

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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EDITORIAL **Stop the war on Gaza!**

Nov. 14, 2012—Israel's current onslaught against the Gaza Palestinians, beginning with the assassination of Hamas military chief Ahmed Jabari, are more than a response to Hamas' recent round of rocket attacks. Syrian rebels have begun to take over land around the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, bringing revolution to its borders. As with the recent bombing of the Yarmouk factory in Sudan, allegedly supplying Iranian-built missiles to Hamas, Israel's war moves are driven by fear of the Syrian Revolution.

Israel's attack must be opposed. "Operation Cast Lead" in 2008, Israel's last war in Gaza, killed thousands, including hundreds of civilians—many of them children. For a government that includes Avigdor Lieberman, the advocate of Palestinian genocide, to carry on a new war against Palestinians is absolutely unacceptable and must be opposed by all people of conscience. That government must be overthrown.

PALESTINIANS ARE A TARGET EVERYWHERE

At one and the same time, reports out of Syria describe the shelling of the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus by Assad's genocidal regime, a regime that Iran desperately seeks to preserve.

It has long been clear that in a war between the reactionary governments of Israel and Iran, the Palestinians' very existence will be threatened. The current attacks in Gaza and Damascus (and previously Latakia, Syria) are a direct expression of the counter-revolutionary essence of these state powers.

The U.S., France, Turkey and the Gulf States backed the creation of a new umbrella group to replace the Muslim Brotherhood-dominated Syrian National Council (SNC). The SNC had become a marginal player

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Just who are the makers and takers

by Htun Lin

The unparalleled billions of dollars spent in the 2012 elections, in the midst of the Great Recession, drowned us in endless ads. Yet Mitt Romney was defeated in no small measure by workers in Ohio and elsewhere. Workers saw through the glaring contradictions in the claims of the Romney campaign that as a seasoned capitalist he would rebuild the economy and help restore jobs.

But Romney hadn't seen jobs at GM and Chrysler as worth saving, calling President Obama's Auto Rescue Package "excessive government intrusion." The biggest lie, however, is shared by both parties. It is the lie that it is capital which creates employment.

Right after the election, the biggest news item reported by the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* was that, fresh on the heels of Obama's victory, the first crisis to greet the newly re-elected president was the "looming fiscal cliff."

THE FIRST CONCERN IS TO SAVE THE BANKS

The first concern to greet a newly elected President Obama in 2009 was the looming collapse of the private financial sector. Obama's Treasury Secretary and Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, both from Wall Street, distributed trillions from the TARP (Troubled Assets Relief Program) that Bush had signed into law.

TARP saved Wall Street's hide and the jobs of

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Obama's re-election doesn't end clash of two worlds

by Franklin Dmitryev

The two worlds of the rulers and the ruled shone through the suffocating blanket of propaganda surrounding the election in which Barack Obama won a second term. A pronounced gender gap and long lines at the polls in African-American and Latino areas reflected the determination to defeat the reactionary Republicans and retain the first Black President. The biggest defeats were handed to the Tea Party and the Religious Right, notably with votes in four states in favor of marriage equality.

At the same time a number of protests immediately made it clear that the struggle continues. During early voting, Floridians in a long line chanted, "Let us vote!" after doors were closed in their faces. Following the election, protesters in Phoenix chanted, "Count our votes!" after learning of hundreds of thousands of provisional and early ballots still uncounted, most of them cast by people of color. Outside Democratic Senator Durbin's office in Chicago, several people were arrested during a Budget Showdown rally (see article page 2), demanding deficit cuts be at the expense of Wall Street and the wealthy, not cuts in social programs. Sit-ins are opposing the administration's behind-the-scenes preparations to approve the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. And a gathering wave of strikes at Walmarts was building momentum at press time toward planned nationwide actions on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving.

