

## WORKSHOPTALKS

### Chinese model is not workers'

by Htun Lin

As I watched the news of a state visit by the designated next President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, sealing important trade deals with the U.S. President, I couldn't help but think about another "state visit," to China, by Andy Stern, former President of Service Employees International Union (SEIU).

Stern penned a love letter, a sort of ode to state-capitalist planning, in an Op-Ed piece entitled "China's Superior Economic Model" (*Wall Street Journal*, Dec. 1, 2011). He confessed his gushing admiration of a symbol of China's success—a skyline of cranes, continuously erecting new factories and other real estate, "building roughly 1.5 million square feet of usable floor space daily."

Stern exclaimed that, "The Global Revolution—coupled with Deng Xiaoping's government-led, growth-oriented reforms—has created the planet's second-largest economy. It's on a clear trajectory to knock America off its perch by 2025." Stern lectured, "While we debate, Team China rolls on. The ability to plan is what is missing in America."

#### WORKERS' VIEWS MISSING

Stern curiously omits, in his exaltation of the Chinese economy, the point of view of Chinese workers: they have no rights and suffer rampant labor and human rights abuses. There is no collective bargaining and workers are forbidden to strike or form independent unions. It is no mystery that in order to enforce work rules, company thugs have the backing of the Chinese government, corrupt local bureaucrats and state-sponsored unions.

As Li Qiang, executive director of China Labor Watch, points out, labor policy in the PRC is set exclusively by the government. "Economic growth in China happens through the sacrifice of workers' lives....The few people in China who benefit the most from Chinese

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## EDITORIAL

The depths of this society's inhumanity have been laid bare by the intensity of the war on women's bodies, minds and lives. Poor women are taking the brunt as those in power in state and federal governments mount an assault so reactionary that birth control, something considered a settled fact of life, is actually in jeopardy. While women have always fought back, these new outrages have brought more women to the fore, enraged by the invasive and uncaring Taliban-like onslaught.

That is seen in:

♀ The escalating anger and widespread demonstrations over the religious Right's attack against President Obama's Department of Health and Human Services mandate requiring employee insurance plans, with the exception of houses of worship, to cover women's contraception. (See page 2.) While Republicans tried to frame it as a question of "religious liberty," few women saw it that way. Their view was confirmed by the refusal of California Congressman Darrell Issa to allow any woman to testify before his all-male panel to discuss the question. Casting aside pretensions that this is about religion, Senators Roy Blunt and Marco Rubio's bill would exempt both insurance purchasers and providers—be they religious or not—from covering any services that go against either their "religious beliefs or moral conviction." Luckily the bill—a license to

## Syrian revolution fights Assad's genocide, world powers watch

by Gerry Emmett

The unprecedented uprising in Syria has been called the "orphan revolution" because it seems that the Syrian people have stood almost alone in their epic struggle for freedom. The Arab League observers achieved nothing. The UN has been stymied by Russian and Chinese vetoes in the Security Council. Most recently, the meeting in Tunis Feb. 24 of the 80-nation "Friends of Syria" failed to produce anything concrete in the way of aid to the revolution.

The Syrian Revolution is a serious challenge to the order in the region and beyond. Israel, Iran, and Saudi Arabia all have much to lose from the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad's Baathist family dynasty, as do their imperialist patrons.

The Arab Spring lives on in new struggles emerging in Egypt and Tunisia. Somewhere in the upper atmosphere the smoke of Syria's tortured cities mingles with the smoke of burning Athens.

As well, the Egyptian, Tunisian, Palestinian, Libyan masses and others clearly see this revolution as their own.

The opposition Syrian National Council has been unable to gain concrete solidarity from state powers, in part because it is unable to guarantee the "stability" that al-Assad has provided. For instance, there is no possibility that free Syrian people would turn their backs on the Palestinian people's struggle. Nothing spells that out more clearly than Hamas finally being forced to turn its back on its former patron, al-Assad.

Revolution will not come from above.

#### BANKRUPT ASSAD TURNS TO GENOCIDE

What is needed is for all to support the Syrian people's just and heroic struggle.

There is no question that Assad has lost any "legitimacy" his regime had. His family's rule in Syria has always been based on violence and intimidation. The phrase "Hama rules," after his late father Hafez al-Assad's murder of 40,000 people in that city in 1982, entered the world's vocabulary to signify the ultimate in ruling class cynicism and brutality.

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Now, over 8,000 have reportedly been killed since the start of the Revolution one year ago. Countless thousands more have been injured, beaten, detained and threatened. Torture is common, including the torture of children. Cultural figures have been singled out for attack: cartoonist Ali Ferzat, his hands broken; the songwriter Ibrahim Qashoush, his throat cut out. Qashoush's defiant words ring at demonstrations from Damascus to Chicago, "Screw you, Bashar, and screw those who salute you. Come on, Bashar, time to leave! Freedom is at our doors. Come on, Bashar, time to leave!"

The assault on Homs, a center of resistance, has

been merciless. The genocidal nature of Assad's regime is clear. Apt comparisons have been made to 1990s Bosnia and the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

#### SYRIANS' RIGHT TO FIGHT BACK

The Syrian people have the right to armed self-defense, which didn't come from outside plotters. It began in the villages and working-class communities where guns were more likely to be available, and men with some previous military experience to use them.

Resistance began in defense of the largely peaceful demonstrations.

Massive, peaceful demonstrations took place week after week in the face of brutal assaults from the regime. Throughout 2011 the Syrian branch of the Arab Spring manifested one of the most profound, courageous and sustained nonviolent freedom movements in memory. Given orders to attack unarmed men, women and children, many members of the Syrian army defected in disgust and horror. They justly turned their guns around. Thus the armed resistance grew.

The armed resistance—whether in the form of the Free Syrian Army or the more informal local defense forces—has received little aid from outside. Instead, there has been a one-sided fight in which the Syrian regime forces are supplied with heavy weaponry by Russia. The Russian naval base being reconstructed in Tartus on Syria's Mediterranean coast gives the conflict an aspect of classic imperialism.

Assad, in return, has not scrupled to use the same

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Baba Amr neighborhood spirit Feb. 17 before Assad's military started shelling.

## New attacks on women take fascistic turn

let prejudice reign—was defeated in the Senate.

♀ The overwhelming condemnation of Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's bow to right-wing anti-abortion fanatics in their move to defund Planned Parenthood. Their reversal because of the outraged response was greeted with skepticism. (See page 2.)

♀ The proposed Virginia law mandating that women be compelled to have an invasive transvaginal ultrasound before an elective abortion, brought out over 1,500 furious women and men who stood, arms linked, at the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond in silent but seething protest. Even Vice-President wannabe Governor Bob McDonnell recognized he'd stepped over the line, so he had his minions craft a bill only slightly less oppressive because he thought the backlash might hinder his political aspirations.

♀ Taking the tactic from the Arab Spring, two angry women decided to plan a "We Are Woman March on Washington DC April 28th, 2012." It caught fire. In only a few days 12,000 joined and by the time you read this it will be thousands more. Remarkably, this does not come from the National Organization for Women or NARAL Pro-Choice America, who act as if the only way women can do anything is to send them money. This is a grassroots effort and is comprehended as such. You can find them at: <http://www.facebook.com/UniteWomen>.

THERE IS CERTAINLY MUCH for women to

unite against, beginning with the almost unbelievable hoops they must jump through to get an abortion, such as: "burdensome" waiting periods of 24 hours and longer; forced viewing of unnecessary ultrasounds; and state constitutional amendments defining life as beginning at conception, thus treating abortion as murder.

Kansas, ever the sewer of anti-abortion actions and legislation, is considering a bill that encourages doctors to lie, giving them the right to withhold needed medical information from a pregnant woman. Doctors would not have to tell a pregnant woman if her health would be compromised or her fetus damaged if she continued her pregnancy. The law protects the doctor from malpractice for refusing to tell her the truth about her medical condition so that she wouldn't seek a needed abortion—even if it results in harm to the woman or baby.

#### FORCED CHILDBIRTH AND NO HELP AFTER

The biggest and most sustained attack in this war on women has been waged against poor women, starting with the Hyde Amendment in 1976 that cut all public funding for abortions. Laws that require women to make two trips to clinics, often hundreds of miles away from their homes, increase the cost. Congress has kept the District of Columbia, poorer and Blacker than almost any state in the nation, from using its own tax

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# Komen & capital vs. self-development

by Terry Moon

Over 40 years ago, 12 Boston women got together to talk about women's health. This was in 1969, when no one talked about women's sexuality. Abortion was illegal and birth control had been legalized nationally—for married couples—only in 1965. Breast cancer was an embarrassment and not discussed; it was viewed as a shameful disease.

Those 12 women approached the subject as critics, making what they did a revolutionary act. As they tell their

own story: "At a workshop on 'Women and Their Bodies,' we discovered that every one of us had a 'doctor story,' that we had all experienced feelings of frustration and anger toward the medical maze in general, and toward those doctors who were condescending, paternalistic, judgmental, and uninformative in particular. As we talked and shared our experiences, we realized just how much we had to learn about our bodies, that simply finding a 'good doctor' was not the solution to whatever problems we might have. So we decided on a summer project: we would research our questions, share what we learned in our group, and then present the information in the fall as a course 'by and for women.'"

They ended up self-publishing a 136-page booklet on newsprint that cost 40¢. It was so popular—and important—that they formed the Boston Women's Health Book Collective and over the years published eight more editions of what became *Our Bodies Ourselves*.

## SELF-DEVELOPMENT VS. CAPITALISM

This was not about money, this was about self-knowledge and self-development, about spreading the word that women could take control of our healthcare and bodies, and we could become the "experts."

It didn't take long for capitalism to try to fill the obvious need revealed by the feminist self-help health movement that flourished in the late 1960s and early 1970s, trying to submerge a movement driven by women's desire to become whole, thinking, acting human beings under one driven by profit and more profit.

We've seen this history made explicit in the few days it took for a supposed charity created to raise awareness about breast cancer, to reveal itself as playing politics with Republicans, anti-abortion fanatics, and others who actually oppose women's right to control our own bodies and health.

It may be true that when Nancy Brinker formed the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in 1982, it was to bring awareness of a disease that had taken the life of her sister, Susan Komen, when she was only 36. And there is no question that it did bring awareness of breast cancer front and center. But its decision to defund Planned Parenthood shows that it long ago transformed into its opposite and is now a barrier to helping women.

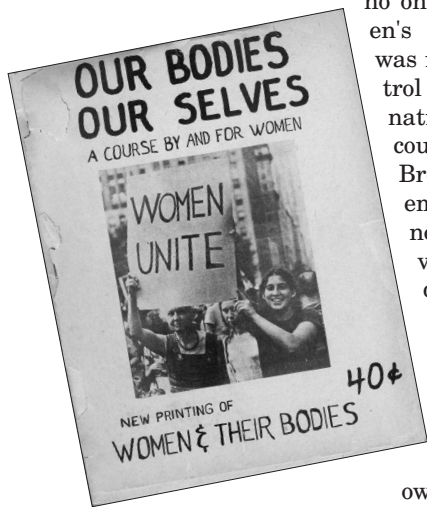
## TRANSFORMATION INTO OPPOSITE

It is not that Komen "caved" to anti-abortion fanatics who demanded that they defund Planned Parenthood. It is that they agreed that they should, despite the fact that Planned Parenthood is a leader in testing poor women for breast cancer.

Their agreement was shown in hiring anti-abortion politician Karen Handel as their Vice President. She was the brains behind their defund-Planned-Parenthood strategy. Not only is Handel willing to sacrifice poor women's health for her anti-abortion ideals, as the secretary of state for Georgia she was successful in disenfranchising thousands of Blacks, Latinos and the elderly. All this had to be known to Komen. Handel was simply a good fit for them.

Komen recently also pulled funds from embryonic stem-cell research centers. Its investment portfolio includes several drug companies, which is probably one reason it has worked diligently to undermine research aimed at finding the cause of cancer, not alone a cure, for example fighting "behind the scenes" to kill the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act.\*\*

This isn't alone a question of the transformation into opposite of Komen. It is what happens when a movement has to co-exist with capitalism, when instead of revolution, we get counter-revolution. Even many of those who begin with good intentions are co-opted. Nancy Brinker and her organization no longer work for women, they work to maintain their own power and influence and for the companies that fund them.



We can't roll time backwards, but we can work to retake control of our bodies and lives. That is a revolutionary act.

\* <http://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/about/jamwa.asp>  
\*\* *Daily Kos*, "Behind the Pink Curtain—Komen's Political Agenda," by Betty Pinson, Feb. 1, 2012, <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2012/02/01/1060885/-Behind-the-Pink-Curtain-Komen-s-Political-Agenda>

## 'Let women speak!'



Chicago—On Feb. 23 women's health advocates gathered at 230 S. Dearborn downtown at 12:45 PM, in front of Senator Richard Durbin's office to demonstrate support for women's access to health insurance that covers birth control, regardless of where we work.

The gathering was organized by the Illinois Choice Action Team, the all-volunteer group representing NARAL Pro-Choice America in this state, with support from the Coalition to Protect Women's Health Care, a national group of more than 40 diverse organizations devoted to the common cause of protecting women's access to preventive care.

The advocates said they're gearing up for additional fights in Washington, including a vote on Sen. Blunt's (R-Mo.) amendment to allow any employer or insurance plan, with or without religious affiliation, to refuse to cover any essential health service for virtually any reason.

Our demonstration focused on asking Senator Durbin for his support to oppose the Blunt Amendment and to demand that Congress "Let Women Speak"—a reference to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee hearing last week on the new women's contraception policy where the panel was all-male and opposed to birth control coverage.

—Benita Uliano  
Illinois Choice Action Team

## WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

Pakistan's first Academy Award nomination, the documentary *Saving Face*, follows the successful struggle by the Acid Survivors Foundation to introduce a law ensuring a minimum 14-year prison sentence for perpetrators of acid attacks. There are 150 such attacks, mostly on women and children, reported each year in Pakistan. This type of violence is spreading worldwide. The film follows plastic surgeon Mohammad Jawad, who holds free clinics to repair victims' faces, and Zakia, a survivor who attempts to bring the husband who attacked her to justice.

\* \* \*

Ugandan first lady Janet Museveni, who threw a "virgin party" for 70,000 young Ugandans last year, is now proposing a nationwide "virgin census." She changed her focus from promoting condoms to promoting abstinence after her conversion to evangelical Christianity and an increase in U.S. funding for abstinence programs under the Bush Administration. This especially harms women who contract HIV through marriage and can't use condoms for fear of being labeled unfaithful, or for poor women doing sex work to survive. HIV had declined due to the "Abstain, Be faithful, use Condoms" (ABC) program, but is now rising.

