

WORKSHOPTALKS

Spy on workers, but overlook patients

by Htun Lin

If time is money, hi-tech forces us to count time down to the millisecond. The stock exchange on Wall Street is now controlled by super-fast computers making automated billion-dollar trades in a split second by counting differences of fractions of a penny in the price per share. We're constantly counting so much that our world has lost sight of what really counts.

At the HMO where I work, our company has invested billions of dollars in a super computer system which is able to count everything, from how many pieces of gauze are used on a patient to how much nurse-time each patient expends. Everything is tracked for cost control, up to the minute and down to the penny. An obsession with quantitative measures predominates, but because of state regulations the company pretends to monitor "quality" of healthcare.

Originally, it was consumers and labor unions like the California Nurses Association and service workers' unions who successfully lobbied our state legislature to enact quality care monitoring. But management always found ways to turn those watershed laws on their head.

Take, for example, the state mandate for a minimum nurse-patient ratio. When that became law, management started to reduce support staff around nurses. They successfully trimmed the workforce in housekeeping, unit assistants, nurses aides, LVNs, and transportation aides. Frontline RNs now have to fill in those gaps. They have suffered an increase in back and other injuries from this extra workload.

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VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Sham response to prison hunger strike

by Faruq

Pelican Bay, Calif., April 2, 2012—After we read the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) "Prevention, Identification and Management Strategy," we had a tier discussion of it. To a man, we believe that document is nothing more than a public relations stunt by CDCR to regain public support.

This is clear, particularly as it did not meet the five core demands set forth by the Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers. It leaves in place the very practices that generated the hunger strike.

In the preface CDCR claims the public safety realignment is their opportunity to modify aspects of its gang management policies consistent with successful models used in other correctional agencies. We have learned via our experiences that CDCR's rhetoric is not its practice.

The preface also states CDCR's current policy for identifying prison-based gang members and associates and isolating them from the general population will be replaced with a more effective model that identifies, targets and manages "security threat groups" (STG). It utilizes a behavior-based step-down program (SDP).

The catch is, "This program will afford the offender the opportunity to work their way from a restricted

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Counter-revolution's rise shows need for a total philosophy

Revolution, having forced its way to center stage over the last year and a half, cannot easily be bottled up.¹ That explains the viciousness of the counter-revolution, whether the violent police attacks on occupations from New York to Oakland or the Syrian state's torture and heavy weapons aimed at civilians. It is seen as well in the rulers' bringing to bear two of their most powerful anti-revolutionary tools: fascism and war.

The circumstances of Trayvon Martin's murder spotlighted not only the perniciousness of racism rotting the heart of American civilization, but the malignancy of private forces wearing the shield of vigilantism. It is no accident that this outrage elicited comparisons to Emmett Till as well as numerous hoodie-themed protests and school walkouts.

With Staff Sgt. Robert Bales's massacre of 17 Afghan civilians, including nine children, starkly exposing the meltdown of the Afghan war, the generals atop the military are hardly eager to embark on a war against Iran. The political chorus keeps beating the war drums in time with the Israeli government, but the brass are warning that an Israeli strike on Iran would drag the U.S. into a regional war with hundreds of

deaths of U.S. troops. However, the forces driving to war must not be underestimated. The U.S., though weakened by both imperial overreach and economic crisis, is still the lone superpower and a bulwark of counter-revolution.

I. The Arab Spring confronts setbacks

A. Syria as a test of world politics

The collision between counter-revolution and revolution is occurring most sharply in Syria.² The Syrian state's genocidal assault on its own people stirred such outrage across the world that governments from the U.S. to the European Union to the Arab League had to give up their efforts to stay neutral and thereby preserve the regional "stability" backed by Bashar al-Assad's regime.

Undaunted by their feckless rhetoric, Assad only intensified his bloody repression. After months of siege, intense shelling of Homs began on Feb. 3, hours before Russia and China vetoed a toothless UN Security Council resolution calling on Syria to accept the Arab League's peace plan. Rhetoric aside, the Obama administration is happier with Assad than with "instability," which is what Israel has been warning would result from Assad's fall.

The U.S. and its "Friends of Syria" have given little more than lip service to the Syrian people, while the Arab League's observer mission failed even at observing. Assad prepared for the April 12 "cease-fire," negotiated by Kofi Annan for the UN and the Arab League, by stepping up his assault, slaughtering hundreds in the days leading up to it. Afterwards, the bombardment only slowed. "What ceasefire? There's an explosion every five to six minutes," Yazan, a Homs-based activist, told the Associated Press. (See "Syrian cry for solidarity," p. 12.)

The world's peoples watched in horror, but governments did little to stop the atrocities as Assad's forces bombarded Homs with artillery, tanks, helicopters, rockets and mortars. By Feb. 29, water, electricity and

1. See "Revolution and counter-revolution take world stage," May-June 2011 *News & Letters*.

2. See "Syrian revolution fights Assad's genocide, world powers watch," March-April 2012 *News & Letters*.

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

communications were cut off in the Baba Amr neighborhood, a rebel stronghold, as a ground assault began. Hundreds were killed, more of them civilians than fighters. Survivors who did not flee were rounded up, many executed. Government forces used hospitals as torture chambers. After Homs, troops moved on to attack Daraa, Idlib, Saraqeb and Hama—but new fighting erupted in Homs and other places, even in the capital, Damascus, dashing the regime's illusions that it could wipe out the revolution with military force.

In giving President Bashar al-Assad a green light to proceed with his assault, the rulers of Russia and China had above all their own restive masses in mind. On the other side of the same coin, the leaders of Al Qaeda announced their "support" for the uprising to cover up their antipathy to Arab Spring. Far from aiming for freedom, which is what the Syrian masses are telling the world they want, Al Qaeda and political Islamists thirst for state power. It is only in the fevered imagination of some "anti-imperialists" that the Syrian revolt could be a plot by the CIA in league with Islamic fundamentalism.

Within the Western Left, the crisis is manifested as ideological pollution when so many insist that enemy number one is U.S. imperialism and therefore Assad must not be opposed. This lays bare the fixation on first negation, or what one is against—and that opposition is not even directed at the capitalist system but rather at one of its manifestations. Where is Karl Marx's vantage point, the freedom of the masses? This is central to Marxist-Humanism, but is missing from the post-Marx Marxists who reduce Marx's ideas to economic theory alone, or to working out blueprints for the future, let alone to crude "anti-imperialism." Today's "anti-imperialists" recapitulate the attitude to theory identified by Raya Dunayevskaya:

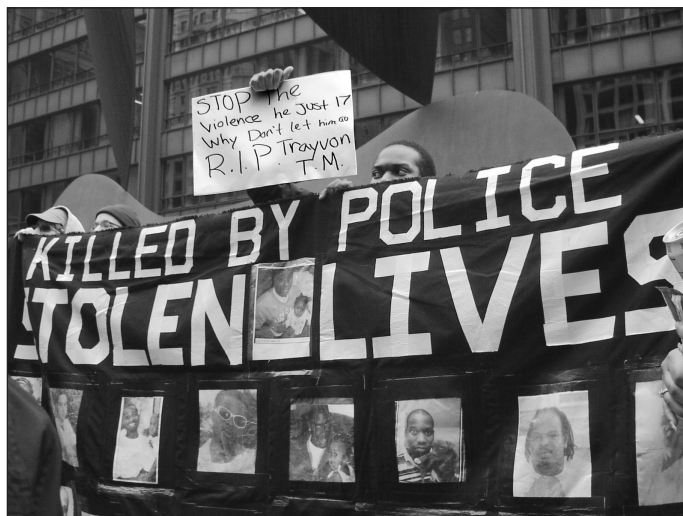
"The New Left, born in the 1960s, so disdainful of theory (which it forever thinks it can pick up 'en route'), has a strange attitude toward imperialism. It is as if imperialism were not the natural outgrowth of monopoly capitalism, but was a conspiracy, organized by a single imaginary center, rather as the Nazis used to refer to the Judeo-Catholic-Masonic Alliance, or Communists under Stalin to the conspiracy of the Trotskyists and Rightists in league with the imperialist secret service...."³

MASSES AS SUBJECT

What is needed instead is to center our analyses on the masses, not only as victims but as Subjects. Since the Tunisian Revolution opened 2011, the subjectivity of masses in motion has shaken the whole world. Arab Spring inspired the student/labor occupation of the Capitol in Madison, Wisc., and Occupy Wall Street. In turn, the people of Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia support the Syrian uprising. What is at stake in supporting the Syrian masses, as it is in the Arab Spring in general, is supporting the self-development of revolutionary new beginnings. As events have shown, this is

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3. Quoted from "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the PLO but the Whole Left," by Raya Dunayevskaya, which is included in the new News and Letters pamphlet of *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East*.



Protest against the murder of Trayvon Martin in Chicago, Illinois

Terry Moon/News & Letters

WOMAN AS REASON

by Olga Domanski

The world lost a passionate, beautiful voice for freedom and self-determination with the death of the feminist lesbian poet Adrienne Rich on March 27. Whether it be the precision of her poetry or essays, what is always inescapable is that Rich not only spoke for herself, but articulated the desire of legions for a different, a profoundly human existence.

Rich's death took me back to the letter I received from her the week Raya Dunayevskaya, whose secretary I had been, died unexpectedly in 1987: "I have been thinking about all of you who were her close co-workers and had the privilege of knowing her as a person. I had been hoping to meet her. I feel keenly the loss of that opportunity. But how much she left behind, for all of us to draw on and pursue in our several ways!"

A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP

The special relationship between them had begun in 1986, when Rich—at the urging of her friend, the African-American feminist scholar Gloria Joseph—read through all of Dunayevskaya's major works, and was impelled to review them for the September 1986 *Women's Review of Books*. She called her review "Living the Revolution," and *News & Letters* printed excerpts in the November 1986 issue to continue the discussion.

Her review ended by accepting Dunayevskaya's challenge to "commit ourselves to a more inclusive definition of freedom than has ever been attempted" by "leaping forward from Marx who had been moving in that direction." Dunayevskaya responded in the December 1986 issue, explaining that she was embarking on a new work on "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy."

Their relationship came to an abrupt halt with Dunayevskaya's death in 1987. In 1990, however, Rich decided to write the foreword for a new edition of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* because, as she wrote, "In the last couple of weeks I have begun to see more clearly the dimension of my own book and Raya's presence in it, and to feel that in writing the introduction I could also enrich my own project—in short, that there would be more continuity than interruption involved....[I]t is Raya's voice which speaks, in these days, with even greater urgency and clarity than when I first began to study her work."

THE FULLNESS OF BEING HUMAN

Rich's foreword ends: "It's made so difficult, under the prevailing conditions of capital-shaped priorities, male supremacism, racism, militarism to envision that revolution without end to which Dunayevskaya devoted her life...we can lose sight of the fact that we 'live human beings' are where it all must begin....Raya Dunayevskaya never let go of her experiences of the fullness of being human—and she wanted that to be the normal experience of every human being, everywhere." That is the vision that Adrienne Rich kept alive throughout her own life.

Her appreciation for what Dunayevskaya had created as the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism changed

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

About 30 Afghan youth, mostly women, marched to the Afghan parliament April 14 to protest the horrific murders of five women in one month including a woman beheaded by her husband, a 15-year-old tortured by in-laws for refusing to become a prostitute, and a teacher stabbed to death by her brother for working outside the home. They also protested President Karzai's support of recommendations from the Ulema Council to segregate the sexes, legalize wife-beating and outlaw women leaving the home without a male relative.

* * *

Amnesty International (AI) issued a report stating that up to 50,000 women in Bosnia and Herzegovina have not received reparations for war-related rapes and tortures of almost two decades ago. Only 40 cases of sexual torture have been prosecuted, but even more pressing needs are for access to health insurance, medical care, and financial assistance to treat PTSD, anxiety, colitis, headaches, STDs, diabetes, hypertension, and insomnia. AI stated that it hopes the government will implement the reparations program it promised in 2010.

* * *

The Supreme Court of India gave the federal and state governments eight weeks to respond to a petition by activist Devika Biswas, who has evidence of abusive and unhygienic conditions in rural, government-run sterilization camps. With the government giving doctors a goal of sterilizing 1% of the population per year, operations are conducted under torchlight. Women are not given consent forms or information about other means of contraception. Sometimes the sterilizations fail, resulting in pregnancies.

Adrienne Rich—a voice for freedom

her life. She marked the precise point in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (1986). She noted that in 1975 she had written: "Much of what is termed 'politics' seems to rest on a longing for certainty even at the cost of honesty, for an analysis which, once given, need not be reexamined. Such is the deadenedness—for women—of Marxism for our time." At that point Rich added a footnote (although some copies had already been published). She dated it carefully: "A.R. 1986. For a vigorous indictment of dead-ended Marxism and a call to 'revolution in permanence,' see Raya Dunayevskaya, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution*."

Several unique characteristics become evident in this action. One is the precision with which she sought to mark this moment; another is the question of what "honesty" meant to her, which becomes clear in her constant return to this moment. The need was for honesty to herself, first and foremost.

THE RELATION OF ART TO JUSTICE

That honesty was displayed in a different way in her refusal to accept the National Medal for the Arts in 1997, when she famously informed Jane Alexander that while "there is no simple formula for the relationship of art to justice....I do know that art, in my own case, the art of poetry, means nothing if it simply decorates the dinner table of power that holds it hostage."

The moment Rich had documented in 1986 when she grasped the life-changing meaning of Raya Dunayevskaya's philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, was demonstrated in all her work thereafter but explicitly expressed in two of her prose collections. In *What Is Found There*, published in 1993, the penultimate chapter of the 28 essays sums up what she saw herself as responsible for demonstrating. She wrote: "Raya Dunayevskaya wrote of revolution that while 'great divides in epochs, in cognition, in personality, are crucial,' we need to understand the moment of discontinuity—the break in the pattern—itsself as part of a continuity, for

Stop Mitt's war on us!



Chicago—On an unseasonably warm last day of winter, eight to ten women from the Illinois Choice Action Team and News and Letters Committees demonstrated downtown in front of the Chicago Hilton where GOP Presidential candidate Mitt Romney was appearing at a fundraising luncheon.

We were furious at the attacks on women's reproductive health and rights that he, along with all the other GOP Presidential contenders, were spewing, including his attack on Planned Parenthood and support of the Blunt Amendment that would have allowed any employer that felt a moral or conscientious objection to birth control—or any other mandate like colonoscopy screenings, mammograms, flu shots and regular pediatric visits—to refuse to pay for them.

So many reactionary bills have been proposed—and passed—that destroy women's right to an abortion and now birth control, that it felt great to yell at all those entering the hotel: "Keep your Mitt off my body!"

Here in Illinois two awful bills are headed to the full House for a vote. One would impose ridiculous and unnecessary standards for abortion clinics; the other would force the doctor to "offer" a woman to have and view an ultrasound and then record her decision in her medical record—clearly an attempt to intimidate her. Our signs read "Stop the war on women!" and "BC 4 ME" meaning birth control for me and any other woman who wants it.