HURRICANE REVEALS TWO WORLDS

Hurricane Sandy and its aftermath put the two worlds in stark relief. Its destruction punctuated the last few days of an interminable campaign marked by silence from both Obama and Mitt Romney about the mounting harm from global warming. Instead, each had jockeyed for position as the true champion of coal mining, of oil drilling, of fracking for natural gas. "We've built enough pipeline to wrap around the entire Earth once," bragged Obama. Despite the campaigns' silence on climate change, the storm's devastation brought the issue to the forefront of many American conversations.

While people of every race and class suffered from Hurricane Sandy's blows, in areas like New York City's Red Hook, Far Rockaway and Staten Island many of the working class and people of color faced serious neglect from the government in the storms' aftermath. Occupy Wall Street activists, 350.org and others decided that they could not wait for the state to act. They created Occupy Sandy Recovery to help people on the ground, declaring, "We are creating autonomous zones for community and solidarity, not camps for managing the lives of powerless victims." In some areas this was the only help available for a week or more.

It was not only in the storm-ravaged areas that

voters faced chaos at the polls. Especially in predominantly African-American and Latino areas of swing states, voters faced long lines, incorrect or misleading instructions, last-minute changes, and privately funded attempts to intimidate them. In Florida, some had to wait seven hours to vote, and Tea Party activists blocked volunteers from handing out water to voters standing in the sun. Republican-controlled

state governments had passed a blizzard of measures trying to prevent people of color and students from voting, such as photo ID requirements, restrictions on registrations, and cutbacks in voting hours. Many laws were blocked by courts, but some election officials and volunteers still tried to enforce them. Blacks in Ohio and Latinos in Arizona were disproportionately forced to cast provisional ballots that may never be counted.

But the long lines were a sign that these attempts backfired, hardening the resolve of communities with a history of resisting discrimination. The racism pervading the campaign was already obvious enough. In the end, close to 750,000 more Latinos voted for Obama than in 2008, and Black turnout, while down nationally, rose substantially in the battleground states of Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Florida and North Carolina.

WOMEN FIGHT BACK

Ayn Rand booster Paul Ryan and the Republican platform share the basic views on rape, abortion, birth control and women's role held by Senate candidates Todd Akin in Missouri and Richard Mourdock in

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Part of the Budget Showdown action in Chicago on Nov. 9.

Special offer! Just off the press:

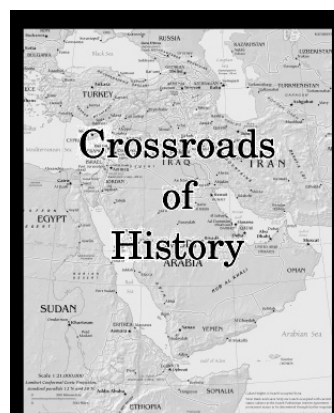
Marxist-Humanist writings on the Middle East

by Raya Dunayevskaya

From the Foreword:

The Arab Spring can become a real turning point in human history. Against the backdrop of a state-capitalist world in a deep and intractable crisis, the vision of self-determination, courage, dignity and creativity can raise itself into an absolute opposition to the degraded reality of endless cutbacks, austerity, and accompanying bigotry that is all capitalism is offering humanity....

In publishing this collection of Raya Dunayevskaya's writings on the Middle East and revolution in permanence, we hope to be part of the worldwide dialogue that will move the revolution, and humanity, beyond the inhuman system of capitalism with its eternal threats of war and deprivation, its racism, sexism and heterosexism. These horrors must end. In no respect are we willing to be passive spectators at yet another wrong turning of history.



Marxist-Humanist writings on the Middle East

by Raya Dunayevskaya

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ME 11-12/12

WOMAN AS REASON

by Terry Moon

Meredith Tax, a women's liberationist and political activist since the late 1960s, author of *The Rising of the Women: Feminist Solidarity and Class Conflict, 1880–1917*, and now U.S. Director of the Centre for Secular Space, a think tank formed to oppose fundamentalism and promote universality in human rights, has recently written an important and controversial blog post, "Code Pink, the Taliban and Malala Yousafzai" (<http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/meredith-tax/code-pink-taliban-and-malala-yousafzai>).