\* \* \*

For 30 years, the Argentinian activist group Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo has been demanding the return of the children of some of the 30,000 citizens executed for being supposed "leftist subversives" during the "Dirty War" of 1976 to 1983. The 400 to 500 children given to families loyal to the military dictatorship who often murdered their parents are now in their 20s and 30s and are mostly unaware of their true identities. Since 2007, a series of trials has been seeking to document human rights abuses during the dictatorship. Currently, 11 former military leaders are accused of kidnapping. U.S. Democratic Congressman Maurice Hinchey is seeking the declassification and release of U.S. government records that could prove a systematic plan to appropriate the children sanctioned by the highest levels of power. It could as well help identify the children.

## Fanon and Marx

When Terry Moon in her column in the last issue asks, "How deep does the dialectic need to become when the subject is woman, is Black woman?" she calls for more discussion of Fanon and Women's Liberation.

Fanon, in breaking with Sartre's Existentialist Marxism—which acknowledged only one Subject, labor, and consigned the Black dimension to a "minor term"—did not merely pose the "opposite," Black as the Subject. A movement at the time which did pose Black as Subject was Negritude. Fanon criticized the "cultural nationalism" of its spokesman, Aimé Césaire, as promoting a "vanguardism and a top-down" approach.

### FANON SPEAKS TO WOMEN'S ALIENATION

L Boogie is remarkable in seeing how profoundly Fanon's description of Black experience as "crushing objectification" also applies to women. She means being "made to not feel safe in my own body" and being "alienated from my own physical self."

Even as Fanon rejected Sartre's truncated concept of labor as the only universal, he turned to labor anew starting from the way Hegel worked it out in his master/slave dialectic. Fanon pointed to the fact that, whereas in the master/slave dialectic the master needed the slave's recognition, once the element of race is introduced, the master does not want recognition from the slave, but only work.

For Hegel the development of humanity comes only through the slave, not the master. The slave gets a mind of her own because she experiences the power of ideas that shape the world through being disciplined by social relations of slavery and the actuality of her work.

### A NEED FOR A DEEPER DIALECTIC

Fanon's dialectic, with the introduction of race, is deeper and sharper than Hegel's, because one can no longer take for granted the master's recognition of the slave's humanity. There is no reciprocity. In Fanon, the struggle of the laborer whose ideas shape the world includes the struggle to be recognized as a human being.

Fanon here has something in common with Marx, who began with labor in a universal sense, very different from Sartre's. Labor, which is humans' metabolism with nature in any society, is always shaped by abstractions that determine human relations. The extent to which we become fully aware and freely choose the abstractions that mediate our relations with each other and with nature is the extent to which we realize our essential human nature. For Marx this was true not only about labor under capitalism, but in the struggle against Black slavery in the U.S. and in the most fundamental relation: man/woman.

For Fanon, the colonial Subject's struggle was "an untidy affirmation of an original idea propounded as an absolute," a radical affirmation of the Subject's humanity in their social being. Fanon's break with Sartre was a reconnection with Marx, with his recreation of a universal which has to manifest in the particulars but is not exhausted in them.

—Ursula Wislanka

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revenues to pay for poor women's abortions.

The attack on poor women runs deeper than an attack on their reproductive health as Congress and the states cut programs for the poor, including the federal Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program that helps poor mothers feed their children. Republicans want to slash at least 10% of WIC's funding, throwing 700,000 women and children off the program.

The Texas Department of Health and Human Services will enforce a law in March prohibiting doctors and clinics affiliated with organizations that provide abortion services from receiving state Medicaid funding. The rule denies funding even to institutions that do not directly provide abortions. It could shut down the Women's Health Program and deny health services to approximately 130,000 impoverished women. These are only two examples, but there are plans to cut food stamps, all funding to Planned Parenthood, Medicaid and Medicare—all programs that women depend on more heavily than men.

### A NEW SOCIETY OR BARBARISM

What brings this onslaught against women to such an inhuman crescendo is multifaceted. Partly it is that those trying to control women's bodies and minds consider women as less than human—as things that should do their will. They see women's liberation as well as Black, Gay—really all genuine liberation movements—as a threat to the way they think things ought to be. It is more than just despicable misogyny of Republican politicians. It is a sign of the degeneracy of 21st century capitalism as it moves faster and faster toward fascism.

The stakes are always, in the end, either freedom in a new society based on new human relations, or fascism. The forces arrayed against women and others fighting for freedom have chosen fascism. They have not yet given it that name, but that is the path they've chosen.

# Justice still overdue for 29 murdered coal miners

**Detroit**—A new break in late February signaled a giant step forward in the prosecution of officials at the Upper Big Branch coal mine in West Virginia, where a methane gas and coal dust explosion two years ago killed 29 miners in the worst mine disaster in 40 years. The break came when federal prosecutors filed charges against a superintendent at the mine at the time of the explosion who is apparently cooperating with prosecutors.

While charges have already been filed against a mine foreman and the security chief, they are small potatoes compared to a superintendent, who has great authority and responsibility in determining the operation of a mine. That he is cooperating indicates that his testimony may lead to future charges being brought against higher Massey executives of the mine—and this is crucial to bring those who were the real safety violators to justice.

## BLANKENSHIP IS THE REAL CRIMINAL

The chief architect of those deadly violations is Don Blankenship, then head of Massey Energy, which was recently bought by Alpha Natural Resources on the condition that Alpha not be prosecuted for Massey's crimes. Blankenship has much to answer for, not only the more than 360 safety violations reported that led to the death of the 29 miners. Equally important is the vicious culture of fear and terror that he created at all of his mines and in the communities of the miners.

To enhance his ominous aura of intimidation, he drove a black Mercedes, flew to the several mines he owned in a black helicopter, and wore black clothing. The refusal of miners and their families to talk to reporters following the explosion is an indication of their fear of Blankenship. They knew that if their names ever appeared in any paper, any family member working at Massey would be fired immediately. They were so fearful that, even when reporters promised not to use their names, they still refused to talk.

As for the miners themselves, Blankenship tolerated no hint of opposition to anything he dictated and ordered that a miner be fired on the spot for daring to point out a dangerous safety violation or question anything he decreed. Unfortunately, he was able to destroy any attempt to form a union, leaving the miners at his

complete mercy—of which he had none.

This pattern goes back to the 1960s and his first Massey mine in West Virginia, when he refused to renew a union contract with the United Mine Workers union. After months of a strike marked by horrible violence on the part of Blankenship, he succeeded in breaking the strike and the union.

## INSTILLING A CULTURE OF TERROR

Blankenship refined this anti-worker, anti-union pattern in the years that followed. He expanded his mine holdings and instilled the same culture of fear and terror wherever he went. He became a violent anti-environmentalist, recklessly and aggressively polluting his mine areas with toxic mine wastes. He vehemently supported mountain-top removal mining, as well as reactionary political policies.

What must be understood is that the culture of fear and terror that he instilled in his mines and miners required an unquestioning bureaucracy, from the executive boardroom to the mines themselves. There were many miners, foremen and superintendents who could not follow his illegal or dangerous orders and quit working for him, but those who remained obeyed him unquestioningly. It was this blind obedience on the part

of the foremen and superintendents at the Upper Big Branch mine that resulted in the explosion.

The extent to which Blankenship blatantly ignored his responsibility is seen in the charges brought against the cooperating superintendent, which include conspiracy to defraud the government by blocking a federal agency, which is a felony. This is important because present laws classify a "mere" safety violation as a misdemeanor, with little punishment involved.

Supporting evidence of the charge is the revelation that workers were directed to falsify safety records and to use code words to warn when mine safety inspectors were coming so that safety corrections could be made. The charge also notes that safety equipment on a mining machine to detect the presence of methane gas had been rewired to render it inoperative. These violations were routinely practiced, placing the miners' lives in deadly danger.

Until these felony charges continue to go up to the executives, especially Blankenship, there can be nothing even approaching justice for the dead miners and their families. Even this, of course, cannot bring those dead miners back to life or ease the pain of their families.

—Andy Phillips

## Immigrant workers 'March for Dignity'

**Berkeley, Calif.**—On Feb. 17 over 500 people joined a "March for Dignity," endorsed by Occupy Oakland, in support of the over 200 mostly Latino workers fired the previous month, despite Berkeley being a "sanctuary" city (meaning the city pledged to not cooperate with discrimination based on legal status). An I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification Form, for checking on resident status) audit of Pacific Steel Casting Company, concluded in January, found 214 incongruities.

My husband and I were among those fired. Although the law was supposed to punish employers hiring undocumented workers, we are the ones punished by it.

At the beginning it looked as though our union, headed by Oakland's councilmember Ignacio De La Fuente, was going to help us. The company posted an E-Verify poster on the human resources office last January and started hiring new "legal people." The union assured us that nothing would happen to us because we were already inside. Eventually the union provided us the name of a law firm to help those of us who could get legal documents like a U visa.

But that was not enough. The union promised to provide a representative to be with us during the audit interviews. I called the union many times, but one never came. They didn't even answer the phone. Most

of us were fired, and I am not aware of anything the union may be doing after that. For example, they are not providing us with a list of jobs we could apply for. They only delayed any action on our part. The delay let the company hire our replacements, whom we trained before being fired.

We started to organize at first just to get our pension money back. We know we will not get another job in this industry; we will not continue to be represented by this union, so we wanted back the money we contributed for our pensions. Frankly, we need it: we don't have a job, we don't even have a hope of getting another job like it.

Once we started organizing, others joined us with their ideas of what we could do. We know that we will not continue to be a minority. In the future we will be a majority. We have to do things for all of us, starting right now.

We are looking for wider perspectives. This march is a march for dignity because we feel we don't have anything else. We don't have access to education, we don't have a way to survive without a job. We don't have anything here. But this is our country now. We have our families here, we have friends, we are a community. This is our place, our home now. So dignity is what we are fighting for.

—Ana Castaño



Ursula Wislanka/News & Letters

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economic growth may agree it's a great system, but not for migrant workers in factories."

If one is willing to listen, workers speak well enough for themselves in innumerable wildcat strikes (see "Widening labor and peasant revolts threaten Chinese rulers," Jan.-Feb. *N&L*). Stern surely is aware of the punishing work environment that is common in Chinese factories, yet he says not a word about the role of multinational corporations or of the global supply chain in fostering such conditions. Technology giants like Apple, Dell and Hewlett-Packard offshore their manufacturing to China and other developing countries to capitalize not only on the low wages but on the power of the state to suppress workers' independent voices.

## TOP-DOWN PLANNING FAMILIAR IN U.S.

Li's description of the Chinese model has an eerie parallel in the "Labor-Management-Partnership" (LMP) in my shop. Over a decade ago, in collaboration with our company CEO behind closed doors, Stern planned the LMP from the top. It soon became clear that its mission was to suppress workers' independent voices in the name of meeting company goals—to minimize cost and maximize revenue.

Kaiser management successfully stole a recent union election for the SEIU, its "partner" union. Like in China, we have no independent voice through the LMP, with company union SEIU as the ruling party.

## 'RIGHT-TO-WORK' STATE WORKERS' FUTURE?

For Stern, China is but a reflection of our right-to-work future. He urges us to partner with American corporations and their efforts to outsource our jobs to help cut costs so they can "stay competitive."

Stern has witnessed the growing labor unrest in protests by the Occupy Movement, Wisconsin public employees, and elsewhere. His remedy for America is "a streamlined government as a partner with the private sector"—a plan the Wisconsin governor would heartily endorse.

Stern's love for state-capitalist planning represents what Karl Marx called the "despotic plan of capital." He admonished the rank and file to "learn to adjust to new economic realities" and said that we should be glad that we even "have a job." My co-workers and I wondered how often Chinese workers must have to listen to that kind of lecture by their production foremen.

Today Team China rolls on, in partnership with Pennsylvania Avenue and beyond. They think rank-and-file democracy belongs in the "ash-heap" of history. We rank-and-file workers of the world beg to differ. We are united in that difference.

## Rally for locked out sugar, tire workers

**Chicago**—Locked out workers from American Crystal Sugar plants in North Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa joined locked out workers from Cooper Tire in Findlay, Ohio, and came to Chicago on Feb. 25 as one stop in their regional tour to raise support, "From Fargo to Findlay: A Journey for Justice." Workers from Chicago met them at Wal-Mart in the West Loop to hear their testimony and march in solidarity in front of the store.

We heard from speakers that American Crystal Sugar workers, beet sugar processors and members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers have been locked out since Aug. 1, 2011. Tire builders at Cooper Tire, members of United Steelworkers 207L, have been locked out themselves since November, after they rejected a tentative contract. Despite the hundreds of miles separating the two companies, both of them contracted with the same supplier of scabs to replace the long-time workers.

Chicago-area workers who came out in support included not only steelworkers in the USW and bakers in the BCTGM, but also electrical workers, teachers, teamsters, grocery store workers and others along with Jobs with Justice. One American Crystal Sugar worker from North Dakota let us know that locked out workers in his state had been denied unemployment benefits, in a state where the governor was one of the largest stockholders in the company. For news of the struggle and to support workers financially, go to crystalgreed.com.

Before the rally word had filtered out about a new tentative contract negotiated by Cooper Tire and USW Local 207L, but Cooper Tire workers at the rally were only about full solidarity for themselves and for the locked out BCTGM workers. The following Monday, locked out tire builders did, indeed, ratify the contract and will return to their jobs.

Wal-Mart was the target because it is the largest distributor of American Crystal sugar, which is now being processed by scabs. Workers and labor supporters had rallied at the same Wal-Mart just nine days earlier, that time in solidarity with 65 fired Wal-Mart warehouse workers. They were fired because they protested to their boss, a Wal-Mart subcontractor, over being paid far less than the minimum wage—unbelievably, \$4.62 an hour! Wal-Mart shrugs off responsibility for the wages and working conditions of their suppliers, but squeezing its subcontractors guarantees substandard conditions.

Like the national tour of Hormel strikers of Local P-9 in Austin, Minn., a quarter-century ago, this tour "From Fargo to Findlay" invites solidarity from workers when the news media and many union bureaucrats would like to bury the workers with silence.

—Teamster supporter

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## FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's Note: For International Women's Day and Women's History Month, we print below brief excerpts from Raya Dunayevskaya's 1975-76 lectures on "Women as Thinkers and as Revolutionaries," which were also excerpted in Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future.*

### I. Mass Creativity and the Black Dimension

What today we call Women's Liberation, as an Idea whose time has come, are movements from practice, from below, that have been accumulating through the ages.

Take the so-called Aba "riots" in Eastern Nigeria in 1929, some 30 years before anyone thought seriously of Africa, much less African women, as a new development of world freedom. It was in that inauspicious year that the market women in Eastern Nigeria were suddenly taxed by the occupying British Empire....

