Revolts shake Libya, Syria

While the world's attention focused on the long-expected fall of Libyan dictator Muammar al-Qaddafi, the Syrian regime of President Bashar al-Assad has conducted a Ramadan massacre that ranks as one of the greatest atrocities of the counter-revolutionary reaction to the Arab Spring. The Syrian masses will certainly take heart at Qaddafi's defeat, however he might manage to protract it with his military and financial resources. He and Assad are one in their hatred and contempt for their own peoples.

Qaddafi's influence has been reduced to Sirte, the center of his tribe, and a few other places. The basis of his rule was, in the end, as narrow as that of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. The most that he can hope for now, if his "resistance" continues, is to produce a mindless terrorism similar to Saddam's. It is simply the other side of his rule, the terror without the state power.

ARAB SPRING DESTROYS OLD ATTITUDES

Like Assad's brutality, which is directed at one of the most sustained, inspiring and non-violent mass movements that the modern world has witnessed—a movement which should make any one of us proud to be human—Qaddafi's madness incarnates all the contempt with which the masses of the Middle East have been viewed, a cynical, old attitude which the Arab Spring has destroyed utterly.

At the same time, it is important to see the difference between the situations in Libya and Syria. In Syria the Arab Spring has brought us back to the most basic of all understandings: **the opposite of war is revolution.** This is as profound a question as any that has been opened in this year of revolutions.

Qaddafi had a certain symbolic importance, limited

continued on p. 8

ON THE INSIDE

- p. 4 **Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya:
Recession, rate of profit and labor**
- p. 5 **Essay: Education in era of cutbacks**
- p. 8 **Norway's tragedy, mainstream hate**
- p. 9 **California prisoners' strike**

ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Political spectacles cannot hide reality of deranged capitalism

by Ron Kelch

At the end of a months-long political spectacle in Washington—manufactured over irrelevancies concerning what should have been a routine raising of the national debt limit before the Aug. 2 deadline—reality struck with a bombshell: the anemic "jobless" recovery in the U.S. has stalled. The economy is getting worse and there is no solution under capitalism. Revised data revealed that the economy grew at less than 1% in the first half of the year. The 9.1% unemployment rate is really over 16% when you consider that at 63.9% the level of labor participation in the economy is the lowest since the Great Recession started in 2007.

Economists worry that the global economy is poised for a double dip recession. Most agree that, for the foreseeable future, at best there will be low or no growth—namely, a prolonged **depression** in employment. The government spared no expense in immediately rescuing the finance sector in the face of a total meltdown in 2008. A completely inadequate stimulus package, which is about to run out, barely made a dent in mass unemployment. Now, in the face of a new downturn, there is the highest long-term unemployment since the Great Depression.

FANATICAL TEA PARTY POLITICS

Republican Tea Party fanatics, who control the U.S. House of Representatives, were willing to risk a default on the national debt by refusing to raise the debt limit. A default would have triggered a "financial Armageddon" and pushed the already weak U.S. and world economies into an abyss. The mass misery this would have generated was of no consequence to the Tea Party, for whom nothing mattered except gutting spending on all social programs and stopping any tax increases for the wealthy.

The tax structure in the U.S. is so outrageous that billionaire Warren Buffett pleaded with the politicians to stop "coddling" the rich like him whose tax burden, at 17.4%, is less than half of the average 36% paid by

Somalia famine, climate and capitalism

The famine in the Horn of Africa is finally getting attention, though it has been years in the making, now that shocking pictures of starving Somali children have become a regular feature on the nightly news. So far tens of thousands of people have died, half of them children under the age of five.

The suffering of nearly 12 million people in the Horn who could starve without aid, and the flight of nearly one million Somalis to other countries, are not just products of climate change—let alone of just "nature"—but of the way the crumbling global capitalist order is responding to climate change.

The failure in the last two years of what used to be the region's normal rains, bringing about the worst drought in six decades, coincides with rising food prices across the world. This is in a land that has suffered 20 years of war, and general neglect by the rich countries that have profited at the expense of Africans and others while pouring greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

Washington is pointing fingers at Al Shabab, the reactionary Islamist militia that controls southern Somalia, where the famine is worst. U.S. sanctions, coupled with threats from Al Shabab, have kept aid agencies out of that area.

For their part, Al Shabab cares more about their struggle for power than the people they lord over. While

the other 20 employees in his office. Inequality in the U.S., where the top fifth has 84% of the national wealth while the bottom two fifths have a mere 0.3%, is one of the most extreme in the world. One fifth of children in this richest country on earth grow up in poverty. Thus, as the Aug. 2 deadline approached, without a care to these facts or the consequences of their actions, the Republicans got what they wanted. Standard & Poors (S&P) promptly lowered the U.S. credit rating from AAA to AA+, not because of a U.S. inability to pay its debts, but because such a deranged political system can no longer be counted on to do so.



Verizon workers all across the U.S. went out on strike for 15 days to force the company to bargain in good faith. Represented by the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, they agreed not to strike again for 30 days. Verizon called for draconian measures that would have destroyed the union. The workers are ready to resume their strike when necessary.

<http://www.workingfornorman.com>

The religious fanatics who control the Republican Party like Michele Bachmann and Texas governor Rick Perry adhere to "Dominionism," which holds that certain Christians should not let anything get in the way of fulfilling their destiny: to run the government according to their strictures and in turn impose them throughout society. Dominionist views are totally divorced from reality—whether on evolution, global warming or the nature of homosexuality—but, when they include ruining the economy, **then** many capitalists get scared. Such a deranged single-minded reach for power on the part of these ideologues can't be dismissed, however, precisely because capitalists are still so willing to use them to force cuts on workers' pensions, healthcare and education to pay for deficits from wars, tax cuts for the rich, and speculative excesses that caused the downturn.

KEYNESIANISM AND AUSTERITY-INDUCED DOWNWARD SPIRAL

The capitalist dilemma is that austerity has also revealed itself as a deranged policy that makes the deficits worse because it drives down economic growth. In Europe, an austerity-induced downward spiral in employment and living conditions has been met with mass strikes, riots and "Take the Square" movements inspired by the Arab Spring and demands for "Real Democracy." Nationalism is tearing apart Europe's

continued on p. 10

denying there is a famine, they blocked starving people from leaving their territory, on pain of death. They banned immunizations as a "Western plot," increasing the threat of a measles epidemic that has now begun. Villagers report that Al Shabab has blocked rivers to divert their water to commercial farmers.

GOVERNMENT STEALS, PEOPLE STARVE

Nor does the U.S.-supported Transitional Federal Government (TFG) have clean hands. Up to half of aid deliveries are being stolen and resold in Mogadishu. Somali government troops have looted sacks of grain and killed several people in camps where fighting erupted as food was distributed.

An Aug. 14 Human Rights Watch report, "You Don't Know Who to Blame," describes routine violations of civilians' human rights by Somali troops, including indiscriminate shelling and summary killings. The report chronicles similar abuses by militias set up in Somalia by neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya and by the TFG's Ugandan and Burundian allies, fighting under the African Union banner, as well as by Al Shabab.

Those starving people who survived Al Shabab threats and a trek through the desert to cross the border into Kenya have been herded into the area in and around the Dadaab refugee camp—over 400,000 people

continued on p. 10

No power for bishops or mullahs!

by Terry Moon

The racist U.S. Right has used the specter of terrorism in attacking Muslim religious law, Sharia, as a way to build and deepen fear of all Muslims and forward their reactionary agenda of racism against all minorities, sexism, and anti-immigrationism. Genuine feminist organizations like the decades-old Women Living Under Muslim Laws and the Britain-based One Law for All make sure to distinguish themselves from such anti-human organizations.

A new One Law publication, *Enemies Not Allies: The Far-Right*, shows how right-wing British anti-Sharia groups "betray an unwillingness to distinguish between Muslims and Islamists and reveal a desire to target Muslims *en masse*."¹

It exposes a racist U.S. group, led by Pamela Geller and Robert Spencer: "In 2010 Spencer defended his and Geller's colleague Joseph John Jay, who had recommended the 'wholesale slaughter' of Muslim civilians, including children. Spencer has also written that 1. "Enemies Not Allies: The Far-Right," published by One Law for All, August 2011, pp. 5-8.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis



Unite Here, a union for service workers, has filed charges against the management of Hyatt Hotels for turning heat lamps on hotel housekeepers picketing the Chicago Hyatt for safer jobs in July in near 100 degree temperatures. Nearly all hotel housekeepers are women and most are women of color and immigrants. After downsizing, they face even more health and safety risks from increasing workloads involving lifting 100-pound mattresses and cleaning with toxic chemicals. They have the highest injury rate of all service workers, and most report work-related pain that can become physical disabilities. They also report a pattern of sexual harassment from male guests.

* * *

In Birmingham, England, about 500 people attended UK Feminista's two-day "2011 Summer School" in August, which trained new feminist activists in campaigning and direct action. UK Feminista is a new organization created in response to a "massive resurgence" in feminism and designed to link "ordinary people" with existing feminist groups.

* * *

Ultraconservative members of the U.S. Congress have introduced legislation to reinstate the "Global Gag Rule." Previously enacted as an executive order by Republican Presidents and rescinded by Democratic ones, it would cause foreign health organizations that inform their patients about abortion to lose U.S. funding. In the past, this policy caused thousands of deaths from illegal abortions and prevented women from receiving contraception and healthcare. The House has also proposed a 39% cut to Obama's funding request for international family planning and reproductive health services as well as an end to U.S. support for the UN Population Fund.

* * *

Between 1929 and 1974, the state of North Carolina forcibly sterilized over 7,600 victims, most of whom were young, poor, Black, and female. In June, Elaine Riddick, who has fought the legal system for reparations for 40 years, testified before the Governor's Task Force to Determine the Method of Compensation for Victims of North Carolina's Eugenics Board about her own unconsenting sterilization at the age of 14. The taskforce, formed by Gov. Beverly Perdue in 2009, estimates that there are over 2,000 victims still living.

* * *

On Aug. 31 Survivors of Institutional Abuse (SIA) will hold its first press conference at the Center for Inquiry-West in Los Angeles to call attention to damage suffered by survivors of fundamentalist facilities for troubled teens. These cult-like facilities, also including so-called "ex-gay therapy" programs, inflict severe psychological abuse and often physical and sexual abuse. Legislation against them has been defeated in Congress in spite of the deaths that have occurred. An SIA conference for survivors is planned for February 2012.

there is 'no distinction' between American Muslims and Jihadists....Geller and Spencer have also defended Serbian war criminals.... Islamism and the far-Right are two sides of the same coin using similar methods, ideologies and tactics in order to promote their bleak and inhuman worldview."

Clearly it is not fear of religious law trumping secular laws that animates such creatures, as they have not one word to say against another actual religious doctrine seeking global hegemony.

CATHOLIC HIERARCHY DANGEROUS TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN

U.S. Catholic medical institutions now treat one in every six hospital patients and refuse to do abortions or direct sterilizations, honor patients' end of life wishes, give rape victims the morning after pill, or dispense any birth control. They are particularly dangerous to women experiencing miscarriages and ectopic pregnancies—which are always life-threatening—because they delay or outright refuse treatment if there is even a hint of a fetal heartbeat, even when the woman's life is endangered and the fetus is bound to die regardless.

Imagine the outcry if Muslim fundamentalists established a hospital that would allow a woman to die because there were no women doctors available at the time to treat her and they forbade the male doctors to help. Yet we know about the young woman in 2009, only 11 weeks pregnant and suffering such severe pulmonary hypertension that she would die without an immediate abortion. St. Joseph's Hospital broke Catholic policy and the woman received the life-saving abortion. But the Phoenix diocese bishop was so incensed he declared the hospital no longer Catholic, and excommunicated the only nun on the ethics committee. He was sending a message: even if both the fetus and woman will die without an abortion, Catholic law must be obeyed.

No imam or Muslim religious order has permanent observer status at the UN, but the Holy See—the government of the Roman Catholic Church ruled by the Pope—does. In most UN conferences they are granted UN member status, including voice and vote. This has been most problematic at conferences on population, where they partnered with Sudan, Libya, Morocco and others to oppose emergency contraception for refugees, the promotion of condoms as protection against HIV/AIDS, sex education, and making sure that legal abortion is safe and accessible.

The Catholic hierarchy's power, rivaling state/national/international governments, is also manifest in their decades-long cover-up of pedophile rapist priests. The recently published Cloyne Report revealed a 1997 confidential letter from the Vatican's ambassador in Ireland to Irish bishops. It warned them that new Irish child protection policies violated canon law, which states that, instead of turning abusive priests over to civil authorities, they should appeal their cases to the Vatican. Furthermore, the letter dismissed the Irish guidelines as "a study document."

NEED FOR NEW HUMAN SOCIETY

It is far from an isolated incident. As Anne Barrett Doyle, co-director of BishopAccountability.org, put it, the report of "the Cloyne diocese in Ireland is eerily similar to the grand jury report released earlier this year by the district attorney of Philadelphia. Like Philadelphia archdiocesan officials, Catholic church leaders in the Cloyne diocese continue to show a brazen disregard for both civil law and the church's own internal policies."²

It is telling that the racist Muslim-haters never come out for the separation of church and state because they have no problem with their interpretation of Christianity being the law of the land. What the whole rotten debate reveals—be it the bogus threat of Sharia taking hold in the U.S. or the real problem of a Catholic hierarchy determined to keep the power they have and take more—is the need for a total uprooting of such disgusting racism and sexism and the creation of a society based on new actual *human* relationships.

2. "Reactions to the Cloyne Report," http://www.bishop-accountability.org/news/2011/07_08/2011_07_14_Coday_ReactionsTo.htm

WOMAN
AS
REASON

'A Strange Stirring'

A Strange Stirring: 'The Feminine Mystique' and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s, by Stephanie Coontz (Basic Books, New York), 2011.

A Strange Stirring is an examination of the situation of U.S. women during the years surrounding the 1963 publication of Betty Friedan's book *The Feminine Mystique* and how it helped the feminist movement change our culture. Friedan coined the term "Feminine Mystique" to describe what was going on in the lives of middle-class women diagnosed with the mysterious ailment psychologists called "the housewife syndrome." Friedan explained that women suffered depression because they did not have the ideal lives that patriarchal society claimed. They had no opportunity to engage in creative, meaningful work.

Coontz says it's hard today to understand the level of contempt aimed at women in the 1950s and 1960s as well as the negative image that women had of themselves. The book describes some of that period's brutally anti-woman laws. Also, psychologist Sigmund Freud's popular theories of psychoanalysis caused women to live in fear that, whatever they did, they would "emasculate" men and make their children "neurotic." Both the legal system and psychoanalysis assumed that women and men were like two different species, marked not only by completely different abilities and interests but by a supposed psychological need for male dominance and female submission.