In her post she takes up the delegation of Code Pink, a U.S. peace group that purports to be feminist, to Pakistan, where they marched with former cricket champion turned politician Imran Khan to the borders of South Waziristan, a Taliban stronghold. There they protested U.S. drone strikes that have killed hundreds of innocent civilians, including children, and apologized for the strikes. However, they had not a word to say about the many hundreds killed in Pakistan by the Taliban, or those killed in Mumbai, India, by Lashkar-e-Taiba, part of a coalition of terrorist groups supported by their host and guide, Imran Khan.

ONE-SIDED SOLIDARITY

What Code Pink didn't see coming, as Meredith Tax reports, is that while they were in Pakistan, "in nearby Swat, another Pakistani child, 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai, was gunned down by the Pakistani Taliban because she was an advocate of education for girls."

Tax continues, "No turn of events could more forcefully illustrate the idiocy of the U.S. peace movement's one-sided approach to solidarity."

The outcry against the shooting of Malala was so fierce and so passionate that, as Tax points out, "even Imran Khan had to condemn it, though it took him ten hours to do so and he didn't mention the Taliban." As for Code Pink: "Code Pink's Washington office also did a hasty press release Oct. 10 saying they prayed for Malala's recovery and offering \$1,000 to her school, while making 'a connection between drone attacks and growing extremism in Pakistan'—as if there were no Taliban before there were drones."

Tax's post let the voices of women in the region speak eloquently for themselves. What they said, loud and clear, was that they opposed both U.S. imperialism's drones and—as Afiya Zia, a feminist researcher and activist based in Karachi, Pakistan, said—we "simultaneously oppose the masculinist misogyny and non-democratic rule and violence employed by local authoritarian forces including the army, tribal rulers, landed political rulers, the ulama/clergy or indeed, any patriarchal forces."

Scathingly, Tax conjectures that, "Perhaps the U.S. antiwar movement is so small because of its failure to develop a politics that is critical of both U.S. imperialism and fundamentalist movements like the Taliban."

THE TRAP OF ONLY BEING AGAINST

There were plenty of angry responses to Tax's post, but what those who responded could not do—including those from Code Pink and the other so-called peace delegates—was to bring themselves to actually condemn the Taliban as they did the U.S. Oh, well, yes, now that Tax brings it up, and now that they did gun down a 14-year-old school girl who got all that press, they grudgingly condemn the Taliban too. Many used the argument that, since they were Americans, only the U.S. deserved their condemnation. With that logic, Pakistanis could only condemn the Taliban and leave

Abortion rights action

Chicago—On Oct. 20 dozens of determined women and some men demonstrated against the war on women, this time spearheaded by the Catholic hierarchy in cahoots with crazy anti-abortion, anti-birth control fanatics. This was the same bunch who came out on June 8 (see "Fighting the war against women," July-Aug. 2012 *N&L*) to try to claim that requiring employers to include paying for contraception in the insurance they provide for their workers is an attack on freedom of religion.

What was heartening was that, though our group remained about the same size, the war on women crowd was only about a fourth as big as they had been before. This time we had a bullhorn, which we all enjoyed immensely as it was both visibly irritating to those opposing a woman's right to control her own body, and a great way to get our message across.

I had a long talk with an older woman active in the Grey Panthers who was so happy to see us there that she joined the demonstration—and she wasn't the only one. That so many women and men are happy to see us protesting and join in is only one measure of how fed up people are with the attack on women's bodies that became so blatant in this election year.

One sign spoke loudly to me: "When abortion is illegal, women die." That is certainly the motivation for many of us standing there, that and a determination to control our own bodies, lives, and destinies.

—Women's Liberationist

The Left and Malala

condemning the U.S. to others.

Tax's polemic is well taken. This is the same Left who is incapable of condemning *both* U.S. imperialism and Bashar al-Assad's slaughter of thousands of civilians. As Raya Dunayevskaya says in her essay on page four in this issue: "It is at this point that the movements opposing war show their own negative character. The falling into a trap is inevitable when one does not view positively what they are fighting *for*, instead of only what they are fighting against."