The self-organization of the women established a totally new form of struggle which transcended all tribal divisions—Ibo, Yoruba, Hausa, as well as the smaller tribes. So united, powerful, and violent was the opposition of the women to the edicts, to their own chiefs, as well as to the British imperial rule, that it became impossible to contain the revolt....

Has any historian, or even revolutionary, seen that historic act as ground from which a great leap into freedom as well as leadership was achieved in the 1960s? Nor can the neglect be explained only by the fact that the event occurred in far-off Africa, back at the outbreak of the Great Depression.

Take the Women's Rights Convention in this country in 1848, at Seneca Falls, N.Y., a fact often enough recorded by women historians of today. All underestimate the Black dimension which inspired the white, middle-class, educated women to strike out on their own. Sojourner Truth and sometimes also Harriet Tubman are dutifully mentioned, condescendingly admitting their bravery—and of course their suffering as slaves—but never as Reason which drove the educated to face reality: that the Black women were the orators, generals, and, yes, thinkers, whereas they, the middle-class intellectuals, were but subordinates....

**HAVE WE EVEN TODAY**, as we inveigh against "male domination," compared that to Sojourner Truth's separation from Frederick Douglass after the Civil War for being "short-minded" because he did not wish to burden the struggle for passage of the 14th Amendment by demanding also the right of women to vote? And have today's women theorists built on that movement from below, not only as force, but as Reason? Nor have any analyzed it within the context of that year of revolutions, 1848....

Other than Marx's genius, what **was** in the air that led to Marx's discovery of a whole new continent of thought? Can we today afford to let the ruling ideology keep us hemmed into American pragmatism? Shouldn't we, as women, at least be aware of the fact

### Philosophic dialogue

## Situationists and Absolute Negativity

It was good to have Ron Kelch's Essay, "Absolute Negativity, Occupy and Situationists," in the Jan.-Feb. *News & Letters* open an overdue philosophic dialogue. As someone who discovered the work of Guy Debord and Raya Dunayevskaya at about the same time, I've given a lot of thought to their relation.

I consider Debord's work, especially *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), as valuable. Further, the Situationist International's (SI) influence in the Occupy Movement is real. My first night at Occupy Chicago I heard SI slogans and ideas, even if the people using them didn't know the history.

I like the way Kelch discusses the question in light of Absolute Method. The Occupy Movement needs to grasp its own logic in terms of second negativity—not only what are we against, and wish to destroy, but what are we for, and wish to create. This includes the dialectics of the American Revolution and the vanguard role of Black freedom struggles.

The dialogue with the ideas of the SI, particularly Debord, can also help with this, even if there is a distinction to be made between Debord and Dunayevskaya in terms of method. Marxist-Humanism has rooted itself in the idea that revolutionary Subjects' activities, whether "labor, Women's Liberation, youth, Black, etc.—will be inseparable from the meaning of that activity... because in meaning, i.e. philosophy, is both ground and roof of all we do, survey, strive for, as we prepare for that 'revolution in permanence'" (*The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, p. 18).

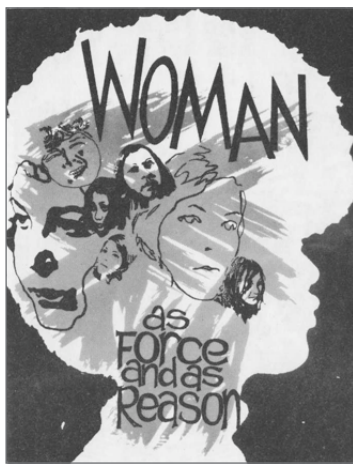
## Women as thinkers & revolutionaries

that the year Marx first broke with bourgeois society and worked out a philosophy of liberation which he called "a new Humanism"—1843—was also the year when a woman, Flora Tristan, proclaimed the need for an International of men and women that would put an end to the division of mental and manual labor?...

### II. Russia, February 1917; Germany, January 1919; and Rosa Luxemburg

Now let's turn to the 20th century and see, firstly, what we can learn from women **as masses in motion**, initiating nothing short of the overthrow of that reactionary Russian colossus, Tsarism—the dramatic, creative, empire-shaking five days in February 1917; and, secondly, let's turn to the 1919 German Revolution, and its greatest theoretician, Rosa Luxemburg.

That first day, Feb. 23, in Russia, appeared simple enough as a celebration of International Women's Day by the textile workers in Petrograd. But was it that simple when they insisted it become a strike, despite a raging world war in which their country was doing very badly? Was it that simple when all revolutionary parties—Bolsheviks, Left Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries, Anarchists—were telling them that they were courting a massacre, and they shouldn't go out on strike? Was that first day of the revolution, when 50,000 women marched despite all advice against it, a "male-defined" revolution? Was the letter they addressed to the metal workers, which the metal workers honored by joining the strike—and 50,000 grew to 90,000: men and women, housewives as well as factory workers—a proof of the fact that they didn't really "know" what they were doing?...



Art by Paul Tanzawa

What had happened in thought, what had happened in consciousness of the mass participants—all this is ground on which we build today. Or should be. But even if some still insist on playing down women **both** as masses in motion and as leadership, let them consider the German Revolution, January 1919, led by Rosa Luxemburg. None questioned that she was the leader.

From 1898 when she fought the first appearance of reformism in the Marxist movement, through the 1905 Revolution in which she was both a participant and out of which she drew her famous theory of the Mass Strike; from 1910-13 when she broke with Karl Kautsky—four years in advance of Lenin's designation of Kautsky as not only opportunist but betrayer of the proletariat—and when she first developed her anti-imperialist struggles and writings, not only as political militant but carving out her greatest and most original theoretical work, *Accumulation of Capital*, to the 1919 Revolution, she made no division between her theory and her practice....

Luxemburg was not only involved in lecturing and developing an anti-imperialist struggle over the 1911 Morocco crisis which would, in turn, lead to her greatest theoretical work, *Accumulation of Capital*, but she also turned to work on the "Woman Question," which heretofore she had left entirely to Clara Zetkin, who was editing the greatest German women's magazine, *Die Gleichheit*, from 1891 to 1917.

The magazine's circulation rose from 9,500 in 1903

to 112,000 in 1913. Indeed, by the outbreak of the war, the female membership in the German Social Democracy was no less than 170,000. It is clear that, as great a theoretician as Rosa Luxemburg was, and as great an organizer as Clara Zetkin was, they were not exceptions to the alleged apathy of German women. On the contrary, it would be more correct to say that there wouldn't have been as massive and important a revolution in Germany were there not that many women involved in the revolution....

Has the Women's Liberation Movement nothing to learn from Rosa Luxemburg just because she hadn't written "directly" on the "Woman Question"? Outside the fact that the latter doesn't happen to be true, should not the corpus of her works become the real test of woman as revolutionary and as thinker and as someone who has a great deal to tell us as Women's Liberationists of today? Are we to throw all that into the dustbin of history because she had not written on the "Woman Question"?

### III. An Ongoing Revolution and Today's Women Theorists

The plunge into revolutions is being undertaken because they not only are exciting events of the early 20th century, but will also illuminate the problems of our day. We need to examine, if only briefly, today's ongoing Portuguese Revolution to see the historic continuity of working-class women in motion as shapers of history. As far back as two decades ago, when the totally new movement from below began with the outbreak of the East European revolt against Russian totalitarianism, signaling a new world stage of struggle for freedom from under totalitarianism, and no one was paying attention to the fascist regime in Portugal, there were struggles of workers, of women, of peasants....

Women became especially important in 1973 when a labor shortage sent them into textiles and electronics, and directly into the fight against multinationals. It is in textiles and electronics and shipyards where the grassroots workers' movement first erupted, and where none questioned the militancy of women workers. But they were asking not only for a fundamental change in labor conditions, but for different relations at home, as well as raising totally new questions of revolution and new human relations....

Women's participation became critical as three movements—the rebellion within the army, and the wildcats of industrial workers covering the length and breadth of the country, as well as the peasant occupation of the land—coalesced. It was no accident that one of the revolutionary political movements that arose, PRP/BR, was headed by a woman, Isabel do Carmo....

**WORKING-CLASS WOMEN HAVE** a very special reason for their passionate interest in revolutions, not simply because they're exciting events, but because they show working-class women in motion as shapers of history. The dialectical relationship of spontaneity to organization is of the essence to all of us as we face today's crises. It is not only Portugal which is under the whip of counter-revolution that began Nov. 25, 1975. The global struggle for power between capitalist imperialism and state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist, all nuclear-armed, has put a question mark over the very survival of humanity.

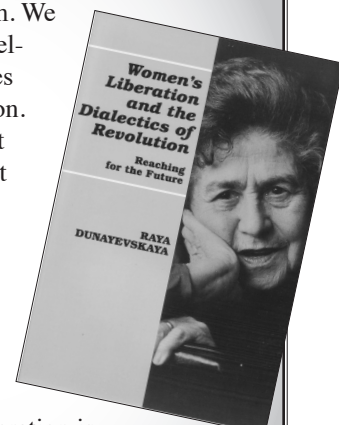
Creativity that can really tear things up at their roots and genuinely start something new, humanly new, can only come from mass creativity. It is only then when it is totally revolutionary, is not hemmed in by the concept and practice of the "Party to lead," and it is only then it can once and for all end aborted and unfinished revolutions....

### Celebrate International Women's Day

"No doubt we will not fully overcome male chauvinism so long as class society exists. But we can and will break up its monolithism. We can and will witness the development of women themselves not only as force but as reason. We can and will be a catalyst not only for our development as all-round human beings, but also for that of men. The first step in that direction is to meet the challenge as it appears, everywhere it appears, any time it rears its head, under no matter what disguises. The first act of liberation is to demand back our own heads."

—Raya Dunayevskaya  
From: *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*

To order yours, see page 7

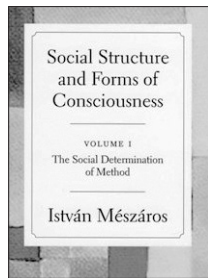


—Tim Finnigan

## ESSAY

## István Mészáros and the Dialectic

by Eugene Walker



István Mészáros, *Social Structure and Forms of Consciousness. Volume I, The Social Determination of Method*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010.

Global depression conditions have once again brought to the fore capitalism's grave contradictions, and with it, new interest in the work of Karl Marx. This

is not alone a theoretical question. The massive protests in Greece, Spain, Italy and England, as well as the Occupy Wall Street protests across the U.S., have meant that activists have been questioning the system, protesting against the cutbacks in social services, the massive unemployment, the growing inequality everywhere. TINA, "there is no alternative," has become a bankrupt expression while the ideas of Marx, if not front and center, have entered the discussion.

Which Marx is being explored and debated? After the distorted practices of what passed for Marxism for much of the 20th century, this is no minor point. One needs to return to Marx's ideas in and of themselves, crucially their re-creation for our specific moment, especially after the collapse of so-called Communism.

Here the labors of István Mészáros have a particular relevance. His *Beyond Capital* (1995) was an important critical study of the social metabolic form of capital as elucidated by Marx. As well, it showed that the deeply contradictory efforts of 20th century revolutions in the name of communism failed to move beyond capital. One could take issue with Mészáros' refusal to designate such societies as state-capitalist, but his return to Marx's analysis of capital and capitalism was a contribution in the last decade of the 20th century.

However, Mészáros' study came with a most peculiar philosophic framework—Hegel as the defender of "universal permanent capital." His focus was primarily on Hegel's political philosophy in *Philosophy of Right*. He recognized Marx's indebtedness to the Hegelian dialectic, but subordinated that to Marx's comment: "Hegel's standpoint is that of modern political economy" ("Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic").

In *The Social Determination of Method*, Vol. I of *Social Structure and Forms of Consciousness*, Mészáros focuses on the Hegelian dialectic itself, directly attacking how Hegel uses a number of philosophic categories: measure, mediation, negation in relation to Spinoza, object-subject identity, the Absolute Idea. *What is at the center of Mészáros' critique of Hegel's development of these philosophic categories is his full-blown attack on the heart of the Hegelian dialectic: "negation of the negation," or second negativity.* He is determined to demonstrate that *the Hegelian dialectic itself* is conciliatory to bourgeois society, and not a radical rupture in the manner of Marx. Let's examine his claim.

**"ALL DETERMINATION IS NEGATION"**

At first negation, we find the source of Hegel's praise for Spinoza: "Determinateness is negation—this is the Absolute principle of Spinoza's philosophy, and this true and simple insight is the foundation of the absolute unity of Substance." In the same moment, Hegel critiques the limitation of Spinoza's insight for stopping at absolute substance: "But Spinoza does not pass on beyond negation as determinateness or quality to a recognition of it as absolute, that is, self-negating negation....Therefore, Substance lacks the principle of personality" (*Science of Logic*, Vol. 2: 168).

Hegel's point was that the dialectic is not alone negation, but negation of the negation; not alone substance but Subject, including "personality"; that dialectics is movement and self-movement. Negation of the negation contains the positive emerging from within the negation.

Rather than seeking to grasp both Hegel's appreciation and critique of Spinoza, Mészáros makes a caricature of Hegel's commentaries, quoting tiny phrases: "negatively self-negating negation," "circle of circles," and "return to the beginning," that are meaningless without context and serious examination. Hegel's initial praise of Spinoza is, in Mészáros' view, related to the fact that "Spinoza sums up in a most striking fashion the inescapable negativity of the philosophical conceptions which are representative of capital's social formation."

To Mészáros, the Hegelian dialectic contains no movement to potentially transcend capital: "The Hegelian conceptualization of the world from the standpoint of political economy" (77) is the one and only truth. As a result, there is no serious exploration of Hegel's dialectic of second negativity, only ridicule of isolated expressions in a manner that borders on cynicism.

**NEGATION OF NEGATION IN THE ABSOLUTE**

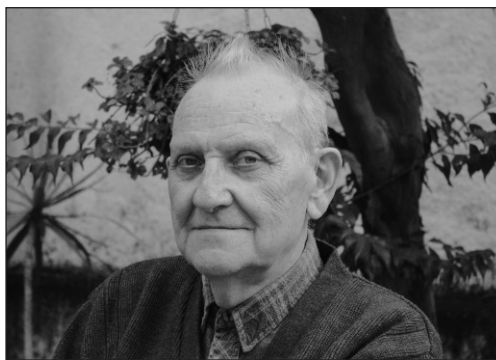
Mészáros seeks to bolster his critical reading of the Hegelian dialectic with an examination of paragraphs of the Absolute Idea chapter of the *Science of Logic*. Mészáros asserts that Hegel is not interested in removal of contradictions but only in their reconciliatory pres-

ervation; that Hegel's use of the negative as mediator is a hopeless task because real extremes and opposites cannot be mediated; that absolute negativity and absolute mediation based on subjectivity are brought in as merely semantic solutions that solve nothing. However, Mészáros' analysis seems colored by his determination to take every philosophic category of Hegel and look for the hidden political root of "universal permanent capital." Hegel almost becomes reduced to an ideologue.