WHY FRIEDAN'S BOOK WAS A MUCKRAKER

White middle-class women felt guilty even about feeling frustrated because they had materially better lives than their parents had during the Depression and were aware that African Americans were going through a much harder time struggling for their rights. Friedan countered this by discussing psychologist Abraham Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs, which states that self-actualization is a true need after basic survival needs are met. Friedan also pointed out that men's need for self-development is routinely recognized and celebrated.

Coontz says Friedan "turned Freud on his head" by stating that any women who did try to control their husbands or sons really needed to control their own lives (rather than accept a submissive, "feminine role") in order to have healthy relationships with men. Simplistic, conservative marriage "experts" thought that women's independence and participation in the workforce would damage marriages, but Coontz, an expert on the U.S. family, states that, after initially rising when more women entered the workforce, divorce rates fell. Today, they are lowest in states with over 70% of married women in the workforce. Couples with egalitarian gender views report higher marital quality.



Betty Friedan

Critics complain that Friedan's book did not discuss working-class women who were in the workforce by necessity. Friedan did not want to mention her past as a labor activist because she had seen the damage done to Leftists by McCarthyism. When she founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) and became its first president, most of NOW's early court cases focused on the rights of working-class and African-American women. Coontz discusses mail Friedan received from women stating they did feel they were contributing to society with working-class jobs and that their main reason for quitting was overwork because their husbands refused to do housework or childcare.

THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE STILL LIBERATES

Coontz also tackles Friedan's own myth that she had single-handedly revived the feminist movement. It was still there in organized form as professional women's groups that pressured Presidents behind the scenes on issues such as equal pay. These earlier groups allowed feminists to network and later form NOW.

Coontz asks whether "men and women can, as Friedan predicted, 'finally see each other as they are' rather than through the distorted lens of gender stereotypes?" She briefly discusses new mystiques such as the Motherhood Mystique, in which mothers are afraid they are not doing enough for their children when they are actually spending more time with them than did housewives of the 1950s and 1960s.

Although *The Feminine Mystique* is outdated by its reactionary fears that repressed housewives caused homosexuality and female promiscuity in their children, it still liberates modern readers, especially those living in conservative areas. The rhetoric aimed at women in the 1950s and 1960s is eerily similar to that of the religious Right today. The situation for women described in both books is one that our society could slip back into, but both Coontz and Friedan show a way out.

—Adele

Each issue of *News & Letters*:

- Women WorldWide
- Woman as Reason
- Book reviews
- Women involved in struggle speaking for themselves



Only \$5 for 6 issues

Car wash workers unionizing

Editor's note: On Aug. 6, 15 young Mexican workers and student activists picketed the Robertson Car Wash for seven hours in support of low-wage immigrant car wash workers. They again picketed on Aug. 14, along with additional students from the AFL-CIO Union Summer program.

Of the very few drivers who came to have their cars washed, over half of them turned away, taking flyers describing the reason for the boycott. A janitor who has been picketing here for two years said that at the beginning the car wash was very busy, but since then business has declined.

The CLEAN (Community-Labor-Environmental Action Network) Carwash Campaign is a coalition of labor unions, immigrant rights, environmental and other progressive organizations in support of 7,000 to 10,000 car wash workers struggling to improve the substandard working conditions in the greater Los Angeles area. Its goal is also to help keep the environment clean and keep wastewater from polluting rivers and the ocean. Erik, a youth, writer, student and CLEAN Carwash Campaign organizer, told *News & Letters*:

Los Angeles—When the Campaign first started talking to the workers three years ago, the workers told them what was going on, then said, "We want your help in fixing this." For instance, an owner would have a car washer work ten hours, but maybe pay them for only five or six. The workers needed the money, so they accepted it. There's a lot of that.

The struggle includes having the boss provide clean drinking water, clean and proper restrooms, work in the shade, and rest and lunch breaks. California law says all workers are entitled to such breaks, regardless of their immigration status, but they aren't provided by owners.

There is no standard for how car wash employers operate and treat the workers. Car wash owners operate against existing labor laws. Workers have to handle toxic chemicals, sometimes acids and waxes. Owners try to gain as much money as possible by exploiting the workers. With some workers, there are language barriers.

WORKSHOPTALKS

continued from p. 1

Some days I'm not sure whether it is the patients, or those of us who have to impose these kinds of pressures on them, who are most troubled by that. Healthcare workers don't like to be reduced to mere robots in an assembly line designed by the HMO. Both patients and workers feel dehumanized.

It is a natural human tendency to want to help heal those who are ill. In today's HMOs, in "this economy," that is not the bottom line. We rank and file in the ER feel a certain disquiet and apprehension, as well as indignation, as we see ourselves transformed into automatons, feeding the computer with useless information, just to earn a paycheck.

Everything we do at work is now dictated by the computer, turning healthcare workers into data entry appendages to the machine. Marx's admonition about the factory taking "all the human interest out of work" with its deadly drone of endless repetition and speedup, is gradually permeating the healthcare assembly line.

The unions who are supposed to represent us are no help. Often their mantra is, we should be glad just to have a job "in this economy." Why do we have to become something we don't like in order to keep our job?

MANACLES ON OUR COLLECTIVE THINKING

All the experts and labor "leaders" tell us daily there's a serious recession out there. But I feel the real recession persists in our heads. It is more like a depression, a manacle on our collective thinking. Our society has made choices that dehumanize all of us. Those of us who still have a job feel scarcely more at ease than those who are chronically unemployed. Dehumanization is felt inside and outside the shop floor.

The HMO's bottom line is not about how well the patient's illness is treated, but how to minimize costs. They remind us employees daily that we're a business. The corporate ethos is the survival of the business above all, over anyone else's survival. The work is designed to efficiently get out of committing further resources to keep patients alive or get them well.

Human beings do not naturally conform to behaving like robots. In order to make this happen, the company now offers all kinds of bonuses and incentives. Managers and workers alike have to be **bribed** to act unnaturally. Company executives are all too happy to factor this kind of cost into the budget.

Managers get fat bonuses for keeping staffing as low as possible. The rank and file are also tantalized with the same carrot, if we achieve the goal of cost control according to the metrics prescribed by computers.

Metrics "in this economy," is to enhance the business's bottom line. It compels us to "downsize" our natural desire to care for others. We will not get out of this Twilight Zone unless we collectively deal with the recession inside our minds, reclaiming our own humanity in our everyday working lives.

Sometimes, immigration status is involved.

A lot of times, not understanding that they're entitled to their rights, they fear the authorities. So it's hard for them to understand that their legal status has nothing to do with them as workers. The owners exploit this, threatening them and saying, if you don't cooperate, we're calling the police, or immigration; or, if you don't like this job, go somewhere else. People need to support themselves or their family, so out of that need they stay and put up with all that goes on.

When businesses offer specials at bargain prices, it usually comes at a cost to the worker. There have been times when workers complained about not getting paid or not getting a break. They tell them to go home, or not to come back to work for a month. If the owners are really bad, they'll fire them, saying there are plenty of people who want the job, willing to put up with the abuse and not complain.

Our goal is to reach an agreement with the owners, for them to sign a contract with the CLEAN Carwash Campaign that unionizes the industry and brings about standard working conditions for all car washers.

—Erik, CLEAN Car Wash Campaign

Permanent army of the unemployed

Detroit—The unemployment crisis is reaching far into the future. Whereas many government and private economists have been predicting that the economy will pick up in the next quarter or the next year, new reports conclude that in 50 U.S. metropolitan areas, it will take at least a decade to regain employment lost since the 2008 economic meltdown.

In Detroit, which lost 323,400 jobs, the projection is that it will be 2021 before those jobs are recovered; in Los Angeles, which lost 537,100 jobs, the recovery year is projected to be 2018—and the data do not include the number of new jobs that would have to be created to fill the needs of new workers coming into the job market. The number of jobs required to hire new workers entering the workforce is 100,000 a month, a figure that is unlikely to be met under existing conditions.

What this means is that "the permanent army of the unemployed," that Marx analyzed as being a consistent feature of capitalism, has at no time been more prevalent than today. This is what is keeping the political leaders in this country—from President Obama to Congress and state and local politicians—awake at night as they grapple with the reality of over 20 million Americans unemployed or underemployed.

But even this 20 million is inaccurate when tens of thousands of workers are not counted, both workers unemployed for years who have given up on getting a job, and youth who can't get a job.

The present official 9.1% unemployment rate will not change much, if at all, and there is no time, even in the distant future, that anyone is predicting that the previous unemployment rate of 4.4% before the meltdown will be reached. As a matter of fact, the Washington politicians are now talking about raising the "normal unemployment rate" to 7% or 8%.

Under present conditions of dismal job growth and a housing market consistently losing value due to foreclosures and lack of construction, both major growth factors under capitalism, there is nothing but increasing misery in store for unemployed workers and their families. For many millions, the only thing keeping them from literal starvation and homelessness is their unemployment compensation.

This too is beginning to create nightmares for national and local politicians, because extended unemployment compensation, even after being extended many times to 99 weeks (almost two years), is to expire at the end of 2011. Government payments for all of its benefit programs amounted to \$2.3 trillion in 2010, up from \$1.7 trillion in 2007.

This reflects the increasing dependency of millions of Americans on government payouts due to the economic meltdown and the virtual stalling of the economy, over two years after the Great Recession was officially declared dead. For those unemployed during this period, it has been a Great Depression all over again.

These economic and social dislocations, along with the disgust with a paralyzed government incapable of solving the crises, are generating much discontent among the whole population, but especially among workers and their families. Fears are growing that this discontent cannot be controlled. Proposals for another extension of unemployment benefits are an attempt to keep the lid on what may become a social explosion that challenges the continuing existence of the status quo.

—Andy Phillips

As Others See Us

Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal

I recently finished the first part of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* by Charles Denby, and have to say that it is a great, great read.

The book is a written account of his life as orally told by Denby (or rather, by Si Owens, who originally wrote under the pseudonym of Matthew Ward and later under the pseudonym of Charles Denby). Denby was originally born in Alabama in the early 20th century to a family of sharecroppers and farmers. He joined a massive migration northbound in 1924 when he moved to Detroit to find work in the factories.

During the Depression he was laid off, so he temporarily moved back South, first to Alabama with his family and then to Montgomery when he found the farm work unbearable. He would eventually return to Detroit in the 1940s to work in the auto plants. He was a rank-and-file militant, and recounts numerous episodes of the everyday resistance among Black workers against the white racists of the rural South, against the bosses in the northern factories and the growing union bureaucracy.

From what I can gather from Part I, Denby got involved with a Trotskyist group in the 1940s, which is how he met and came to work with the Johnson-Forest Tendency until it eventually split. He helped build a new formation with Raya Dunayevskaya resulting from that split, known as News and Letters Committees, and later become editor of its newspaper [*News & Letters*].

There's a lot to take away from Part I of the book. I highly recommend it as a really accessible reading on working-class resistance, the relationship of race & class, critiques of the union bureaucracy, and much, much more. Now that I think about it, it is not really an autobiography about Denby; rather, it is an account of social life and working-class self-activity during a particular historical period (1920s–1940s)....

EVERYDAY RESISTANCE & SELF-ACTIVITY

Denby highlights the everyday resistance of workers around him to their oppression. The book is a solid reminder of the fact that the essence of our day-to-day life is struggle! In one sense, this struggle can (and

should!) take the form of organizing, collective struggle with others. In another sense, there is a lot of individual struggle and self-overcoming that happens as people have to fight just to preserve their self-respect in the face of constant attack.

Existence within a white supremacist, patriarchal capitalist society comes at the cost of unceasing battle against the relations that try to twist us and turn us into objects, things that are less than human.

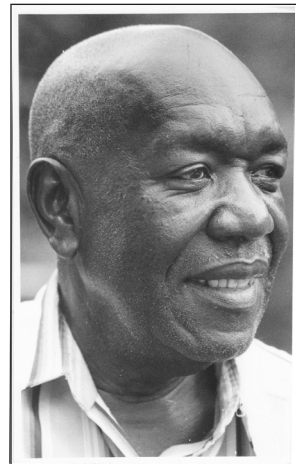
This recurring theme in the text really made me think of how right now, as a young twenty-something militant, I look to struggle with excitement, some fear or self-doubt but mostly positive anticipation. But imagine spending 20, 30, or 40 years engaged in that day-to-day struggle?

That shit wears you down, it absorbs so much energy and can age us much quicker than we might otherwise feel. It takes a lot to keep fighting, and I imagine it is really only the collective struggle, vibrant movements and revolutions that can revive us and help maintain us over time.

Denby's reflections on growing up in the Jim Crow South capture very well this day-to-day struggle. But he does so in a way that is really positive and highlights how most Black folks of his generation didn't take no shit! Fuck the textbook histories of slavery and Jim Crow that portray us as walking around with our heads down all the time, all scared and timid until some big Leader comes along and brings change (MLK, Malcolm, etc.). Denby shows a strong community with many individuals who were "meaner than hell" and who put fear into the hearts of the bosses and racists....

—From *Nothing but a Human*, by L Boogie

To see the entire post on L Boogie's blog, visit: <http://nothingbutahuman.wordpress.com/2011/08/21/themes-from-indignant-heart-a-black-workers-journal-part-1/>



Charles Denby/Simon Owens

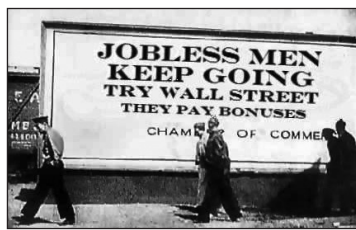
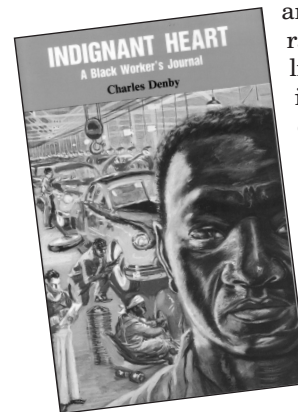


Image by Mike Licht, NotionsCapital.com, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/notionscapital/4258319634/>



FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: Written in the midst of the last double-dip recession in the U.S., the piece excerpted here was originally titled, "In the U.S. and globally: deep recession, military buildup and the pulling apart of political alliances." It was published as the lead article in the April 1982 N&L.

The depth of the economic crisis has sent capitalist ideologues to search for a new expression rather than to face the truth that the U.S. is on the brink of a Depression. The front page of the Business Section of the March 14, 1982, *New York Times* has come up with the expression, "The Great Repression." It also names "who" is responsible: "The Government caused it." This is an apt description of the crisis both economically and politically, at a time when the genocidal war in El Salvador is being propped up by the Reagan Administration. While the *New York Times* hardly meant to point to the capitalist system itself as the culprit, it is impossible to avoid confrontation with the irreversible decline of capitalism.