The fact that the U.S. is such a huge and deadly imperialist power blinds much of the Left to the fact that there are two worlds in every country and we actually can and should, at one and the same time, condemn U.S. imperialism and support indigenous struggles including—or especially—those of women, minorities and LGBT people. Because that's what it comes down to, not only that you condemn both the U.S. and the Taliban, but why. It is because you are grounded in a philosophy of liberation that you know enough to support those struggling for freedom and a new human society, even when their enemy isn't exclusively the U.S.

Slutwalk in Chicago



Slutwalk participants showing off their signs at the demonstration on Sept. 16. Signs read: "The only time that my body 'shuts that thing down' is when I go through menopause"; "My body is a flower, not to be exploited"; and "Girls just wanna have fundamental human rights!"

Rape and the disabled

On Oct. 3 the Connecticut State Supreme Court made the inhuman and sexist decision to overturn the sexual assault conviction of a man who "had sex" with a woman who has severe cerebral palsy, with the intellectual functional equivalent to a three-year-old and who cannot verbally communicate. The Court held that, because Connecticut statutes define physical incapacity for the purpose of sexual assault as "unconscious or for any other reason...physically unable to communicate unwillingness to an act," the rapist could not be convicted if there was any chance that the woman could have communicated her lack of consent.

According to the ruling, since the victim was capable of "biting, kicking, scratching, screeching, groaning or gesturing," the court ruled that she could have communicated her lack of consent despite her serious mental deficiencies.

This outrageous ruling also states that "we, like the Appellate Court, are not persuaded that the state produced any credible evidence that the victim was either unconscious or so uncommunicative that she was physically incapable of manifesting to the defendant her lack of consent to sexual intercourse at the time of the alleged sexual assault."

Lack of physical resistance is *not* evidence of consent as many victims make the good judgment that physical resistance would cause the attacker to become more violent. How can someone with the intellectual equivalent of a three-year-old know that she had to kick or bite to show lack of consent? According to the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, lack of consent is implicit "if you were under the statutory age of consent, or if you had a mental defect."

Anna Doroghazi, director of public policy and communication at Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, worried that the Court's interpretation of the law ignored these concerns.

"By implying that the victim in this case should have bitten or kicked her assailant, this ruling effectively holds people with disabilities to a higher standard than the rest of the population when it comes to proving lack of consent in sexual assault cases. Failure to bite an assailant is not the same thing as consenting to sexual activity."

Beyond all the legal jargon is the human side. Women with disabilities have more than twice the rate of rape and/or sexual assault than women without a disability. They are considered easy targets. It is unconscionable that the courts would make the distinction of saying that this victim could have somehow communicated her lack of consent. A decision like this is sick and dangerous, and encourages those who would take advantage of someone who is disabled. —Suzanne Rose

Chalking a felony?

Chicago—On Nov. 9 we held a "Budget Showdown" protest at the Federal Building. We were protesting the threatened budget cuts to Medicaid and Medicare, rallying around the Robin Hood tax that would fall mainly on the rich, and demanding that people get the services they need. We came from Occupy Chicago, IIRON, SOUL, Northside POWER, the Lakeview Action Coalition, the Jane Addams Senior Caucus, and National Nurses United.

Some people held a sit-in inside the building and were arrested. I was with people rallying on the outside who were not trying to get arrested. I came to show support. I was in an area where some people were chalking. The chalk messages were not threatening, but were G-rated messages like, "The people united will never be defeated."

Police walked up behind me, pinned my arms and carted me off. They charged me with a felony, destruction of public property. I was held in the precinct for six hours. It would not have been so bad, but my kids were waiting on me. The police confiscated my phone, so I couldn't call to let them know where I was for two or three hours.

The jail support from Occupy Chicago was amazing. There were people waiting for me when I was released. I was given a court date of Dec. 17, 2:30 PM, at 2452 W. Belmont. This felony charge is utterly ridiculous. Earlier, another Occupy activist was cited with two felony charges, including assaulting a police officer because, according to the cop, "You damaged my hearing with your yelling." After months, that was finally dismissed, so I'm pretty sure this will be dismissed too.