After an hour, about 12 members of Stand Up! Chicago came to the Hilton to also demonstrate against Romney. They spread a symbolic red carpet from the sidewalk to the door of the Hilton with people lying under it and had a big Romney puppet stomping on the red carpet and the people under it. Their message was that "Romney is trampling the 99%" and "wants to tax the poor to make the rich richer."

The first man with the bullhorn refused to broaden his message to include our concerns, but after talking to the man who was in the puppet outfit he and others did speak to Romney's war on women and eventually we all marched together. I'm sure that there are many demonstrations like ours taking place around the country, but the media is so bad that you'll only hear about it on Facebook or in papers like *News & Letters*.

—Long-time Women's Liberationist

it to become a turning point in human history." She concluded, "Poetry is not a resting on the given, but a questing toward what might otherwise be."

In her 2001 collection, *Arts of the Possible*, the first four essays show the inability to fulfill her direction "within feminism alone." The rest of the collection begins with the reprinting of her foreword to the 1991 edition of Dunayevskaya's book on Rosa Luxemburg. She calls the chapter simply "Raya Dunayevskaya's Marx."

Adrienne Rich found in Dunayevskaya's work what she had passionately been looking for. It becomes a challenge to all those struggling for a new world on human foundations—especially those who carry the revolutionary banner of "women's liberation" today.

We deeply mourn Adrienne Rich's death, and greatly honor her life.

Mid-South WAC is back

Memphis, Tenn.—Feminists here are reforming the Women's Action Coalition as the Women's Action Coalition of the Mid-South, in response to the current legislative attacks on birth control and abortion. It is also a response to the misogyny of some of the demonstrators at Occupy Memphis.

While the original WAC was effective, it was limited by being a student group at the University of Memphis because non-students were sometimes hesitant to join, even though they were welcome. Members of WACoM include women becoming activists and organizers for the first time, but also women who have long experience in feminist and other progressive organizations. This will allow more collaboration with more organizations.

There are more members too, with about 15 women at each meeting, and a greater diversity in age and race. Plans for future actions include organizing a Slut Walk against sexual violence and attending a Unite Against the War on Women Rally in Nashville this month.

WACoM's web page allows members to keep current on fighting harmful legislation such as anti-abortion and pro-abstinence education bills. It alerts us to situations of discrimination such as the Shelby County Jail forcing employees to leave work with no pay or benefits when they become pregnant. Since the Memphis NOW chapter and the old WAC dissolved, WACoM fills an important void in feminist organizing in the area.

—WACoM Member

Palestine human rights

To Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations:

As a Palestinian Feminist Human Rights Organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of women's rights in Palestine, the Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development (PWWS) is gravely concerned by the increasing Israeli threats to Palestinian rights, and therefore asks the UN to commit to its charter and to fulfill its obligations towards the Palestinian people.

...Palestinian women are among the most vulnerable groups in society, as they are continuously exposed to immense oppression, which ranges from killing, demolition of their homes, sexual harassment and assault, discriminatory treatment of female prisoners, refusal of movement to the refusal of access to healthcare during emergencies. They also encounter indirect effects of Israeli occupation, such as poverty, unemployment and domestic violence....

The impact of living under occupation for women includes extreme anxiety, stress-related illnesses, loss of opportunities in education and gainful employment, and is detrimental to their relationships with husbands and children. The violence and personal insecurity that many women have witnessed and been subjected to cause extreme psychological distress, harming both family life and society as a whole....

It is important that the UN and all international bodies dedicated to upholding and implementing International Law hold Israel accountable for its violations, thereby reinstating the rights of Palestinian women, men, and children alike within their lives and homes.

In writing this letter, the PWWSD hopes to draw attention to the war crimes implemented under Israeli occupation in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, and hopes for urgent action from the international community to prevent further violations and to stop the discrimination, violence and repression that occurs daily in the Palestinian Territory. PWWSD calls upon the UN to recognize the international consensus as indicated by UN General Assembly in September 2011, which supports an independent Palestine, and most importantly the Palestinian right to an independent sovereign state, where they can live in peace and dignity.

The PWWSD hopes the international community will convene a conference with International Humanitarian Laws as its terms of reference in order to effect a just and durable peace.

—Amal Khreishe, General Director, on behalf of the Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development

Recalling 1972 Québec General Strike

Montréal—May 2012 marks the 40th anniversary of the 1972 Québec General Strike, one of the largest strikes in North American history. It brings up memories and invites comparison to today.

A long series of events led up to it: the brutal 1970 declaration of Martial Law by Prime Minister Trudeau during the "October Crisis" which targeted French-Canadians; chronic unemployment and lack of educational opportunities; and widespread labor unrest, especially a long strike and lockout in 1971 at *La Presse*, Montréal's largest French-language newspaper. That year, a Common Front of labor unions formed to fight back.

In April 1972 over 200,000 public employees walked off the job, and a number were jailed for six months and fined a year's pay for ignoring an injunction to return to work. Two days later the Québec government passed Bill 19, outlawing strikes.

The leaders of the three major unions, Louis Labege of the Fédération de Travailleurs du Québec (FTQ/QFL), Marcel Pepin of the Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN/CNTU) and Yvon Charbonneau of the Corporations des Enseignants du Québec (CEQ/QTC) were sentenced to one year in prison for disobeying the anti-strike law.

Once the leaders were jailed on May 8, almost the entire province struck. Radio stations and newspapers were occupied, stores and the port closed, and roads and bridges were blocked. The only municipal service which workers kept providing was running water, along with emergency services. The strike was so large that the provincial police took a position of non-intervention.

In the end, provincial Premier Bourassa negotiated a truce. The labor leaders were released from prison, and workers slowly returned to work.

The truce was not entirely a defeat. One outcome was that in order to preserve social peace, Québec today has what is arguably the best social safety net in the Western Hemisphere, and more civil rights than the rest of Canada.

WORKSHOPTALKS

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Due to this speedup, there has been an increase in error rates. Whenever one of us makes an honest error in our daily routine, either with a patient's medical number, or other medical data, management will turn a simple error into a federal case. The shop floor now feels like a police state.

HI-TECH SNOOPING

Technology is used not to enhance care, but is deployed as hi-tech snooping on employees. What do they police? Mostly the money, but also to catch employees in "gotchas" to discipline and trim staff.

They install surveillance systems under the pretense of quality care monitoring, but we workers know it's really about how to apportion blame when things go wrong. For example, state-of-the-art electronic devices detect whether a nurse has washed her hands and how many times, or whether a patient has been placed in a room within a specified amount of time.

Never mind that the room doesn't have adequate facilities, or that the nurse is spread out to many rooms in separate wings on the floor with insufficient support staff. Never mind that the nurse is unable to tend to the new patient, because she is busy tending to requisite data-entry for the last recent admission, or that there are no instructions from the doctor either, because the doctor too is hampered by computer protocol.

When some mishap in care or breach of patient data occurs, or when these tracking and monitoring systems register a failure, administration will blame individual workers and not take responsibility for system failures. Their system compromises both patients' safety and workers' safety on a daily basis.

DESIGNED TO FAIL

We workers don't oppose monitoring of quality of care. In fact, it was workers' initiatives which first brought landmark contractual language on quality care. But don't just lecture to us, or police us, under a system designed to set us up for failure, indeed, expecting failure in order to assign blame.

What we have is a healthcare shop floor turned into a factory where patients are treated like commodities on an assembly line, and employees are treated like appendages to the information super-machine.

We sorely need healthcare reform in this country, but that's not what politicians are fighting about. They're only fighting over what they call cost control. Tens of thousands of people continue to die every year unnecessarily from HMO errors and negligence. Hundreds of thousands more are injured because frontline healthcare workers are so hurried, harried, and harassed. Frustration on the job is rampant. Only workers' own initiatives can shift the ground back to real healthcare.

Québec is still in a state of deep unrest today, as can be seen by the student strike which is going on at this moment. (See p. 11.) There are differences too. At that time, many people felt that there was still some possibility for a sort of equilibrium between capital and labor. Today, far more people are questioning the viability of capitalism itself, as it becomes clear that today's global depression can't be solved under this society.

In 1972 there was not a lot of interest in the theory, but rather a sense that militancy could carry the day. Furthermore, the dialogue was colored by cultural nationalism and the belief that if only Québec were independent, then all would be solved.

Today there is more interest in ideas. French Canadians tend to think more in a cross-Canada way, though the racism of the British part of Canada remains as deep as it was 40 years ago, and tensions are high. Québec already has a certain degree of de facto autonomy.

Québec is the most comprehensive melting pot in Canada, and the most tolerant province. Most immigrants prefer to integrate into the French-speaking life of Québec, which is a big change from the old days.

Québécois workers have lost none of their militancy, nor have the students, and there are new beginnings of cooperation between English-Canadian and French-Canadian workers. There is an interesting future ahead for the whole continent, and Canada will be a big part of it.

—D. Chêneville

Voices of labor and youth at Left Forum

Editor's note: Below are a few of the young voices from the workshops at the 2012 Left Forum, in which News and Letters Committees participated.

New York City—Joyce Gill-Campbell was paid \$135.50 for a 60-hour week as a domestic worker in the late 1990s. She helped found Domestic Workers United (DWU) in 2002. "I stood up for justice, dignity for all nannies. DWU became a voice for the voiceless. Everyone said we couldn't organize but we did."

Nannies met each other at playgrounds; the myth that they were "part of the family" was debunked by the sexual abuse, limits on food use, etc., that they experi-



Joyce Gill-Campbell at May 20, 2011, Day of Action in Albany, NY.

enced. In New York State, the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights means that now nannies get overtime after 44 hours in a week, three paid days off after one year, and other benefits. "We shamed employers and allied with other unions. We use culture, theater to reach out. We also have begun Domestic Justice Dialogue, to bring workers and employers together."

'GUEST WORKERS'

Stephen Boykewich talked about guest workers: "Mostly from China and Turkey, they pay a company \$3,000-\$6,000 to get 'cultural exchange' jobs. At Hershey's, the jobs are at subminimum wage. On Aug. 17, 2011, a 19-year-old Turkish student led the whole shift in a sitdown, and marched into the streets. They were joined by local workers fed up with degraded job conditions; they refused to work under those precarious conditions."

"With Students for Justice @ Hershey's, the students became workers. The experience of the strike led to understanding power, and solidarity with local and unemployed workers. Guest workers have been used to undermine local labor movements and are seen as the enemy, but we are now allying with Jobs with Justice, the AFL-CIO and SEIU."

OCCUPY WALL STREET

Melanie of Women Occupying Wall Street said, "We are combating an attitude in OWS that 'Gender equality is important, but after the revolution.'"

Tanzeem said, "We changed 'Occupy the Bronx' to 'Take Back the Bronx' because we are already occupied: police, real estate developers, landlords. Youth are leading the charge: Youth took over Gompers High School, even though it was symbolic because the school is being closed. But it was amazing to see youth get that power."

—Susan Van Gelder

'Right-to-work' attacks on labor

Detroit—The so-called right-to-work legislation approved recently in Indiana is another indication of the decreasing influence unions now have. Such proposals have always been opposed by labor, and any efforts to get this legislation passed, as Indiana learned, will be met by mass demonstrations and every other measure available to the workers. Unfortunately, this was not enough to defeat the legislation in Indiana.

Right-to-work legislation, now approved in 23 states, launches an assault against both the labor and the union movements. Workers can refuse to become union members, even though they may benefit from union negotiations. By refusing to compel corporations to deduct union dues or a collective bargaining fee from workers, union representatives must individually collect dues from members, and workers can refuse to pay dues.

Let there be no confusion about the difference between the labor and union movements. In many instances they are in an adversarial rather than complementary relationship. While the labor and union movements both oppose right-to-work legislation, the fact that there is now a concerted effort by corporations and many legislators to pass such legislation is an indication of the present weakness of the union movement.

The first state to adopt right-to-work legislation was Florida in 1943, even before Taft-Hartley in 1947 encouraged it. Other states, especially in the South where opposition to the labor movement has been the greatest, followed. No state in the northeastern U.S. has approved right-to-work legislation, and until Indiana's recent approval, the last state to approve it was Oklahoma in 2001. Before that, it was Texas in 1993. Indiana had first passed right-to-work legislation in 1956, but repealed it in 1965.

Under the impact of the recent economic meltdown, many states are moving forward on such legislation, including Michigan. Right-to-work legislation in Michigan would have been laughed out of existence a few years ago, but today appears to be a real threat following the 2010 election, which resulted in Republican majorities in the legislature.

Although Michigan's Republican Governor Rick Snyder says he does not have right-to-work legislation on his own personal political agenda, rabid anti-labor Republicans are making a highly focused effort to introduce such legislation this year, and Governor Snyder has said that he would approve it if it reaches his desk.

It took years of working-class solidarity and sacrifice to get the dues check-off agreement, which management bitterly opposed. To lose this through right-to-work legislation would deal both unions and the labor movement a powerful public blow, which corporations fully understand. That is why they avidly support the efforts to get such legislation passed.

We still have to see how this will play out in Michigan, as well as in other states that are seeking to continue the vicious attacks against workers and their standard of living.

—Andy Phillips

Michigan despot law

Flint, Mich.—Since an emergency manager was appointed for Flint (see "Flint's emergency manager targets labor," Jan.-Feb. *News & Letters*), the president of AFSCME Local 1600, Samuel Muma, obtained a restraining order from a court in Lansing that reinstated the mayor and city council. The financial review team that had recommended the appointment of an emergency manager may have violated the Michigan Open Meetings Act.

Eleven days later, on March 26, the Michigan Court of Appeals lifted the restraining order, which meant that the emergency manager was reinstated. The Court of Appeals will hold a hearing on May 3. Very likely the lawsuit will go from there to the Michigan Supreme Court, which is already considering whether to bypass lower courts entirely with respect to a different lawsuit filed by private citizens.

The City of Detroit, acting under duress, signed a consent agreement that avoids the appointment of an emergency manager but which puts the operation of the city in the hands of a nine-member financial advisory board and prevents Detroit from bargaining with its employees. The state will allow Detroit to borrow \$137 million against a projected \$270 million deficit this year. The consent agreement is actually worse than the emergency manager law because it avoids even the nominal review process set up under that law.

The emergency manager law is aimed squarely at solving the financial problems of Michigan cities and school districts by slashing wages and benefits. The traditional government structure would not allow that, at least on the drastic level contemplated by Governor Snyder and his supporters. Petitions were submitted on Feb. 29 to the state canvassing board to put repeal of the emergency manager law on the ballot in November.

—Dan B.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's Note: "On political divides and philosophic new beginnings," written 25 years ago, is the last writing of Raya Dunayevskaya, who died on June 9, 1987. It was first published in the In Memoriam special issue of News & Letters, on July 25, 1987. Footnotes have been added by the editor.