The parallelism between the ever-deepening chronic unemployment, the industrial stagnation and the political repression—in Latin America, in the Middle East, and indeed globally—characterizes both the U.S. and that other nuclear Titan, Russia, who are fighting for single world domination to the brink of a nuclear holocaust. The determinant that has so far halted their drive to a war that would put a question mark over the very survival of humanity is the global mass discontent—which is seen not only in the Polish rebellion behind the Iron Curtain, and the open revolt of the masses in Latin America, but also in the undercurrent of revolt in the U.S.

THE MILITARY BUILDUP

The frantic militarization—not just for this year and next, but over a whole five-year period—adds up to the hallucinatory sum of \$1.6 trillion. It speaks loudly and clearly about the coexistence of two total opposites: limitless, unconscionable expenditures for the military, on the one hand; and outright poverty for the millions, on the other....

U.S. scientists have pointed to a corollary to this fantastic expenditure: the military has drained no less than 25% of all scientists worldwide and 60% of overall scientific research. They have also shown that for every billion dollars spent for the military 36,000 fewer jobs are generated than would be generated if that billion were expended in the civilian sector....

So massive have been the anti-nuclear demonstrations, both in the U.S. and in the West in general, that this opposition is the element that has the government leaders throughout the world, and their ideologues, so concerned that they are trying to hide the relationship between the militarization and the state of the economy....

It isn't only the Reagan Administration but the whole capitalist system that seems to know nothing but how to go from war to depression and back again. We can see the integrality of capitalist economy and actual war not only in general, but very specifically during the last decade. Although the quadrupling of oil prices following the 1973 Arab-Israeli War enabled Western imperialism to blame the whole, deep 1974 economic crisis and soaring inflation rates on the oil sheiks, the truth is that, as much as the quadrupling exacerbated it, it was the Vietnam War that was the main cause of the crisis.¹...

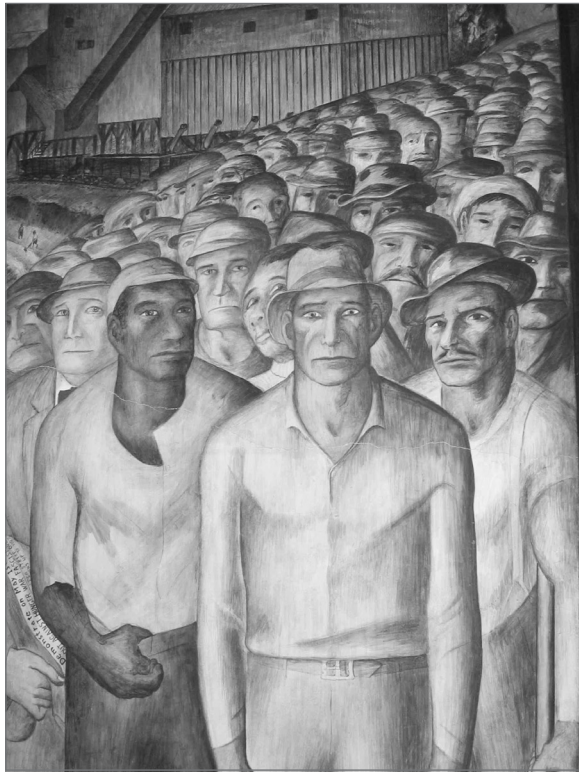
In a word, short of war, business goes on as usual. Economics remains the gut question, and it helps not a whit that Ronald Reagan's ideological twin, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, also practices "supply-side economics." On the contrary, in both cases their policy further deepened the economic crises in each country.

As Robert Solomon, the former advisor to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve

1. For our analysis of the relationship of the economy to the Vietnam War, showing both that war's degeneracy and its repercussions on the U.S. economy, see the section "U.S. Imperialism-Capitalism in the Throes of Many Crises: Economic, Political, Labor, Racial, Sexist" in our *Perspectives 1977-78*. See also *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis*, published by *News & Letters*, 1978.

Deep recession, rate of profit and the supreme commodity, labor power

Board, put it in summing up the year, "Demand and supply are the bread and butter of the economists, but the supply-siders would like us to ignore the demand effects of tax cuts. This would be myopic....The classical remedy is a lengthy recession in which workers accept lower wage increases out of fear of losing their jobs." The labor bureaucracy's bowing to these capitalist demands with the massive cuts in wages as well as hard-won health and retirement benefits, only spells out the beginning of the end of its leadership, even as it points to the disintegration of capitalism itself.



Mural from Coit Tower, San Francisco, California

Instead of Reagan's tax cuts unleashing a vigorous expansion of the economy, we are now confronted with a prolonged slowdown in growth. David Stockman, Director of Reagan's Office of Management and Budget, in his confessional in the *Atlantic Monthly*, put it most succinctly when he proved that supply-side economics was simply "a cover for the reduction of income taxes in the upper bracket."²

THAT SUPREME COMMODITY, LABOR POWER, AND ACCUMULATION OF CAPITAL

The most massive restructuring of industry since the Depression has brought about the most prolonged period of capital shortage. Capital investment fell so greatly that in the non-energy sector there was an **under**-investment by \$50 billion in 1980.

With high technology as the main factor, only the biggest monopolies, whether in agriculture or industry, will survive. This, of course, leads to ever greater concentration and centralization of capital in ever fewer hands. Strange as it may sound to those looking only at the lush profits of the few, there is a shortage of capital to sustain the boom that isn't. But the **rate of profit**, or what the capitalists call "the average rate of return on equity," declines.

Without acknowledging that capitalism's profits come from the unpaid hours of labor of that supreme commodity, labor power, capitalists see that the more machinery they invest in, and the fewer workers they need to run those computerized machines, the less surplus value do they have. In a word, no matter how lush the mass of profits—and only in oil and high technology are they that lush—the rate is less.

The truth is that so large is the capital needed for new investment for each unit of production, that the amount of output in 1980 shrank 38% from what it was in 1978. At present, the average rate of return in industry is just under 8%, which is hardly more than one-half what it was for all U.S. companies only five years ago. We must repeat that what characterizes the global economy—the U.S. and West Europe, Russia and East Europe—is a **permanent** lower growth rate.

And, despite all the ballyhoo about how people would be "rehired," as soon as they are retrained in robotics or hired in the service industries, the truth is that manufacturing, even with the economic base having been eroded, is the one that employs one-third of the nation's work-force.

What they call "a wild ride for U.S. capital in the 1980s" is actually a wild ride for the workers into the **permanent army of the unemployed and their pauperization**. This is what the economists try to hide by evoking the word "total," and speaking of the "total factor of productivity," as if indeed capital were productive. At the same time, these capitalist ideologues themselves call non-productive investments "more like consumption expenditures than an investment."

In a word, when it gets down to the actual facts, so great is the need for capital investment, per machine or per robotic, and so little is the demand for labor, that they fail to anticipate their rate of profit sinking lower. Since it's only from living labor that they get all their unpaid hours of labor, and since they do not want to admit any such thing, the cry for inclusion of capital productivity is just one more way to have the **mass of profits** hide the decline in the rate of profit.

* * *

Over 100 years ago, Karl Marx, who had removed political economy from an intellectualistic debate and

2. See also John Kenneth Galbraith on "The Budget and the Bust," *New Republic*, March 17, 1982.

centered it on the relations of capital and labor at the point of production, as well as in the political class struggle, had called the decline in the rate of profit the "pans asini" of capitalism: "**The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself.**"³

It is the inescapable result of that absolute contradiction of capitalism: On the one hand, its technological revolutions are always calling for more and more constant capital, and less and less variable capital (workers); and, on the other hand, the only source of surplus value is from that supreme commodity, labor power.

Ever since then, even those bourgeois ideologues who build their own business cycle theories on this, have been busy pointing instead to what Marx called "counteracting factors," as if these were not just tendencies but the actual solution, one that would overcome the absolute general contradiction of capitalism and transcend it. The truth is there is no way out of the absolute contradiction.

This does not mean that capitalism will "automatically" collapse. It needs a good, hefty, determined, revolutionary push from the masses of workers. At the present moment, the steelworkers in Belgium, who have already been on General Strike for weeks, are showing the way, but the undercurrent of revolt globally, including the U.S., will not be restricted to strikes. With the coming of Spring we are sure to see massive anti-nuke demonstrations, women's liberation struggles, the Black masses' intense opposition to Reaganism, and the outbursts of youth discontent in every field from the unconscionable cuts in education to being thrown into the ranks of the unemployed before they ever had a job. They will surely coalesce not only in expressing their opposition to Reaganism and its immoral minority calling itself the "Moral Majority," but in working out so new a relationship of theory to practice as to become the foundation for truly new human relations.

3. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 293 (Kerr edition), emphasis in the original. See, indeed, the entire Part III on "The Law of the Falling Tendency of the Rate of Profit," pp. 247-313.

In this year of revolts across the Middle East and North Africa...

Now available in Arabic translation:

**الإشتراكية
والحرية**

في تاريخ حركات التحرر الإجتماعي والقومي
أوروبا-أمريكا، إفريقيا-آسيا
رايا دوناييفسكايا

Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today

the classic book by Raya Dunayevskaya. Made possible by the Victor Serge Foundation, the new translation can be found in pdf form on the web at

<http://newsandletters.org/Announce/MFArabic.asp>

"Dunayevskaya [translated] the young Marx's essays on alienation and humanism...on which she based her new interpretation of Marx. In 1956 the Hungarian revolution of workers and intellectuals against statist Communism, under the banner of Marxist humanism, confirmed Dunayevskaya's hypothesis. In 1958, she summed up her work to that point in **Marxism and Freedom**, an essential book that we present to Arabic-speaking readers thanks to the care of our great friend Maâti Monjib."

—from Richard Greeman's Preface to the Arabic edition of **Marxism and Freedom**

For paper copies, please contact: Maâti Monjib, Enseignant-Chercheur / Institut des Etudes Africaines, Avenue Allal El Fassi / BP: 8968, Code postal: 10100 / Rabat, MOROCCO Tel 212(0) 37 77 12 74 or /37 77 12 72, Fax: 212(0) 37 77 84 25 mmonjib@yahoo.fr

ESSAY

Needed: debate on education in era of cutbacks

by Erica Rae

From college level all the way down to pre-school, education is in crisis across the U.S. Teachers are made the scapegoats for why students are not "measuring up" to keep our country competitive in a glob-

ing some that have logged over 140,000 miles. As a result, many students will lose their school buses and/or walk farther, and have to go through dangerous neighborhoods, and unsafe intersections on their own. Those who do get picked up will be on buses longer (right now the limit is one hour each way, including kindergarten children), and suffer overcrowding as more students will be jammed on each bus.

In a show of parent support for teachers, one mother of a fourth grade student in Will County, who sits on her district's transportation committee, said, "I'm not a fan," when asked about cutting the bus service in a rural area where there are limited sidewalks for her son to walk on, "but if they're firing a music and an art teacher, just so I can have a bus, that doesn't make sense to me."

HOW DID IT GET SO BAD?

The beginning of the crisis in education started a generation ago when then President Ronald Reagan began serious cuts in education and social services. That was furthered by

the first George Bush. With the institutionalization of "No Child Left Behind" under the second George Bush, the entire educational system was thrown into chaos. Triggering a maze of paperwork and lack of organization, this was a direct attack on poor school districts where suddenly everything from teacher salaries, to textbook selection, to non-union charter schools, to for-profit institutions of higher learning, to standardized "testing, testing, testing" of anything that moves, threw the entire educational system into complete disarray.

A generation of research in the field of early education, emphasizing the need for developing critical thinkers to address the serious problems our world faces, was thrown out in favor of creating a hatred of reading and reducing literacy to knowing the letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds.

Scientific study of evolution going back to Darwin was thrown out in favor of "intelligent design." Prayer was brought back into the public school system. Funding was taken away for school lunch programs, after-school programs—which literally saved children's lives in dangerous neighborhoods—field trips, capital campaigns to fix collapsing buildings, scholarships for minority students (who have become the majority in public schools), forget about the immigrant and second language learning community, physical education, art, music, and special education programs... the list goes on and on.

With the election of President Barack Obama there was a sense of hope in many people, including teachers. But with the installment of Arne Duncan as the Secretary of Education and the focus on "Race to the Top," progressive people in the field of education believe we're looking at a wolf in sheep's clothing.

The fundamental problem with "Race to the Top" is that it is based on a capitalist economic model applied to the field of education. Educational funding is based on competition. In a speech to the National Urban League in July 2010, Obama said that that program was the "most important thing he had done in office." But there was scathing critique from many of the nation's leading civil rights organizations, such as the NAACP. New York University History Professor Diane Ravitch had this to say:

Evaluating teachers in relation to student test scores will have many adverse consequences. It will make the current standardized tests of basic skills more important than ever, and even more time and resources will be devoted to raising scores on these tests. The curriculum will be narrowed even more than under George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind, because of the link between wages and scores. There will be even less time available for the arts, science, history, civics, foreign language, even physical education. Teachers will teach to the test. There will be more cheating, more gaming the system... (Huffpost Politics, "Obama's Race to the Top Will Not Improve Education," Aug. 1, 2010).

Earlier this summer, there was a great deal of fanfare in Illinois, as Senate Bill 7 was signed into law by Governor Quinn. It was hailed as a "model" of cooperation and good will that the whole country could follow. We heard of the wish to "not have all the drama" that happened during the Wisconsin winter. At the table for this heavenly collaboration were state legislators from the right and left, the Chicago Teachers' Union, the National Education Association, the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Federation of Teachers, the new mayor of Chicago, community activists, parents, etc. The goal was focused on the best interests of children. Everyone would be an equal partner and move forward in educational harmony and a spirit of good will.

But then, details started to emerge: a 75% "yes" vote to strike is now required from the entire union membership; a 4% raise for Chicago teachers is gone; tenure is gone; pensions are gone; healthcare premiums will increase; longer school days will be mandated; home visits will be mandated for all teachers (whether traveling alone to safe neighborhoods or crack houses); the school year will be extended; a five-year performance contract focused on student test scores will be established for teachers, and will provide the basis for raises, tenure, and dismissal.

The icing on the cake was when the Chicago Board of Education, on June 22, voted to give the new CEO, Jean-Claude Brizard, a salary of \$250,000. The Board approved the highest salaries ever for Chicago Public School (CPS) administrators. This was done while the CPS system enjoys a \$720 million deficit. The Illinois budget for the coming year, adopted by the legislature, is \$3 billion less than that requested by Governor Quinn. This resulted in an immediate reduction of \$200 million in funding for pre-K-12 programs across the state in 2011-12. This was on top of an additional loss of \$415 million in federal funding. This is the "model" that Illinois wants to present for the rest of the nation to follow?

THE ARAB SPRING AND CHICAGO SUMMER

The Arab Spring burst onto the scene and galvanized many across the world hoping for a new way of life. It helped inspire those in Wisconsin who took matters into their own hands and held the state capitol and government at bay for weeks, opposing a move, spearheaded by Governor Scott Walker, to set the clock back on all labor unions, especially teachers, who he claimed are known to be "troublemakers."