The Occupy Movement has shown a lot of support. I'm really happy about that. Still, on the day before, a 15-year-old kid named Dakota Bright was shot in the head by a cop on the South Side. As a political prisoner I got all this support, but I'd like to see the same kind of support go to Dakota's family.

I fear one day they will be shooting protesters in the head. There's been an escalation in the last year of police aggression toward protesters. We're seeing protesters arrested for nothing. That's been happening in Black and Brown communities for decades.

The Chicago Police Department is out of hand, and we need to turn our attention to it. So much attention was paid to me, but not to this 15-year-old who got shot in the back of the head by an officer. No attention is being paid when they opened fire on a car with a two-year-old in it—his dad allegedly kidnapped him and cops fired into the vehicle that both were in. That is highly reckless. More attention needs to be paid to these stories.

—Marissa Brown

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

In May the first feminist radio show in Lebanon, "Sharika wa Laken," premiered on a top radio station, reaching 70% of the population. NGO representatives, journalists, lawyers, legislators, activists, citizens and public figures discuss topics affecting women such as the demand for citizenship to foreign husbands and children of Lebanese women, guaranteeing women's rights, economic empowerment and labor rights, social security, higher education, voting, and, importantly, sexual harassment and violence against women.

* * *

In October hundreds in Tunisia protested the treatment of a woman raped by a police officer, then charged with public indecency when she filed a complaint. Only after she filed her complaint did police claim they found her in her car in an "immoral position" with her fiancé. Women's groups and others are calling for an investigation of the Tunisian government and judiciary.

* * *

Shulamith Firestone, who wrote *The Dialectic of Sex* and helped organize Women's Liberation groups such as Redstockings and New York Radical Feminists in the 1960s, died in August. Now, feminist activists are petitioning the landlord of her New York East Village apartment to create a "Shulamith Firestone Memorial Apartment." The rent would remain below market rates, and would be reserved for a woman making an important contribution to feminism.

* * *

Middle Eastern women created the facebook group "The Uprising of Women in the Arab World" where people post photos of themselves with signs saying why they support this uprising. Facebook repeatedly disabled administrators and threatened to shut down their accounts for sharing a photo of Dana Bakdounes holding a sign stating, "I am with the uprising of women in the Arab world because for 20 years I wasn't allowed to feel the wind in my hair and on my body." Facebook claimed they removed the post because of offensive speech in the comments section, but the photo had been reported for "nudity" and for being "insulting," although Dana is completely clothed and mostly covered by her sign.

Chicago teachers strike for real reform

New York City—Educators around the country cheered the gains achieved by the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) strike this fall, but also echoed the sentiment expressed on one picket sign, "Our strike is over—our fight is just beginning." How do we retain, replicate, and build on the achievements of this strike?

The strike represented a mass assertion by unionized teachers that they can create "The Schools Our Children Deserve," a document which called the present Chicago system "educational apartheid." In contrast, the so-called "reform agenda" led by Education Secretary Arne Duncan is the agenda of 21st century capitalism, in which students, schools and teachers are all commodities in an ever more alienated system.

Despite resistance to change within large teachers' unions like the

NEA and AFT, movements from within like CORE (Caucus of Rank and File Educators) are seeking to organize for changes that will benefit students and school communities. Ideas, principles and visions of education guided CORE's organizing for two years prior to the strike in Chicago.

Norine Gutekanst, a CTU organizer writing in *Labor Notes*, said that the union "developed a deep new layer of member leaders and won broad public support...we made it clear that our union was...part of a broad coalition." Calling the Chicago Public School

system "educational apartheid...helped show that the union was on the side of Black and Latino children..."

Mark Torres, a New York public school teacher and leader of People Power Movement/Movimiento Poder Popular, described, "A long

history of progressive and radical educators organizing under the motto 'Our working conditions are students' learning conditions'"

(from a Sept. 24 posting on pubedco.com, an email list of the Coalition for Public Education in New York).