The abysmal lower depths that the Reagan retrogression has sunk the world into throughout the seven years of this decade have polluted the ideological air, not only of the ruling class, but have penetrated the Left itself. Such a deep retrogression urgently demands that, along with the economic and political tasks facing us, we look for philosophic new beginnings.

In the midst of the work I am doing on my new book, "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy," I have been digging into research on two opposed forms of organization, that is, our opposition to the vanguard party-to-lead, and our support of forms of organization born out of the spontaneous activity of the masses.

Suddenly I realized that the relationship between these two opposed forms was exactly what I had posed back in 1982, on the eve of the publication of my third book, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. I then (September 1982) added a paragraph to chapter 12 of that just-completed work. It was this articulation, which I reached only after the book was completed, that made me feel that the process of working out such questions demanded a book unto itself.

This became even clearer when I realized that though [*Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*] was already at the printer, and had dealt with forms of organization both in Marx's day and in the early 20th century with Lenin, Luxemburg, and the council communists, I nevertheless felt compelled to write a Philosophic-Political Letter to my colleagues on this subject. I called it: "On the Battle of Ideas: Philosophic-Theoretic Points of Departure as Political Tendencies Respond to the Objective Situation" (October 1982).¹ Here I would like to take up two points from the Letter, which begins:

I am taking advantage of the fact that we do not yet have the new book in hand, which will plunge us into so many activities that we will have a tendency to forget "abstract" philosophic points of departure . . .

I returned to the final chapter 12 of *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*. Its penultimate paragraph read:

"It isn't because we are any 'smarter' that we can see so much more than other post-Marx Marxists. Rather, it is because of the maturity of our age. It is true that other post-Marx Marxists have rested on a truncated Marxism; it is equally true that no other generation could have seen the problematic of our age, much less solve our problems. Only live human beings can recreate the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'"

It was at that point that I asked that the following paragraph be added [to that book]:

"There is a further challenge to the form of organization which we have worked out as the committee-form rather than the 'party-to-lead.' But, though committee-form and 'party-to-lead' are opposites, they are not absolute opposites. At the point when the theoretic-form reaches philosophy, the challenge demands that we synthesize not only the new relations of theory to practice, and all the forces of revolution, but philosophy's 'suffering, patience and labor of the negative,' i.e. experiencing absolute negativity. **Then and only then** will we succeed in a revolution that will achieve a classless, non-racist, non-sexist, truly human, truly new society. That which Hegel judged to be the synthesis of the 'Self-Thinking Idea' and the 'Self-Bringing-Forth of Liberty,' Marxist-Humanism holds, is what Marx had called the new society. The many paths to get there are not easy to work out."²

I also suggested an addition to the Introduction of

'On political divides and philosophic new beginnings'

the book, to be added directly after I pointed out that, "just as the young Marx, in first turning to what he called 'Economics,' had discovered the proletariat as the Subject who would be the 'gravedigger of capitalism' and the leader of the proletarian revolution, so, at the end of his life, Marx made still newer discoveries as he turned to new, empirical anthropological studies like Morgan's *Ancient Society* as well as to the imperial incursions into the Orient and the carving up of Africa.

Here is what I proposed to add at that point:

That seems to have been the first point so misunderstood by post-Marx Marxists, beginning with Frederick Engels, who, without having known of the massive *Ethnological Notebooks* Marx had left behind, undertook to write his own version of Morgan's work—his *Origin of the Family*—as a "bequest" of Marx. When Ryazanov discovered these notebooks, he rushed, before he ever had a chance



Women self-organizing in Egypt's Tahrir Square during the revolution in February 2011

to decipher them, to characterize them as "inexcusable pedantry."³ If an Engels, who was a close collaborator of Marx and without whom we could not have had Volumes II and III of *Capital*, could nevertheless suddenly have gotten so over-confident about his own prowess of interpreting Marx as to assume he was speaking for Marx; if an archivist-scholar like Ryazanov could, at a time when he was actually publishing those magnificent early essays of Marx (the 1844 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*), spend a good deal of his first report of the Archives of Marx in asking for 20 to 30 people to help him sort these manuscripts out, and yet pass judgment before he dug into them—it says a great deal about literary heirs but nothing whatsoever about so great an historic phenomenon as **Marx's** Marxism. Isn't it time to challenge all of the post-Marx Marxists when even those who have achieved great revolutions—and none was greater than the 1917 Russian Revolution—did not, in thought, measure up to Marx? Isn't it time to dig into what Marx, who had discovered a whole new continent of thought, had to say for himself?

My letter to my colleagues then concluded:

The fact that in my latest work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, I focus on Marx's "translation" of absolute negativity as the revolution in permanence, calling that the absolute challenge to our age, will draw greater criticism from academia and outright attacks from post-Marx Marxists. This makes it necessary to be prepared, not only for that encounter, but for further concretizing that challenge. With this in mind, I decided to add that paragraph quoted earlier directly to the Introduction. For while it is true that the actual events of the 1970s—Women's Liberation on the one hand, and the publication of Marx's *Ethnological Notebooks* on the other—are what first led to a renewed interest in Rosa Luxemburg; and while it is true also that the Women's Liberation movement helped disclose the feminist dimension in Luxemburg never before recognized; it is not true that that is the goal of the new book.

The need to see all post-Marx Marxists in strict relationship to **Marx's** Marxism is what revealed that even so great and independent a revolutionary as Rosa Luxemburg did not fully comprehend Marx's dialectic of liberation and thereby committed her biggest error—disregard of the revolutionary nature of Polish desire for national self-deter-

3. David Ryazanov, who edited Marx in Soviet Russia in the 1920s, beginning work on the *Complete Writings of Marx and Engels* (MEGA), made these remarks in a 1923 report to the Communist Academy.

mination. Put simply, **the** determinant of the new book is Marx's philosophy of revolution. This is not for any academic reason, or any sort of orthodoxy, but the fact that his works disclosed a trail to the 1980s and revealed the problematic of this age. The totally new question that Luxemburg posed—socialist democracy **after** gaining power—pointed to a new aspect of Marxism itself.

The new moments in Marx that the book discloses and that center around what we now call a Third World are not limited to the manner in which Marx revealed an "Asiatic mode of production" in the *Grundrisse*. Rather, this is extended to the 1880s as Marx was commenting on Morgan's *Ancient Society* and other then-new anthropological works on India, on the Australian aborigines, as well as his letters both on his visit to Algeria and his correspondence with revolutionaries in Russia on the ancient commune there and its possible transformation into an altogether new type of revolution. In a word, it is to revolution in permanence that the book keeps returning, whether the subject is Luxemburg, or Lenin, or Women's Liberation, or the Hegelian dialectic. At the same time, we must keep in mind that, whereas it is Marx who transformed Hegel into a contemporary, and transformed the Hegelian dialectic into the Marxian dialectic of liberation, the revolution is also present **in Hegel**. Hard as Hegel tried to confine this to a revolution in thought alone, he made his presence felt in history, even as he spoke of the *Philosophy of Mind* and *History of Philosophy*. As Hegel put it:

"All revolutions, in the sciences no less than in general history, originate only in this, that the spirit of man, for the understanding and comprehension of himself, for the possessing of himself, has now altered his categories, uniting himself in a truer, deeper, more intrinsic relation with himself."⁴

Now return to our own situation, and think of the attacks that we will be facing in 1987, when we state openly that even the one post-Marx Marxist revolutionary who **did** reach deeply into philosophy—Lenin—nevertheless did not do so on the question of organization. In truth, he never renounced his position on the vanguard party set out in 1902 in *What is to Be Done?*, though he often critiqued it himself. He profoundly extended his new breakthrough in philosophy to a concretization of the dialectics of revolution, and yet never changed his position on the need for the "thin layer of Bolsheviks" as a vanguard party organization. In 1982 in *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, we critiqued Lenin politically. To fully work out the dialectics of philosophy and organization for our age, it is now clear that that critique must dig deep philosophically.

The whole truth is that even Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*, which remains the ground for organization today, was written 112 years ago. What is demanded is not mere "updating," after all the aborted revolutions of the post-World War II world, "Ground" will not suffice alone; we have to finish the building—the roof and its contents. This is what I am working on now in the "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy." I would appreciate hearing from our readers on their thoughts on this.

—June 5, 1987

4. Hegel, *Philosophy of Nature*, trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 11.

The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism

"...[E]very Left was grabbing at some old contradictions, and with them, some old solutions. Which is why the most cogent moment for our problematic ... is ... great new philosophic breakthrough on the Larger Logic, and ... that self-movement of ideas and of people..."

—Raya Dunayevskaya
From: "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987"

To order see page 5

1. See *The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx* by Raya Dunayevskaya, pp. 237-49.
2. These and a number of other paragraphs which Dunayevskaya wanted to add to *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* were published in the 1991 University of Illinois edition of that work, pp. xxxiii-xxxviii.

Sham response to California prisoners' hunger strike

continued from p. 1

program back to a general population setting by demonstrating a willingness and commitment to discontinue gang activity while in CDCR facility." To us this means a perpetuation of the debriefing policy that CDCR said it would reform.

What is the need for a continuance of the debriefing policy if the SDP affords us a transition to the general population? Is the SDP a genuine process? We think not. We base this conclusion on the details in the body of the document.

First it is necessary to examine what is required just to get to SDP. There is an insurmountable hurdle: a prisoner's participation in the SDP is totally voluntary, but a prisoner wishing to participate must sign a contract.

GANG LABEL PERMANENT

We suspect the terms are what CDCR previously had in operation: that a prisoner admits to being a gang member. Prisoners universally condemned this practice, which amounted to locking a chain around your own neck. Such a provision would curtail prisoners' participation in the SDP.

It is the same process that has kept people in the Security Housing Unit (SHU) for the past 20 years or more. CDCR claims that advancement through the SDP will be determined by how far the prisoner has distanced himself from the gang.



Over 1,000 gathered in front of the gates of San Quentin on Feb. 20 under the banner "INSIDE & OUTSIDE DESTROY ALL PRISONS."

It means being discipline-free, yet the guards issue disciplinary write-ups for many non-gang activities, against which prisoners cannot defend themselves.

We in the SHU are not afforded any rights to contest the "information" used against us in the current policy's "active/inactive review." CDCR claims full disclosure of the information would jeopardize prisons' security. Since we cannot see the "information," we cannot know if this is new information, or recycled old "information," much of it proved to be untrue.

CATCH-22

The active/inactive review process is supposed to be based on your criminal activity furthering the goals of a gang. Instead CDCR has opted to use mere validation as the

determinant. We would not be in the SHU in the first place if we had not been "validated" previously. Every six years we are "re-validated" based on the same "information." Just being re-validated, CDCR claims, constitutes gang activity, enough to retain us in the SHU, because we have shown an unwillingness to distance ourselves from gang activity.

In short, the prisoner has not demonstrated the willingness to debrief. This is in spite of the fact that the majority of us have over 15 years of clean time.

In addition, the document details a more enhanced

role for the Institutional Gang Investigator (IGI), giving it even more control. IGI determines if participants in life-skills programs, where one is expected to write a journal, are being forthright enough. IGI is the very entity which ensures we prisoners stay in the SHU. Now we are to be further subjected to their influence, in effect telling us we ain't got nothing coming unless we debrief.

There is much more in the document that we find totally reprehensible and reject outright. But we leave its thorough rebuke to the representatives of the Pelican Hunger Strike Human Rights Initiative.

Rewilding of Detroit

Detroit—Outside the fence, the tom turkey jumped up on the stump, rock, or whatever piece of junk was back there to elevate him above the weeds, spread his feathers and gobbled away impressive and noisy—and all the more so as it was happening just a few feet away from the fences of a state prison in the City of Detroit.

The year was 2010, and I had just been returned to this prison after being transferred out in 2005 and taking a near five-year tour of the Michigan prison system, from Kincheloe in the Upper Peninsula to Ionia and St. Louis, approximately in the center of the state.

Having spent the greater part of my 57 years in the Motor City, I was very familiar with the neighborhood. Prior to catching this case in 1998, I was working no more than ten blocks away. At that time, the sum total of local wildlife, besides small birds and rabbits living in the nearby cemeteries, consisted of a pair each of redtail hawks and snow owls that would stop by in the spring and autumn to feast on rats inhabiting the local Coney Island. When it was torn down, the rats left, and the hawks and owls stopped coming.

I first arrived at this prison in 2003 and was pleasantly surprised to see that the pair of redtail hawks stopped here to feast on pigeons, fattened up on bread fed to them by prisoners leaving the chow hall. However, there wasn't much else in the way of wildlife except some passing geese and sea gulls, plus a couple of pheasants, mourning doves, and rabbits living in the saplings and brush growing alongside the railroad tracks.

That has dramatically changed. Upon returning in 2010, I found a veritable explosion in the local wildlife population. There were now at least a half dozen pheasants, over a dozen mourning doves, and numerous rabbits, all living along the railroad tracks in the saplings turned into trees and brush. Moreover, there was a flock of turkeys living in the brush and swallows, neither of which I had ever seen in the city before. The hawks were still around and I even saw a fox last year. The guards have told me that they've seen skunks (I've smelled them), possums, raccoons, wild dogs, and even coyotes outside the fences.

No doubt the animals are using the rarely used railroad tracks as a corridor to move around the ruins of Detroit, where the only businesses that seem to be left are junkyards and prisons. Block upon block of homes sit vacant and derelict, at least in this neighborhood.

I imagine it is only a matter of time before I hear the coyotes howling at night and see my first Motor City deer, aside from the little Formosa deer on Belle Isle, an island in the Detroit River. All of which gives me some hope for the future of the planet. If the animals can survive in the toxic ruins of a former industrial center, they can survive anywhere. That goes for us Motor City humans, too!

—Rand W. Gould

Security Housing Unit prisoners react

Pelican Bay, Calif.—Last October, California prisoners again suspended the hunger strike that they had begun on July 1 when prison authorities promised to review all the Security Housing Unit (SHU) prisoners' validations based on new "behavior model" criteria (see *News & Letters*, July-August, September-October and November-December of 2011). The review process was to start at the beginning of the year.

In March, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) finally released a proposal for a new policy: "Security Threat Groups, Prevention, Identification and Management Strategy." We visited Pelican Bay SHU prisoners a few days later.

One prisoner said, "I don't know how people (in here) will take CDCR's proposal if it's as bad as it seems. There has been a peace of sorts, people holding their breath waiting to see what will happen. This is a slap in the face. They broke their word. What will happen now?"

The proposal does not address any of the five core demands the strikers made. Instead, under the guise of responding to realignment, CDCR proposes to establish a much more vague "Security Threat Group," which could include virtually anyone, and the hated Institutional Gang Investigator (IGI) has even more power over the prisoners in the SHU. The proposed step-down program is no different than the current no-way-out-but-snitching-or-death program.