We Illinois teachers wonder whether we will experience the first teachers' strike since 1995.

There is much debate. Some of us talk of forcing a re-opening of the contract on certain pertinent issues; of more sacrifices and belt tightening needed by everyone and that extending the school day will only benefit the children; of broadening the discussion so that a strike is not merely called over the take-back of a 4% raise and the gutting of a pension plan but the attack on labor nationwide. Others of us talk of the hard work of teachers to form relationships with the families of the children they teach and community organizations so that parent/community support for a teacher's strike will be stronger.

One retired teacher talked of teachers being made scapegoats for all of society's ills and said, "Teachers need a new strategy to re-establish themselves as professionals rather than just accepting the definition of a management-worker relationship." One columnist and former Board of Education member from the *Kent (Ohio) Ravenna Record-Courier* said:

Controlling our common schools down from a corporate top, up from a budgetary bottom line, or sideways by slandering and mistrusting one another is not democracy and it is not sustainable. If we as citizens, school boards and unions are not all at the table where decisions are made about our schools, our children and communities will be lunch for the rich and powerful.

Under capitalism, the meaning of what is defined as education has been narrow: you go to school, take tests, memorize, take more tests, get good grades, do this many more times, maybe get a job making a decent wage, pay taxes, and then you die. Occasionally, new ways in thinking about education rise to the top, such as with the Paris Commune or what is struggling to happen within the Middle East. Discussing new ideas in education through *News & Letters* is critical, not just as blips on the radar screen of history but as long-term reality where "education" promotes the development of students, from early childhood to old age, and will not separate the individual human being from the community and world in which s/he lives.



Urszula Wislanka / News & Letters

Students, teachers and community members protesting recent education budget cuts in California.

al market that is falling apart across the globe. But, what is the reality?

At the **college level**: many students are facing unemployment and are moving back with their parents. The average student is starting off adult life approximately \$30,000 in debt, \$24,000 due to educational loans. Close to 20% of college seniors carry monthly credit card balances greater than \$7,000 and can easily slip into debt, destroying their credit ratings for life and the ability to use credit to secure basic needs like an apartment or a car. In Chicago, where I live, two-year city colleges have among the lowest graduation rates in the nation. Of the seven city colleges, Harold Washington holds the highest rate with 9.8% of its students actually making it to graduation. Olive-Harvey has the lowest rate with 3.3%.

At the **high school level**: the recent Programme of International Student Assessment comparing 34 countries, shows the U.S. ranks 14th in reading, 17th in science and 25th in math. The focus of this assessment is not memorization of facts, but the application of acquired knowledge to problem solving.

At the **grade school level**: "60 Minutes" recently shined the spotlight on the impact of poverty on the education of homeless students. Based on our own government projections of unemployment, the poverty rate for children in this country will soon hit 25%. Those children will be the largest U.S. generation to be raised in hard times since the Great Depression. Many go to bed hungry and cannot sleep because their stomachs hurt from lack of food.

During the last five years in Illinois everything imaginable has been cut, cut, cut from education funding. What is left? School buses! Because of the cuts in transportation funding nationally, the delays from the state in reimbursing school districts, and the increased cost of gas, the state is now considering doing away with bus service in various districts. State officials recently told many superintendents that they may not receive final reimbursement for the past year's transportation costs until the end of this year.

Many districts are delaying the purchase of new buses to replace many that are questionable, includ-

How to contact	
NEWS & LETTERS COMMITTEES	
CHICAGO 228 South Wabash, #230 Chicago, IL 60604 Phone 312-431-8242 Fax 312-431-8252 MEETINGS Call for Information	NEW YORK NYNewsandLetters@gmail.com Phone 914-462-3691
DETROIT P.O. Box 27205 Detroit, MI 48227 MEETINGS Sundays, 2:00 PM Write for information	LOS ANGELES MEETINGS Sundays 6:00 PM Echo Park United Methodist Church 1226 N. Alvarado (North of Sunset, side door)
FLINT, MI P.O. Box 3384, Flint, MI 48502 MEETINGS Write for Information	OAKLAND P.O. Box 3345 Oakland, CA 94609 Phone 510-658-1448 banandl@yahoo.com MEETINGS Contact for information
INTERNET	
Email arise@newsandletters.org	WORLD WIDE WEB www.newsandletters.org



**REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION:
ARAB SPRING AS CROSSROADS IN HISTORY**

The West supports any revolution where they benefit from it financially. Libya has oil reserves—much like Iraq—so of course the U.S. is going to support a revolution in that country. That "support" is not for moral purposes—because if that were truly the case then every revolution, big and small, in every country, would receive the same support. That support is based on the capitalist nature of the West and on hopes that any new leadership will be more susceptible to Western graft and corruption (called business) when it comes to that country's resources.

**African-American revolutionary
Wisconsin**

Teenage unemployment is always higher than any other group, but the conditions are so bad now that it has reached 25.5%, the highest number since records on teenage unemployment started to be kept in 1948. That affects about 1.64 million teenagers 16-19 years old. This is about three times the national average of 9.1%. One of the main reasons for this problem is that older workers, many of whom have been unemployed for years, are taking any job available.

**Retiree
Detroit**

The article on the Civil War last issue hits close to home. Racism in this society is so horrific I don't know how people survive it. I have a cousin from the South who is worried about the narrow-mindedness there. She is disappointed in Obama, but can't talk about it because so many people hate him because of his color. The South is the key to the U.S. South Carolina, where Boeing is going, was one of the last states to have chain gangs.

**Working-class white
Bay Area, Cal.**

Gerry Emmett's lead on the Israeli right-wing connections changed my mind about the Tea Party. I used to think they were just white buffoons. But when the Israeli right wing promotes settlements, calls for death to all liberals, Arabs, etc., its relation to the Tea Party shows how pernicious Tea Party'ers are.

**Disgusted Voter
West Coast**

I'm concerned that the Arab Spring becomes a crossroads in history that both defines revolution in motion and the effect that individuals can have on viable change; and which defines how easily a positive moral and philosophical change supported by the masses

may become a nightmare, without truly compelling discussion that sparks action about what comes next, after revolution.

History has shown that there has to be a balance, especially in emerging democracies, that allows the radicalism of youth to be transmitted throughout the new doctrines that are created in order to avoid the process of creating a new conservative attitude that is worse than what was overthrown in the first place.

**Student of Marxism
Wisconsin**

The lead in the July-August *N&L* was exciting because it showed the deep connection between the Arab Spring and



the Gaza youth who started a new revolution by searching for hope. That spirit pressured the ruling factions of the Palestinians to unite. The Black revolutionary who said the revolution will not be televised expressed the frustration the Black youth felt in inner cities everywhere. And the vision of mass non-violent protest among Palestinian youth has shaken the Israeli rulers.

**Also excited
Northern California**

I enjoyed Ron Kelch's article on "Greece, democracy and the economic crisis" (July-August *N&L*), with one caveat. I do not think "Obama fervently believes" in anything. I find it entirely likely that he knows full well that capital's all-pervading need for continual expansion has hit the wall of a finite market—the planet—and it will be capitalist dog eat dog from here on in.

**Observer
Michigan**

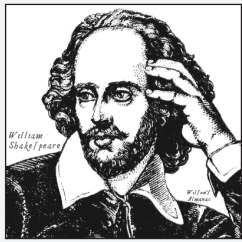
I disagree with the Editorial headline in the July-August *N&L*. These are not Obama's wars. He inherited them and he is carrying on the duties of the office he ran for. I don't defend Obama on healthcare, and all the other things, but these are not his wars.

**Subscriber
California**

The conflicting ways in which the U.S. government is bound up in the crises makes it the time to talk about revolution, not as abstraction, but as what the movements on the ground are raising: what is real democracy. Obama is beholden to a reactionary discourse on the debt, rather than speaking of the relentless class war that is driving it. We

KARL MARX AND WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

It should be noted that 2011 is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's last full-length play, *The Tempest*. Nobody was more steeped in Shakespeare than Karl Marx, and he would not have let an occasion like that pass unremarked. According to his daughter Eleanor, "As to Shakespeare, he was the Bible of our house, seldom out of our hands or mouths. By the time I was six, I knew scene upon scene of Shakespeare by heart."



Marx was also the most Shakespearean of writers and thinkers, and there is a great study still to be written on the many resonances between Marx, Hegel and Shakespeare. Not least of Marx's references to Shakespeare's poetry is the great phrase in the *Communist Manifesto* that describes the impact of the rising bourgeoisie on society: "All that is solid melts into air..."

Or as *The Tempest*'s Prospero, whose magic anticipated the new bourgeois order, has it:
Our revels now are ended. These our

*actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.*

This still repays endless thought. And Marx's great *Manifesto*: "All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind."

**Tim Finnigan
Chicago**

READERS' VIEWS

need to get beyond the illusions of political freedom and reach for a real freedom, for which there are now new openings.

**Ron Kelch
Oakland**

The criminal nature of politics regarding the Aug. 2 deadline for raising the debt limit was playing with the lives of real people. It is time for a revolution of the voters to call the politicians to task and to start demanding a true democracy. To talk about not mailing out Social Security checks, Veteran's benefits, salaries for troops, etc., meant not caring that people—real people—would not have been able to pay rent, buy food, pay car notes, and would even default on their homes. That is criminal and proves this nation needs a revolutionary overhaul.

**Outraged
Midwest USA**

Hillary Clinton urged the Burmese Generals to "take steps to regain the trust of their people." Who is she kidding? Can we afford to trust a bunch of military thugs who decide to bunker themselves in a "capital" (in exile), and purchase missiles which they intend to use on its dissidents? She concludes with this: "The choice is clear. They can take these steps and gain back the confidence of their people and the trust of the international community or they can continue down the path they've been on."

Isn't it crystal clear to all but the Obama/Clinton foreign policy team that the Generals will gladly continue to accept the latter option? Especially when Americans and Europeans are willing to look the other way while their trading "partners" (like China, Korea, Japan, Indonesia) continue to also trade with a country that practices slave labor of its ethnic minorities.

**Burmese American
California**

We dream together of a better world for all, where individual drive and ambition is focused on society rather than private goals. Where humanity becomes a single living organism. The self becomes all and the all becomes self. Socialism must be established before any of that can come about with a proletarian liberation movement. Under capitalism we face the Crackerjacks who praise piracy, private property, and private wealth at the expense of others. We must first sweep away the old system with revolution. World economic events will swell our ranks to the point where one day revolution will be here.

**Sid Rasmussen
Iowa**

The July-August "Woman As Reason" column takes up the Arab Spring, focusing on women. Women have been a crucial dimension to extending the revolution. However, when Terry Moon concludes that the key is independence of the women's movement, I am not convinced that autonomy is enough to get to full revolution. The question that needs to be answered is what is revolution. It is clearly on the agenda in Egypt when the first act of counter-revolution was the attack on women on March 8.

Instead, now many intellectuals and various tendencies are being put on the stage as "credible" spokespeople for the revolution.

**Urszula Wislanka
Oakland**

Gerry Emmett's reportage and assessment of the Arab Spring *vis a vis* the Palestinian youth, Greece and Spain was impeccable. We all need a "positive vision of freedom." And in order to attain one, we should start by redefining "freedom" in human terms, not capital's.

**Steady Reader
Michigan**

**REMEMBERING
CHRISTINA SANTIAGO**

Queer rights advocate Christina Santiago was killed when the concert stage collapsed at the Indiana State Fair in August. Ms. Santiago worked tirelessly to better the lives of all Queer people, especially women. She earned her degree in women's studies and sociology from the University of New York at Albany. In 2006, she began working at Howard Brown Health Center (HBHC) and in 2008 became the Lesbian Community Care Project's (LCCP) programming manager.

Ms. Santiago helped greatly in expanding health services for HBHC, for which she received the Spirit Award in 2010. She was in the midst of leading HBHC's new LifeCycle Project to meet the healthcare needs of the entire Queer community. She was also the Programming Chair for Amigas Latinas—which advocates for Latina Lesbians, Bisexual, Transgender and questioning women.

Christina Santiago is already missed and will always be remembered as one of the LGBT community's "fiercest and brightest warriors," as said by Amigas Latinas. Donations may be made in her memory at the Amigas Latinas site, www.amigaslatinas.org, or donations may be sent for her family's expenses or for the LCCP to Howard Brown Health Center at 4025 N. Sheridan Rd., Chicago, IL 60613. See http://howardbrown.org/hb_services.asp?id=1900.

**Elise
Chicago**

THELONIOUS MONK

Paul Geist captures something important about being human in his review of the documentary "Straight, No Chaser" (July-August *N&L*). He re-



minds that Thelonious Monk disliked doing more than two takes because

"after that the spirit dissipates as you imitate your own performance." But record producers pushed for as many takes as needed to achieve the buying public's perception of "genuine" Thelonious Monk.

Monk probably didn't mind selling records so long as people caught the spirit of creativity. Otherwise we collapse into imitations of others or of ourselves.

**D.M.
Bay Area**

**CANADA AS 'CONTESTATAIRE'
SOCIETY**

I'm not sure how much Canada has changed with the last federal election. Voters tend to throw out the party in power no matter who it is, so the election of the Conservatives may not mean much real support for them.

The problem is that we remain a "contestataire" society, always fighting over every individual ill without getting anywhere in the broader picture. There are strikes every day with little resolved; people focus their anger on one issue at a time without connecting them, and we move from crisis to crisis to crisis.

Until we have an overall view and a deeper idea, a real understanding of the kind of society we want Canada to be, we will continue to spin our wheels. Nonetheless, the fact that English and French are now finally working together in some ways is encouraging. We'll see what comes of it.

**Retired dairy farmer
Comté de Berthier, Québec**

MAN-MADE DISASTERS: NUCLEAR POWER AND WORLD WAR

I agree with Narihiko Ito in his article on "Fukushima's man-made disaster" (July-August *N&L*) that Tokyo Electric Power Co. is completely corrupt, as are promoters of nuclear power all over the world. They, along with the pro-nuclear scientists, have lied to themselves and to us about nuclear power being safe, clean and green. There is no safe way to dispose of nuclear power's deadly waste with tens of thousands of years of half-life. There is, however, technology to process waste into nuclear bombs.

Everything produced under capitalism, including nuclear power plants, are commodities, and there is a drive to constantly expand the production of more commodities. The only way to abolish that (and eliminate unemployment) is to replace capitalist production with a new society of freely associated workers who will abolish what Marx called the "law of value." That would be the foundation of a new society of new human relations.