Formal evaluation of teachers' performance is here to stay. But meaningful evaluation will only emerge from meaningful principles. Who better than teachers, with input from administrators and communities, to answer questions like, "What do good teachers need to be-

come better? How can the teaching profession establish and maintain standards?"

Emerging from this strike is a recognition that a complete revolution, overthrowing capitalism and creating a human society, would be needed to allow truly human education to flourish. One contributor to the discussion on pubedco.com on Sept. 24 suggested: "Ultimately, reforming public education must be part of—not a substitute for—a broader movement for economic justice."

Every one of us is either a parent, a teacher or part of a school community. All our voices and thoughts are needed to advance the struggle. —Susan Van Gelder



On Sept. 10, the first day of the teachers' strike, teachers and supporters, including many students, parents and workers from other unions, held a mass march and rally that shut down part of downtown Chicago.

WORKSHOPTALKS

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investment bankers, not the American workers. Now that corporate dollars are called free speech, Wall Street used our very own surplus labor on their candidate from Bain Capital to get him to the Oval Office, to allow the corporate welfare recipients on Wall Street to repeat their financial malfeasance.

Then as now, the first order of the day was to save the banks. Then as now, the big lie is repeated that capital creates jobs. Save the banks first. Workers will follow. Another fiscal cliff looms. But we workers had already been pushed over the cliff a long time ago.

UNION PUSHES COMPANY PLAN

The Service Employees (SEIU) and its Super-PAC may have helped the Obama campaign counter Republican Super-PACs. But it is no small irony that in my shop and other medical facilities, our own union, the SEIU, is concretely implementing management's program in preparation for 2014, the year Obamacare is to be fully launched.

The CEO of our HMO participated behind closed doors in drafting Obamacare legislation. They now anticipate tens of millions of new HMO customers who will have to sign up or pay a tax. A brand new 350-bed state-of-the-art hospital is scheduled to open, as well as clinics and medical offices.

Meanwhile, in preparation for the new facilities opening, the work force is being trimmed. Many front-line healthcare workers report extreme exhaustion from speedup. Some departments are working at only 50% staffing levels. Many of these workers say the unprecedented speedup by computerized automation is impacting patient care, and they have reported safety violations to the State Department of Health.

WHOLESALE SHUTDOWNS

Management has responded by closing "problem areas," shutting down whole wings of the hospital which have experienced repeated citations and inspections from regulators. Workers are then forced to sign up for new positions elsewhere in order to continue working. Many are uncertain what the future holds for them, because looming layoffs will be conducted with SEIU's Labor-Management Partnership president in secret negotiations.

Workers are saying the facility closings are retaliation for speaking out. We are being pushed over a cliff because we are not "just glad to have a job." This is the real concrete crisis we are facing.

The truth is we workers create capital's wealth, not the other way around. Company management will spend billions of dollars of what we have created investing in new facilities. Yet, in order to do that, they say they have to recover that money by trimming the labor force.

For rank-and-file workers, that crisis is continuously present and real. Nothing will change for us concretely unless and until we defeat the forces of abstract labor and its idea of value production with our concrete labor. The only way to do that is to begin by reclaiming not only our labor-power but the very meaning of our labor.

Union recognized at Hot and Crusty

New York City—After 55 days of a nonstop picket line in front of a shuttered Hot and Crusty Bakery on Manhattan's posh Upper East Side, the new company management agreed to workers' demands for recognition of their own independent union and a new contract. Hot and Crusty workers were locked out of their restaurant/bakery by the former management under the guise of "renovations" and checking the employees' legal right to work in the U.S.



Workers told *News & Letters* of abuses that motivated them to organize. Managers subjected workers to verbal abuse and women workers to sexual abuse. Workers were forced to work overtime and were cheated of their pay.

The workers contended that the lockout was the result of their efforts to organize a union. They set up a picket line, and appealed to the public for support. They received it from local university students, community residents, and other unions and workers. At the same time, the company received an official letter from the National Labor Relations Board concerning their illegal actions against the workers.