The prison's response is only more retaliation. Guards issue disciplinary write-ups for actions which had been legal and permitted, such as sharing family photos or helping a visually impaired prisoner read his

own legal case material.

One prisoner reported, "The contraband watch, or 'potty watch,' used to be rare, now there are 15-20 at all times. They claim to have confidential info (i.e., from snitches) that you have stuff hidden in your body cavity. You have to defecate in front of them. They don't allow you to wash your hand after wiping. Your hands are encased in metal sleeves during this process (he showed a picture). This is retaliation for the hunger strike."

The strike accomplished unprecedented cross-race unity and unity of action among SHU prisoners. It created solidarity between the SHU prisoners and the general prison population. It resulted in solidarity actions in most of California's prisons and many other prisons in the U.S. and even in other countries.

The strike action created support outside of prisons for prisoners' issues. Most importantly, it brought together those who consider themselves primarily activists with those whose relation with the prison is mostly through a loved one inside.

As the strong actions of Occupy for Prisoners from Feb. 20 on show, we are creating a national conversation about the abuse of solitary confinement and the (in)justice system in general. As part of that effort, Peter Schey, of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, filed a petition with the UN signed by more than 400 prisoners asking the UN to investigate the torture administered in California prison SHUs.

Another prisoner said, "So far our collective activity has proven to be powerful both among all the prisoners and between prisoners and outside. The struggle is just beginning."
—Urszula Wislanka

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TWO WORLDS IN EVERY COUNTRY

It angers me to hear immigrants called "illegal." People come here because of the conditions of poverty created by capitalism's intrusion into their own land, whether it's Mexico, an African country, or wherever. It happens when foreign capitalist corporations go to undeveloped countries, take their resources, pollute their land, privatize the drinking water and leave the people without a way to live. How can you call those who come here to improve their lives "illegal"? I call them "undocumented." Capitalism is an ugly system.

**Japanese American
California**



"Two worlds in every country" is the phrase evoked by Gerry Emmett's article, "Syrian Revolution Fights Assad's Genocide, World Powers Watch" (March-April *N&L*). There are two worlds in both the U.S. and Syria: the rulers and the ruled. We owe solidarity to the other Syria. Such a perspective cuts across the Left's abstract anti-imperialism. Mostly, the press portrays Syrians as victims with very little about what they are fighting for. So it is really important to have the actual voices, including the letter *N&L* just put up on the web site. That's one way of making theory concrete.

**Urszula
Bay Area**

Not many events in human history test the mettle of organizations and persons who support a more democratic society, human rights, women's rights, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, and sometimes, even revolution. Yet when the opportunity arises, will we stand in solidarity with those rising up in struggle, contradictions and all? That is the question asked in Emmett's article.

I come from Burma. A national independence revolution led by General Aung Sung was usurped and then dominated for a half-century by a military dictatorship. When the Tunisian uprising spread to Egypt, I was excited about the possibilities of shedding the yoke of imperial domination, and apprehensive because there is potential for massive atrocities, as we have witnessed in Rangoon and in Beijing decades earlier.

Emmett's article tied together the Syrian uprising with how "the Egyptian, Tunisian, Palestinian, Libyan masses and others, clearly see this revolution as their own." As "anti-imperialists," how can we not recognize the Syrian Revolution as a serious challenge to the order in the entire region and beyond?

**Burmese American
Oakland**

WAR ON WOMEN AND WORKERS

The Republicans trying to frame their opposition to contraception as "religious freedom" is on par with 19th century Southern Democrats framing slavery as "states' rights."

**Feminist
Bay Area**

Businesses take advantage of women by paying them less. Women have a double responsibility of raising children and working to feed them. Many of my students have single-parent moms who work from 8:00 AM to 5:00 or 6:00 PM every day. I know a lot of women probably would have an abortion because they really cannot afford to have a baby. Sometimes they don't have a job to support a baby.

**Male teacher
Los Angeles**

Five or six years ago when Terry Schiavo was brain-dead the right wing went nuts. They go nuts about people who are almost dead or fetuses that aren't born. Why aren't they talking

READERS' VIEWS

about those of us who are alive? There are 25 million children who go to bed hungry every night, talk about that! They say they care about life so much. It's a smokescreen. They never talk about the economic situation. They are people with false consciousness.

**Bruce
Northern California**

So much is happening, with revolts and repression everywhere, the developments are impossible to keep up with. From the slaughter in Syria, to the European nations trying to get out of the economic crisis, to austerity measures in Spain and Portugal, to hundreds of thousands in mass protests in Russia—no nation is immune from crisis.

And here at home, there is the attempt to limit the power of unions, and the reaction against it. Some 40 states are trying to limit public employees' ability to negotiate. Once a rare tactic, we now see lockouts by dozens of corporations who are making billions in profit. Presidential elections are ludicrous, any safety net has been completely shredded. It is a throwback to decades ago.

**Octogenarian
Detroit**

The attack on Labor in the recent retrogression we are suffering involves more than the number of jobs that have been eliminated. It is also on the nature of the work and the quality of wages, benefits and the security of employment and benefits. Even if people switch fields/careers, one job is not the same as another. It can mean a huge disruption for workers and their families.

**Retired School Teacher
New York**

FANON AND THE DIALECTIC

In Terry Moon's column on L Boogie's discussion of Fanon she raised the question of "how deep a dialectic needs to be?" It has to go deep enough to allow creation of the new. That may be what Fanon discovered, that Hegelian dialectic did not go deeply enough because he did not recognize color. There is a reality to skin color that is critical and from which freedom can emerge. That is what "Black masses as vanguard" means. It is not a superiority of Black man in history, but that without the Black struggle for freedom there would not be a revolution in the U.S.

The freedom Blacks were fighting for could not be conceived of by whites, not even by the Abolitionists. It makes freedom concrete. I hazard a guess that Hegel would not have disputed Fanon, because of that lived experience. What Hegel wrote down was an assessment of 2,500 years of lived experience, not just the thought of philosophers. I don't think Hegel would have dismissed Fanon.

**David M'oto
Bay Area**

OCCUPY ON STREETS & IN IDEAS

During and after our women's march here at Occupy Boston in March, we were belittled and called "morons" and other choice words by male members of the Boston Police Department (specifically, badge #1101). We were forced to get off the grass when there's no law saying we can't be on it, and were forced out of a park that was still open. Two occupiers were arrested for climbing on a public structure that I've watched scores of citizens climb on. They weren't read their rights, and they weren't told why they were being arrested.

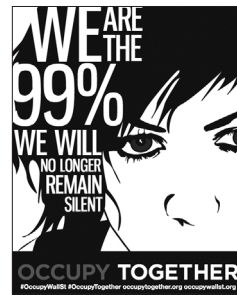
This behavior doesn't scare us or make us less likely to protest. It certainly doesn't incite violence among us. All

it does is compel us to tell our stories, to relay the news to non-occupiers who typically agree with us that the BPD's behavior is "hideous" and "an embarrassment to Boston." Keep it up, BPD.

**Robin Jacks
Boston**

There is a serious theoretical point to make about the 99% slogan. It doesn't mean the same thing to everyone. It lends itself to interpreting wealth as a quantitative measure and that doesn't show the class structure of society which needs to be totally transformed. Some don't think further than narrowing that huge inequality to ten to one, or getting money out of politics—as if that will ever happen. That is a petty bourgeois mentality that can be encapsulated in that 99% slogan. Occupy is a movement, however, where you can engender discussions. Differences are there and we need to raise questions and be concrete about them. It means more when you bring in these theoretical questions in relationship to some action that is taking place or being planned.

**Occupier
Chicago**



I like the slogan, "We are the 99%," because it makes concrete the incredible inequality here and the question of who has power and control. It is that 1% or less that

dominates everything and everyone. Yesterday in Wal-Mart I talked to two women with "99%" buttons on their jackets. One woman said her kids had to drop out of college for lack of money, the other had to move back home and they had to decide what to do about their mother. She said, "It's not just me, there are so many others out there like me." The other woman said that the time is now, there will never be a better time. It's a short way of addressing what the problem is.

**Erica Rae
Chicago**

FROM MOROCCO TO GURGAON

I have just received an urgent appeal from comrades in Morocco, where I was so warmly received during the heady days of the Arab Spring. Today, the young February 20th Movement is on the defensive. French-supported King Mohammed VI, after making cos-

metic changes in the Constitution, has reverted to the naked tyranny of his father, cracking down on demonstrations and all forms of political activity.

I'm now circulating an Avaaz petition you can find at http://www.avaaz.org/en/petition/Pour_la_liberation_de_tous_les_detenus_politiques_marocains/. It is an appeal for all the political prisoners and to save the lives of five imprisoned Moroccan student demonstrators, one of whom has been on a hunger strike since Dec. 1, 2011. Lives are at stake, and Avaaz petitions sometimes work!

**Richard Greeman
Montpellier, France**

A friend and I who met during Bosnian protests in Chicago several years ago really liked Gerry Emmett's article on Bosnia. The Bosnian genocide was a terrible tragedy and we fear that the world has not learned to avoid such tragedies—for example, Rwanda, Iraq, Sudan and Syria.

According to my Bosnian friend, if NATO troops leave, war would start tomorrow. The Dayton Accord is a temporary solution and not fair. Serbia received a much greater amount of Bosnian land than the Bosnians. Close to 300,000 were killed, plus many thousands of women were raped.

**Bosnian-American activist and a long-time troublemaker
Chicago**

"Gurgaon in the industrial belt of Delhi is presented as the shining India, a symbol of capitalist success promising a better life for everyone. Behind the factory walls and in the side streets of the industrial areas, thousands of workers keep the rat race going, producing cars and scooters for the middle-waged classes which end up in the traffic jam on the new highway between Delhi and Gurgaon." This is how one of the articles in the *GurgaonWorkersNews* begins its documentation of what it calls "some of the developments in and around this miserable boom region."

It is a valuable publication to read. Find how to get it via gurgaonworkersnews.wordpress.com.

**Internationalist
Illinois**

CALL FOR CONVENTION

Your Call for Convention posted at <http://newsandletters.org/Announce/Call2012.asp> feels like a statement to an already committed core group, yet there is a sense to try to open this up and communicate to other people. The issues are laid out rather clearly. It says "there will never be a time when the movement is not under attack." It is very true. The right wing is out there. They will take whatever openings there are.

**Rich Y.
Oakland**

THE 1992 LOS ANGELES REBELLION: TWENTY YEARS ON

April 29, 2012, marks the 20th anniversary of the 1992 Los Angeles Rebellion. When the barbaric beating of Rodney King by four L.A.P.D. officers was videotaped and shown on national TV, the youths of South Central Los Angeles and other impoverished areas could no longer contain their rage at the constant daily police harassment, brutality and racism. The four police officers were subsequently acquitted in the trial in Simi Valley, a suburban white community where many police reside.

When the verdict of "not guilty" was announced on April 29, the city erupted into three days of protests, fires and looting. Over 12,000 people were arrested and over 50 people were killed by the National Guard and police. At the intersection of Florence and Normandie, a white truck driver was pulled from his truck and beaten. Prosecutors stacked a plethora of charges on Lance Parker, Damian Williams, Keith Watson and Antwon Miller. Damian Williams was

especially targeted by the media and remains incarcerated.

Conditions for the youth in blighted and underserved neighborhoods have not improved much since 1992. The effects of the high unemployment rate have resulted in many social disruptions, constant police repression and today's massive prison industry. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents along with local police have waged a war on Latino immigrants, culminating in thousands of working-class men and women being subjected to workplace raids, street arrests, detentions and deportations.

On Saturday, April 28, there will be a memorial gathering at Florence and Normandie Avenue immediately followed by a Block Party on 71st where Maxine Waters will be keynote speaker. There will be poetry, music and a multicultural potluck. All are invited to join us for a Unity Rally.

**Georgiana Williams
Los Angeles**

Counter-revolution, revolution and philosophy of liberation

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a question of revolution in permanence, of continuing the development beyond first negation, overthrow of the old regimes, on to a second negation, releasing mass creativity to construct a new human society.

B. From Egypt to Bahrain, the struggle continues

Having achieved partial success by ousting the old dictators, the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen have all faced serious setbacks. At the same time, the struggles continue, and voices from below make clear that a thoroughgoing, radical transformation is what many of the participants are still fighting for.

Take Egypt, where the combination of labor strikes, public square occupations and neighborhood self-defense represented a high point that refused to disappear with the toppling of President Hosni Mubarak.

From the beginning of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, we have singled out the vast flowering of different forms of self-organization by masses from below, of workplace struggles and of women's challenge to sexism. The voices of people in Cairo's Tahrir Square showed that many were reaching for freedom.

One year later, the Muslim Brotherhood and the military council want to claim the mantle of revolution. Both came late to the revolution only in order to take it over. The Brotherhood and reactionary political Islamists known as Salafis dominated elections to Parliament, showing once again that bourgeois elections do not equal freedom. One year ago, the Brotherhood promised not to try to dominate the new government and not to impose Islamic values on the country. In office, they filled the panel to write a new constitution with political Islamists and virtually excluded women, youth, and the Christian minority.

Since Mubarak's fall, young activists have been attacked by the police and jailed by military tribunals. Workers are still fighting for better wages and conditions and full recognition for their independent unions. Women have been pushed aside and subjected to vilification, street beatings and sexual assault. Far from being fooled, masses in the streets are calling for both the military and the Muslim Brotherhood to be toppled.

Last year a youth in Tahrir Square declared, "Everything is now possible. Horizons have opened up. We must now care for the revolution we have made." This year, on Jan. 25, at a rally in the Square marking one year since the first day of revolution, unemployed worker Attiya Mohammed Attiya explained, "I am not here to celebrate. I am here for a second revolution." Others were chanting, "Revolution until victory, revolution in all of Egypt's streets!"

In short, calls for revolution in permanence are in the air. It is crucial to reexamine some of the dominant assumptions held by the youth movement during the heady days of occupation of the Square and the downfall of Hosni Mubarak.

First, too many held the illusion that the goal should stop at getting rid of the dictatorship and establishing conventional political democracy. The quest for democracy is indispensable, and at the same time represents a reach for freedom that goes much further.

As we pointed out one year ago: "We do not overlook the importance of bringing down a police state and the prospect of a real improvement in human rights. However, a far deeper democracy, a deeper freedom, was created in Cairo's Tahrir Square, and dissolving that is exactly what the rulers aim for."⁴

The revolutionary new beginnings in the multiple forms of mass self-organization and self-activity were pointing to a much deeper kind of freedom, but key activists in the April 6th Youth Movement were too ready to abandon those beginnings, viewing elections as the arena for competition of political currents. Foreseeing that the Muslim Brotherhood would take advantage of its long-established organization, they pushed for postponement of elections, but the Brotherhood had made a deal with the military to undercut revolution.