**Japanese American
Los Angeles**



Editor's note: Our solidarity message, which was translated into Japanese and read out at meetings in several cities, began as follows:

News and Letters Committees—the Marxist-Humanist organization founded by Raya Dunayevskaya in the United States 56 years ago—sends our revolutionary greetings.... In calling to your attention our longstanding solidarity with you in the international antiwar struggle, we, once again, are proud to quote our fundamental opposition to imperialist war, established in the *Constitution* of News and Letters Committees adopted in 1956:

"The age of state-capitalism, whether in its single-party totalitarian form or its parliamentary form, can offer nothing to humanity but the prospect of another war. The advent of nuclear weapons, possessed by all contenders for world power, seriously raises the question of the survival of humanity in the advent of such a struggle. We believe that the working people are the only force in the world today capable of changing present-day society and of evolving the forms and shape of future society."...

LABOR STRUGGLES IN 2011

As schools open, unprecedented moves against education workers continue to weaken the quality of public education. In New York, 19 "failing" schools have been kept open at the price of 40% of their teachers' evaluations to be based on student test scores. (Widely known, but too little discussed, is the gross unreliability of measuring teacher performance with test scores.)

And in Detroit, Michigan Public Act 4 of 2011—the new emergency manager law—has been used to modify school employee collective bargaining agreements.

Two separate lawsuits have been filed against the 10% wage cuts and increases in healthcare costs. But why didn't the Detroit Federation of Teachers and AFSCME Council 25 file one single suit, to prevent management from

dividing teachers from other employees? It's not only the teachers who create a quality education.

**Retired Teacher
Detroit**

The 300 foreign exchange students who went on strike to protest their conditions of work and life were working in a Hershey's warehouse in Palmyra, Penn., and got a real dose of life in the U.S. Not only were their working conditions horrible, including standing all day and lifting heavy boxes, they were also charged a \$400 monthly rent fee.

They all had to pay for their visas, as much as \$6,000, and were paid at or near the minimum wage, which meant that some of them did not make enough to pay for their visas. So they did what workers all over the world do when working under unbearable conditions—they went on strike. You can bet that some heads will roll for this now international incident.

**Observer
Michigan**

There are many concessions in the United Auto Workers current contracts with the auto companies that the rank-and-file autoworkers want to have revoked, but their top priority is the divisive two-tier wage structure. At an autoworkers conference held in Detroit last month, this provision received the most attention and the workers made crystal clear that they knew how poisonous two-tier was and their opposition to it. They are now waiting to see if the union leadership will act on this vital demand.

**Andy Phillips
Detroit**

WHY WRITE FOR N&L?

I like writing for *N&L* because the writing has great company with the content of the publication as a whole. Quite frankly, it is one of the few papers that I read that always has something to say from cover to cover that is both intelligent and informative.

**Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin**

VOICES FROM BEHIND THE BARS



Thanks to *News & Letters* for covering the Georgia, Ohio, and now the Pelican Bay SHU prisoner protests.

The sad truth is none of us (prisoners or non-prisoners) can ignore the reality of the loss of civil and human rights over the past decade.

What was considered inhuman treatment limited to psychopaths like Hitler's SS is now defended as official U.S. policy (kidnapping, torture, denial of effective counsel). In fact many of the contract employees for the U.S. military prison system (both official and hidden) are U.S. state and federal prison employees.

The cross-fertilization of the U.S. international torture network with domestic prisons has and will have an impact on the deterioration of the civil and human rights of prisoners and the general U.S. populations alike.

At some point freedom-loving people will need to design a justice system worthy of its name by promoting rehabilitation of citizens, not retribution.

**Prisoner
Texas**

I'd like the paper to highlight how the "one party" capitalists pretend to be two parties, one for the rich and one for the poor. Yet the poor keep getting poorer and the rich richer. And the slogan of "lesser of two evils" isn't human.

**Prisoner
Youngstown, Ohio**

I really like the way the paper is put together. My only request is that some sports would be good to include.

**Prisoner
Corcoran, Cal.**

TO OUR READERS: Can you donate the price of one sub (\$5) for a prisoner who cannot pay for one? It will be shared with many others.

Dear comrades,

We send you an Overseas Appeal for the annual Antiwar Assembly in Japan. Japanese working masses are still faced with terrible radiation from the Fukushima nuclear plant, as well as enormous damages from the earthquake and tsunami. On the occasion of the annual antiwar meeting, we the Executive Committee call on you to promote an international struggle together with us against the imperialist and other rulers continuing nuclear development for their economic greed and stronger war capabilities.

We ask you to send a message of solidarity, as you have every year since our first Assembly. The 49th International Antiwar Assembly will be held this year on August 7th, between the days of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

**Solidarity,
Masao Yoshida for the Executive Committee**

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

Books

by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 30th Anniversary edition, 2003.....\$24.95
- Marxism and Freedom: from 1776 until Today** 2000 edition. Foreword by Joel Kovel.....\$24.95
- Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** 1991 edition. Author's new introduction. Foreword by Adrienne Rich.....\$24.95
- Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future**\$14.95
- The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx**\$24.95
- The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism: Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya**.....\$8.50
- The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism: Two Historic-Philosophic Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya** Contains "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987" and 1953 "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes"\$3 paperback, \$10 hardcover

by CHARLES DENBY

- Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal** Includes Afterword by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$14.95

En Español

por RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- Marxismo y libertad**.....\$10
- Filosofía y revolución: De Hegel a Sartre y de Marx a Mao**...\$10
- Rosa Luxemburgo, la liberación femenina, y la filosofía marxista de revolución**.....\$10
- La liberación femenina y la dialéctica de la revolución: tratando de alcanzar el futuro**.....\$10
- El Poder de la negatividad: Escritos sobre la dialéctica en Hegel y Marx**\$10
- Dos ensayos por Raya Dunayevskaya**\$2

See our website or contact us for fuller listing

Pamphlets

- Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'** (Expanded edition).....\$5
- Kosova: Writings from News & Letters, 1998-1999**.....\$3.50
- American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard.** by Raya Dunayevskaya, 40th anniversary edition
- Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy & the Needed American Revolution** by John Alan Each \$8, Special: Both for \$15, including postage.
- Explorations in Dialectical and Critical Theory** From Hegel to Derrida and from Marx to Meszaros.....\$5
- Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis** Includes critiques of Ernest Mandel and Tony Cliff.....\$4
- Myriad Global Crises of the 1980s and the Nuclear World since World War II** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$4
- Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions** by Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$4
- Voices from within the Prison Walls** by D. A. Sheldon. Prisoners' views of (in)justice system and organizing from within.\$8 For pamphlet plus donor copy for a prisoner.....\$16
- Working Women for Freedom** by Angela Terrano, Marie Dignan, and Mary Holmes.....\$5
- The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism In the U.S.** by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya.....\$5
- On the 100th Anniversary of the First General Strike in the U.S.** by Terry Moon and Ron Brokmeyer.....\$5

- News and Letters Committees Constitution**.....44 ¢ postage
- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog** A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....61 ¢ postage

Archives

- Guides to Collection and Supplement to the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection: Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development** Full description of 17,000-page microfilm collection.....\$4.50
- The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of Its World Development** A 17,000-page microfilm collection on 9 reels available from Wayne State University, Detroit, MI 48202.....\$165

Newspaper

- News & Letters subscription** Unique combination of worker and intellectual published 6 times a year. (Request information about gift subscriptions.).....\$5/year
- Bound Volumes of News & Letters** 1977-84, 1984-87, 1987-94, 1994-99, 2000-2010.....\$70 each *N&L* is also available on microfilm.

Mail orders to:

News & Letters, 228 South Wabash, Suite 230, Chicago, IL 60604, Phone (312) 431-8242

Enclosed find \$_____ for the literature checked. Please add \$2 postage for each pamphlet, \$4 postage for books. Illinois residents add 7% sales tax.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Mainstreaming of hate leads to Norway's tragedy

The death toll currently stands at 77 in the mass murder carried out by Norwegian Rightist Anders Behring Breivik on July 22. Most of the victims were young people attending the Norwegian Labor Party's summer camp. Breivik cold-bloodedly fired upon hundreds of innocent teens for at least 90 minutes before surrendering to police.

This was the worst incident of mass murder by a single gunman in modern history, and it was entirely motivated by a very specific and widespread ideology.

Breivik was opposed to the governing Norwegian Labor Party's policies on immigration. He hated Muslims. That the Utoya summer camp included anti-xenophobia workshops would have helped drive his rage.

If Breivik had been unknown to Norwegian police—who carefully track local neo-Nazi groups—it is because he was hidden in plain sight. He had made no secret of his anti-Muslim, anti-immigrant views, pub-

lishing them over the internet and advocating them at public meetings. He was not a fan of Hitler, but rather of the supposedly more "respectable" U.S. Tea Party, and Geert Wilders' Dutch Party for Freedom. This is hatred become "mainstream."

This mainstreaming of hate is an excrescence of capitalism in deep crisis. A system that can only produce a future of endless war, austerity and alienation will find its fit ideologies. This happened in Yugoslavia, for instance, when the crisis of state-capitalism calling itself Communism wasn't met with a revolutionary alternative.

FROM BOSNIA TO UTOYA ISLAND

Behind Anders Behring Breivik's cold-blooded rampage is an ideological campaign that reaches back to the Bosnian genocide of the 1990s and straight into the politics of the modern Right. Breivik was acting out the exterminationist rhetoric that fills right-wing websites and rallies. He hated "multiculturalism."

"Before we can start our crusade we must do our duty by decimating cultural Marxism," he wrote. (He explicitly echoes the "Obama is a Marxist" Tea Party crowds.)

Breivik is a devout follower of the so-called "counter-jihadi" websites and authors who specialize in demonizing all Muslims. His rhetoric is their rhetoric. These figures include authors like Robert Spencer, Pamela Geller, and the pseudonymous "Fjordman" (Breivik's favorite author). They include websites like Gates of Vienna and Document.no (where Breivik often posted his own writings). These are the same circles that created the false "Ground Zero mosque" controversy before the 2010 elections. They are all defenders and apologists of the Bosnian genocide.

Geert Wilders runs from the "Ground Zero mosque" to the illegal Israeli settlements of the West Bank, promoting the international spread of this filth. When Republican Presidential hopeful Herman Cain attacks long-established mosques in Tennessee, he is tapping this same vein of poison.

What Breivik hoped to achieve through this massacre was to publicize his genocidal body of ideas. He wants to promote his book through the medium of his trial, calling for a million deaths in Europe. He actually called his mass murder a "marketing method." As unbelievable as the events in Norway seem, Breivik was only acting out the genocidal violence that is implicit in the anti-Muslim (and often, by extension, anti-immigrant, anti-"other" in general) arguments that are heard commonly from today's Right. It is reminiscent as well of U.S. white supremacists like Timothy McVeigh, forever fantasizing about the genocidal "race war" they intend to spark.

THERE MUST BE ACCOUNTABILITY

It is only too common to hear people say that the issue in Bosnia was that the "Muslims" had better public relations than the "Serbs," as if there was never a struggle to defend a multi-ethnic Bosnian identity and as if there were two sides equally at fault.

This was never true, and it becomes vitally necessary to keep the record straight as time passes.

As we wrote in *News & Letters* in May 1993: "Nothing more exposes the lie of this fabrication than the fact that the very first shots fired in Sarajevo on April 6, 1992, were those fired against a mass demonstration of Serb, Croat and Muslim Slavs standing together against Milosevic's designs. No less than 200,000 marched together that month shouting, 'We want to live together!' Nor was it only in Sarajevo that mass opposition to the war erupted. In June there were huge demonstrations—nearly half a million—against Milosevic in Belgrade itself." (*Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization,'* pp. 21-22; *News and Letters Committees*, 1996.)

The indecisive character of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's trial, the contradictory judgments by the International Criminal Court on genocide, and the example of a convicted war criminal like Veselin

Sljivancanin serving eight days in prison for each person murdered, indicate that Europe has so far failed to come to terms with the meaning of the genocide in Bosnia. The recent arrests of war crimes fugitives Ratko Mladic and Goran Hadzic in Serbia, along with the mass murders in Norway, will test that further.

The truth about the Srebrenica genocide? It is seen in Anders Behring Breivik murdering scores of youth on Utoya island. This retrogressive, neo-fascist ideology of a capitalism in deep crisis must be opposed everywhere, on every level.

—Gerry Emmett, for the Resident Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees
24 July 2011

Save Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare!



Chicago—On a blistering hot July 21, over 200 seniors, disabled people, and outraged citizens demonstrated downtown in front of the Social Security office to express anger over proposed cuts to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Called by several groups, including Community Renewal Society, Illinois Alliance of Retired Americans, Lakeview Action Coalition, Jane Addams Senior Caucus and several unions, the demonstration was mostly made up of people in their 60s and older, several in wheelchairs, and younger supporters.

It was sobering to see so many older people concerned about being able to survive, demonstrating on a day so hot that it was dangerous to our health. Organizers, aware of the fragile nature of many of the participants, made sure to have water available and promised a demonstration shorter than usual. Even so, many had to take turns going into the air-conditioned building lobby for a few minutes to be able to continue participating.

Not despite disability and age, but **because** of it, the demonstration was militant and spirited. We chanted and yelled: "Whose money? **Our money!**" "Banks got bailed out; we got sold out!" and the one that got the most enthusiasm: "Don't put seniors in the ditch. There is money: **Tax the rich!**"

We were there to pressure Illinois Senators Mark Kirk and Dick Durbin to preserve funding for life-saving programs that capitalists are anxious to destroy. Despite the unusual nature of the demonstrators and the urgency of their message, this demonstration got little coverage. But that will not stop either the outrage or the protests to come. —Marxist-Humanist participant

G-8/NATO vs. Chicago

Chicago—In a first, both the G-8 and NATO summits will be held in Chicago at the same time, May 15-22, 2012. Chicago's Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy has already threatened to restrict the civil liberties of demonstrators who will converge from around the world to confront the tottering high priests of capitalism and their dogs of war.

This situation does present an unprecedented opportunity to confront the ruling class, not only with more demonstrations, but with the perspective of the revolutionary history of the modern age. The rulers that have devastated lives and communities with their bottomless austerity programs will be coming to the home of the struggle for the eight-hour day, with all its revolutionary implications: the city of Haymarket. That should be thrown back in their faces.

They will be coming to the city where the most revolutionary of labor organizations, the Industrial Workers of the World, was founded. The city of great Black revolutionaries like Lovett Fort-Whiteman and Richard Wright. That is the history that we will claim as our inheritance, seizing the opportunity to create new international (and local) links and support networks, seizing the opportunity to **make** history.

Further, the G-8/NATO summit protests will be happening in the wake of the Arab Spring, the most significant revolutionary movement in decades. It will be the perfect moment for discussing and clarifying ideas on how to end the cycle of austerity, repression and war that has gripped the capitalist order for decades and which, as the masses in the Middle East have shown, demands nothing less than revolutionary change.