The workers fought on. Articles appeared in the press concerning this battle. An Oct. 18 rally brought attention to the struggle. Finally, they won. As one worker told me, they are very happy with their victory.

When asked if they had a message for readers of this newspaper, a spokesperson for the workers said, "We have to organize. We cannot have fear of the bosses. *Si se puede.*"

—Michael Gilbert

Robots get promoted

Detroit—More sophisticated, inexpensive and safer robots are on the immediate horizon. They can be used alongside workers to produce virtually any manufactured product requiring repetitive motions and are available from a firm in Boston called Rethink Robotics.

One problem with existing manufacturing robots is that their speed and power require protective measures to keep them from harming humans, as can be seen on any automated production line. The Boston robot, called Baxter, does not move as fast and is equipped with sensors that will slow it when it encounters a human, and a red button that will stop it when pressed.

Baxter comes with a price tag of only \$22,000 each compared with the huge amounts of capital previously required for robotic production. This puts Baxter in a price range available to manufacturers from the very big to the very small. It takes time and money to train a new employee to do a task, but with Baxter, a human moves the robot arms once, and it is fully trained.

Another advantage of Baxter to the capitalist is the cost per hour of production, which is estimated to be \$4. While this is not as low as the hourly wages of 50 cents or a dollar paid in some countries, it is very attractive to employers in the U.S. paying union wages, or even the minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour.

This means that bots will swell the ranks of the unemployed by replacing millions of workers, exacerbating the crises faced by workers throughout the U.S. and the world. It is very clear that the advances in technology have outstripped the ability of capitalism to absorb without creating insoluble social problems.

Since the advent of automated production, beginning with the continuous mining machine in 1949 that turned Appalachia into a chronically depressed area, technology has wreaked havoc in virtually every area of human life.

We still haven't heard much from the robonaut in the space station circling the earth. This robot was purported to have many advanced features developed jointly by General Motors and NASA and was sent to the space station to test its capabilities. While we don't yet know what was discovered, a sure thing is that any feature that will aid the productive ability and capacity of GM, regardless of the effect on the auto workers, will be put into practice in GM's auto plants. As one GM auto worker noted, "If it's good for GM, you can be sure it's not good for us."

—Andy Phillips

Car wash unionizing

New York City—Workers at Astoria Car Wash & Hi-Tek 10 Minute Lube voted 21 to 5 in September to join the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union. This is the first victory in a six-month campaign to unionize 5,000 low-wage car wash workers at the 200 car washes in New York City.

In an October election at Webster Car Wash in Fleetwood in the Bronx, the workers voted 23 to 5 to become the second such business in the city to unionize, citing low wages and harsh job conditions. The union votes follow protests and rallies to improve industry conditions by New York Communities for Change and Make the Road New York.

"The bosses will respect us better now, and see us as people," said worker Francisco López. López, a Salvadoran immigrant who has been working at Webster Car Wash for a year, said he makes \$6 an hour and doesn't always earn enough in tips to take home the \$7.25 an hour minimum wage.

The vote comes as state Attorney General Eric Schneiderman is investigating the Webster Avenue shop—one of ten owned by city car wash kingpin John Lage that are being looked at for potential wage-and-hour violations.

—Supporter

Workers disappear

Los Angeles—The parking attendant where I bank suddenly disappeared. She had worked for many years in a little makeshift office with a chair and a window, and always greeted the customers and wished them well. One day the new young guy who replaced her was standing by a post with a machine into which he would insert our parking ticket to open the gate to let customers out. "Where is your office?" I asked. "This is it, this is the new office," he said, pointing to the post with the machine on it.

Many workers just like these parking attendants are getting the short end of this system. Both Romney and Obama promised glossy tax cuts for the working people, especially the middle class, without mentioning that the minimum wage has not moved a bit for at least a decade and that many salaries are frozen. Both capitalist parties had nothing to say about workers, but a lot to say about investments in new technology and bringing factories back to the U.S.

How does it help the economy to open the doors of factories to workers paid so poorly they do not have enough money to live? Romney made a lot of stupid remarks about working people, and Obama gave us a lot of empty promises. If the workers don't have the money to spend, you will perish, Mr. Capitalist!