Against a backdrop of Saudi money funneled to Salafis, weariness of economic disruption, and large segments of the population that had not been drawn into the revolution, the Brotherhood and the military used bourgeois elections to take the initiative away—temporarily—from the masses' self-activity, which is the only basis for a true, revolutionary democracy.

We cannot overlook the contradictions in the wish to be "non-ideological." Ideas about what should happen after the revolution, beyond "democracy," took a back seat in the name of unity against the dictatorship. In Part IV we shall return to how ideology was still very much present. For now let us recall a vital point from our new Middle East pamphlet:

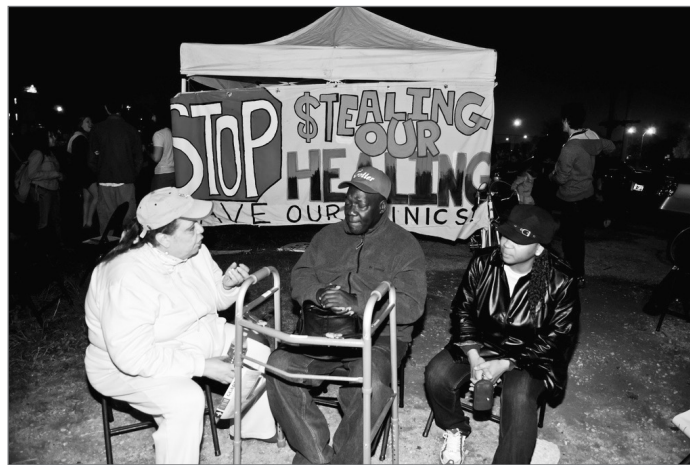
"It isn't that class is the sole characteristic of na-

tional liberation movements that revolutionaries can support. It is that the working class nature is its essence and it is that the revolutionaries and international impact emerges from masses in motion....This does not mean that we give up the struggle for self-determination, Palestinian especially. It is that we do not narrow our vision of the revolutionary struggle for a totally different world, on truly new Humanist foundations, the first necessity of which is the unity of philosophy and revolution."⁵

Crucially, the struggle continues, as it does in the other countries that are part of Arab Spring:

- In Tunisia the Islamist Ennahda Party won constituent assembly elections. Nabil Karoui is on trial for blasphemy after broadcasting the feminist movie *Persepolis* about the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution. Karoui was correct to declare, "This is a political trial. It is the trial of 10 million Tunisians who dreamed of having a democratic country." Salafists have taken to the streets, beating up journalists, harassing unveiled women, calling for an Islamic Caliphate and demanding the closure of the country's main theater. Thousands of counter-protesters have come out as well, as have thousands protesting attacks on labor union halls. Strikes and sit-ins are frequent.

- In Yemen the old president Saleh had to resign, but his relatives and close associates control the reins of power. Protesters still occupy Change Square in Sana'a, oil workers went on a national strike on March 14 over corrupt privatization, and women are still



Participants sit in front of the tent city erected at 63rd and Woodlawn to demand that Chicago's mental health clinics stay open. Patients had barricaded themselves inside the Woodlawn clinic on April 12, with Occupy Chicago supporters blockading the doors from the outside. Police broke in the next morning, arresting 23. Participants in the Mental Health Movement and Occupy Chicago then set up the tent city, which police evicted on April 17. That did not stop the protest presence, including a city-wide Occupy General Assembly. The occupation is part of a campaign, led by patients from all 12 threatened clinics, to defend Chicago mental health clinics from closure and privatization, which Mayor Rahm Emanuel (aka Mayor 1%) is pushing for. Demands include: Keep all 12 city mental health clinics public, open, fully funded and fully staffed; stop plans to privatize Chicago's seven neighborhood health centers; hire more doctors, therapists, nurses, social workers and other clinic staff; reinstate the drug assistance program; expand the public mental health safety net to cover unmet community need. "We are not going to be turned around. This is a question of life and death for us and we will not give up the fight," said Linda Hatcher, one of the patients who were arrested.

vociferously demanding equal rights.

- In Bahrain the movement was harshly repressed with the help of Saudi and United Arab Emirates troops, but open demonstrations have recently restarted.

While a superpower's involvement is for its own purposes and not to secure the freedom of the masses, it would be a mistake to ascribe all counter-revolution only to that. In our time, counter-revolution also keeps emerging from within revolutions. In each of the above cases, with or without U.S. military involvement, the masses are confronting a political structure friendly to international capital and hostile to workers, usually with Islamists at the fore, though they were not prominent in any of the uprisings. And in each case the struggle continues.

II. In the belly of the beast

A. Occupy and anti-Occupy

The very new phenomenon of the Occupy Movement brought this moment of revolutionary new beginnings squarely to the U.S. Though not now a revolution, it nevertheless transformed the political atmosphere in the country and, even after most actual occupations were violently dismantled, revealed a new generation of youth engaged in breaking down barriers between different movements and aiming to overturn the economic and political dominance of a tiny elite dubbed the 1%.

Naturally, the movement contains conflicting ideas about how to overcome that domination. While some focus on campaign finance reform, taxing the rich, and prosecuting bankers, and a few even want to find common ground with the reactionary Tea Party, a deeper reach for freedom is there too. That is seen not only in what is explicitly voiced, but in the very form of taking public space from state-corporate control and making it truly public, and in the many-sided experiments at drawing participants into running the movement.

For the movement to release its deepest potential would entail making that fully explicit not only as negation of elite domination but as negation of that negation, construction of the new, a revolutionary reconstruction of society from the bottom up.

Thus, workplace takeovers such as the workers' occupation this February at Serious Energy—known to the world by its former name, Republic Windows and Doors, when the workers occupied it in 2008—are not just an extension of a tactic to another field, but a re-
5. "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the PLO but the Whole Left."

jection of the capitalists' monopoly of the means of labor and a small preview of workers' reappropriation of their own activity. That advance is crucial if we are to break down the domination of society by an elite, which is built on the alienation of labor. As will be discussed in Part IV, freely associated labor is needed to overcome this domination and the ideology that makes it appear natural.

From the beginning of Occupy, a reach for new human relations was manifested in experimentation with new forms of self-organization. Now the movement has spread out into neighborhoods and is trying to deepen participation by people of color and by workers. It has breathed new life into a wide range of activist groups.

This includes new efforts to block evictions and take over unoccupied dwellings, at a time when, for instance, 3.5 million are homeless yet 18.5 million homes in the country are vacant. Occupy is looking ahead to

big protests, including "Chicago Spring," which began April 7 and is leading up to the May Day labor/immigrant rally and actions against the NATO summit. One victory has already been won, with the specter of the protests chasing the G8 summit out of Chicago to secure and secluded Camp David.

The rulers and their police forces have made clear how seriously they take the threat Occupy poses to the status quo. Their repression did not end with the violent clearing of occupations last November and December. When the Occupy the Midwest conference brought hundreds of occupiers from several states to St. Louis, many set up camp in a park on March 15. Police ordered them to leave, but when they left cops jumped on them, pepper-spraying

and beating several with batons and arresting 15.⁶

Two days later, when Liberty Plaza in New York City was reoccupied, police viciously attacked the occupiers, beating and stomping many and dragging young women by their hair. They handcuffed Cecily McMillan and then watched her having seizures on the concrete. Police punched an Occupy medic in the face and slammed him into a glass door, breaking it. While carrying another man onto a bus, they slammed his head against the door and several seats.

Occupiers responded by reinforcing their coalescence with New Yorkers of color who live with the NYPD's daily racial profiling, "stop and frisk," and brutality, even murder. Many voices—Black, Latino and white—came together in the March 20 demonstration against police terror, and again in New York's Million Hoodie March calling for justice for Trayvon Martin.

Brute force is not the only type of repression leveled against the movement. In preparation for the expected massive protests against the NATO summit in May, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel pushed through his "Sit Down and Shut Up" anti-protest ordinance, followed by an attempt to deny a permit for the May 20 anti-NATO march—even though it had previously approved a permit for the day before, when the G8 was still planning to meet in Chicago.

An ominous precedent for what could happen before the summit, as well as during this summer's political party conventions, was set at the 2008 Republican Party convention in St. Paul, Minn. The FBI infiltrated protest groups. Police and sheriff's deputies raided five buildings, including the house hosting the I-Witness Video collective. During the convention, police repeatedly assaulted demonstrators, arresting nearly 800, including medics, legal observers and over 30 journalists. Eight people were charged with "conspiracy to riot in furtherance of terrorism"—the first terrorism charges under the Minnesota version of the Patriot Act.⁷

The Obama administration has not only continued but intensified the Bush administration's clampdown on civil liberties. President Obama signed the "anti-Occupy" law March 8, which is actually a renewal and strengthening of existing legislation used, among other things, to keep protesters bottled up in "free speech

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6. See "Police Violence Against Occupy comes to the Midwest," *Occupied Chicago Tribune*, April 12, 2012, <http://occupied-chicagotribune.org/2012/04/police-violence-against-occupy-comes-to-the-midwest/>.

7. Public pressure forced the prosecutor to drop the flagrantly political "terrorism" charges against the activists.

4. See 2011 Call for Plenum, <http://newsandletters.org/Announce/Call2011.asp>.

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zones" out of sight of major events like the summit, and away from news cameras. Obama also signed the National Defense Authorization Act, which allows indefinite military detention of citizens and non-citizens without trial.

It was under this administration that the FBI raided anti-war activists' homes in several cities in September 2010. And this administration has prosecuted more government whistleblowers under the Espionage Act than all previous administrations combined. It is trying to destroy Wikileaks and is prosecuting Army intelligence analyst Bradley Manning for allegedly leaking a classified video that showed American troops shooting Iraqi civilians from an Apache helicopter in 2007, and thousands of other secret documents.

B. From Trayvon to Tulsa

The heating up of state repression is made infinitely more dangerous by the private forces of counter-revolution—not only corporations like Stratfor, known as the "shadow CIA," and mercenary Blackwater (renamed Academi), but also white supremacist private border patrols and self-appointed neighborhood watch vigilantes. When news spread of yet another Black youth gunned down for no reason, Trayvon Martin became the symbol of the violence and injustice of racist USA.

The fact that a vigilante in a Sanford, Fla., gated community could kill an unarmed 17-year-old—without even being arrested—spoke even louder than the thinly veiled racist rhetoric of Republican presidential candidates. Outrage broke out into protests coast to coast, "million hoodie marches," and walk-outs by thousands of students at 50 Florida high schools.

Many protesters drew a comparison to the Mississippi lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till in 1955 by two white men who went free. An African American in Chicago commented, "This is what they want to do to all of us." When it comes to organized vigilante groups, the mission is to search and destroy people of color. It cannot be separated from the politicians' rhetoric on one side and the racist workings of the criminal injustice system on the other. The random shootings of five Blacks in Tulsa brought home the message that it is open season on people of color—and it brought calls to end the "conspiracy of silence" about the too-little-remembered 1921 Tulsa race riot, one of the country's worst, in which 300 African Americans were killed and a whole section of town was burned to the ground.

The parallel that the ruling class is most worried about is what Emmett Till's murder helped set loose: the Freedom Now movement of the 1950s and 1960s. Closer to the present is the Los Angeles Rebellion of exactly 20 years ago, sparked by the outrageous April 29, 1992, acquittal of the police officers whose brutal beating of Rodney King was videotaped. That rebellion involved African Americans, Latinos and white youth.

The specter looming today is that of Black and Latino revolt coalescing with white youth and labor, facilitated by the Occupy Movement. That motivates the character assassination of Trayvon Martin, complete with fake photoshopped pictures, just as surely as it motivates the Tea Party rhetoric portraying healthcare reform, birth control, abortion and foreclosure protection as power grabs by an Other spearheaded by a Black President.

In truth, the ongoing struggles over prison, housing, public service cuts, closing of mental health centers, attacks on public employees, and voting rights affect people of color more, and they involve all races.

C. Against the war on women

What's rightfully being called the "War on Women" likewise affects poor and minority women most strongly, but also all races and genders. While much of the outrage has been directed at the fascistic attack on women's reproductive rights—ballooning from the assault against abortion rights to going after birth control—the war on women is much broader and deeper.

Look at the ramifications of the gutting of welfare under Clinton-Gingrich in 1996. A new report from the National Poverty Center released in February used the World Bank's measure of poverty to look at poor families in the U.S. The number of households in the U.S. trying to survive on \$2 or less per day per person shot up by 130% from 1996 to reach 1.46 million households in 2011. The number of children living in extreme poverty doubled to 2.8 million. The study concludes that "the percentage growth in extreme poverty...was greatest among" households "headed by single mothers or disadvantaged minorities." Furthermore, "This growth has been concentrated among those groups that were most affected by the 1996 welfare reform."⁸

8. "Extreme Poverty in the United States, 1996-2011,"

President Clinton's 1996 destruction of welfare is now taking a savage toll on poor women and their children. Women—and poor women in particular—are losing their right to control their own bodies, not just abortion, but birth control and healthcare. Last year alone, 80 new restrictions on abortion rights were enacted by state legislatures, up from 23 in 2010. The first attack on women's newly won right to abortion was the 1976 Hyde Amendment barring the use of federal money to pay for them. That set a precedent that it was somehow OK for the federal government, an old boys club if there ever was one, to legislate on what can or cannot happen

to a woman's body. The debate around access to contraception—under the rule of religious freedom—follows from the Hyde Amendment.

So successful have anti-abortion fanatics become that the only clinic where abortions are performed in Mississippi may close. Governor Phil Bryant bragged, "As governor, I will continue to work to make Mississippi abortion-free." Mississippi House Bill 1390 requires all doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a local hospital and be board certified in obstetrics and gynecology—a requirement specifically designed to force the clinic to close. Hospitals can refuse admitting privileges to physicians, and Jackson's two church-affiliated hospitals may well do so. When abortion is illegal, women die from illegal back-alley butcher abortions, so Bryant was lying when he proclaimed: "This legislation is an important step in strengthening abortion regulations and protecting the health and safety of women." Meanwhile, anti-abortion violence continues, as in the April 1 firebombing of a Planned Parenthood clinic in Grand Chute, Wis.

Women's renewed vigor for fighting back was heralded by the unanticipated reaction to Susan G. Komen for the Cure's decision to cut funding to Planned Parenthood. The outcry that forced Komen to back down was soon followed by calls for a National Protest Against the War on Women.⁹ Women in all 50 states quickly planned their own protests to complement the national protest in Washington, all on April 28.

So potent has been the outpouring of support that the mainstream national women's organizations eventually had to get on board too, despite their initial silence. Yet the Left by and large still has women's liberation on the back burner, and in some corners has even been penetrated by ambivalence about abortion rights. At the same time, women's demonstrations on a number of fronts have been proliferating as the inhumanity of the war on women rolls on like a blitzkrieg.