On one occasion, Mészáros strings together isolated sentences to make his point. His reductive view of the Hegelian dialectic reaches an absurd level when the rich, complex dialogue of the 20-page Absolute Idea chapter of *Science of Logic* is dismissed in four isolated sentences quoted from various pages. This is supposedly to demonstrate that the Absolute Idea chapter is part of "determinations and contradictions of capital's constraining horizon...reproduced in [Hegel's] philosophy at the highest level of abstraction" (72).

Most telling of Mészáros' critiques is his failure to fully grasp Hegel's concept of "negation of the negation." At times he characterizes it as "pseudo-positivity of apologetic inversion," or "a formula problematically extended far beyond its validity." Mészáros does recognize the need not just for negation, the negation of capitalism, but the necessity for posing the positive: "In order to succeed in the envisaged historic sense, the socialist approach must define itself in *inherently positive* terms. Marx made this absolutely clear when he insisted that 'Socialism is man's *positive self-consciousness*'" (391).

But for Mészáros, "negation of the negation" relies only on negativity and thus positive self-consciousness cannot emerge from it. He rejects a reading of nega-



István Mészáros

tion of the negation as containing a positive within the negative, which we can "translate" in revolutionary terms as the destruction of the old, capitalism (first negation), and the construction of the new, the creation of a humanistic socialist society (negation of the negation), which moves beyond a dependence on the old and emerges on its own ground.

Marx did not view negation of the negation in such a narrow, undialectical manner. In "Critique of Hegelian Dialectic" he wrote: "communism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of private property. Only through the supersession of this mediation—which is itself, however, a necessary premise—does positively self-deriving humanism, *positive humanism*, come into being." This is second negation, self-negating negation, that is far from only a return to the old or reconciliation, or a simple wishing away of all the real contradictions. *Marx discerned the methodology for this within the Hegelian dialectic.* It became one of the keys for his conceptualizing and practicing the overcoming of the world's real, concrete contradictions in a manner that expressed an emerging new Humanism.

If Mészáros wants to criticize Hegel for his abstractions, for his reconciliatory political writings, well and good. But when he claims that the dialectic itself only has this reconciliatory end as its foundation, not only is he flying in the face of Marx's view, but, most crucially, he has cut himself off from the philosophic construction that can most profoundly assist us in the destruction of capital and the creation of a humanist, socialist, future society.

**DISMISSAL OF HEGEL'S ABSOLUTES**

Mészáros' reductive view of negation of the negation is one with his dismissal of the Absolute Idea in Hegel: "The fundamental methodological orienting principle of the Hegelian philosophy, centered on the Absolute Idea, is inseparable from its deeply reconciliatory ideological orientation" (305). What is most problematic here is Mészáros' attempt to conflate the revolutionary dialectic of *Science of Logic* (as well as Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Philosophy of Spirit*) with Hegel's reactionary writings on the state, etc., and thus to define the Hegelian dialectic as at heart reconciliatory and apologetic for capital:

[E]ven a great philosophical genius, Hegel, who identified himself with capital's standpoint of political economy, had to terminate history in the *present*: by postulating colonially dominant Europe as "absolutely the end of history" in his own version of the perfect "*organic system*" corresponding to the historically objectified, and fully realized, *eternal present* of the Absolute Idea.

While Marx did not extensively comment on the totality of Hegel's Absolutes, he did explore Absolute Knowledge in *Phenomenology*, and never dismissed the Absolutes in the manner Mészáros does. What is at issue is not alone theoretical. It is whether Hegel's Absolutes have crucial points of departure for a theory of transition, for the overcoming of capital *today*, in the first decades of the 21st century. This is what Mészáros has cut himself off from, even as he profoundly critiques the persistence and death logic of capital, and the failures of what he terms post-capitalist capital societies.

Put another way, as crucial as is what Mészáros identifies as the "Marxian Reorientation of Method"—as opposed to all the methods that he importantly critiques in *Social Determination of Method* as pre-Marx in the era of capital—Mészáros has not fully grasped Marx's method because he minimizes and fails to fully explicate Marx's indebtedness to and revolutionizing of the Hegelian dialectic.

He is not open to the possibility of returning to the Hegelian dialectic in and for itself for *our day*. His view is that after Marx's settling accounts with the Hegelian dialectic, there is no need to return to Hegel, no need for Hegel's dialectic as a way to critique bourgeois society, in either its classic form or its so-called socialist form. Unlike Marx, Mészáros chooses not to use the Hegelian dialectic against Hegel's political conclusions, against his false positivism.

We are not arguing the Absolute Idea contains *the* key for overcoming capital. One needs Marx and the revolutionary subjectivity of masses in motion. But that too does not alone solve the problem. The question is whether a return to the Hegelian dialectic in and of itself, and not alone via Marx, can assist us at the present moment. Mészáros does not believe so, and argues that an active rejection of the Hegelian dialectic in the Absolute Idea can help us clear away mystifying, obscuring debris.

**ABSOLUTE NEGATIVITY AS NEW BEGINNING**

Can we have a more illuminating way to explore "negation of the negation" and the Absolutes of Hegel than Mészáros offers? In a vastly different interpretation, Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, saw Hegel's Absolute Idea not as an apologia for capital, but rather as ground upon which to create new beginnings—"Absolute Negativity as New Beginning"—for social transformation. In her 1961 "Rough Notes on *Science of Logic*" she wrote:

[I]n reaching this final chapter, the Absolute Idea, [Hegel] is through with all which we would politically describe as "taking over"; that is to say, capitalism will develop all technology so perfectly for us that all the proletariat will have to do will be to "take over." As we reject this concept politically, Hegel rejects it philosophically. He has now so absorbed all the other systems that, far from taking over, he is first going back to a *totally new beginning*.

The challenge she saw was the need to discern and concretize that dialectic within humanity's struggle for freedom. For decades, Dunayevskaya labored on "the specific of self-liberation" in the world of here and now. Three strands were crucial: (1) Marx's dialectic of revolution in permanence in the entire body of his writings from the 1840s to the 1880s, was both a transcendence and a revolutionary appropriation of the Hegelian dialectic. (2) She sought out the revolutionary human subjectivity of her day, what she expressed as the movement from practice that is a form of theory, and which she saw in the action and thought of workers, women, Black masses and other minorities, and youth. (3) She returned to the Hegelian dialectic in and of itself, to his Absolutes rooted in negation of the negation. She found there a new philosophic moment. For her, *Absolute Negativity as New Beginning* became the universal that determined her philosophic-political-organizational labors.

The contrast with Mészáros' view could not be sharper: Where he finds only "universal permanent capital" in Hegel's dialectic, Dunayevskaya found a vantage-point for comprehending the totality of Marx's "new continent of thought and revolution." Where Mészáros fails to see the Hegelian "negation of the negation" as expressing a positive reaching for the future, she found the needed "translation" of revolution's dual rhythm, the destruction of the old and the creation of the new. Where Mészáros dismisses Absolute Idea as only the "fully realized, *eternal present*," Dunayevskaya grasped Absolute Idea as "free creative power," enabling "the unity of the theoretical and the practical idea," the preparation for "the drive to transform reality itself" (Dunayevskaya, "Absolute Negativity as New Beginning," Chapter 1, *Philosophy and Revolution*).

Today's activist generation needs to view the totality of Marx, particularly his dialectical roots in Hegel. For this, Mészáros' recent writings, despite their many brilliant insights, create unfortunate barriers.

## REVOLTS AND HOPE FROM CHINA TO TEXAS

Your Jan.-Feb. lead on China ("Widening labor and peasant revolts threaten Chinese rulers") was very interesting. I had seen videos of police beating up anyone who recorded such revolts. I am so tired of police with guns, e.g., in Oakland recently, but even at the airports. It is literally a police state, just like in China. I felt so sorry for the people there and here.

**Kathy Oakland**

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It is important to see how integral the "other China" is to humanity's liberation from global capitalism. Sweated alienated labor concentrated in Chinese factories is still the foundation of capital's extraction of surplus value which sets the global standard for job creation. There has been a persistent call for global solidarity from Chinese workers. That was the plea we heard in Seattle in December 1999 from independent Chinese trade unionists. It didn't get much attention at the time.

The specter haunting China's rulers today is the movement for self-determination from below in peasant communities and the factories in the face of the global capitalist system. The persistent struggle of the Chinese workers and peasants is a crucial link in the effort to overcome global capitalism.

**Observer California**

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Although the reality is barbaric today, there appears to be a hopeful awakening of the people worldwide—what I would call an emerging hopeful collectivism of the working class. The challenge is not to give up.

I keep wondering what will happen in May? Will we see another 1968, when the near-revolution in France was, however, aborted? What will the G8/NATO events bring about? Will the world's working class this time collectively use their mental and muscle power to create a truly human civilization? One that is biophilial (loving creation and construction) to replace today's necrophilial (loving death and destruction)—to paraphrase Erich Fromm. We will see.

**Octogenarian Wisconsin**

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The current potential—to move activists from a shallow liberalism into the deeper waters of socialism—gives me goose bumps. We can be confident that all the state actors will react predictably, with repression in various ways, depending on the local circumstances, from Europe, Syria, Egypt, to the U.S. (whether that be Austin, Oakland, New York, or Memphis). Many will have the opportunity to test the limits of a shallow democracy in a voting booth. Some

will retreat into defeatism, but some may take the opportunity to test new ideas of freedom.

**Hopeful Texas**

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A year ago, on the same day I'm writing this, Feb. 24, Yemen's then-president, Ali Abdullah Saleh, told me and others at a meeting that he is not leaving power and if we want him to leave we have to force him to, and bring our own president. Really amazing how things end up. Goodness wins after all.

**Shatha Al-Harazi Sanaa, Yemen**

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I find it hypocritical that we condemn China for workers' oppression, without looking at what the U.S. has done. I think we want to blame them for our problems, saying, for example, that China is taking our jobs. But the fact is that the U.S. is sending the jobs there. I condemn China for their policies but feel they are just as guilty as we are.

**Subscriber Chicago**

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Your Jan.-Feb. lead on the widening labor and peasant revolts talks about peasants and workers being forced to resist. I don't think they were forced but resisted anyway. The capitalists in China were forced into the land grabs to perpetuate capitalism. The point is to see the resistance dialectically, not mechanically. In the popular portrayal, Rosa Parks refused to sit at the back of the bus because she was tired. But that wasn't it. She was tired of racism.

**Reader San Francisco**

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Turning people into factory workers is what capitalism demands, without regard to what it means to be human. This is also the story in Haiti, which has had crises because their native agriculture has been decimated, and imported rice prices have risen so much. It is very true that we are all connected to the struggle of Chinese peasants and Chinese labor.

**Reader Northern California**

## RAMPANT RACISM

Racism is running rampant. I have not seen it like this in my whole life. Schools, hiring practices, language and behavior are blatantly anti-Black and anti-Latino. Talking about it infuriates white people. Talking about it scares people of color. If we do not stand up to it, we will perish.

**Elena Herrada Detroit**

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A petition has been circulated seeking to repeal the recent Arizona State Government ruling outlawing

# READERS' VIEWS

the teaching of Ethnic/Racial Studies. This racist Arizona ruling not only applies to Mexican American Studies, but also Black/African American/Africana Studies, Latino/Hispanic Studies, Native American and Asian Studies within public schools and state and city colleges and universities. Given their records, there is no presidential candidate—Democratic or Republican—who will support the fight to repeal this ruling.

That's why we created our petition. You can sign it here: [http://signon.org/sign/repeal-the-arizona-government?source=c.url&r\\_by=588262/](http://signon.org/sign/repeal-the-arizona-government?source=c.url&r_by=588262/)

**National Black Education Agenda New York**

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Librotraficante, a caravan of banned books, will go through Texas and New Mexico in March, dropping off books to a network of "Underground Libraries." On March 17 in Tucson, organizers will hold a literary celebration. Participants include Tucson high school students affected by the abrupt shutdown of their Mexican-American studies program last year, as well as Latino authors, educators and activists.

Tony Diaz, founder of Nuestra Palabra: Latino Authors Having Their Say, stated: "When we heard that Tucson administrators...in front of young Latino students, during class time, removed and boxed up books by our most beloved authors...that offended us down to our soul...politicians in Arizona have become experts in making human beings illegal. We did not do enough to stop that, thus anti-immigration legislation spread...now they want to make thoughts illegal. If we allow this to happen, these laws, too, will spread."

To read a list of the banned books and support this latest chapter in 500-plus years of resistance, visit <http://www.librotraficante.com/Press-Release.html>.

**Supporter Nueva York**

## VOTING AND FREEDOM

Obama represents a party that wants to run capitalism. Republicans are "purists" identifying unbridled capitalism as freedom. The need is to project what freedom is. It would be great if the Occupy Wall Street movement mounts a real challenge to capitalist "freedom." Politics is only a reflection of issues in real life.

**Ursula Bay Area**

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David Letterman sarcastically endorsed Santorum for president. Stating that the Republican Party was looking for the most "crazy" candidate, he said Santorum clearly beat Romney in that department, and went on to list all his incredible positions. The most frightening revelation, however, is not the horrifying parade of openly racist, xenophobic, classist, homophobic, misogynist retrogression represented by the Republican candidates. It is the support they are receiving from a significant portion of the population!

**Teacher Illinois**

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While I am disappointed with Obama's politics, I would still crawl on my knees through broken glass to vote for him. I see what is arrayed against him. He doesn't realize that technology, too, is war, and that there is no way to reconcile with it. I am offended by people who don't vote. It's a small thing, but it is important. There are many countries where people get killed for that right.

**Malcolm Bay Area**

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In a recent emailed "alert" from the ACLU, I was startled to read: "Rather than working to protect and expand the right to vote, politicians in Springfield, Ill., are considering legislation that suppresses the right to vote, and hurts low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, senior citizens and voters with disabilities. Tell legislators to oppose repressive Voter ID requirements."

I had not known that millions of Americans lack the narrow category of "permissible IDs" under proposed new legislation. Those who lack it include people who happen to have moved, were born at home, and even veterans who served the country. What is happening today is truly insidious.

**Forewarned Chicago**

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Obama's election signaled a new moment in that a segment of the white working class broke with prevailing notions and for a moment overcame the racist determinant of U.S. politics. *American Civilization on Trial* points out that when Black and white get together, there is real movement forward. The Left now has two positions: Obama represents a real movement and we should participate in politics (after all, Marx supported Lincoln); the other position critiques him for being a Black face for capitalism. News and Letters Committees' position is neither. It does not confuse the aspirations of people who participate in an election with the narrow arena of bourgeois politics.