—Gerry Emmett

EDITORIAL

continued from p. 1

by his eccentricity and absolute lack of principle. History will not forgive this "revolutionary" for attacking the first true revolution he encountered, inviting NATO's intervention in the Arab Spring. The Libyan people are right to celebrate his downfall.

In Syria the masses now confront the entire logic of the oppressive state system that has developed into a regional Cold War between Iran and Israel (and their various patrons and allies of convenience) and has attempted to co-opt the legitimate freedom struggles of Palestinians, Lebanese Shi'a, Kurds and others. This Syrian movement can't be separated from the new stirrings of Palestinian youth in the West Bank and Gaza.

This stage of the Arab Spring sets out as critical a challenge to the existing world order as Tahrir Square. It presents a great opportunity for revolutionary thought. The Arab Spring has had a profound effect in regard to the question of Palestine and Israel. When terrorists murdered seven Israeli civilians on Aug. 18, the Israeli government's response was far more limited than would previously have been the case. The reactionaries in power there now have to take account of public opinion—of Egyptians, especially.

SYRIAN REVOLT IMPACTS ISRAEL/PALESTINE

The Gaza leaders of Hamas are also walking a fine line. They have been pressed to take the pressure off Assad by attacking Israel and inviting retaliation which Israel's reactionary rulers would usually be happy to provide. But the Arab Spring has also changed their equation.

Thus, the Aug. 18 terrorist attacks were conducted, not by Hamas, but by the Popular Resistance Committees (PRC), an armed group with ties to Hezbollah in Lebanon and through them to Iran. Meanwhile, Iran's government cut subsidies to Hamas in retaliation for their reluctance to launch attacks on Israel which could distract world attention from Assad's brutal crackdown.

The division between the local Hamas political leadership and their military leadership in Syria that became clear during the 2008 Gaza war is clearly still operative. Palestinians have no more wish to be bombed in support of Assad's murderous dictatorship than do the Lebanese people. In this light, the speed and accuracy of the Israeli Air Force's targeting of the PRC's top command personnel is also very telling, and the murderous shelling of Palestinian refugees in Latakia, as part of Assad's Ramadan massacre, was lost on nobody.

Arab Spring has also impacted the hundreds of thousands of Israelis demonstrating for economic reform determined to "walk like Egyptians," in their own words. (See "Israel: 'Egypt is here,'" p. 12.)

These new openings in thought and reality are real, are what the world has long hungered for. We revolutionaries bear a huge responsibility. New paths are opening. We say we are about the new—here it is.

.....
Participate in a series of four classes on
Dialectics of organization and philosophy in today's freedom struggles, Karl Marx, and Marxist-Humanism
.....



From Tunisia to Egypt, Yemen to Syria, Spain to Greece, new forms of organization have appeared in the world, posing challenges to the rulers, but also to Left groups and theoreticians. Struggles like that of workers in Wisconsin and the hunger strike of California prisoners show that these challenges are alive in the U.S. too. Without action by masses in motion, no revolution could take place, nor could there be any fundamental change in the direction the world is moving, dictated by capitalism.

History has shown how retrogression follows movements that fall short of revolution, and revolutions that

stop halfway, or are transformed into opposite. This series of classes explores the missing link: the inseparability of organization and the philosophy of total uprooting, of revolution in permanence, that is, Marx's philosophy of revolution. Each class revolves around one or two of the pieces in the forthcoming book of selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx, as a way of letting these ideas and us as individuals be part of transforming the world.

Take part in the work on this new book as an integral part of the work of creating a new world. Contact us for details—see p. 5 for contact information.



Hunger striker speaks

July 4, 2011

Pelican Bay, Calif.—Here in Pelican Bay State Prison's Security Housing Unit (SHU), a number of us prisoners decided to launch a peaceful collective protest in the form of a hunger strike starting July 1. This action is necessary due to the anti-human, draconian institutional policies implemented by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR).

According to those policies, our confinement and length of time in SHU are by no stretch of the imagination an extralegal death sentence. The use of the term "extralegal" is quite correct. The court ruling that established the active/inactive gang status review has amounted to a comic process that clearly undermines its original judicial intent. It was supposed to be an impartial review of a prisoner's past and present institutional behavior in determining his alleged gang status. It has turned into a **re-designation** of gang status.

Since the Institutional Gang Investigators cannot find any criminal activity in furthering the objectives of a gang, they use a boiler-plate term, such as "a threat to inmates, staff, and institutional security." It is their way of maintaining their forced interrogation policy: one has to debrief (snitch) or die in the SHU.

It is this issue, more than any other, that has galvanized the overwhelming support of us prisoners. The hunger strike is intended to bring about a process where we are judged impartially and on an individual basis to determine alleged gang status, one that affords us a real opportunity of being released from the SHU to fully participate in whatever rehabilitation programs are still available to California prisoners.

We are not asking for anything special in our treatment, only the due process of law that has been enshrined in the U.S. Constitution. What the hunger strike is about, in essence, is a fundamental plea that our humanity and dignity as men be respected.

* * *

July 26, 2011

On July 22 the local Channel 3 News reported that the prisoners had declared the hunger strike a victory. The claim of victory rests upon the prisoncrats' alleged acquiescence to the small, very basic prisoners' demands. For example, now SHU prisoners will be allowed watch caps and more educational opportunities.

I don't discount or minimize these small gains, because they lessen the degree of the overall torturous effects of being perpetually subjected to SHU confinement. Nonetheless the question remains what prisoners—if any at all—actually declared such gains as victory? It's clear the media wasn't given access to the representatives of the hunger strike, where one-on-one interviews would reveal prisoners' true sentiments about the strike and its conclusion. Without this particular input directly out of the mouths of prisoners, any kind of assessment of the hunger strike is one-sided.

A day or so before, prisoncrats released a statement characterizing the prisoners' participation in the strike as misguided. They said that after a meeting with prisoners, in which CDCR articulated their projected strategic plan for next year, understanding and acceptance materialized as prisoners realized that CDCR was already moving to address their vital concerns. Nothing could be further from the truth.

However, that action by CDCR is the unintended recognition of the success of the hunger strike. The force of the strike, its large internal participation and its widespread external support, caught CDCR off guard as it went beyond their ability to control. The strike broke through the veil of vulgar deception that has continuously served CDCR in misleading the public.

Now, perhaps, the veil has been lifted and rays of light shine on present-day prison operations and the policies governing SHU confinement. It isn't a secret to prisoners or their loved ones that for decades CDCR hasn't had a handle on administering internal prison policies that are humane and that return prisoners to the community at large as wholesome, productive individuals. The basis for the hunger strike, in its most simple and undeniable interpretation, was to turn prisons toward such social functions. How can it be said prisoners are misguided?

The ultimate success or failure of the strike will be shaped by individual's perspective. The most important thing now is to not lose sight of the positive in the negative as we search for a way to begin anew. Prisoners reach for the level of social conditions behind prison walls that give us the ability to express our humanity in opposition to the oppressive prison conditions. It is no different from the efforts in various countries today trying to lift the curse of capitalist social relations.

At the heart of social movements is the fundamental quest to unify subjectivity and objectivity—in other words, for an individual's thinking/feelings to be reflected in their given reality. With such a full expression of humanism, society can be reconstructed on human foundations.

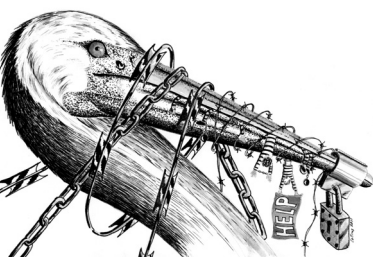


Image by Pete Collins, imprisoned at Bath Prison, Ontario, Canada, in solidarity with the Pelican Bay strikers.

—Faruq

Pelican Bay SHU struggle continues!

Pelican Bay, Calif.—The hunger strike among California prisoners, consigned to perpetual solitary confinement in Security Housing Units (SHU), was suspended on July 20. The conditions that drove many prisoners to severely endanger their health by not eating for three weeks persist. According to prison officials themselves, at one point 6,600 inmates in at least 13 California prisons had joined the strike.

The hunger strikers discovered their own power when the authorities did something they said they would never do, that is, openly negotiate across the table with the prisoners' strike committee.

The prison authorities begged the prisoners to give up their strike, privately promising them they would address some of the core issues, while publicly claiming they would offer prisoners some tokens they had no right to take away in the first place like a hat to help them keep warm in their cold cells and the right to have a wall calendar.

The prisoners decided to give the prison officials a few weeks to show their good faith out of concern for some, including those on solidarity hunger strikes in other prisons, who were at the point of doing real damage to their health. None believe the prison administrators will deliver. If they don't, after prisoners rebuild their strength they plan to continue the strike.

The success of the strike is that it drew widespread attention to the torturous isolation from which many prisoners have no exit, caught in a hell in which there is no way to overcome the designation "gang member" which put them in the SHU.

An African-American prisoner in the SHU for 17 years said all he has to do is to speak with another African American to be "validated" as an active gang member. The only way out of the SHU is to go through a "debriefing" where one implicates someone else. He said, even if he wanted to do such a thing, now he would have to make things up because he doesn't know anyone anymore.

Prolonged isolation and sensory deprivation forced on prisoners by a "snitch or die in the SHU" policy, are in fact internationally recognized as torture. Dorsey Nunn, an ex-prisoner who testified in Sacramento on Aug. 23 before a specially called legislative hearing on the Pelican Bay SHU, caught the essence of the multi-racial, non-violent strike when he said prisoners were demanding to be "validated" as human beings.

An elderly SHU prisoner we visited on July 21 has been in the Pelican Bay SHU for 20 years. He has been continuously imprisoned on a seven-to-life sentence he started serving in 1968. When he was up for review in 1996, he was revalidated by a confidential source (a debriefer) who supposedly said he planned to blow up the California Department of Corrections in Sacramento—from his prison cell!

On a more recent evaluation day he said a guard testified he heard him say he was still in a gang—a total fabrication that was enough to keep him in the SHU six more years!

The doctor who saw him last January ordered him transferred out to the Folsom

Prison medical facility, where they can care for his chronic heart failure, but the hated Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Sayre, denied the transfer.

A Latino prisoner, who lost 27 pounds in the strike, came directly from the medical facility and was very weak and unable to speak a few minutes into our visit because of a dry throat. We were not allowed to buy him a bottle of water, nor would the guards make any water available to him. After a few minutes this prisoner, who has been in the SHU for 26 years, continued despite the difficulties because he so wanted to tell his story. Though he tried eating after hearing the strike was over he hadn't been able to keep any food down. He also had doubts about whether the strike was indeed over because he first heard about the end of the strike from an officer. He was determined to continue on, saying, **"We knew this would not be easy, that we would have to continue until some die."**

The SHU is the heart of an inhuman California prison system designated by federal courts as committing systemic medical abuse, and now under orders to cut its population of over 160,000 by 30,000. Guards' power over prisoners with no real oversight re-creates the "Lucifer effect" in the extreme, so named by Stanford psychologist Dr. Zimbardo, who had to stop a two-week experiment after six days when students, assigned the role of prison guards and selected for being

well-balanced individuals, became sadistic while those assigned the role of prisoners displayed extreme stress.

The collective action of California prisoners challenges the foundations of a totally irrational prison system, which is evident to anyone willing to make even the scantiest comparison to the way other countries, and even other states, deal with crime. Prisoners also challenged the way the system, especially the guards' union, holds state resources hostage at the cost of education and healthcare.

The African-American, Latino and white prisoners who united in anti-SHU action raised a fundamental human question with far deeper implications than



Rally at the Sacramento capitol on Aug. 23 before legislative hearings on Pelican Bay SHU

political ones.

Prisoners are risking their lives against their torturous isolation in order to utter, as one prisoner put it, "a fundamental plea that our humanity and dignity be respected" (see "Hunger striker speaks," this page). This unifying thread was heard throughout the prison system and the outside as acts of solidarity and demonstrations were held across the country and internationally. It totally contradicted the official mantra, issued daily by prison administration spokesperson Terry Thornton, that the hunger strikers were gang members who had to be separated because of the threat they pose to society.

The criminal justice system loves the designation "gang" in order to denigrate that most human attribute, becoming who we are through our freely chosen associations with others. While a gang may perceive most others as the enemy, the prisoners' strike showed the opposite: that they considered all other prisoners a part of their "we." The hunger strike—as an association by prisoners in total opposition to the prison's inhumanity, even risking their own death—was, at the same time, asserting a new beginning in human relations.

The prisoners' demand for human dignity in the belly of the beast of the California prison system, the SHU, is at the core of our struggle for a new human society. Stop the torture in California prisons!

—Ursula Wislanka and Ron Kelch

L.A. prisoner solidarity

Los Angeles—On Aug. 13, 30 youths, mostly young women, gathered at the County Twin Towers Prison to support the Pelican Bay prisoners' hunger strike. With the drumbeat and the performance of Aztec dancers, the protesters held individually made signs that read: "Prisoners are human beings, give them their rights"; "We stand in solidarity for prisoners' human rights"; "L.A. Prisons = torture chambers"; "Calif. Dept. of Correction's negotiations are not reasonable enough"; and "Justice for California prisoners—this is my brother, he's starving and being tortured in Corcoran SHU."

As the July-August *News & Letters* article "Pelican Bay SHU on hunger strike" states: the prisoners are being physically and psychologically tortured.

A Firedoglake flyer listed the five Basic Core Demands From Pelican Bay Prisoners as:

1. Eliminate group punishment of prisoners of a race when an individual of that race breaks a rule.
2. Abolish "debriefing" (snitching, or forcing information on active/inactive prison gang status).
3. End long-term (10-40 years) isolation/solitary confinement.
4. Provide adequate (healthy) food and sanitary conditions.
5. Provide and expand constructive programs including education, religious and other activities, allow self-help, and provide warm clothing in bitterly cold cells or exercise rooms.

All these demands are already allowed in other Supermax prisons.

During the demonstration, a protester was also organizing a trip to Sacramento to protest and address the legislators and the governor on the violation of prisoners' civil and human rights.

—Human Rights Activist

Political spectacles can't hide reality of deranged system

continued from p. 1

economic union as countries like Germany, with financial prowess due to an export-driven economy, have dictated harsh conditions for bailouts of other countries. Bailouts became necessary after bond dealers, who were rescued from their own speculative bubble, forced one country after another to face exorbitant interest rates on their debt. The contagion spread from marginal countries like Ireland, Portugal and Greece to Spain and even Italy. Now economic growth in Germany itself has collapsed to almost nothing. Economists fear not just another global recession but another financial meltdown like 2008.