Fightbacks are emerging from many Subjects of revolt. The attacks on women, on immigrants, on workers, on the homeless, on Queers, on people of color, are all part of one counter-revolutionary onslaught:

The anti-Gay backlash, together with the war on women's self-determination, forms an important pillar of the theocratic fascism exemplified by Rick Santorum, whose strong showing in the primaries did not secure him the nomination but does reflect the potential for a mass base for fascism.

Attacks on immigrants continue with laws like Arizona's and Alabama's drawing protests, with another combined immigrant/labor May Day march coming up. While immigration has declined, deportations have hit record highs close to 400,000 a year.

The attacks on labor brought on the whole Wisconsin outburst, which is far from finished. Connections have been developing between workers and occupations such as Oakland's. Just the threat of Occupy Oakland mobilizing in Seattle forced the port to back away from opening a non-union terminal in Longview, Wash.

Internationally, ever newer and more widespread labor and peasant revolts in China are a signal to North American workers beset with a race to the bottom in wages and conditions. The China-to-Walmart economy has reached the point where California warehouse workers are illegally paid sometimes less than half of

National Poverty Center Policy Brief #28, February 2012; http://npc.umich.edu/publications/policy_briefs/brief28/policybrief28.pdf.

9. See "New Attacks on Women Take Fascistic Turn," Editorial in the March-April 2012 *N&L*.

minimum wage.¹⁰

Minds are the target as more and more laws mandate public schools be propaganda machines, from Arizona's prohibition of ethnic studies to Tennessee's new "monkey bill" encouraging teachers to disparage evolution and the science of climate change—just at the time when the toll taken by extreme weather around the planet is raising the alarm.¹¹

The question is whether Subjects will unite with each other and unite theory and practice in so total a way as to unleash the power of a vision of building a revolutionary society on new human foundations.

III. Paths of destruction

A. From war to war to war

War is one of the rulers' most potent counter-revolutionary weapons when faced with economic crises and revolt. With a military stretched thin, one eye on China, and the failures of Iraq and Afghanistan hanging over their heads, the Pentagon is not pushing for war against Iran. But the Romney-Santorum-Gingrich chorus, joined by many members of Congress, keeps beating the war drums, and the Israeli government is pushing hard for war. While publicly trying to cool the heated pro-war tumult, the Obama administration reportedly offered Israel more powerful bunker-busting bombs if they agree to delay a strike on Iran until 2013. At the same time, the Pentagon is alarmed by a simulation they ran of an Israeli strike on Iran. It concluded that such a strike would most likely lead to a regional war, and the U.S. would be drawn into it regardless of its intentions, resulting in hundreds of troop deaths.

However irrational the path to war is, its siren song is compelling to rulers.¹² That is not alone because of the brinkmanship of leaders playing chicken with millions of lives. It is above all because of the pressure building up from the tectonic plates clashing beneath the surface of capitalism in deep economic crisis. At a time when globalized capitalist industry and trade are depleting natural resources and undermining the environmental conditions that sustain civilization, competition is aggravated by rising demand for energy and water. The workings of capitalism's law of motion drive rival powers toward conflict.

Therefore, truly opposing war entails opposing the social bases from which it comes. The urgent need is to struggle to stop war against Iran *and at the same time* "not narrow our vision of the revolutionary struggle for a totally different world, on truly new Humanist foundations, the first necessity of which is the unity of philosophy and revolution."¹³ Taking the side of one set of rulers or another undermines opposition to war.

The distance of much of the Left from such a fully revolutionary perspective is measured in the choice to follow various state powers that claim to oppose U.S. hegemony—that is, to merge the anti-war struggle with acceptance of counter-revolutionary anti-imperialism,

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10. See "Warehouse workers say abuses are systemic," by Lilly Fowler, March 5, 2012, http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/46597603/ns/business-us_business/#.T3damNXwCuO.

11. See "ALEC Climate Change Denial Model Bill Passes in Tennessee," by Steve Horn, <http://www.desmogblog.com/alec-climate-change-denial-model-bill-passes-tennessee>; and "Climate change denial: Attack on the minds of humanity," by Franklin Dmitryev, <http://dmitryev.wordpress.com/2011/01/05/239/>.

12. Fifty years ago in October 1962, in the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy and Khrushchev took the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation. See "Marxist-Humanism vs. the U.S. Blockade of Cuba, the Russian Missile Bases There, Fidel Castro's 'Selective' Party, All Playing with Nuclear Holocaust," Oct. 25, 1962, Political Letter by Raya Dunayevskaya.

13. "Lebanon: The Test Not Only of the PLO but the Whole Left."

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such as that of the rulers of Iran.¹⁴ Some anti-war demonstrations have even excluded leftist Iranians who oppose the Islamic Republican regime of Iran; some have barred denunciations of Syria's Assad.

As yet, a majority in the U.S. opposes strikes on Iran by either the U.S. or Israel. One factor is the meltdown of the occupation of Afghanistan. The massacre of 17 Afghan civilians, including nine children, by Staff Sgt. Robert Bales was only the latest in a series of events



Afghan women march to the Afghan parliament April 14 protesting horrific conditions for women there. See "Women Worldwide," p. 2.

that prove it is no aberration. The Koran burnings, the desecration of Afghan corpses, the everyday brutality with which NATO soldiers treat civilians,¹⁵ the continuing night raids that terrorize civilians, all reveal the barbarism and hatred pervading the occupation.

Far from "winning hearts and minds," the protracted occupation has resurrected the fortunes of the misogynist, ethnocentric, counter-revolutionary Taliban—responsible for 80% of civilian killings. The corrupt, U.S.-allied Karzai government, under which the oppression of women almost matches that of the Taliban, is hardly a credible alternative.

One-third of all U.S. troop deaths in Afghanistan this year have been at the hands of Afghan troops. On top of all that, Pakistan has blocked military supply trucks from entering Afghanistan.

The occupation is so moribund that 69% of Americans chose "U.S. should not be involved in Afghanistan" in a survey. About half said Obama's withdrawal timetable is too slow. When Newt Gingrich referred to the occupation as "very likely... a mission that we're going to discover is not doable," his Republican competitors did not even bother accusing him of "cutting and running." As in the dying days of the Vietnam War, the leaders know they have lost but dare not admit it, so the slaughter drags on. That includes even President Obama, who secured the 2008 nomination on the basis of his supposed rejection of the Iraq war.

The U.S. significantly weakened itself with that war. A swift battlefield victory led to a nine-year violent occupation, together with widespread sectarian, "honor" and homophobic killings and degraded living conditions in much of the country. Contrary to the plan, Iranian influence in the region has been strengthened, especially in Iraq. The Iraqi government's refusal to grant legal impunity to U.S. troops forced their withdrawal, after which the U.S. had to scale back drastically its plans for a massive presence of embassies, spies and mercenaries.¹⁶ The rulers had to face the limits of what the "greatest country in the world" can do—limits set not only by imperial overreach but by the deep global economic crisis. After all, the maintenance of the world's most colossal military machine—more than half of world military spending—places a huge burden on the economy, which cannot go on forever in the face of stagnation.

B. Economy and ecology

The Great Recession, officially declared over in 2009, lingers on in the impoverishment of millions, with Black America hardest hit, even as corporations rake in record profits. In March unemployment was officially 8.2%—for Blacks, 14.0%, double that of whites. Those figures would be higher if they included involuntary part-timers and "discouraged workers." Just 14.7% of Black teens had jobs. The national poverty rate had risen to 15.1%, and nearly twice that for Blacks and Hispanics.

The recession, and especially predatory loans followed by predatory foreclosures, destroyed decades of slow erosion of racial economic inequality. Net worth of Black households plummeted to less than what it was

in 1984, leaving average wealth of Black households at just 5% of that of whites.

In the last four years, there have been nearly 13 million foreclosure filings, with many more projected for several years to come. State and local legislatures stepped up to the challenge of growing homelessness by further criminalizing homeless people. San Francisco passed an ordinance against sitting or lying on the sidewalk. Memphis gave official blessing to police harassment by creating "No-Panhandling Zones" in the downtown area. As always, capitalist democracy operates in the spirit articulated by Anatole France in 1894:

"The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread."

Across the Atlantic, capitalism's decay is seen in Europe's barbaric austerity programs, especially in Greece—and in the revolts against these conditions. What Greeks are calling the dictatorship of European capital, with Germany in the lead, has forced on their country an austerity program that includes firing one-fifth of public employees, cutting the minimum wage by 22%, and slashing pensions. Those are only highlights of the latest round of austerity, imposed at a time when youth unemployment is near 50%, the suicide rate has shot up, stores are closing in droves, and many people who still have jobs have not been paid in months.

No economic recovery for Greece is envisioned by the European Union plan, but only a bailout of international financial capital and a desperate attempt to stop the crisis from enveloping all of Europe. Some European leaders are calling for debt repayment to be the absolute priority for Greece's treasury, even before such necessities as wages, healthcare, and food provision. Greeks have been fighting back with general strikes, huge demonstrations in cities all across the country, and occupations, which have moved from Syntagma Square in Athens to neighborhoods. (See "We Are All Greeks," March-April 2012 *N&L*.) At the same time, the economic crisis and disintegrative forces in the European Union have created openings for outright fascism. Not only is the neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" gaining popularity in Greece, the fascist LAOS party was briefly part of the government, and even the Socialist Party is scapegoating immigrants.

Revolt is Europe-wide. In Spain, where unemployment is even higher than in Greece, millions went on general strike on March 29 on the eve of a new round of austerity. Many strike participants have been involved



Marchers in Valencia during Spain's March 29 general strike. These signs refer to a strike of caregivers, domestic workers and nurses.

in the activities of the *indignados*, whose occupation of Madrid's Puerta del Sol drew from Tahrir Square in Egypt and helped inspire Occupy Wall Street. Though the occupation ended last June, the movement continues. Spain, which has plunged back into recession, has experienced a surge of eviction blockades and protests over the past year, including a wave of solidarity protests after a high school walkout was attacked by police in February.¹⁷

Many left as well as mainstream economists point to "economic growth" rather than austerity as what is needed to address the crisis of joblessness. One of the extremely serious contradictions that entails is the environmental fallout from capitalist growth. The more the economy grows, the more it degrades the planet, through pollution, squandering of natural resources, or direct destruction of ecosystems that are turned into plantations, pastures, mines, roads or cities.

Consider how this plays out in ongoing climate change, or rather climate chaos. More than 42 million people in Asia have been displaced by climate-related disasters in the last two years.¹⁸ All the big carbon-emitting countries have failed to rein in their greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, production keeps growing and, with it, so do energy use and carbon dioxide emissions. Europe's numbers look best, but that is a mirage because so much of its industrial production

17. See "Spain's general strike is also a day of action for the 99%," by Katharine Ainger, 3/27/2012 *Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/mar/27/spain-general-strike-99-cent>.

18. See the Asian Development Bank's report at <http://www.adb.org/publications/addressing-climate-change-and-migration-asia-and-pacific?ref=themes/climate-change/publications>.

has been shifted to China, only to be shipped back to Europe, generating even more emissions. Much-touted biofuels are often produced by transforming forests into industrial plantations, displacing indigenous peoples and canceling out emission savings because of the destruction of trees.

In the U.S. politicians are afraid even to mouth the phrase "climate change," except to deny its reality. The substitute formulas touted by the administration—"investing in technology," "all of the above," and "energy independence"—resolve in practice to using more renewable energy and burning more fossil fuels.

In short, there is an insuperable contradiction between capitalist economy, whether in or out of crisis, and the environmental conditions necessary to sustain human civilization.

Even so mainstream a group as the intergovernmental Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development warned in March about "alarming" prospects of "irreversible changes that could endanger two centuries of rising living standards" due to climate change and other factors such as species extinctions and freshwater depletion.¹⁹

Last year's famine in the Horn of Africa reveals what it means in human terms. The starving children displayed on newscasts, the tens of thousands of deaths, and the flight of nearly one million Somalis to other countries, were not just products of climate change—let alone of just "nature"—but of the way the crumbling global capitalist order is responding to climate change.²⁰ Today, the UN warns that looming famine threatens 15 million people in West Africa.

Across the planet, and especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and small island states threatened by rising seas, the struggle to deal rationally with climate change is spreading—and it involves confronting what are the social foundations of its continued exacerbation. While a number of observers have connected food riots and rebellions in Africa to climate change, they cannot be reduced to one factor.

Asked about views of the Arab Spring in Sub-Saharan Africa, a Senegalese told *N&L*: "The revolutionary spirit is very much alive and all are wondering if they can make it happen in their own countries."

That is seen in what happened to 45 Zimbabweans. Just for watching and discussing a video on the Arab Spring in Feb. 2011, they were thrown in jail, tortured, and accused of treason, which allows a death sentence. International solidarity made the state drop charges on all but six, who were given suspended sentences. On the day of sentencing, hundreds of supporters of the defendants packed the courtroom or protested outside.

IV. Marx's Humanism today

"The commodity form of the products of labor became a fetish because of the perverse relationship of subject to object—of living labor to dead capital. Relations between men appear as the relation between things because in our alienated society that is all 'they really are.' Dead capital is the master of living labor. The fetishism of commodities is the opiate that, to use a Hegelian expression, passes itself off as 'the very nature of the mind' to all **except** the proletariat who daily suffer from the domination of dead labor, the stranglehold of the machine. Therefore, concludes Marx, no one can strip the fetishism from the commodities **except freely associated labor.**" — Raya Dunayevskaya, "Marx's Humanism Today"²¹

The accelerating plunge to climate chaos, the never-ending unemployment and austerity, the domination of politics by a small elite, the worldwide struggles to reverse these conditions, all point to the urgent need to uproot capitalism.

While that task can only be accomplished by masses in motion, history shows that revolutions cannot succeed without being grounded in a philosophy of revolution. Even when the old regime has been overthrown, let alone when that has only been halfway achieved, the relations and ideas of the old order find ways of rearing their heads—not only through the economic and military power of the old, but from the contradictions *within* the revolution.

We saw earlier that tendencies in Egypt have been pushing in opposite directions. Will the move toward democracy be a stepping stone for mass self-activity toward greater freedom, or will it be confined, as the capitalists and their representatives wish, to a form without real content?

The latter tendency knows how to take advantage of the wish to be "non-ideological." Especially at the beginning of the struggle, given the pressing need for masses to unite in opposition to Mubarak's regime,

continued on p. 10

14. Our new pamphlet of *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* roots its analysis of counter-revolutionary anti-imperialism in the actual dialectics of revolution and counter-revolution in Iran 1979. Its meaning is obscured today by the rewriting of history as if that had been an "Islamic Revolution," rather than a social revolution with many contradictions that led to its capture by counter-revolutionary Islamists.