**Ron Kelch Bay Area**

## WOMEN'S LIBERATION

I found "Frantz Fanon and women's liberation" (Jan.-Feb. *N&L*) interesting, particularly "the thingification of women," or, as I would put it, "the objectification of women." Since both men and women objectify their own bodies, as well as the bodies of others, this is very precarious territory. Many of us like a little "objective" attention. I know I do. Unfortunately, society serves to alienate us from our bodies. Nevertheless, no one should be harassed on the streets. Women are more exposed, thus more vulnerable to this. Much easier for a man to remain armored in these situations. I'd like to see a wide discussion of this in the pages of *N&L* because I've found that being in love with a woman goes to the very essence of my being as a man.

**Rand W. Gould Lapeer, MI**

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Thanks to *N&L* for keeping true to Dunayevskaya's standard for a "deep and sharper dialectic." Often the condition of girls and women is a side issue. It was a relief to read Moon's "Frantz Fanon and Women's Liberation" and the Reader's View by Van Gelder, which, taking up L Boogie's analysis of street harassment and the harassment of Israeli girls on their way to and from school, seriously engage the business of everyday living—the front on which human liberation, in practice and theory, ultimately is battled.

**Dawn Perkins California**

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For years the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has tried to stay out of the papers as "bishop" became a synonym for pedophile enabler. But now, just as the Komen Foundation felt the time was right to attack Planned Parenthood, the Bishops are feeling emboldened by current political talk to return to the attack on the long-settled issue of birth control. One can only hope they have misread the mood of the country to the same extent that the Komen Foundation did.

**Bob McGuire Chicago**

## IN MEMORIAM FOR MARIE COLVIN

The death of Marie Colvin, the British war correspondent killed in Syria Feb. 22 by bombs raining down from Assad's army, is a tragedy. It is a



tragedy because she was determined to report what was happening in the most dangerous parts of the world, but also because of why she did so. As her friend Roy Greenslade wrote in *The Guardian*: "She was not interested in the politics, strategy or weaponry; only the effects on the people she regarded as innocents. 'These are people who have no voice,' she said. 'I feel I have a moral responsibility towards them, that it would be cowardly to ignore them. If journalists have a chance to save their lives, they should do so.'"

While *News & Letters* tells the truth by being a forum for people involved in struggle to speak for themselves and tell their own stories, Marie Colvin reflected the voices of those "who have no voice" in a powerful way few others have.

She died in Homs from Assad's shelling precisely because of her commitment to let the world know what the people of Syria are suffering.

In 30 seconds on the night before she was killed, she did just that in an ITV news report from Homs: "The Syrians are not allowing civilians to leave...anyone who gets on the street is hit by a shell. If they are not hit by a shell they are hit by snipers. There are snipers all around on the high buildings. I think the sickening thing is the complete merciless nature. They are hitting the civilian buildings absolutely mercilessly and without caring and the scale of it is just shocking."

Colvin wanted the world to be shocked along with her, a courageous political act, the kind of act that has made reporters targets of repressive regimes the world over. The silencing of her fearless voice reminds us of the importance of knowing the truth, and the preciousness of Colvin and her comrades who face death to give it to the world.

**Terry Moon Managing Editor, News & Letters**

**A LOOMING WAR**



The administration is warning that Iran will attack the U.S. if Israel attacks them. Israel is warning that it may attack Iran and will not tell the U.S. beforehand. Iran warns that if attacked it will shut down the world's busiest oil shipping lane and retaliate so as to cause Israel's collapse. Presidential candidates bluster about taking military action against Iran. In such an environment, war becomes very likely, and the administration's soothing reassurances can't erase the fact that war quickly spirals out of anyone's control. When you teeter on the edge of a cliff, it's pretty hard not to fall all the way to the bottom. Stop the war before it's too late! No war on Iran!

**Anti-war activist Chicago**

**FOR CLARENCE SCOTT, "THE BUTTON MAN"**

Clarence Scott, aka bluesman Li'l Scotty, aka "the button man" to anybody who attended a demonstration in Chicago in the last 30 years, passed away Feb. 1 from a heart attack suffered in January.

Scott was born in Florence, S.C. A house fire in his early years, blamed on the Ku Klux Klan, left him with scars. It didn't stop him from playing guitar or singing.

He was a supporter of civil rights and freedom struggles. He would be seen at most rallies here—sometimes performing, but more often standing beside his button display. His Blues Revue played local clubs, and also did shows in nursing homes.

In recent years health problems forced Scott to undergo a tracheotomy. He taught himself to sing again, using a marking pen to block off the tube in his

throat. The blues in action.

I last saw him a few months ago at Occupy Chicago. Scott wasn't talking then. But he always had a hug or fist bump. He had the light of humanity in his eyes, always, and as history shows, that's the spark of revolution. He will be missed.

**Blues lover Chicago**

**SITUATIONISTS**

Oakland stands out in the Occupy Movement for its radicality, largely thanks to a mix of young anarchists, council communists and anti-state Marxists thoroughly familiar with the writings of the Situationists.

In his essay in the Jan.-Feb. *N&L*, Ron Kelch zeroes in on how Debord and company seem to fetishize the idea of workers' councils. But the councils are not the end-all/be-all for the Situationists. Beyond the councils is "generalized self-management." Beyond "generalized self-management" is the realm of freedom where all can try their hand at "creating situations." They named themselves with this idea and soon saw that no one is free until everyone is.

Kelch strikes a false note when he states, "They took no hints from how the content of [Marx's 1844 Manuscripts] spoke to the 1956 Hungarian revolutionaries whose workers' councils fought official Communism." I believe the exact opposite is true.

Kelch is right to lament that the Situationists did not deepen theory with their own 1844 Manuscripts, as they had intended to do. Let's hope that "Hella Occupy Oakland" produces such a thing along with an "Oakland Commune"!

**Lew Finzel Oakland**

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I agree with the content of the Jan.-Feb. *N&L* essay article, "Absolute negativity, Occupy and Situationists," but it is present in reverse. What is important is not to answer Guy Debord and other Situationists, but to answer the questions of the Occupy activists and revolutionaries. Those activists are looking to Situationists because they are looking

for a total philosophy which expresses the experience of their lives and their dreams. Raya Dunayevskaya put it as movements "looking to be taken over," not in the sense of being co-opted, but to make it part of a greater idea.

Situationism started in 1957 but took hold in the 1968 French revolts and still has currency because of a similar void in thought today.

It does little good to show the inadequacy of Situationists unless we are able to project a positive humanism, a "second negation." That "second negativity" can only come about through listening to the movement itself. "The Left" has not been listening very well since the 1970s, which is part of why we are in the situation we are in today. If we start with the real lives of those in the Occupy movement and the millions more who have been moved by it, then we will find our way to the full philosophical expression of the striving for freedom and universality.

**D. Cheneville Oakland**

**BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING**

In a recent Charlie Rose program, Rose interviewed the New York chief of police on the surveillance going on there. It is apparently very pervasive and contentious, with many complaints. I'm sure this kind of surveillance is happening everywhere. It reached enormous heights during the 1960s—and must be increasing again now, although it seems little talked about. It needs to be recognized and stopped while that's possible.

**Veteran of the 1960s Detroit**

**CRIME AND PUNISHMENT**

Christian Gomez was only 27 years old when he died while on hunger strike on Feb. 2 at Corcoran State Prison in California. The strike of over 30 prisoners began Jan. 27 after the prison failed to keep promises it had made in order to end an earlier, larger hunger strike. Corcoran is known for medical neglect, and reportedly they cut off hunger strikers from medication and other care. It appears that they knew of pre-existing

health problems and let Gomez die. Prisoners nearby were yelling and banging on bars to try to get guards to check on Gomez as he lay dying.

Prisons, which supposedly exist to punish people for wrongdoing, face no punishment for their own crimes: contributing to the death of a human being. Gomez's death added urgency to the Occupy Movement's Feb. 20 nationwide Day in Support of Prisoners. The strike may have ended, but a communication from inside implied future strikes will take place. More information and links to the prisoners' demands can be found at [prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com](http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com).

**Occupier Chicago**

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Queer Notes cites a petition in England to pardon the brilliant cryptologist Alan Turing. In the U.S. a pardon means you did indeed commit the crime. It is the British government who should ask for a pardon for driving Turing to suicide for being gay.

**David M'oto Oakland**

**PRISON VOICES**



Your paper is a great outside view of a world and its policies that need attention and immediate change for the better. Keep shining the

light on the real and important issues.

**Prisoner Crescent City, Cal.**

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Thank you for providing me with *News & Letters*, which is shared with fellow prisoners. Through your publication, we are kept abreast of events that are normally suppressed through the capitalist media.

**Prisoner Susanville, Cal.**

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

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## Biblioteca Popular needs your support!

*Editor's note: Biblioteca Popular has been an important anti-authoritarian institution in the Chicago Pilsen community, holding cultural events and forums on issues from war to immigration, revolution in Tahrir Square to femicide in Ciudad Juárez. Now under attack by Mayor Emanuel's Chicago, the Biblioteca Popular Collective released a statement, "They are afraid we can dream without them":*

On Oct. 15 Biblioteca Popular received a "cease and desist" letter, along with multiple fines from the City of Chicago's Department of Business Affairs, for unlicensed "live creative expression." The notice cites the lack of a Public Place of Amusement License, intended for for-profit venues with a capacity of more than 100 people. However, this license does not reflect the activities of Biblioteca Popular, and the capacity requirement alone makes it exempt.

We have no illusions of the city's intentions. This is an act of aggression meant to disrupt an effort to build alternative institutions for self-determination. It reminds us of how spaces like Biblioteca Popular, where communities dialogue and forge bonds of solidarity, can challenge the logic of state and capital, and are a threat to those in power. The city wants a moratorium on "creative expressions" it cannot control and claims our poetry, love songs, and war cries should be purchased, approved and surveilled. It is evident the city is not meeting the needs of our communities and that it will not tolerate efforts to self-organize around meeting those needs.

After filing a Freedom of Information Act request we have discovered an ongoing investigation launched by Chicago's Bureau of Organized Crime since April, along with documents indicating the city's desire to shut down Biblioteca Popular. We were facing thousands of dollars in fines on trumped-up charges. After notifying the City that we are shutting our doors and haggling with them about the gravity of these alleged offenses, we were offered to settle for a fine reduction of \$1,000. After receiving legal counsel, we realized contesting the fines would likely result in a \$10,000 verdict, total fines adding up to \$12,000. Though the fines are bogus, the city is determined to push forward with

## The Black trek north

*The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, by Isabel Wilkerson, Vintage Books, 2011.

Isabel Wilkerson, the first Black woman journalist to receive a Pulitzer Prize (1994), spent 15 years creating this book, the title of which is taken from Richard Wright's *Black Boy*. It traces the Great Migration lasting 55 years and ending only "in the dragged-out, belated response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964" (p. 539).

Wilkerson distilled over 1,200 oral histories into three biographies, representing the broad range of origins and outcomes for Southern Blacks who moved north. She intertwined their stories with literature, history and government reports, enriching her moving description of their lives.

The book beautifully reveals the human face of the Great Migration. Wilkerson challenges commonly held views of the six million Black people who moved north. She asserts that the deliberate Southern construction of Jim Crow segregation—"the violently enforced codes of the Southern caste system" (p. 10) after the Civil War—created the deep-seated racism in the North.

Although Wilkerson concludes that the "common denominator for leaving was the desire to be free" (p. 536), her protagonists achieved only limited freedom, beset with contradictions, like the crime-ridden Chicago neighborhood of former sharecropper Ida Mae Gladney. But some migrants' individual quests for freedom were unseparated from a burning drive to create a whole new society.

That burning drive animated Charles Denby, who migrated from Alabama to Detroit in the 1920s, worked in auto factories and became the first Black worker-editor of a Left newspaper, *News & Letters*. He is not taken up in this book, but his autobiography, *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* (Wayne State University Press, 1989), chronicles his pursuit of freedom. His philosophy grew to include what he titled his last chapter, "Worldwide Struggle for Freedom":

"I consider my life story as part of the worldwide struggle for freedom. As a Black from South USA and a Black auto production worker in Detroit, my experience has proved to me that history is the record of the fight of all oppressed people in everything they have thought and done to try to get human freedom in this world. I'm looking forward to that new world, and I firmly believe it is within reach, because so many others all over the world are reaching so hard with me" (p. 294).

*The Warmth of Other Suns* is worth reading for the human stories that the U.S. still doesn't want to acknowledge and for showing us the reach of Jim Crow into the 21st century, as it enabled capitalism to divide and exploit all of us. Far as we have come, there is a lot of hard work to do before we will achieve a deeper freedom.

—Susan Van Gelder

all of them. We have decided to accept the settlement.

In light of this repression we have decided to close up shop at 1921 S. Blue Island.

We still need your support fundraising, packing and moving. We also ask your help in finding venues for the activities and projects which currently make up the space and invite you to meet with us to organize toward their survival. Get in touch with us at pilsenradical-space@riseup.net.

In Love, Rage, Solidarity and Friendship,

—The Biblioteca Popular Collective

## Maldives coup defied



In the Maldives, a country of hundreds of islands in the Indian Ocean, a Feb. 7 coup overthrew the country's first democratically elected president, Mohamed Nasheed.

As a long-time pro-democracy activist, Nasheed was imprisoned 16 times and tortured under the previous Gayoom regime. As president, he was an internationally recognized leader on climate issues, speaking on behalf of small island states like the Maldives, whose highest natural elevations are about three feet above sea level, facing extinction from rising sea levels. He had set the Maldives on a path to become the first carbon-neutral nation.

The coup was headed by Vice President Mohamed Waheed Hassan, backed by a mutiny of elements in the police and military, who attacked the main military base in Male', the capital, and took over the state broadcaster.

As the new president, Waheed has appointed figures from the former dictator Gayoom's government, which had been agitating against Nasheed's attacks on judges who protect corrupt Gayoom allies. Whipping up a violent atmosphere, Waheed adopted their anti-Semitic, Islamist rhetoric and branded Nasheed supporters traitors and terrorists.

Within a day after the coup, 500 democracy supporters had been thrown in jail, and dozens more were in intensive care in the hospital. The headquarters of Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) was trashed, and its staff was brutally beaten.

**Thousands of people, including a large number of women, flooded the streets to oppose the coup. An arrest warrant was issued for Nasheed, and the new home minister pledged to send him to jail for the rest of his life, but hundreds of supporters massed outside his home, preventing his arrest. Protests are continuing. On many islands, anti-coup protesters attacked police officers and burned or closed down police stations.**

In a "Women's rally for justice" on Feb. 24, hundreds of women joined by dozens of men marched across Male' chanting, "Tyrant Waheed, Resign," before joining a MDP rally of 8,000.