After S&P's downgrade, far from fleeing from U.S. debt, investors demanded more of it, making it even cheaper for the government to borrow. The interest rate on ten-year Treasuries fell to historic lows of under 2%. U.S. capitalists have a huge cash hoard of nearly \$2 trillion that is not being invested in the real economy. It gets lent to the government for almost nothing. **The near religious faith that capital creates jobs has met the reality of stalled capital accumulation creating permanent mass unemployment.**

As economists like Paul Krugman and Robert Reich keep saying, Keynesian economics arose in the 1930s to deal with a similar deranged moment when capitalism kept digging itself into a deeper hole. Today is said to be akin to 1937, when President Roosevelt listened to those who wanted to cut the deficit and the Depression returned with a vengeance.

Only when Roosevelt turned to several years of what would in today's dollars be \$3 trillion deficits in the buildup and execution of World War II did the U.S. exit the Depression. Krugman claims

the economic impact of the war—the massive physical destruction of capital, which left the U.S. as the lone economic superpower—wasn't necessary for ending the Depression and restarting capital accumulation.

But total war was not separate from the Depression. War was preceded by the monstrosity of Nazism arising in an advanced capitalist country. A more thoughtful evaluation came from another renowned academic economist, Simon Kuznets, who also saw only "transient difficulties" in the collapse in the rate of capital accumulation, but nevertheless questioned the capitalist basis of economic growth if it is "susceptible to such a barbaric deformation" (*Postwar Economic Growth*, Harvard University Press, 1964).

CAPITALISM'S FALLING RATE OF PROFIT

Karl Marx showed that the collapse in capitalist growth is no "transient difficulty," but is rather a reflection, despite many countervailing tendencies, of an overall tendency for the rate of profit to decline. (See "Deep recession, rate of profit and the supreme commodity, labor power," p. 4.) A financial meltdown reveals a dramatically lower rate of profit in the real economy where capitalists balk at investment and produce not jobs but a growing army of unemployed and mass pauperization.

Profit can only come from surplus value extracted from living labor, and the rate of profit falls when there is relatively less living labor in proportion to dead labor or capital. Capital's self-contradictory motivation is to diminish living labor as much as possible—this goose that lays their golden eggs—by constantly revolutionizing production with new dead labor or machines. With a given level of technological development and ratio of capital to living labor, the only way to boost profit is to lower the cost of labor through a class war on labor rights, wages, benefits and pensions.

The capitalist system will not collapse on its own, but will continue as long as it can in a protracted painful

decline. There are persistent new revolts on the ground searching for a new path as when mass demonstrations and sit-ins in Wisconsin confronted Governor Walker—not only because of his huge take-backs but because of the repeal of public workers' basic labor rights. The opposition to Walker also came within one vote of taking control of the State Senate in recall elections and effectively ended his majority for the most extreme of his agenda items. The political arena of elections, however, is where capitalists have infinite cash to spin facts in the media according to their inverted reality.

President Obama, who was elected on a promise of change that inspired masses of new people to work for his election, behaves as if he also believes fervently in the political process that operates on a different plane than the conditions of life and labor of those who elected him. Obama kept exclaiming that high unemployment is unacceptable and a prime concern, but the political process, divorced from the aspirations of those who elected him, revolved around deficit cuts that undermined employment. His new promise to introduce a jobs program has little credibility.

Workers experience the process of accumulating capital as an alien one, where the object, capital in the form of a machine, dominates the subject, the living laborer. The capitalist begins from total costs and

views labor not as the source of value but only as an expense. In this way, says Marx, "the extortion of surplus-value loses its specific character." **For the capitalists it always appears as though an increase in value results from technology.** New technology lowers socially necessary labor-time and makes those commodities issuing from it temporarily sell above their value, which

is determined by the average socially necessary labor-time. The "crisis" hits when all capitalists get the same technology (or are driven out of business) and all commodities sell for their now lower value, the amount of labor-time "in" them. What pervades the totally dysfunctional political system is the capitalist's fantasy thinking that treats capital as the generator not only of jobs but of value itself.

The appearance of creating value from nothing through speculative finance capital is twice removed from the "specific character" of creating value in production and greatly amplifies the hallucinatory thinking of capitalists and their political allies. **Production is the source of both profit and the illusions of finance capital.** Under finance capital, as Marx put it, "the way that surplus-value is transformed into the form of profit...is only further extension of that inversion of subject and object which already occurs in the course of the production process itself. We saw in that case how all the subjective forces of labor present themselves as productive forces of capital" (*Capital*, Vol. 3, Fernbach trans, p. 136).

DIGGING HUMANITY OUT OF A MENTAL HOLE

Ideologues never tire of projecting anew this disordered consciousness in which humans begin from reality not as our own creative powers in metabolism with nature, but bow to technology as capital. In *Foreign Affairs* (July/August, 2011), Michael Spence warns of "structural underpinnings" driving a divergence between "growth and employment," which means "the United States should brace itself for a long period of high unemployment" because of the impending loss of even "high-value-added" jobs that revolutionize technology. "Value-added" fantastically becomes "capital and labor that turn the inputs into outputs." Capital produces no new value. Only living labor, whose proportion diminishes relative to dead labor, creates new value even as it transfers the value of the machine over its lifetime in production.

Apple Corp. came to be the iconic center of high-tech jobs and briefly the company with the largest market capitalization in the world based on an abundance of alienated, sweated labor. Foxconn, which employs a million workers in China manufacturing high-tech gadgets for Apple and others, has an ignominious reputation for workplace injuries and a rash of suicides from long hours and high production quotas. Workers, who make at most \$200 a month, must sign a promise to not commit suicide. Safety nets have been placed outside factory windows. Foxconn chairman Terry Gou wants to deal with these erratic humans by replacing as many as possible with a million robots by 2013. This is in the name of wanting his employees to move "higher up the

value chain" ("Cheap Robots vs. Cheap Labor", *New York Times*, Aug. 14, 2011) in a country which still has 300 million peasants. Nothing will stop China, rife with worker revolts, from a reckoning, not only with speculative excesses in finance, but with its own internal barriers to accumulation.

New revolts, emerging outside the familiar players like political parties and labor unions—including the mass demonstrations that forced the shutdown of an ecologically disastrous chemical plant in Dalian, China, or the new people's assemblies that have filled the public squares in Europe—reveal masses of people searching for a way out of capitalism's upside-down thinking. It's time to stop digging ourselves into not only deeper economic stagnation but also the stagnation of the mental hole that just reproduces capitalist illusions. For Marx, the only way to wipe away those illusions is when production is run by freely associated laborers, a conceptual guide-rail for all the new spontaneous and self-organized revolts.

Famine in Somalia

continued from p. 1

at a camp built for 90,000, where they are prey to rape by police and others, attacks by bandits, and spreading epidemics of cholera and measles. For months the Kenyan government has rejected urgent calls by aid agencies to allow them to expand the permanent infrastructure.

Humanitarian agencies have been making urgent appeals all this year, but assistance from the U.S. actually dropped by 90% since 2008. Instead, the U.S. has tried to have the UN take up climate change as a security matter.

That is the crux of the rulers' approach to the growing damage from climate change. With great fanfare, fruitless negotiations are held and feckless measures pretend to limit greenhouse gas emissions, while the real action resides in quiet military planning to repel future waves of climate refugees and contain resource wars from impinging on strategic interests of the state and transnational capital.

CONTROLLING NOT ENDING CLIMATE CHANGE

This truth is obscured by the myth of U.S. fear of involvement in Somalia since its disastrous militarized "humanitarian" intervention of 1992-93—whose history was rewritten in the jingoistic movie *Black Hawk Down*. The U.S. is in fact heavily involved in current fighting there, orchestrating the outsourcing of the bulk of the TFG's defense to private contractors and African Union troops, supplemented by drone attacks and Special Operations strikes.


As revealed by Jeremy Scahill in *The Nation*, the CIA is operating a secret prison in Mogadishu, complete with rendition, interrogation, torture, and the absence of any due process, court proceedings, representation by lawyers or visits by the Red Cross/Red Crescent. At the same time, the CIA is building and funding the Somali National Security Agency as a power base independent of the TFG.

In short, from the collision of the climate's destabilization with social destabilization spills the plight of Somalia's starving people. Six years ago, the militarization of New Orleans during and after Hurricane Katrina, the herding of the poor into the Superdome and the police murders of African Americans on the Danziger Bridge unmasked capitalism's stance toward climate disasters in the industrialized lands. Today the Horn of Africa hints at how much bloodier, how much crueler and more brutal it can become, if humanity does not replace it with a new way of life.

—Franklin Dmitryev



Photo by The Rick Smith Show, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/ricksmithshow/6054182428/>
Student "guest workers" walked off the job packing Hershey's chocolates in Palmyra, Penn., in August. They worked long hours at pay lower than promised, many of them doing heavy lifting, and were gouged for housing, in what was supposed to be an educational experience. The students protested exploitative conditions as well as the fact that they were being used to eliminate union jobs for local workers—who are supporting the students' action.



Bosnia-Herzegovina: Achilles Heel of Western Civilization (expanded)

Our statement on the massacre in Norway (p. 8) states: "Behind Anders Behring Breivik's cold-blooded rampage is an ideological campaign that reaches back to the Bosnian genocide of the 1990s and straight into the politics of the modern Right. Breivik was acting out the exterminationist rhetoric that fills right-wing websites and rallies."

Learn about the ideas raised by the Bosnian struggle in an age when capitalism is making every effort to divert attention from its deep crises by trying to define life along the contours of racism, ethnic hatred, misogyny, and homophobia. The ideas raised by and in the Bosnian struggle are a serious challenge to the system. The book contains Raya Dunayevskaya's "A Post-World War II View of Marx's Humanism, 1843-83; Marxist-Humanism in the 1950s and 1980s."

Only \$5 + postage. To order, see page 7.

NEWS & LETTERS
VOL. 56/NO. 5 September-October 2011

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are \$5 a year (bulk order of 5 or more, 25c each) from News & Letters, 228 South Wabash, #230, Chicago, IL 60604. Telephone 312-431-8242. Fax 312-431-8252. Periodical postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 228 South Wabash, #230, Chicago, IL 60604. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

Raya Dunayevskaya
Chairwoman, National Editorial Board (1955-1987)
Charles Denby, Editor (1955-1983)
Olga Domanski, Franklin Dmitryev, Co-National Organizers, News and Letters Committees. Terry Moon, Managing Editor. Felix Martin, Labor Editor (1983-1999), John Alan, National Editorial Board Member Emeritus (2008-2011).

News & Letters is printed in a union shop.
News & Letters is indexed by Alternative Press Index.

ALTERNATIVE PRESS TAMPICO PRESS
CHICAGO, IL 457

Expose demonization of Black Gay youth

Chicago—*Editor's note: News and Letters Committees hosted a forum in our Chicago office on Aug. 8 on the response within the Gay community to the Facebook page Take Back Boystown posting videos of Blacks fighting as a way to demonize "outsiders" coming to Gay institutions and bars. Below is part of the discussion among panelists and audience.*

Ed Negron, AIDS Foundation of Chicago: It is unfortunate that certain incidents were caught on tape, but the silver lining is that the true racism and the true ageism that has always gone on in Boystown is now out in the public. The Gay community doesn't like to air its dirty laundry, they did it unintentionally, but it's not going to be brushed under the rug anymore.

Because of the internet, we can see in writing what people have been feeling about people of color and the younger generation. When I first came out in the early 1990s and raised these issues, people would say that's just in your head, your internalized racism and homophobia. Now it is on Facebook.

Back when crystal meth was the big thing in the neighborhood, business owners were actually talking about hosing the youth off the front of their property. They really got up in arms: "Don't even think about coming here." The group Affinity is trying to build a youth center on the South Side. Would it help to gather our energies to support them, or would it sound to Take Back Boystown supporters like, fine, we're leaving, we're going somewhere else?

Darrell Gordon, Queer, Gay, anarchist activist: From an historical perspective, an openly African-American Queer bar on Halsted at Belmont opened in 1985. There was controversy from the start. It was closed in 1989 by then Alderman Bernie Hansen. The sentiment from Gay guys in Lakeview was that they were glad the bar was closed because then there would be fewer African-Americans around. The same type of force we're talking about wants the Night Ministry, which hands out food and other material to youth, to move from the Lakeview neighborhood.

As the face of AIDS has changed, the interest among white Gay men around the AIDS issue in Lakeview has declined since the mid-1990s. We need to do

more than just address the issue of racism in Lakeview. We also need to confront heterosexism and homophobia on the West and South Sides of Chicago and create meeting places for community and political organizing.

Benjamin Perry, Gender JUST: We are currently involved with Center on Halsted. We are trying to set up a better structure for them. I felt we were building a relationship with the Northalsted Business Alliance. We showed them how traveling is one of the biggest issues for the youth, because a lot of resources are on the North Side and we really don't have a lot of resources on the South and West Sides.

They were receiving \$50,000, and using it as they had for the past couple years for policing the youth. They could use the money in a better form like a jobs

program, or some after-hours spot for the youth. They wonder why a lot of the youth go up and down the Lakeview-Boystown strip. It is because we do not have a place to go.

Darrell said that there had been African-American clubs in the area, and residents just went hooray, those clubs are gone, we don't have to worry about them any-

more. That kind of transitions to Take Back Boystown.

Betty Akins, formerly of Center on Halsted: I saw what was going on over the past year going to and from work. I'm concerned not only with class and race, but as someone living outside of Boystown. I hope resources aren't being pulled out of neighborhoods that really need them. On 82nd St. last week, very close to where I live, a young girl was shot. We found out only because the METRA Line was stopped.

Racists are like sharks. They smell blood and they will come in and send this message. I remember seeing comments on the internet that "they" are messing up Boystown, using the n word and the f word. They have been doing that for a long time, but now they are stoking the fires. My fear is that those sharks will start circling, trying to create this ugly emotional atmosphere.

Fred: At the CAPS meeting I recognized I was seeing the same racism as in Marquette Park in the 1970s. There was no connection to a rising crime rate because there was no rising crime rate. The police admitted that the crime rate has fallen every year since 2007. The alderman himself should be put on the spot. To counter these loose racist charges with their own voices, the Black youth could put out a newsletter.

Ahkia: Whoever Take Back Boystown is, it is not a person, and is not an organization. I feel that Northalsted Business Alliance might just be Take Back Boystown. If you take your butt up to Lakeview, you know what you are getting yourself into. Because they have thousands of rainbow flags everywhere, it obviously means the Queer community.

If you own property there, then you are accepted. But if you are not a white homosexual man, then you are out. Women kind of slide. But anything else, Trans, oh my goodness. Community to them does not mean Queer, it means owning property.



From left: Benjamin Perry, Ed Negron, Darrell Gordon, Betty Akins.

Illinois 'care' a disaster

Chicago—The Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services on May 1 implemented a five-year pilot program and the state's first Integrated Care Program for older adults and adults with disabilities eligible for Medicaid but not Medicare.

The program is mandatory, no exceptions. You have to choose between two "medical homes," Aetna and IlliniCare, and use only the doctors and hospitals in that "medical home." The program promises "better coordination of care, as members work with a team of providers to give them the best possible healthcare."