15. See Neil Shea, "Afghanistan: A Gathering Menace: Traveling with U.S. Troops Gives Insights into the Recent Massacre," *The American Scholar*, Spring 2012, <http://theamericanscholar.org/a-gathering-menace/>

16. Yet the Pentagon's 2013 budget request includes \$2.9 billion for "Iraq activities."

19. See http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,3746,en_2649_37465_49036555_1_1_1_37465,00.html.

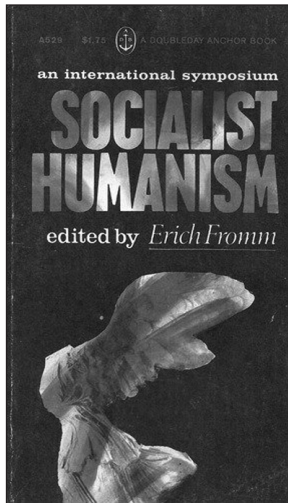
20. See "Somalia famine, climate and capitalism," Sept.-Oct. 2011 *N&L*.

21. "Marx's Humanism Today," originally published in Erich Fromm's 1965 symposium *Socialist Humanism*, is included in our forthcoming book of selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Karl Marx.

Counter-revolution, revolution and philosophy of liberation

continued from p. 9

ideas about what should happen after the revolution, beyond "democracy," took a back seat in the name of unity against the dictatorship. But ideology was still very much present. What was not banished was the ideology



"Marx's Humanism Today" was first published in Erich Fromm's international symposium *Socialist Humanism*.

that does not seem like ideology because it flows from everyday life: what Karl Marx termed the fetishism of commodities. The most basic unfree relations seem natural and inescapable because, in capitalism, people are treated as things and things rule. The alienation of workers from their own activity—expressed as the value-form—appears to have no alternative. Liberty is confined to the political sphere, and the economy appears to have a will of its own that cannot be controlled.

Self-activity is at the heart of Karl Marx's philosophy, which opposes the fetishism of commodities and grasps its absolute opposite, freely associated labor, as what is needed to transcend it. At the same time, today's struggles demand recognizing that multiple subjects of revolution are confronting multiple dimensions of alienation. The full development of these concepts in Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence is projected in our forthcoming book of selected writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Karl Marx.

Her Marxist-Humanism saw in Marx's analysis of fetishism both the ideology and the reality of the value form as the domination of dead labor over living labor, and in addition its absolute opposite, the future in the present.

While the occupation of Tahrir Square did not match the Paris Commune of 1871 in transforming relationships in the workplace, what Marx wrote of the Commune applies: what was greatest was its own working existence. As Dunayevskaya wrote in "Marx's Humanism Today,"²² the total reorganization of society embodied in the Commune shed light on the form of value and its impact on thought.

The value of a commodity is determined by the labor objectified in it. The fact that labor appears to be a characteristic of the commodity, a thing, reflects how the capitalist labor process turns the worker, living labor, into a thing, an appendage to the machine. This dehumanization is the expression of a system of production and social relationships where dead labor dominates living labor. Dunayevskaya shows how Marx's theory probes all of this as both alienated labor and as revealing what is needed to negate alienation and achieve a whole new human dimension through freely associated labor:

"Marx created special economic categories not only to expound his theory of value and surplus-value, but also to show how degraded human relations were at the point of production itself. By splitting the category of labor into labor as activity and labor power as a commodity—as if the laborer could indeed disjoint his hands from his body and have them retain their function—Marx was able to show that, since labor power cannot be so disembodied, it is the laborer himself who enters the factory. And in the factory, continues Marx, the laborer's ability becomes a mere appendage to a machine and his concrete labor is reduced to a mass of congealed, abstract labor."²³

That reified reality is precisely why ideology appears non-ideological:

"Under capitalistic conditions of production, philosophy had been reduced to an ideology, i.e., false consciousness. The categories of thought proper to capitalistic production were uncritically accepted by all.... The fetishism of commodities is the opiate that, to use a Hegelian expression, passes itself off as 'the very na-

22. "Marx's Humanism Today" was quoted at the beginning of Part IV. This is one of the pieces that will be in the forthcoming book.

23. Quoted from "Marx's Humanism Today."

ture of the mind' to all *except* the proletariat who daily suffer from the domination of dead labor, the stranglehold of the machine. Therefore, concludes Marx, no one can strip the fetishism from the commodities *except freely associated labor*."²⁴

To truly cut through ideology requires, not putting off discussion of ideas about how deep social change needs to be, but actually getting to the root of the social relationships from which false consciousness emanates, *and* listening to the voices of the Subjects of revolution, the workers, the women, the youth, the national minorities. As Dunayevskaya shows in this essay, Marx transformed his economic theory, as well as his concept of what theory is, under the impact of the workers' movement for a shorter working day after the Civil War, and his theory of fetishism was deepened by the Paris Commune.

Crucially, Dunayevskaya's comprehension of fetishism goes beyond where most other theoreticians stop. The theory of fetishism encompasses not only first negation, what we must oppose, but second negation, what is needed to create the new—specifically, freely associated labor as what is needed to abrogate the law of value, strip the fetishism from labor's product, and establish freedom. This is one way the new book will illuminate the significance of grasping Marx's body of ideas as a philosophy of revolution in permanence.

The contradictions being suffered by the current revolutions and movements are again showing what an urgent practical matter it is to be armed with a philosophy of revolution in permanence—based on a vision of total uprooting, knowing that the overthrow of the old is only the first act of revolution. Such a vision is needed to continue revolution's self-development until a totally new social order is established.

24. Quoted from "Marx's Humanism Today."

Justice for ALL the Trayvon Martins

Los Angeles—Protests against the murder on Feb. 26 of unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman, an armed neighborhood watch volunteer in a gated community in Sanford, Fla., exploded across

V. Marxist-Humanist Tasks

We will prepare ourselves for the publication of the collection of Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx. In all kinds of activities, we will work out concretely how it will be part of our participation in the freedom movements and today's battle of ideas.

We will bring the new pamphlet of *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* into anti-war and solidarity actions, international correspondence and theoretical explorations, as an avenue for releasing the power of philosophy as a force of revolution.

We will continue *News & Letters*, the only Marxist-Humanist journal in the world, as a print publication and on our website. That work will involve creatively eliciting the new voices from movements like Occupy Wall Street and revolutions like those of the Arab Spring. Just as importantly, it will involve new theoretical-philosophical essays as part of concretely working out the previous two tasks.

We will develop new discoveries of Marxist-Humanism and the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya—through our redesigned website, our newspaper, our activity in meetings and protests, or other avenues—into new relationships with the Marxist-Humanist body of ideas and News and Letters Committees as the organization grounded in them.

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

—The Resident Editorial Board, April 15, 2012

dena police, including a woman, all of whom were Black except for one Latino youth. Occupy L.A. and L.A.'s Occupy the Hood were among groups supporting this action.

There are a tremendous number of things that go on where nobody does anything. Then something sparks people like the murder of Trayvon Martin. Now there are demonstrations everywhere, and people are starting to talk about all those other shootings, mostly targeting young Black men.

—Basho



Terry Moon/News & Letters

the U.S. Zimmerman, who remained free for weeks, claiming he killed Martin in "self-defense" and hiding behind Florida's Stand Your Ground law, was finally arrested for Trayvon's murder on April 11.

There were many protests in Los Angeles, including at Leimert Park in a Black community, and downtown. On April 9, a crowd of about 500 Blacks with support from white and brown activists gathered in Persian Square downtown. We listened to music, signed letters of protest, had small discussion groups and heard speakers, including activists from different organizations, and several Black actors. We marched for six blocks in silence to City Hall where a short rally was held. A woman organizer said: "This is not just a march, it's a movement!"

Though this demonstration was smaller by several thousand than the ones for Trayvon a week or two earlier, what made it important is that it included protests against many other unarmed victims of police killings. There were multiple signs with the name and photo of each victim and the words "Justice for Trayvon Martin" above their website: www.mhoodies.org.

The next day, April 10, several Black groups organized a rally at the Pasadena City Hall protesting the recent killing of Kendrec McDade, an unarmed 19-year-old college student, by the Pasadena police. McDade was shot on March 24 after a false report that he had robbed a person at gunpoint.

A Black woman speaker said this is not a war against the Pasadena police: "We just want justice." McDade's father said, "I've been in Pasadena for a long time seeing this happen over and over. Someone has to be held accountable."

Protestors held signs for Martin and for McDade and over ten other unarmed youths killed by the Pasa-

dena police, including a woman, all of whom were Black except for one Latino youth. Occupy L.A. and L.A.'s Occupy the Hood were among groups supporting this action.

The speakers' platform had a large banner: "Killed by police: STOLEN LIVES," with many pictures attached to it, reminding us all that what happened to Trayvon was far from an isolated event. People put their hearts on their signs: "Only in America can you MURDER a child and get away with it. But you kill a dog and you receive jail time"; "The Florida 'Stand your ground law' is nothing but a modern day LEGALIZED LYNCHING LAW."

A young Black woman's sign read, "Am I next to die?" Another read, "It is not a crime to be Black!" and another what so many felt, "This child was our child."

Speaker after speaker decried the racism that, unchecked, leads to so many deaths. Most speakers noted how common being stopped for being Black has become.

On the previous afternoon 150 people marched two by two from Millennium Park to the ABC-TV studio and around the Loop. The marchers were mostly young people, all in hoodies, and were racially mixed with about three-fourths of them Black.

The marchers had eagerly taken and read copies of *News & Letters* and waved them along with Skittles as we called for justice for Trayvon. The Los Angeles mother's account of her son Jonathan Cuevas' execution by sheriff's deputies in the March-April issue showed eerie similarities to Trayvon's killing 2,500 miles away: official protection of the killer and ignoring pleas of the victim's family for facts and for simple justice.

The spirit of the crowds on both days was sad and somber, as well as angry and determined. We all know that Trayvon's tragic death was not just an indictment against the man who pulled the trigger, but that his murder put all of American civilization on trial.

—March participants

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300,000 Québec students strike

Montréal—Post-secondary students in Québec have been on strike for two months, following a decision by the government of Premier Jean Charest to raise university tuition by \$1,625 yearly for a total of \$2,519. For us here in Québec, unemployment is extremely high. Unofficially, the percentage of people unemployed or underemployed between the ages of 18 and 25 is estimated to be as much as 40%. Thus, such tuition amounts to a lot of money. Loans and scholarships are not always easy to get.

The first strike was called at the Collège de Valleyfield in early February, where students formed a coalition called CLASSE (Coalition Large de l'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante). The strike quickly spread across the province. On March 23, over 200,000 students and teachers, along with labor union members, marched peacefully through the streets of Montréal. We had a good time—a lot of street theatre, creative signs and singing. There were no arrests, and even some police expressed solidarity. By March 26, the number of students voting to walk out of their classes had grown to 300,000.

The issues concern access to education, and there are two basic positions in the movement: those who are demanding tuition-free education on all levels (*la gratuité scolaire*) including university, and the minority, who simply want to roll back the tuition increases or modify them in some way. In mid-April, most students are still out on unlimited strike, though a smaller number are on a limited strike, with a possible return to class. The pressure is on, because there is now talk of having to scrap the entire semester. The Charest government, in power for nine years, has been thrown into disarray and destabilized by the strike, and is now in a precarious political position.

A WHOLE VIEW OF LIFE

The Minister of Education, Line Beauchamp, has been viciously repressive and dishonest. She has refused to meet with any student organizations. Her tactics included trying to divide students and workers,

which hasn't worked, issuing injunctions to re-open schools and threatening the academic records of those who remain on strike.

Beauchamp is so detested by many young feminists as a sellout, as someone willing to do anything to get ahead, that she has been nicknamed "The Inflatable Doll" ("La Poupée Gonflable"). On April 13, a group of students briefly occupied her office and upset the furniture a bit. The police arrested five students, along with a reporter and a photographer from *La Presse*, seizing all of their materials, in flagrant violation of freedom of the press.

This struggle is not over. It is not just about free education, it's about a whole view of life, and a whole new society that we would like to create. We're different here in Québec. The idea of the "isolated individualist" which seems to be so big in the rest of North America isn't popular here. We see ourselves as part of a collectivity, of a whole society working together. That's how we see our future, the Québec of the future, and we are happier for it. This struggle is a part of that larger hope.

—Natalie, Université du Québec à Montréal

Stop service cuts! Keep our home care!



Chicago—About 35 people participated in a lively rally beginning at SEIU headquarters on March 28. We then marched through downtown Chicago to the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, where we chanted to protest proposed drastic cuts in the Home Services Program. The rally and march were organized by The Taskforce for Attendant Services and Chicago ADAPT, a direct action disability rights group.

The Chicago Mercantile Exchange was targeted because they are one of several corporations who received very large tax break packages from Illinois, while Governor Patrick Quinn has introduced a budget that will block thousands of people from receiving home care. Also at stake are service cuts to 14,000 people in the home care program, stopping services to families with youth under the age of 18 and blocking the Home Services Program for people with psychiatric or developmental disabilities.

The State of Illinois also wants to make it impossible for family members to become personal assistants for their disabled family member. My worker at the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), told me that we cause too much trouble and too many misunderstandings. In other words, because we are more likely to advocate for our family members and challenge the small amount of hours that DRS allows us to care for them, the state wants to keep us from becoming their personal assistants!

The home care program was started to pay personal assistants to care for disabled people in their homes to keep them out of more costly nursing homes and institutions. Adequate home care services are what I and others count on to keep our disabled family members at home, in the community where they belong, and not to have to institutionalize them, which would be heart-breaking and detrimental to everyone.

"If I lose some of my hours, that means that my personal assistant can't work as long and will lose his health insurance, which is based on working a certain amount of hours per month," said one participant. Another marcher stated, "These cuts are disgusting and inhuman. If I lose even an hour a day, I can't complete my daily routine. I am unable to even do the basic things for myself and will have to go into a nursing home. That would be unbearable and cost the state even more!"

"We fought long and hard to get these services, we cannot allow them to be cut. Our lives are at stake here. We are literally fighting for our lives."

—Suzanne Rose

Captive Genders

Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison Industrial Complex, Eric A. Stanley and Nat Smith, Editors (AK Press, 2011, 300 pages).

This book introduces the importance of Queer and Transgender people as victims of and resisters against the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC). The term "PIC" includes all jails, juvenile halls, immigration centers, and psychiatric institutions. It also includes police brutality and harassment as well as the ineffective "wars" on terror, drugs, and gangs.

More and more poor, people of color, immigrants, homeless etc. are funneled into the constantly expanding system of prisons and jails. They are often harassed by police when they have committed no crime or are punished disproportionately for the crimes they do commit. People are punished for non-violent "crimes" which are really strategies for survival, such as sex work, selling drugs, or even sleeping in public.

Having a criminal record makes it harder to get a job and easier to return to prison. The more tax dollars go into the PIC, the less go into education, welfare, and other community development programs that prevent crime. Neoliberal propaganda regards poverty and the disabilities, illnesses, and addictions that accompany it, as the fault of the individual, not the system.