Following a Feb. 26 protest in Addu City, women's rights activist Shiyara Mohamed said, "It was just around 100 people, and most were women. We were standing near the police barricade and calling for Waheed's resignation when all of a sudden the Star Force charged from behind us and tear gassed the whole area without any warning." Women were beaten with batons and boots.

The U.S. and India immediately recognized the coup as "constitutional." They are pressuring Nasheed to call off protests and join in a "national unity government." Soon China too expressed support for Waheed. India, with U.S. backing, is competing with China for a commercial and military foothold in the strategically located Maldives, just southwest of India's tip.

In an op-ed piece in *The New York Times*, Nasheed acknowledged his mistake in not purging the military of Gayoom allies. He warned the people of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, "Long after the revolutions, powerful networks of regime loyalists can remain behind and can attempt to strangle their nascent democracies."

However, he is betting on new elections to bring him back to power. He has not confronted the fact that democratic elections in themselves cannot substitute for a revolutionary self-organization of the masses from below. Elections are not enough to dismantle the exploitative economic relations and corresponding organs of violent coercion, which are what enabled the coup. On Feb. 7, when military "officers on my side then begged me to open the weapons vault," Nasheed refused in order to avoid bloodshed. It was already too late.

—Franklin Dmitryev

## 'Shootout' in the back

**Los Angeles**—My name is Alicia Alvarez. I'm the mother of Jonathan Cuevas, who was 20 years old when he was shot and killed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department in the city of Lynwood on Oct. 10, 2010.

He was walking with two friends from a party. He called me when he was almost home. I told him to call me back when he made it to the house because it was almost midnight. In the morning his father knocked on my door, saying he was called by the Sheriff's Homicide Bureau. At the Lynwood Century Sheriff station Homicide detective Torres told him that Jonathan had been fatally wounded.

**At the morgue, I was really upset to see what we saw when they pulled Jonathan out of a drawer. His eyes were open, there was a bullet hole in his chest. According to the autopsy report, that was an exit wound—he had been shot three times in the back, starting from the lower back up to almost the shoulder blades, and once in the side by the hipbone.**

Detective Torres told me he was fatally shot because he had a shootout with the officers. He wouldn't tell me where the crime scene was, but my son had told me he was on Long Beach Blvd. I drove around, and when I came to Josephine St. and Long Beach Blvd, I saw the puddle of blood. Then people started coming to us, telling us what they saw. What they told me and what the detectives said, was different.

People told us they had heard gunshots and Jonathan had fallen to the ground. The officers handcuffed him and left him there lying on the ground without rendering any aid. According to witnesses, an ambulance came with no lights or sirens. The paramedics were not allowed to go to him immediately.

**Two nurses came to me with their faces covered and told us that deputies got in a physical altercation with doctors and nurses in the ER and would not allow them to perform CPR on my son. I saw in the medical records that they did give my son all the medical attention he needed, but unfortunately it was too late. I know there were precious moments that were wasted. This is where I saw a violation of my son's civil rights in not receiving medical care immediately.**

After the autopsy report came out, showing that the gun residue test was negative, they changed the first story they gave us, that Jonathan had a shootout with the deputy, to say he was reaching into his waistband. The story they are sticking to now is that they had received a 911 call that three men were brandishing a weapon and terrorizing motorists.

I have not received the police report because, according to the police, it's an ongoing investigation. Videos from street cameras have not been released. I've asked for them at City Council meetings, I've talked to the mayor one-on-one.

I've had a lot of harassment and break-ins into my house after my son died. My daughter was beat up along with my cousin by the same deputy sheriff that was there at the time. We're going to Juvenile Court still fighting that case, because they said she assaulted the officer. I asked for the officer's background and that's where I found out he had killed someone before.

A lot of organizations come out and try to help you because the family doesn't know where to start. Yes, it was my son that was killed, but it affects the whole community because the officers continue to work here. We need an independent review committee to do these investigations. I wish we could do something to hold these officers accountable for their actions.

—Alicia Alvarez

## Protest prison abuse

**Los Angeles**—On Feb. 20, over 150 protestors gathered at the Los Angeles County Jail and the adjacent Twin Towers County Jail against the ongoing oppressive treatment of prisoners. This is a continuation of growing support for the prisoners' hunger strike that began July 1, 2011, at Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit (SHU). (See *News & Letters*, Sept.-Oct. 2011.)

This renewed strike spread throughout California prisons, with 12,000 participating in the first week. Extended solitary confinement is based on a prisoner's alleged gang status based on someone else's "debriefing," or snitching. Those that don't cooperate are given extended time in solitary confinement.

A Latina whose husband is in Pelican Bay said, "Treat prisoners humanly." And a Latino student said, "Prisons don't make us safer. Prisons don't solve human problems."

—Basho

**San Quentin, Calif.**—On Feb. 20 over a dozen rallies and demonstrations were held throughout the U.S. for a "National Occupy Day in Support of Prisoners," including in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Austin, Denver, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York. In the Bay Area, over 1,000 people gathered outside the gates of San Quentin to hear mostly from former prisoners and statements read from current prisoners including Mumia Abu-Jamal.

—Urszula Wislanka



# The return of the Russian Revolution?

by Alexei Gusev

**Moscow, Russia**—The demonstrations of Dec. 10 and Dec. 24 in Moscow, in which tens of thousands of people took part, show clearly that the period of social passivity in Russia is over; the Putin era is nearing its end. The last time such large demonstrations took place in Moscow was in 1990-91 at the height of the democratic wave directed against the domination of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Then, as a result of these mass actions, the whole party-state system of the USSR began to crumble. Those who participated in those events 20 years ago are again feeling revolution is in the air.

The rising wave of protest has demystified the myth of Putinism as a durable "consensus" between the people and the authorities in Russia. It was not just a few small "marginal" groups but **the mass of ordinary people who no longer were willing to exchange their civil and political rights for Putin-style "stability."** Many were surprised by such an awakening after ten years of social hibernation. But in fact it was inevitable.

...[D]espite the explicitly pre-revolutionary situation in Russia, the victory of the democratic revolution in the near future is not assured. The death-throes of the Bonapartist regime could last. **But the revolution is ripening, sooner or later it will break out.**

**And if this revolution succeeds?**

Objectively speaking, today the revolution can only be political and democratic. Russian society is not ready to go further, given long decades of totalitarian atomization, a serious economic recession and then Bonapartism. The revolution will not solve social-economic problems right away, but it can create the political and institutional conditions for their solution. Political freedom and democracy are not a panacea—but without them no serious improvement of the social order is possible....

The Stalinists and some of the right-wing liberals claim, erroneously, that a "bourgeois mob" was in the streets of Moscow. According to a poll, 75% of the participants in the demonstration on Dec. 24 were salaried workers in nonmanagerial positions; 68% were low and medium-low income. On the other hand, their level of education was rather high: 83% had degrees. One of the main forces in the struggle for democracy is this 21st century proletariat—skilled, educated, but deprived of a decent share of the public wealth.

...The "Putin decade" has witnessed a large growth of nationalist ideas of the type that turn easily into Na-

zism. The regime is responsible for much of this, since it has no other ideology than "statism" tinged with nationalism. The lack of freedom in social life and the lack of developed political culture favor the propagation of such crude ideological substitutes. This has resulted in xenophobia, inseparable from nationalism, ethnic pogroms against migrants from the Caucasus, Nazi terror in the streets, thuggish violence of nationalist football hooligans, etc. The mass protests against electoral fraud called forth feverish activity among the nationalists, who tried to attach themselves to the democratic movement. Their main goal is to be recognized as a political force. But behind the "democratic nationalists" hide genuine Nazis. "Democratic nationalism" is the claim of superiority of "true Russian nationality" over other ethnic groups, profoundly incompatible with the principles of democracy.



Moscow demonstrator's gag says, "Without voice."

In the membership of the protest demonstrations are apologists for the assassins of Stanislav Markelov and Anastasia Baburova. This is a serious mistake on the part of the leaders of the democratic movement. The participation of the far Right, with their flags and their spokesmen on the platform, can have serious consequences. In the hope of attracting new protesters from the camp of the far Right, the movement's organizers run the risk of discrediting their cause....

However, it is highly improbable that the victory of the democratic revolution will reinforce the nationalists. Their target audience is already divided between the nationalist Liberal-Democratic Party (of the notorious Zhirinovskiy) and the CP, which leaves little ground for "new" nationalists. According to polls, 75% of the Russian population does not feel hostility towards other ethnic groups. The majority of people in Russia realize that xenophobia is disastrous for their multi-ethnic country. The rank-and-file activists of the protest movement strongly rejected nationalism by booing the far-Right speakers at the big Moscow demonstrations....

**The objective task of the democratic revolution in Russia is to liberate civil society from the authoritarian and bureaucratic yoke and to create a political space where all social forces can express their interests.** The absence of an organized Left movement (outside of tiny Trotskyist and anarchist groups) cannot continue, and the different Stalinists and phony "social democrats" of "Just Russia" party parading as Leftists are not up to filling the bill. Today already, 17% of the protesters identify with the non-Communist Left. Their position is not yet represented politically. Sooner or later, the consolidation of the democratic Left forces that are anti-totalitarian, internationalist and defend human rights and the rights of the workers must begin.

Although it may upset the prudent "Communist" Gennady Zyuganov, Russia has not "used up her supply of revolutions." History knows no limits to this supply; revolutions continue as long as their tasks have not been accomplished. In France it took four revolutions over 80 years to establish a democratic system. The ruling group may well stage-manage demonstrations by street-sweepers under the slogan "Fuck the Revolution!" Such feeble ploys only indicate the febrile agitation that precedes death, the senile fear of the ineluctable end. "The laws of history are more powerful than any bureaucratic apparatus."

29 December 2011

Editor's note: For a full version see [http://www.praxis-center.ru/files/\\_editor\\_Return=20Rus=20Rev.pdf](http://www.praxis-center.ru/files/_editor_Return=20Rus=20Rev.pdf)

## QUEERNOTES

by Elise

A California Girl Scout put out a YouTube video asking the public to boycott Girl Scout cookies because she objects to a troop admitting a Transgender girl. While three Louisiana troops disbanded over the issue, a national Girl Scouts spokeswoman for the 100-year-old organization said to the *Washington Post*: the Girl Scouts "prided itself on being an inclusive organization serving girls from all walks of life....We handle cases involving transgender children on a case by case basis with a focus on ensuring the welfare and best interests of the child in question and the other girls in the troop as our highest priority."

\* \* \*

Kuwaiti police justify torturing and sexually abusing Transgender women because of a 2007 law which makes it a crime to imitate the opposite sex. Even males dressed in male clothing have been arrested by police, forced to dress in female clothing and then police report they were arrested in that attire. Human Rights Watch documented these abuses in their report "They Hunt Us Down For Fun: Discrimination and Police Violence Against Transgender Women in Kuwait."

\* \* \*

Discrimination against LGBTQ people by the owners and operators of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) housing and their lenders is now prohibited beginning in March. GLBTQ individuals in, or perceived to be in, Queer relationships will be included in the definition of family. HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan made these liberatory announcements in late January.

\* \* \*

One week after Uganda's anti-homosexuality bill was re-introduced, Ugandan police raided a workshop for LGBT human rights defenders. Women Living Under Muslim Laws' Violence is Not Our Culture Campaign vehemently protested the raids ordered by Minister for Ethics and Integrity Simon Likoko. Kasha Jacqueline Nabagasera, founder of Freedom and Roam Uganda, the only Lesbian organization in Uganda, was arrested.

## 'We are all Greeks'

On Feb. 12, open rebellion broke out in Athens. "Layoffs! Layoffs...You will save Greece without the Greeks!" protesters proclaimed against the Greek parliament's approval of a new round of austerity measures, dictated as conditions for a new 130 billion euro loan by the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and especially the European Union's (EU) rich creditor nations like Germany. The rage that fueled the burning of 50 buildings at the center of Athens and looting of shops peddling luxury goods was over the unending downward spiral pushing the majority of Greeks into ever more severe material deprivation. They see no end to the cycle of austerity measures, economic contraction, and more austerity.

The Greek economy has been contracting, especially since the 2008 financial meltdown, while finance capitalists who caused the global economic crisis drained the public treasuries. Austerity measures mandated by a 2010 loan caused Greece to suffer a much deeper depression, leaving it with less ability to get out of debt. Now unemployment is over 20%, 50% among the youth, and public services like healthcare have been gutted. Without a new loan Greece will go into default in mid-March when a big bond interest payment is due. To get the loan, both major parties in the government had to agree to a long list of conditions including huge new pensions cuts, cutting an additional 150,000 jobs in the public sector and reducing the minimum wage by 22%.

**Far from being a "bailout," this deal, constructed by Greece's financial masters, is another totally cynical ploy designed to fail.** The Greek economy, which contracted 7% in 2011, will, by the financiers' own estimates, shrink at least another 4% in 2012 and will have no capacity to meet debt repayment conditions. The financial overlords and creditor states think that by sacrificing Greece they can save themselves. With this contemptible move to micromanage the Greek economy and to hamstring any new government that may come to power, the last bit of "solidarity" that could be attached to the word "Union" in the EU's name has been shredded.

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble at first suggested that Greece delay April elections and install a technocratic government. When this was met with outrage in the birthplace of democracy, Schauble insisted on structuring the loan so that most of it goes into an escrow account to be first used to pay bond interest because his only concern is managing the Greek default in the interest of the financiers.

**Within a few months a new calamity of homelessness, ever more massive lines at soup kitchens, and deaths from lack of healthcare awaits the Greek people.** The search for "real democracy" in the public squares in Europe in the wake of Arab Spring was nowhere more deep and persistent than in Syntagma Square in Athens, which has been rife with general strikes and mass action demanding the overthrow of the "dictatorship of capital." On Feb. 18 solidarity rallies were held throughout the world from Occupy Wall Street to Berlin, exclaiming, "We're all Greeks." In Syntagma Square, Manolis Glezos, a national hero for his role in the resistance to Nazi occupation, asked for global solidarity to "overturn a rotten system."

Greece is only the weakest link in capital's stalled accumulation after the financial meltdown revealed a much lower rate of profit in the real economy. The scarcity in opportunities for accumulation drives nations, who can get away with it, to try to save themselves at the cost of others. Thus, Germany uses its economic power to keep other nations in Europe from bringing their trade into balance. Portugal, Spain, Ireland and even Italy are not far from the same austerity-induced death spiral inflicted upon Greece.

**New massive demonstrations have erupted again in Spain, where in many areas teachers and garbage collectors haven't been paid since December.** Spain's EU-mandated cuts were supposed to address the problem of its public debt but, predictably, the resulting economic contraction made their level of public debt much worse. The Eurozone as a whole, as well as EU countries outside the Eurozone like Britain, are now in the midst of a new recession which threatens to bring the global economy down with it.