TAKING THE 'HEALTH' OUT OF 'HEALTHCARE'

The program is supposed to save the state millions of dollars. One way it purports to do this is by offering the doctors a set payment whether they see a patient or not, as opposed to the usual pay per visit. In my daughter's and my experience, the program takes the "health" out of healthcare.

"Team of providers?" In our experience there is no team. Our Primary Care Provider said that she has no idea who else is in the Aetna network and does not have the time to look at the book Aetna sent her that lists all the providers. She is unable to refer us to a specialist within the Aetna system. We are on our own finding them. Teamwork is crucial for people with complicated medical needs. The doctors must communicate with each other and coordinate their care. That is not happening.

My disabled daughter needs many specialists to manage her complex medical needs. When I called to find doctors for her, they didn't have any that were reasonably close to us. The most important doctor my daughter needs is a neurosurgeon. The only neurosurgeon both Aetna and IlliniCare have is in Kankakee! It is unreasonable to expect people to drive from Chicago to Kankakee to see a specialist (from where I live that would be a 150-mile round trip).

Every time over a two-month period that I called Aetna to find providers they simply did not have, I was told that "new providers are being added every day." That was not our experience.

ILL PATIENTS PANIC IDIOT DOCTORS

The most disturbing part of this program is some of the doctors. The first Primary Care Provider we visited had a complete look of panic on her face when I wheeled my daughter into the room. She did not examine her, ask any questions, or even acknowledge her presence in the room. What should have been a double appointment (at my request) turned into five minutes with the doctor talking about her "waiting room full of patients" and escorting us out of the exam room.

Our visit to an orthopedic surgeon was even worse. My daughter has multiple leg and hip problems from cerebral palsy (CP). She has painful arthritis and bursitis in her knees and hips. She has had multiple surgeries on her legs including the removal of a femur bone from one leg. She has had a spinal fusion and has metal rods in her back.

What I was expecting from that doctor was for him to examine her legs, check her range of motion and order X-rays to check the progress of her arthritis and bursitis. I also expected him to deal with her constant complaints of pain in her leg, which requires heavy-duty pain medicine. He did nothing. He could not seem to understand why we were there.

When I asked him about examining her, he said that, since we didn't have an "immediate problem," he didn't need to. I again listed all her problems and asked him what about all of them wasn't "immediate" and he had no answer. We ran into this attitude again and again with every doctor we visited in the Aetna system. This is not healthcare.

People with disabilities and those with chronic health conditions require more attention at the doctor's office. Part of the problem is the nature of managed care itself. The "managed" part is doctors being told how long to see a patient, how many patients to see in a day, etc. Many good doctors don't want to sign up for this program, which limits their ability to offer comprehensive healthcare to the people who need it the most.

NEW PROGRAM ENDANGERS LIVES

I am worried about my daughter's life. She needs a neurosurgeon to monitor the shunts in her brain that drain excess spinal fluid from it. She could easily die quickly from a shunt malfunction if it is not caught ahead of time. She needs an orthopedic surgeon who will monitor her many needs from the CP in her legs and do X-rays to check for the many fractures she gets, just from sitting in her wheelchair all the time.

This program is a disaster for the many people who are now forced to depend on it. Quality healthcare does not come from herding everyone with disabilities and chronic health problems into a program with seemingly incompetent doctors, third-tier hospitals and an attitude of uncaring from the people at Aetna. The State of Illinois has five years to prove that this program saves them money. I wonder how many people have to die for them to meet their goal.

—Suzanne Klug

No 'Secure Community'

Los Angeles—On Aug. 13 the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights, Los Angeles (CHIRLA), held a press conference against Secure Community (SC), the federal government program that allows local police to act as federal immigration agents. Under the program, over a million immigrants have been deported, most after being stopped for minor offenses.

According to CHIRLA: "From the beginning, SC has been shrouded in lies and deception—and was a smokescreen for achieving record numbers of deportations. Both the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* called for its shelving."

Protest signs read: "Stop ripping families apart!" One sign said, "R.I.P. S.O. 40." "Special Order 40" is the L.A. Police Department's 30-year policy of non-cooperation with immigration agents is now dead because of SC. Isaura Garcia said she was a victim of domestic violence who called the police. The police arrested, handcuffed and detained her for seven days.

Many street vendors are under attack because of SC. A young man was arrested in South Gate while selling ice cream because he had no ID. While detained, he resisted strong pressure to sign a confession because he knew his rights. He said, "Obama, the Latino Community voted for you, and you need to end this."

That evening the Homeland Security Task Force Advisory Council to ICE held a hearing on SC. An hour before it started, hundreds of youths marched from CHIRLA's office with signs reading, "Terminate Secure Community," "Legalization or no reelection," "No more lies, terminate the program," and "The Border is illegal, not the workers."

The Southern California Immigration Coalition reported that police at checkpoints have impounded cars for minor traffic violations or for expired drivers licenses. It's lose your car or pay \$500 to get it back.

At the hearing, a student told of how his ten-year-old brother was taken to foster care after his parents were detained. A spokesman for Mayor Villaraigosa said, "Terminate the program." An activist followed with, "Tell Villaraigosa to stop stealing our cars too!"

A youth who was arrested by the San Bernardino Police told the task force, "Over one million people have been deported. You need to resign!" A task force person responded, "We have an opportunity to reform SC." The audience erupted with chants of "No More Lies! Terminate the program!" Hundreds of youths walked out and rallied in the streets chanting, "We don't need a hearing, we need to end the program." —Basho

QUEERNOTES

by Suzanne Rose

While returning from a bar last month in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, three men were detained by the police because they thought two of them looked feminine. The three were jailed for a week and two were tortured and abused by the police. One man was released, but the other two were charged with "homosexuality." People working on their behalf say the charges violate Cameroon's constitution, as well as international law.

A discrimination complaint against Philadelphia's Youth Study Center was resolved by Lambda Legal for a now 18-year-old Transgender woman. While living at the facility, she was physically attacked by other residents and verbally abused by the staff every day for almost a year and a half. Their actions violated the Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance.

Denver immigration judge Mimi Tsankov halted the deportation of Sujey Pando and scheduled a new hearing based on her marriage to U.S. citizen Violeta Pando. Sujey is an undocumented immigrant from Mexico who came to the U.S. as a minor. She married longtime partner Violeta last year in Iowa.

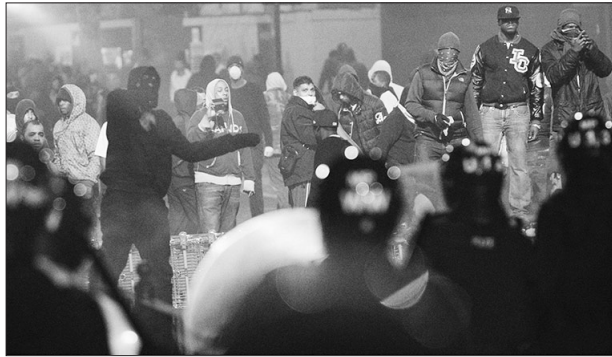
Gay rights activist Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera, Executive Director of Freedom and Roam Uganda, was denied a visa by the UK. After many protesters signed a petition objecting to the denial, she has been welcomed and will now speak at Northern Ireland's Foyle Pride Festival. —Information from: *Pink News*

WORLD IN VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

The killing of 24-year-old Mark Duggan by London police on Aug. 6 set off the largest urban rebellion in Britain in decades. The situation was made worse by police lies that Duggan had pointed a gun at them, and by their rude, smirking response to family and community members who came to the police station to demand justice and truth.

Honest commentators had long predicted such rebellions. Duggan's killing, plus the attempted murder of his reputation, was a further provocation to a Tottenham community that is targeted for racist searches and has suffered such police crimes in the past as the death of Cynthia Jarrett in 1985, which sparked a rebellion then; and the



Tottenham youth confront British riot police.

Students awaken Chile

Hundreds of thousands of students—teenagers, and college students—have taken to the streets of Santiago, the capital, and the cities of Concepción, Valparaíso and Temuco, among others, to demand a decent public education. Hundreds of schools have been taken over. Students have been joined by parents and friends. Now workers have joined the fight, adding their own demands. Rallies, a hunger strike, and sit-ins have been their methods. They demand educational reform from pre-school through the university.

The protest is against the rightist government of Sebastián Piñera, who mouths words of support but sends in riot police to beat and arrest students. The government has also resorted to provocateurs.

In months of demonstrations, the students refused to yield. While education is central, protests have also involved transportation and the environment, particularly hydroelectric projects which threaten Patagonia.

Only last year, students were accused of being apathetic because they had not voted in the last presidential election. The "Socialists" were defeated, allowing the right wing to regain power for the first time since the ouster of dictator General Augusto Pinochet, who had led a bloody 1973 coup against a genuine Socialist president, Salvador Allende. But the students saw little reason to vote. Socialists had won the two presidential terms post-Pinochet, but the policies that followed were a continuation of neoliberalism imposed by Pinochet under the army's boot heel.

Pinochet launched the great privatization of Chilean education, resulting in huge school inequalities and high costs for families who wanted their children to have a decent education. Pinochet also closed several "radical" departments at the public university.

Students have dared to break the shadow of fear, launching a movement that begins with education reform, but opens the door for challenging the neoliberalism that has been Chile's hallmark since the 1980s.

The great Latin American writer Eduardo Galeano sent the students greetings: "A million thanks to the students, who, in the streets of Chile, are returning us to a faith that at times had fallen away from us, or we had lost. A faith that tomorrow is not another name for today; the faith that the best of our days are those that we have not yet lived."

—Eugene Walker

British youth revolt

police brutality which led to the Brixton rebellion of 1981. Over 300 people have died in British police custody since 1998, and not one officer has been prosecuted.

Beyond this is decades of anger at endless attacks on the British working-class and Black communities, most recently in the closing of youth centers in Tottenham and other inner city communities, and draconian cuts in social services. As a statement by the public service workers' union Unison put it, "The answer does not lie in David Cameron's 'Big Society' but in the defence of public services from a reckless attack by a Government which is indifferent to the social damage being wrought by their economic policies..."

Clashes with police also broke out in cities across Britain, including Brighton, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool and Nottingham. Police stations were targeted and a number of police vehicles burned. As in Los Angeles in 1992, the rebellion was multi-racial, which incensed the Right.

Bourgeois opinion reeled with horror, as it always does when the class struggle shows itself to be a two-way street. The decades since former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher declared "there is no alternative" to capitalism have seen an effort to erase the very idea of working-class power and poor peoples' human rights.

Epithets were launched from the Right, the media, and even parts of the Left against "thugs" and "feral youth." Murdoch's late racist tabloid *News of the World* was hardly missed. The hatred expressed for "multiculturalism" was close to Norwegian butcher Breivik's neofascist manifesto.

Marxist economist David Harvey observed, "It reminded me of how the communards in Paris in 1871 were depicted as wild animals, as hyenas, that deserved to be (and often were) summarily executed in the name of the sanctity of private property, morality, religion, and the family." The outrageous sentences being given for small "offenses" like posting pro-rebellion messages on Facebook, or possessing a possibly looted pair of shorts, bear this out. Conservative Prime Minister Cameron shows every sign of wanting to import the worst excesses of the U.S.'s racist criminal justice system. As it has for decades, the Labour Party is willing to follow the logic, if not to the letter.

Some even wished to counterpose the words of a Black woman in Hackney, London, to the rebellion itself, although she really represented its own class consciousness when she urged the rebellious youth to focus their attacks against the authorities: "This is about a man who got shot in Tottenham. This ain't about having fun on the road and burning up the place. Get it real, Black people. Get real. Do it for a cause. If you're fighting for a cause then fight for a fucking cause."

The contradictions in these British rebellions in here in such events, which send a powerful message but do not overthrow capitalism and build the new society as they destroy the old. That requires alliances with all forces seeking freedom and the serious philosophic labor required to work out what one is for, not only against.

News & Letters will send a copy of *A Philosophic Handbook of Urban Rebellion*, articles and essays from Detroit, 1967; Los Angeles, 1992; and beyond, for \$7. Please write for a copy.

Israel: 'Egypt is here'

Israel has seen an unprecedented protest movement grow in the wake of the Arab Spring. Around 250,000 people marched through Tel Aviv, Israel, on Aug. 6 in the biggest protest rally the country has ever experienced. Another 50,000 participated in other cities and towns. It is being seen as a direct challenge to the right-wing government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his ultra-reactionary allies.

The movement began in July when a young woman named Daphni Leef pitched a tent in Tel Aviv to protest against the unaffordable cost of housing. The protesters are also calling for a fairer tax system, free schooling, ending privatization of state-owned enterprises, and higher spending on public housing and transportation.

Besides the tent city on Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv, demonstrations have taken place in such locales as Beersheba and Haifa, with efforts to include all parts of Israeli society, especially Arabs. Leftist, labor and student groups are represented. Palestinian-Israelis have raised their own perspective in Tel Aviv by setting up Tent #1948.

It would be easy to be cynical about these protests, in that they have not directly raised the issues of Israel's brutal occupation of Palestine, the blockade of Gaza, or the illegal West Bank settlements. But some of this is implicit in the criticism of the government's defense spending versus social spending.

However, what really opens up new possibilities is the Arab Spring. The depth of the freedom movement in the region, in Egypt, Syria and Palestine, is a challenge to all that is old and oppressive in life and thought. It is now finding a hopeful, if yet very fragile echo within Israel.

In the words of Israeli war resister Matan Kaminer, "...the articulation of the current movement with the Palestinian movement for liberation is certainly difficult to imagine. But it is unnecessary to point out how many of the events of the past year in the Middle East were completely unimaginable a year ago...the events in Israel are, at least at the level of discourse, deeply inspired by those of the Arab Spring. The very idea of borrowing any progressive concept from an Arab country was unimaginable here until quite recently...When, at the huge rally last Saturday, I saw a giant sign plastered with the Arabic *irhal!* (go!) and subtitled in Hebrew 'Egypt is here'—I was hardly surprised. We should not overlook the profundity of this change because of its apparently rhetorical nature."

Malawi crackdown

Protests against deteriorating economic conditions, fuel shortages and government repression were met with brutal force by authorities in Malawi on June 20-21. Police fired on large crowds in a number of cities, attacking with tear gas, and forcing protest leaders into hiding. At least 19 people were killed in two days of clashes and many more were injured.

As discontent has risen, the government of President Bingu wa Mutharika has passed laws restricting freedom of speech and press, and other civil liberties, and allowing for warrantless searches. The June 20 protests were organized by labor unions and dozens of civil society organizations.

Malawi, one of the world's poorest countries, is heavily dependent on foreign aid. Much of that aid has been suspended in light of President Mutharika's extravagant personal spending and his government's repressive measures. Demonstrators have promised that they will return to the streets if their demands are not addressed. Mutharika promises further repressive measures if they do so.

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.