Captive Genders adds a new dimension to this critique by explaining that Queer (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and "gender-nonconforming") and Transgender people are especially vulnerable to homelessness, unemployment, discrimination and harassment. They have a history of organizing to resist the PIC, which includes a radical economic, gender, and class-based analysis of their oppression. Because of this analysis, their allies have included feminists and anti-capitalists who understood that oppression of Queer and Transgender people leads to broader oppression.

Patriarchy is an intentional part of the penal system. Just as prisons are a continuation of slavery and colonialism, the purpose of women's prisons has always been to train "fallen" women to be submissive to men. This extends to butch and male-identified inmates of women's prisons, who are constantly harassed and punished for their appearance as well as for the supposedly "masculine" act of standing up for oneself.

Guards rape and assault Transgender and Queer prisoners and encourage other prisoners to do so. Transgender prisoners are often denied hormones, which is part of denying them the right to determine their own identities and is also part of a denial of medical care in general. In fact, prisons do not rehabilitate but instead strip prisoners of all civil rights.

Since the PIC is so harmful, *Captive Genders* takes the position that it should be abolished. Several writers in the book emphasize that fighting for prison reforms is sometimes necessary but caution that calls for reform often make prisons worse. The book also critiques the inadequacy of reformist, mainstream, LGBT rights strategies as opposed to radical Queer liberation ones that transform society.

Captive Genders is a valuable introduction to understanding the roles of gender and queerness in PIC abolition, but I would like to see future books delve more concretely into the difficult issues of finding alternative solutions to violent crime and ending institutions that are so firmly entwined with capitalism. The book does, however, provide the names of numerous organizations, books, and websites so the reader can learn more and become involved. It also includes group exercises to get people to think about these concepts and develop solutions.

One of the writers states that activists "far too frequently ignore or abandon radical intellectual work as if it were an unaffordable luxury" and that "this intellectual underdevelopment kills radical movements." I hope that activists take the ideas offered by this book and build upon them.

—Adele

QUEERNOTES

by Suzanne Rose

Two Louisville, Ky., men have been charged with a federal hate crime in a beating of a Gay man in a Kentucky state park in April 2011. The attack left the victim with chest, head and other injuries. The U.S. Attorney's office in Lexington announced the charges—the first time the law has been applied in a U.S. case alleging bias over a victim's sexual orientation. The hate crime law was expanded in 2009 to cover assaults motivated by bias against Gays, Lesbians and Transgender people.

* * *

Ugandan Lesbian Brenda Namigadde, who was granted a last minute reprieve from deportation to Uganda from the United Kingdom, was denied the right to stay in the UK because she didn't own magazines or other literature relating to her sexuality! The judge said he didn't believe Brenda was a Lesbian. Advocates for her say that both the public mood and the official stance towards homosexuality in Uganda are lethal and Brenda would face prosecution and possible death if she is returned. Prominent Ugandan LGBT rights campaigner David Kato was violently murdered in a homophobic incident there.

* * *

In St. Petersburg, Russia, straight allies and LGBT people are protesting the Russian "Gay Propaganda" law. Under the law's vague wording, any positive mention of homosexuality in public, in the media, or on social networking websites can be branded Gay "propaganda," and is punishable by jail and steep fines. Sergey Kondrashov was arrested for holding a sign that read, "A dear family friend is Lesbian. My wife and I love her and respect her, and her family is just as equal as ours." Part of a letter he later wrote stated, "And until last week I would not have been called an activist. But on Sunday in St. Petersburg, I was arrested for spreading 'Gay propaganda.'" Kondrashov's letter and a petition are being circulated by international LGBT rights group ALLOut to have this law declared unconstitutional.

* * *

Albanian Gay organizations announced plans to hold the country's first ever Gay pride parade in Tirana on May 17. "May 17 will be a special day. The LGBT flag will be raised for the first time in Tirana," said Altin Hazizaj of the Pink Embassy organization. It was immediately slammed by Albania's deputy minister and the leader of the royalist party, Ekrem Spahiu, who said, "My only commentary on this Gay parade is that they should be beaten with truncheons." Albania's traditional patriarchal society is deeply homophobic, and human rights organizations say Gays face violence and discrimination.

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WORLD IN VIEW

Syrian cry for solidarity

by Gerry Emmett

It comes as no surprise that Bashar al-Assad's word means nothing. He has already violated the April "ceasefire" he promised Kofi Annan and the UN, first by leaving his troops in place in Syria's cities and villages. With his rule at stake, Assad will not allow peaceful protests to resume.

Further, his forces have continued to murder the Syrian people in full view of the world. Assad's slaughter even spilled outside the borders of Syria itself, with murderous attacks on refugees in Turkey and Lebanon. "The ceasefire is the new joke" read protesters' signs in the streets.

Some of the forces arrayed against Syria's revolution could be seen off the coast of Tartus, with Russia sending aircraft carriers in a show of support for Assad, and Iranian ships reportedly unloading more weapons and ammunition for the regime's forces to use against both the under-supplied armed resistance and unarmed protesters. Less visible are the ties and compromises that belie the rhetoric of the U.S. and other governments.

REVOLUTION OR 'CRISIS MANAGEMENT'?

For instance, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta was embarrassed in Congressional hearings that revealed the U.S. military does business with the same Russian firms that are supplying Assad. This is the tip of the iceberg. As international law expert M. Cherif Bassiouni explained in a discussion at the University of Chicago on April 6, the UN has been attempting to craft a compromise in Syria that will satisfy all the great powers, including the U.S., Russia and China.

In other words, the UN and other half-measures taken, or not taken, over Syria are mainly an effort to *manage* what the rulers see as a profound crisis—the Syrian people's undaunted passion for freedom, inseparable from the Arab Spring and all it has inspired around the world. The determinant for the rulers is their fear of revolution, the practice of freedom.

Every crocodile tear shed over Syria has been paid for with the Syrian people's blood and heroism. The Syrian revolution has placed a challenge to all the world's revolutionaries as well as to its rulers.

A MESSAGE TO 'FRIENDS OF SYRIA'

The passion of Syria's people was expressed in a message from Homs activist Khaled Abu Salah to the "Friends of Syria" conference April 1 in Istanbul:

"At the beginning of the Syrian Revolution, we Syrians discussed amongst ourselves with almost naive certainty that the year 2011 was not like the year 1982, when Assad the father was able to destroy the city of Hama without any international reaction to speak of. We thought that times had changed, and the technological revolution provided the Syrians the means of showing the world what was happening to them. We thought that the standard of ethics in international politics had been elevated and that it was not possible for Assad the son to repeat what his father did. But today, after the destruction of many parts of our city, and especially Baba Amr,

China in the Sudans

South Sudan's stated intent to withdraw from its recent occupation of Sudan's Heglig oil fields—on their still-disputed border—is a welcome stand-down from threatened full-scale war. The situation remains tense, with military mobilizations in both countries and threats of invasion of South Sudan by Omar al-Bashir's northern regime.

South Sudan's President Salva Kiir is scheduled to visit China, as Bashir did before the South's independence. China is the biggest investor in both Sudan's and South Sudan's oil industries. In addition, however, China is a main supplier of weapons to the Khartoum regime of Omar al-Bashir. (Russia is Sudan's main supplier, but China provides up to 90% of its small weapons.)

Bashir is under indictment by the International Criminal Court for his genocidal use of those weapons in Darfur. His regime uses them in the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, and elsewhere—and used them in the last stages of the genocidal war against South Sudan itself before independence. Reports indicate co-ordination between South Sudan's government and Sudanese rebel groups in these regions.

Those weapons continue to be used to attack the border areas of South Sudan as well. So there is a message being sent to China by the seizure of Heglig's oil fields. Kiir's government would like to continue the trend begun by recent supply of Chinese military trucks to South Sudan.

and the slaughter of our women and children, we Syrians are convinced, and especially in Homs, that international ethics have unfortunately remained unchanged...

"After all this slaughter and these massacres, we ask, do the Syrian people not belong to your community, the human community?..."

"Yes, dear Friends of Syria, bread alone is not enough for humans to live. But there are people on this Earth who are still without bread. They are calling to you, inheritors of the Age of Enlightenment, in the name of the absolute value of human life. Do we deserve to live on this Earth?"

This profound questioning of historic reality demands something of revolutionaries. Karl Marx first articulated the idea of Permanent Revolution in 1843, and by 1844 he was already counterposing it to Napoleon's "perfection of the Terror" in the State. It shouldn't be too hard to see that, in Syria today, the violence called upon by all state-capitalist powers has come into conflict with the democratic aspirations released worldwide by the Arab Spring.

It is vital to find ways of building solidarity between all the forces of revolt, and in doing this, to develop the dialectic of Absolute Negativity that points to what we are fighting for—genuine freedom. As in all truly revolutionary moments, it is revolution in permanence that becomes the most concrete, practical line of thought and action.

There are infinite ways of avoiding this issue. Not one of them will move history forward. A successful counter-revolution will not produce a return to the status quo, but something much worse than before.

Mali coup and Tuareg self-determination

The recent military coup in Mali was sparked by a complex problem that has deep historical roots and will endure beyond the present. The Tuareg people of North Africa and parts of West Africa, whose nomadic way of life as cattle-herders stretches back for centuries, have, for decades, demanded the right to determine their own future, including their own territory.

Without regard to peoples and cultures, the imperialist carving up of the African continent imposed boundaries for plunder and exploitation by European countries. These false lines became the markers of independent countries after the African anti-colonial struggles forced the retreat of European powers. It is these imposed borders that the Tuareg face despite having waged several struggles throughout the 20th century for an independent existence. France, the colonial power that controlled Mali, refused to recognize their right to an independent existence. Then the Mali governments, post-independence, also resisted their struggles.

TUAREG FIGHT FOR SELF-DETERMINATION

In recent times the Tuareg formed the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). The MNLA succeeded in occupying cities and areas in what was northern Mali, defeating the government army. It has declared the independent country of Azawad in the north. The MNLA is a coalition of a number of groups, some with conflicting ideologies. Most recently one fundamentalist Islamic faction, Ansar Dine, took control of the city of Timbuktu, and has sought to impose Sharia law. However, they have met resistance from other parts of MNLA, and most importantly from the people in Timbuktu.

It is a serious issue. One women's liberation activist stated, "We are hearing about how Islamic fundamentalists are gradually gaining power in the north. They have started to talk of imposing rules that women must wear hijabs, and putting other restrictions on the way women dress....We have not heard of any targeted physical attacks yet, but for me this is not the only thing to worry about....Women in Mali have a long history as market traders, they move around and interact freely in public and wear the clothing that they want. These changes are going to have a major impact and cause a lot of stress for women." (<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/jessica-horn/crisis-in-mali-fundamentalism-womens-rights-and-cultural-resistance>)

COLONIALISM'S MISTAKES PERSIST

Despite its internal contradictions the struggle of the Tuareg people for Azawad reveals the permanence of rebellion in face of the incompleteness of Africa's anti-colonial struggles and revolutions. As stirring and important as were those liberation struggles from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the painful decades since manifest neo-colonial economic imposition, home-grown authoritarian and dictatorial regimes in many

Breivik's trial

As expected, Norwegian mass murderer Anders Behring Breivik has used his trial to promote his genocidal anti-Muslim program. He pled a "necessity" defense—that his murders of 77 people, mostly youths, were done to stop the takeover of Norway by "multiculturalism" and Islam. He expressed no remorse for his crimes, even in the presence of his victims' parents.

His only tears were shed at the sound of his own words, to the effect that "I realized my ethnic group is dying." This sounds insane, but will be painfully familiar to anyone who has ever had to argue or fight with "White Power" advocates here in the U.S. It shouldn't be forgotten that Breivik has expressed his deepest admiration for the Tea Party here.

He will certainly be convicted and sentenced to the maximum term—21 years—and perhaps held longer, a possibility under Norwegian law. But for Breivik to organize and propagandize his genocidal ideals from his cell would not be unprecedented in Norway. The former black metal musician and convicted murderer, Varg Vikernes, has done this for years, promoting his own neo-Nazi views through publishing and recording.

There is a base of support for Breivik. The so-called "counter-jihad" circles that he is a part of have continued to grow and organize internationally. He has received letters of support from Sweden, Britain, Russia and Germany, and more informally, he continues to draw positive comments in internet forums.

Further, organized Far Right violence is growing in Europe. In Florence, Italy, a neo-fascist connected to the Casa Pound, a Rightist group named for the fascist-sympathizing poet, shot four Senegalese immigrants in December, killing two, before killing himself. In Germany, a recently uncovered group called the National Socialist (Nazi) Underground has been linked to the deaths of at least ten Turkish immigrants.

As Breivik demonstrated in a statement to the court, while most of the violence is being committed by fringe groups, the anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim ideology is becoming mainstream. The mass murderer of Utoya Island was able to quote European leaders Sarkozy, Cameron and Merkel speaking against "multiculturalism."

Often these regimes emerged via the leaders and groups who had led the independence struggles. The acceptance of the imperial-imposed borders and nations by post-colonial Africa has meant the denial of self-determination of peoples and nations. Far from preventing the dismemberment of Africa, it has meant deeper conflict, and opened the door to further neo-colonial interference.

Now, the Tuareg people and their hope for a new nation of Azawad face a world of neo-colonial capitalist opposition from without, and African nations threatened by their own peoples' struggles for self-determination from within.

—Eugene Walker

Toulouse murders

French mass murderer Mohamed Merah claimed to have been trained by al-Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan. There are reasons to doubt that. His tactics seemed to be developed more from street crime than from any training manual.

But there is no doubt that his troubled mind became filled with the same inhuman ideology that drove Osama bin Laden's mass murders. He began by shooting a number of French military men March 11 and March 15, killing three. Most of them were North African and Muslim. Even more ironically, Merah himself had previously tried to join the French Army but was rejected.

Merah then invaded Ozar Hatorah school on March 19 and cold-bloodedly murdered Rabbi Jonathan Sandler and his sons, Aryeh, six years old, and Gabriel, three, as well as Miriam Monsonego, age eight. This was a hideous anti-Semitic crime which Merah, like Breivik in Norway, meant to use as propaganda for his ideology. In his case, this was done by filming his murders and releasing homemade videos. He claimed, outrageously, to have killed the Jewish children in the name of Palestinian children killed by Israel.

Merah was tracked down and died in the siege of his apartment, March 22, killed by a police sharpshooter.

Demonstrations in memory of the victims were held across France, including several thousand in Paris. In Toulouse itself, 6,000 marched on March 25. These marches brought together members of both the Jewish and Muslim communities in France, including religious figures. Richard Prasquier, a French Jewish leader, said, "It is impossible to confuse this person and the Islamist, jihadist, al-Qaedaist movement he represents with Islam in France, which is a religion like any other."

Palestinians in France rejected Merah's "support." "It is time for these criminals to stop marketing their terrorist acts in the name of Palestine and to stop pretending to stand up for the rights of Palestinian children who only ask for a decent life," said Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.