While European nationalism, which precludes Europe from acting as an economic unit, exacerbates the crisis, even the U.S. economy, which is growing again, has anemic job growth and is still in the midst of the most severe long-term unemployment since the Great Depression. Governments of other major world economies are trying to force Europe to better use the levers of finance to manage the general collapse in the rate of capital accumulation in the real global economy.

That collapse, as Marx predicted, is inherent to capitalism because of a tendency for the amount of capital needed to employ each unit of living labor to rise. Global capital accumulation's absolute is a future of growing permanent unemployment and pauperization. Only freely associated human solidarity between workers, not governments drifting toward war and nationalism, can pave the way to a different future. "We are all Greeks!"

—Ron Kelch

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# Syrian revolution fights Assad's genocide

continued from p. 1

genocidal tactics used by Russia against the Chechens. Homs has been bombarded using 240mm "Tulip" mortar rounds, the largest in the world, supplied by Russia and previously used to level the Chechen capital, Grozny. They are being fired indiscriminately into working-class and poor neighborhoods like Baba Amr.

From the midst of carnage, the internet has allowed the human cost to be put before the world. Figures like the late Rami al-Sayyed, killed in Baba Amr, and Danny Abdel Dayem presented on-scene reports and pictures unprecedented in war and revolution. There are no excuses. The world knows.

## HUMANISM OF THE SYRIAN MASSES

The Syrian people have fought the ideological traps laid by the regime. Assad has made every effort to stir up religious sectarianism in his own favor. But demonstrations, largely Sunni Muslim because that is the country's oppressed majority, have continued to include groups of Christians, Druze and Alawites, Assad's own sect. As reported by Nir Rosen, "...I have met many activists from Druze, Christian and even Alawite backgrounds...I have met many secular activists, who for example drink alcohol or date the opposite sex. There are female activists who dress in western fashions. But undeniably, Islam is playing a role in the revolution.... But very few in the opposition are struggling for an Islamic state. Islam is not the goal. But it does provide a creed or inspiration and it colors the discourse for many protesters and fighters" (*Al Jazeera*, Feb. 16).

This contradicts the blanket portrayal by Assad, by some in the Western media, and by some on the Left that the Revolution is dominated by religious fundamentalists, and even al-Qaeda.

As in all of Arab Spring, women have been activists. Even in conservative areas, there have been women's demonstrations. "Nour," an activist in al-Maadamia, near Damascus, described some of the things women have been involved in: "Some prepare demonstration signs. Others take charge of the communication among group members. We are strongly involved in our movement's exposure and communication tools, like Facebook. And we provide special medical care to demonstrators who get injured during the protests" (Adel Mansur, "Syrian women recruit resisters in flashpoint town," *WeNews*, Jan. 31). Women have provided much of the movement's logistics, and compared to some other branches of the Arab Spring, have been better represented in the movement.

Young women, especially, have been active outside Syria in building concrete support—from organizing flash mobs to collecting medicines and iPhones for the resistance.

As has been pointed out in Egypt and elsewhere, the Arab Spring can't be allowed to fall into the pattern of 1979 Iran, with counter-revolution emerging from inside the revolution specifically attacking women as its opening move against the entire revolution. In that regard, Iran's reactionary theocratic regime has much to lose from a successful Syrian Revolution. Millions of Iranian women and men await their chance to overthrow their own oppressors.

## NO ATTACKS ON IRAN!

Nothing could serve the Iranian rulers better than threatened attacks by Israel or the U.S. This would

only serve to unify the people behind the regime, and prolong its life. Israel's threats, in particular, are being driven by the panic its rulers feel toward the prospect of a free Syria which would genuinely support the Palestinians. Nothing terrifies Israel's reactionary rulers more than the Arab revolution.

The Iranian people challenged their own rulers in the mass protests following Ahmadinejad's stolen election in 2009. They have done so continually. The Iranian people's freedom is not an industrial by-product of the nuclear industry, no matter what the Iranian rulers or U.S. and Israeli right-wing militarists would have the world believe. The Iranian masses are closely watching Syria.

Like al-Assad, Iran's ruling hypocrites have sometimes masked themselves as supporters of Palestinian freedom. That masquerade is over.

Palestinian youth have introduced the ideas and tactics of the Arab Spring into their own struggle. The impact has already been felt. Khader Adnan's 66-day hunger strike against Israel's inhuman policy of "administrative detention," a British colonial inheritance, received national support. At the same time,

Adnan, a spokesman for Islamic Jihad, announced his support for nonviolent resistance.

Threats by Israel or the U.S. to attack Iran are designed to kill off these manifestations of freedom and self-development. They are designed to keep events at the level of state power and military threat.

## REVOLUTIONARY RESPONSIBILITIES

Revolutionaries need to maintain a focus on women's liberation. Far from being a diversion from revolution, women's struggles reveal how deep and permanent it must become if all are to experience liberation. That is why the question, "What happens after revolution?" must be addressed now, even in the midst of battle.

The Syrian Revolution calls for grasping second negativity—that is, not just what the struggle is against, but what it is *for*. Anything less risks falling into an "enemy of my enemy is my friend" mentality, all too characteristic of that part of the Left which sees Assad, delusively, as an "anti-imperialist." Journalist Khalil Issa put it this way in *Jadaliyya*, Feb. 24:

"They are oblivious to the fact that fighting fascist oppression was and continues to be an inseparable part of what it means to be a leftist....However, it appears that each and every one of these currents prefers the continuity of Iranian and Syrian authoritarianism for the sake of endlessly reproducing both themselves and their discourses."

These Leftists ignore the real difficulty this revolution presents for a capitalist world order in deep economic and social crisis. In truth, Syria isn't just the place Arab Spring was always heading, toward life-and-death confrontation with the world's rulers. But it is where the world itself—history itself—is heading as long as the capitalist system prevails.

## CUTTING EDGE OF WORLD REVOLUTION

The Syrian people are fighting for their own freedom. They are also fighting for the Palestinian people, who have every interest in a democratic Syria. They are fighting for the people of Iran, who have risen up time and time again to reclaim their own stolen revolution. They are fighting for the hundreds of thousands of Russians who have come out to protest Vladimir Putin's authoritarian regime, and they are fighting for the millions of Chinese workers who are exploited and denied representation.

The Syrian people are fighting for us, here in the U.S., beside Occupy Wall Street and the Pelican Bay prison hunger strikers. An "anti-imperialist" that stops at the call for "Hands off Syria!" undercuts solidarity with the Syrian revolution.

History has assigned to our generation the task of not stopping at any such first negation. Second negation, the creation of the new, begins with working out the new ideas that have been coming to birth in the revolutionary year opened by the Arab Spring.

This is a potential turning point that could move history forward in a way fitting the heroism shown by the masses in motion. It recalls what Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of Marxist-Humanism, wrote about the freedom struggles of the 1960s:

"It was as if Hegel's Absolute Method as a simultaneously subjective-objective mediation had taken on flesh. Both in life and in cognition, 'Subjectivity'—live men and women—tried shaping history via a totally

new relationship of practice to theory. It was as if the 'Absolute Universal,' instead of being a beyond, an abstraction, was concrete and everywhere" (*Philosophy and Revolution*, p. 42).

The goal is the revolution in permanence, in which the free development of each of us is the condition for the free development of all. Supporting the Syrian Revolution is a vital part of the world revolution. History doesn't often afford such opportunities, or responsibilities.

## Iranian critiques 'anti-imperialist' Left

**London**—Since 2009, the first wave of revolutions in the Middle East was started by the marching of millions in Iran. For many years, the Middle East has been run by the capitalist dictatorial regimes in which the working class is exploited to the maximum. People live in misery while the less than 1% swim in gold and money.

In 2009 we reached that stage in Iran. As a result, not only did the deprived in Iran rise up but the uprising caused a crack in the whole Middle East ruling class. Since 2009, the ruling class has not been able to rule as usual. That created an opportunity for the working class in the whole region. Once the revolution in Iran was cracked down on, revolt came in Tunisia and spread all over the Middle East and then back again to Iran.

## IRANIANS FIGHT OWN REGIME

The revolution in Iran was repressed but never defeated. The mainstream media tried to portray the revolution as defeated with only minor troublemakers left on the streets. As we have witnessed elsewhere in the Middle East, the capitalist system sacrificed a few top figures in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya but encouraged a coalition of Islamic and military forces (including NATO) to substitute for them in order to defeat the revolutions. However, the Middle East is still boiling.

From Iran to Libya, from Egypt to Tunisia, from Syria to Bahrain and Yemen, people are organizing and preparing for the second and third phases of the revolution. Ultimately, either the ruling class will massacre the revolutionaries and re-establish their bloody system or the people will succeed. There is no middle ground.

## 'ANTI-IMPERIALIST' VIEW OF MIDDLE EAST

According to the nationalist Left, the so-called anti-imperialist groups in North America, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere, there are two types of countries and dictators in the Middle East and two types of revolutions.

### 'Good Dictator' and CIA Revolution

The Good Dictators are the ones who murder, torture and kill people, exploit the working class, cut their livelihoods and implement all the IMF recommendations. *But* from time to time they bark at the U.S. and other Western countries. These Leftists think the revolutions in these countries are all CIA-made. The CIA is able to organize and bring millions of people into the streets (do not ask me how, ask them). From revolution in Iran to those of Libya and Syria, all are CIA-organized! What genius thinking!

### 'Bad Dictator' and Conditional Revolution

The Bad Dictators are similar to the first group in their killing, torturing and exploiting the population, *but* they have close relationships with the U.S. and other Western countries. Conditional revolutions, such as the ones in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen, are considered good by these Leftists. The "reasoning" for the revolution, according to these "anti-imperialists," just so happens to be an echo of the Mafioso government in Russia, the Islamic regime in Iran, and China: "Just get rid of the Bad dictator, the puppet of the U.S., and go home. Let our anti-U.S. Islamic friends take care of the rest."

—Abbas Goya

*Editor's note: The author created a "Marxists expose the Leftists who support the Islamic regime of Iran/Syria" page at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Marxists-expose-the-Leftists-who-support-the-Islamic-regime-of-IranSyria/253014821448008> to discuss this analysis.*



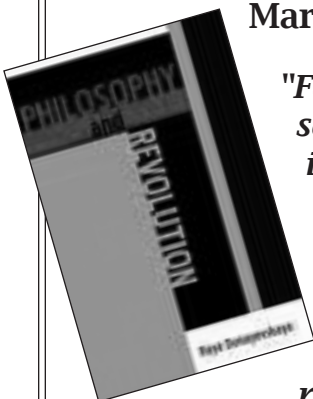
In commemoration of the Hama Massacre in 1982, a flash mob was held Feb. 11 on Michigan Ave. in Chicago to help spread awareness and raise solidarity for Syria. Signs included "Stop genocide in Syria!" and "In Syria, detention is worse than death," as well as "Dear Syria, Egypt is with you!"

## Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao

"For everyone who is seriously interested in the forces which form and deform the present and the future, this book is to be most warmly recommended."

—Erich Fromm

See literature listing, page 7.



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## Parents, students protest schools hit list

**Chicago**—Several hundred people rallied against Chicago's school "turnarounds" on Feb. 20 and marched to Mayor Rahm Emanuel's house. Many marchers wore stickers over their mouths that read "Silenced" or "Excluded," symbolizing how the mayor and his school board have run roughshod over schools without listening to parents, students, teachers or other school employees.

The board, obeying the mayor's corporate agenda, periodically picks several schools to close or "turn around," that is, privatize. The politically connected, union-busting Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL) has taken over 25 schools already.

This was part of a series of protests. One was at the Winnetka home of Timothy Cawley, chief administrative officer for the Chicago Public Schools (CPS). Another was a four-day sit-in outside Emanuel's office. Earlier, an Occupy-style mic-check took over a school board meeting for 20 minutes.

And on Feb. 17-18, parents and students occupied Piccolo School, slated for turnaround. After Occupy Chicago and others answered their call for support, nearly 100 people had gathered to defend the occupation from the police, who backed off.

"Piccolo has failed because CPS has refused to invest in public education," occupiers said in a statement. "The school has struggled for years but you have taken out all the programs, classes and opportunities to learn."

To no one's surprise, on Feb. 22 the board rubber-stamped this year's plan, closing seven more schools and "turning around" ten—all on the Black and Latino South and West Sides and Humboldt Park.

Quite a few marchers were from Occupy Chicago, Teachers for Social Justice, Communities United Against Foreclosures and Evictions, and other groups. Following is some of what we heard from a variety of speakers.

—Franklin Dmitryev

This is a civil rights issue. They are segregating our schools for their own personal use. We want a real investment in our neighborhood schools. We are taught that we live in a democracy where we have equal rights and living conditions, but it's not true. We have been silenced, excluded and pushed around.

—Diamond McCullough, sophomore at Dyett High

We don't have money for books, resources, programs, and computers. But we have \$2 million to turn over your school to a private company and throw away the teachers and principals.

—Latina community activist

Only 18% of the schools that have replaced closed schools are high-performing. Of that 18%, 50% are selective-enrollment schools. It's the new form of segregation. Black and Brown children are blocked from having a quality education.

—Jitu Brown of the Kenwood-Oakland Community Organization

Who are the biggest gangbangers in Chicago? Rahm Emanuel and [CPS Superintendent] Jean-Claude Brizard. Just like drug dealers, they don't care how they get their money. Where are Rahm's kids? In a private school. This isn't a race issue. This is about money. Your kids are just meat to Emanuel and Brizard.

—Brian Jackson, parent of a Tilden Academy High student

It's no education plan. It's a business plan. It's a 1% plan. We need decent working conditions for teachers, decent learning conditions for students, equitable resources, support and funding for all schools. We need an immediate moratorium on all proposed school actions.

—Rico Gutstein of Teachers for Social Justice

## Romanians take to the squares

**Bucharest, Romania**—Romania and many European countries are living in times of an unprecedented crisis. Politics of economic austerity combined with populist and nationalistic rhetoric occurring in a constant realm of corruption have increased the growing distance between citizens and authorities throughout the continent. Street protests in various countries showed the level of popular disenchantment with a political system made to reduce the citizens to simple tools used only for electoral purposes. Police brutality and repression have been the answers to street protests in Valencia, Athens, Bucharest, Moscow, and beyond.

In Eastern Europe, the 1989 revolutions failed in actively engaging citizens in politics and led to a sense of exclusion and lack of representation for the masses. Small elites gathered the political and economic monopoly, and gradually excluded citizens from policy making.

In Romania, ever since Jan. 13, citizens of various socio-economic backgrounds are gathering daily, and demonstrating in streets and squares. Their voices, shouted and sung in incredibly cold temperatures going as low as -4°F, displayed a high disenchantment with an entire political class that has ignored their interests and demands for over 22 years. The economic crisis has divided even further the society and the political class,

# Occupy Wall Street, Oakland, Chicago

**Oakland, Calif.**—In the past I have been involved in a lot of struggles: workers' and immigrants rights, animal rights, etc. They were all single issues, isolated by their demands. The Occupy Movement brings them all together and addresses the cause of the problems, the whole system.

What was most important during the encampment of Occupy Oakland was getting together to figure out how to do it. How will we deal with garbage, provide health-care, etc.? The solution has to start with people getting together and making their own decisions.

**People have to start thinking for themselves and take back their own power. If a revolution is to succeed it will have to succeed before the revolution, during and after.**

Too often, when a system is replaced by another system, the new system becomes equally oppressive. I don't see how a system can work on a big—national or international—scale.

A part of the revolution has to be how to do things for ourselves without a global economy that spits out mass-produced things. Most of the things we use we don't really need. Everything seems to be disposable, including workers. We are destroying the planet. We have to have a change or we won't last much longer. And where are the human beings? Human beings are just parts of the machine to produce stuff we don't need. Being a part of Occupy is different from having a job, though it's more than full time. It is doing things for your community.

The encampment brought together various folks, some of whom were not used to living in such a huge group so close together. Some were not used to sleeping in tents, some had been sleeping in the plaza before the encampment started. We had to figure out how to live together, how to resolve bad experiences, how to improve good ones, how we have each other's backs. How do we deal with people with mental health issues, or disabilities (an area that still needs to be improved)?

But the idea was not to keep the encampment for its own sake. It was a spot for organizing. The capitalist system makes you wrapped up in ahistorical individuality. It's all about "me," my profits, etc. We have to relearn to live together.

We proved that we can get people out for a day of action. It is fun, especially when the weather is nice. But we are not going to change the world by having an action here and there. Actions are important to get people together, to get people thinking and listening and talking to each other. But at the same time, the work that needs to be done is right here, right now, starting locally from the real basics. We're done trying to change laws. It's fruitless.

Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago was the

making the citizens feel unrepresented. They are now demanding their voice be heard.

Under these circumstances, the protests in the University Square (Piata Universitatii) are a proof of normality. The protests belong to the citizens who feel ignored and unrepresented. The peaceful demonstrations symbolize the freedom and solidarity between the citizens of Romania. As ordinary citizens, we have been building a peaceful mood among the crowds at University Square, and a determined solidarity towards democratic values.

We were happy to see increasingly more people, considering that Romania's problems are profound, and go beyond simply sanctioning the current government which should be removed. Such problems involve an entire political class who have distanced themselves from the citizens through top-down politics, elitism, corruption, and a general lack of transparency.

We in the square do not want only the removal of the temporary power-holders, but we actively desire an important change in the rules of the political and social game. Corruption, nepotism, and clientelism must be completely eliminated in order to regain the rights acquired in 1989 and to actively engage the society in the political life of the country.

—Teddy Florea

first successful occupation I had seen. It took five days to show that an action like that occupation is possible and successful. It got media attention from all over the world.

I was camping out in the lobby the whole time making a documentary. Everyone was really excited to take over the plant and run it themselves. It transformed a

lot of workers. For example, those who had kids and both parents worked, had to plan and share the childcare. We also got a lot of support from other workers.

**After the occupation was the best time ever at the Worker Rights Center. Whenever other workers brought their grievances to us, it was enough to just threaten the managers with an occupation, and they wanted to talk. It showed we can get our rights back, but not through the legal system.**

It showed that occupation can be successful, that you can achieve specific goals. Occupy Oakland is different, because we don't have specific goals. Our goal is to transform the whole society. It's the first step

to a more conscious society, to get people to work together instead of relying on the powers to tell us how to live.

—Anka

**New York City**—The Jan. 28 Occupy Wall Street (OWS) Environmental Solidarity Working Group meeting, with 100-plus participants, was just one of many gatherings all over the city, reporting each evening to OWS General Assemblies in or near Liberty Plaza.

Several dozen spokespeople for environmental action organizations gave five-minute presentations, always taking questions. The young facilitator kept emphasizing the importance of coordination and discussion. The idea was to hear from all who wanted to present and then have time for individual dialogues and smaller break-out sessions.

Some of the groups who spoke included:

- \* Occupy the Earth (occupytheearth.net)—said they go beyond Occupy Rio in not relying on the UN but want to create a global platform to consolidate world ideas: (1) open source system, (2) global knowledge base, (3) global resource management.
- \* Shut Down Indian Point Now!
- \* Occupy Farms, working with others, including Food Justice.
- \* Times Up, a 22-year-old environmental direct action group that did a lot of work during the encampment, including composting food wastes and pedaling the energy bikes (www.times-up.org and timesupvolunteer@gmail.com).
- \* Ted Shultz of Tech Ops talked both of reinventing how enterprises of all types work out a horizontal model of relations, and of technology that can facilitate organizing collectively. See www.occupy.net/collaborate, software called www.Bettermeans.org and www.bettermeans.com.
- \* Todos Somos Japon—planning an activity for March 11, at Union Square.
- \* March 23 Occupy the Business of Pollution, the Politics of Energy, to be followed March 24 by a Global Mass Rally for a Livable Planet, with actions continuing through Earth Day, April 22 (99forearth@gmail.com).
- \* An anti-fracking group is working with United for Action (www.350.org), Food and Water Watch and opposing the Spectra Pipeline into lower Manhattan (see also Sane Energy Project). There will be call-in days and mass visits to Obama campaign offices to oppose fracking.

OWS Occupy Education has energized and coalesced Black and Latino organizing to save and humanize public education in New York City. As elsewhere, public education is fighting against corporate interests for which charter school operations are cash cows.

We need to understand the organizing in this new movement. There are genuine widespread attempts to practice new human relations. We want to help all this new thought and activity realize its potential towards a new, human society.

—Susan Van Gelder and Tom Siracuse



**Chicago**—About 100 people came out for the Feb. 28 rally to STOP the Suppression of the Occupy Movement! Protests were held nationwide, including in New York, where hundreds marched and ten were arrested for reoccupying Liberty Plaza. Occupy Chicago has been supporting occupations at City Hall over mental health center closings, at Piccolo School, and by workers at the Serious Energy factory, formerly Republic Windows and Doors. OC has held actions against the mayor's "Sit down and shut up" ordinance and protested on the nationwide Day in Support of Prisoners. Occupy's "Chicago Spring," starting in April, will lead up to the NATO/G8 protest in May.

Aaron Cynic, Diatribe Media www.diatribemedia.com

## WORLD IN VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

April 2012 marks 20 years since the start of the genocide in the former Yugoslavia, 1992-1995. This was a deliberate, state-sponsored attempt by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević (and to a lesser extent Croatian President Franjo Tuđman) to destroy the multi-ethnic Bosnian society in which Muslims, Serbs, and Croats had co-existed peacefully. It is sobering to see how these events continue to affect us today.

Over 200,000 were killed in Bosnia, including 12,000 children, and up to 2.2 million people displaced from their homes. These crimes were aided by a one-sided, UN Security Council-imposed arms embargo that kept Bosnians from defending themselves. Many saw this barbarism as flowing from age-old hatreds released by the overthrow of Communist regimes.

To the contrary, as *News & Letters* held: "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 Milošević'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 Milošević in Belgrade itself.

"The destruction of the multinational heritage for which Bosnia was renowned was accomplished only by the conscious and deliberate campaign we have witnessed over the whole past year: the merciless shelling of every town and village Serbian missiles could reach; the starvation of thousands in besieged towns while food and medical supplies wait in trucks a few miles away; millions making forced marches to towns that might offer refuge, shelled as they walked and dying of exposure on the way; prisoner camps that match the Nazis'; and the unprecedented mass rapes of tens of thousands of women as a war policy....

"What Yugoslavia proves today is that World War II did not defeat fascism—nor indeed is that why that imperialist war was waged. 'Free market capitalism' and state-capitalism alike have always managed to co-exist with the new forms of barbarism that they disgorge. The only alternative is the total uprooting of this degenerate barbaric society and its reconstruction on new human foundations" (Olga Domanski, "Clinton capitulates to 'ethnic cleansing,'" May 1993).

The Bosnians' struggle to preserve their multi-ethnic heritage was heroic. Actions were inseparable from their meaning in a deep philosophic sense.

In 1995, the U.S.-brokered Dayton Accords created a partition of Bosnian territory that rewarded Serb separatists for their campaign of "ethnic cleansing," instituting a kind of apartheid. The international courts have since proven indecisive. Outside of Srebrenica—the largest post-World War II massacre in Europe, in which 8,000 Muslim men and boys were slaughtered—the question of genocide has been left vague. This failure to grasp the meaning of Bosnia has had the most viciously reactionary consequences imaginable.

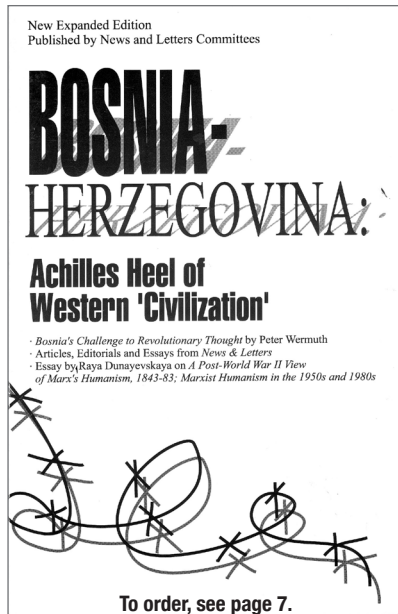
It has, over time, given birth to the dismal "clash

## Bosnian genocide 20 years after

of civilizations" thesis of Samuel Huntington. This was echoed—often by direct reference—in Al Qaeda's rhetoric about "Crusaders," a mirror image of Milošević's appeals to medieval battles over Kosovo. These continue to inspire anti-Muslim ideologues like mass murderer Anders Breivik, who desires genocide on a continental scale. His role models are supporters and apologists for the Bosnian genocide.

New atavistic urges were released into U.S. politics, from the rise of Milošević-supporter Patrick Buchanan, through the racist militia movement that bred Timothy McVeigh to today's "birththers," "truthers" and racist Neo-Confederates—people who illustrate Dr. King's prophetic words that "the ultimate logic of racism is genocide." Those Leftists who failed to understand the implications of Bosnia, imagining Serbia to represent an "anti-imperialist" force, also dipped their heads into this underworld of history and many have yet to come up for air. Today they are supporting al-Assad in Syria.

On a global scale, the destruction of Bosnia represented the crushing of hope for new revolutionary openings in a post-Cold War world. It made clear the rulers wouldn't allow the collapse of Russian Communism to result in new human relations, but rather continued capitalist exploitation. When Marxist-Humanists declared that Bosnia was the test of world politics, we couldn't know all the implications. But in 20 years' retrospect, our collection *Bosnia-Herzegovina*:



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### Honduran prison fire

The Comayagua national prison fire may have started accidentally, but the horrific result—at least 360 deaths—was anything but accidental. With the fire raging, prisoners remained locked up for half an hour. The Comayagua fire chief said that prison officials initially stopped firefighters from entering, citing security protocol.

The prison was grossly overcrowded. Indeed, the entire criminal justice system in Honduras is out of control. With narco-traffic and gangs at unprecedented levels, the response of the government has been a militarization of the police, with the army often taking the lead. Hundreds of youth have been killed by security forces, and thousands have been locked up on suspicion of gang activity.

Many of those in prison have been waiting months and months to be tried. More than 50% of the Comayagua prisoners were never convicted, only imprisoned. And now hundreds have died. Thousands of relatives have lost loved ones, families are devastated. Their suffering will continue long into the future.

These events cannot be separated from the 2009 right-wing coup which deposed the democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya and resulted in the current de facto regime of President Porfirio Lobo. A deepening militarization of Honduran society has been taking place under the cover of fighting crime. Social protest, and not alone gang-related activity, has been criminalized, including numerous assassinations of social activists involved in peaceful resistance.

—Eugene Walker

*Achilles Heel of Western 'Civilization'* (News & Letters, 1996) stands as a lasting contribution to understanding today's world.

### Racism in Arizona

Arizona's effort to ban ethnic studies continues with attacks on Tucson's Mexican American studies program. The Right proposes to ban works ranging from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek*. Some of the books banned from ethnic studies courses will be allowed for use in other, college track courses. As educator Jorge Mariscal asked, "Could it be that the attack is less about ethnic studies and more about denying the right to education to the coming Latino majority and the Black community that is considered equally disposable?"

At the same time, falsified history runs wild on the Outdoor Channel's "Border Battles" program. It presented a whitewashed image of American Border Patrol's Glenn Spencer "risking his life" to "stand sentinel" at the border. In reality he is a racist, anti-Semite, and associate of Shawna Forde, who was convicted of multiple racist murders. Thus the Right attempts to recreate the world in its image. No wonder they want to deny education to our youth.

### Two Sudans in crisis

Since South Sudan gained its independence in July 2011, multiple conflicts erupted between the two Sudans and within each country. Enormous human suffering resulted, with hundreds if not thousands of deaths, rapes, forced displacement and increasing hunger.

A central thread of the conflict is the struggle over oil. South Sudan has most of the oilfields, while Sudan has the oil pipeline to reach the outside world. Billions of dollars are at stake, with Sudan seeking high revenues to transport the oil, which South Sudan refuses to pay. South Sudan has stopped pumping oil. Both countries depend on oil revenue. But the conflict over oil should not obscure the fact that the crucial struggle has been the right of self-determination of the Sudanese people, South and North.

The peoples of what is now South Sudan waged a decades-long struggle for the right to determine their future. They now have a country of their own, which remains under the threat of attack from Sudan. Recently, aircraft from Sudan bombed a South Sudan camp of displaced civilians.

Within South Sudan itself, there have been clashes of rival ethnic groups. Thousands have been killed in disputes over cattle. These are disputes of long standing, which had been somewhat diminished during the struggle for independence.

The most egregious events are within Sudan. The military under Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir wages wars upon its own people. There are simultaneous rebellions in Darfur, in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan, and in Blue Nile State against al-Bashir's genocidal rule. Thousands of civilians have been murdered, more thousands forced to flee their homes; rape has become a common weapon of war.

There is an ethnic dimension to these horrors, with al-Bashir seeking to make an Arab-Black divide the determinant. Any who oppose his dictatorial rule and seek self-determination are met with repression. Recently, hundreds of students at the University of Khartoum who had protested against unemployment and rising prices were beaten and arrested in pre-dawn police raids.

—E.W.

## 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.