—Manel

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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: On the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis, we present Raya Dunayevskaya's analysis of how it tested not only the rulers' rash folly but the anti-war movement's short-mindedness—a lesson still urgent today. She wrote this piece as a Political Letter on Oct. 25, 1962, titled "Marxist-Humanism vs. the U.S. Blockade of Cuba, the Russian Missile Bases There, Fidel Castro's 'Selective' Party, All Playing with Nuclear Holocaust." It can be found in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #3082-87. All footnotes were added by the editors.

Dear Friends:

My preliminary (Oct. 23) statement on the newly created brink-of-war situation as a result of President John F. Kennedy's blockade of Cuba, Nikita Khrushchev's missile bases there, and the impotence of the UN the minute the two nuclear titans decide to unleash a war holocaust, correctly stressed the following:

"In opposing war, we make it clear that we are opposed to *both* nuclear giants: Russia¹ and the U.S. Under no circumstances do we get ourselves maneuvered into a position where we, for a single moment, sound so much against either one of them that we *appear* to be for the other. Above all we oppose war not only as 'againters' but primarily because we are for a totally new society, on new, on human beginnings, free from exploitation and discrimination, where the population to a man has the destiny in his own hands, beginning with the workers at the point of production."

Here I wish to develop this position on two levels: (1) the objective situation and nearness of war; and (2) ramifications of this crisis for our existence both as an organization and as a body of ideas, both on the question of continuous activity and writings, beginning with the next issue of the paper.

I. Before the Blockade

A good deal of illumination on both these factors can be gained if we take it out of the present moment of crisis and see that which was inherent in it the day before. It happens that, on the basis of the Resident Editorial Board discussion on Cuba on Oct. 8, Inez gave a report to the Detroit local on Oct. 19, in which she said: "What is new in Cuba today is that Russia is there, not in spirit but in guns, tanks, missiles with nuclear warheads facing the U.S." This was *before* Kennedy's "discovery," timed to election politics. Then Inez continued: "What is a year old, but has been new for the American movement ever since the fiasco of the U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba, is that *our* basic rights and freedoms have been jeopardized, and these will become more circumscribed. In opposing any invasion or war against the Cuban people, we cannot, however, let Khrushchev get away with playing 'the champion of peace' just because he defends Castro, who has taken away the rights and freedoms of the Cuban people as Khrushchev has of the Russian people and Kennedy of the American people. All three are ready to shed blood to preserve their power."

At that same meeting—and it is necessary to keep in mind that this was held four days before the announcement of the blockade of Cuba—I stressed that what was wrong with people who pretend that Russia is not in Cuba is that they thereby cover up the fact that Russia is the greatest exporter of *counter-revolution*. It is easy to see counter-revolution when it is as direct as it is in the outright squashing of a revolution, as the Russian destruction of the Hungarian Revolution. It is not easy to see counter-revolution when it is a question of *planned exploitation of the proletariat in his daily life*. Yet these Russian "technicians" have been sent there, among other reasons, in order to compel the Cuban working people, who are resisting anti-labor laws, fighting the diversion of the Cuban Revolution from its announced humanism to state-capitalist channels, to compel them to produce more and more for less and less, and at the same time leave their political destiny to "the party and its leader."

Finally, those who can't get away from the spurious ground for argument established by Communists for the special benefit of the liberals, to the effect that if the U.S. has a "right" to bases in Europe, Russia has a "right" to one in Cuba, fail to see that the Russian arms imported into Cuba are not one-tenth of the threat to the U.S. that they are to the Cuban people. Small Cuba, even when armed by Russia, is no match for U.S. might, but it is a power against the unarmed revolutionary underground, and it is for this purpose precisely that they are intended.

1. Dunayevskaya refused to call the state-capitalist Russian empire "USSR" (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), because it was neither socialist nor run by actual soviets, and was dominated by Russia.

The Cuban Missile Crisis and its test of movements' negative character

II. The Blockade and the Movements Opposed to It

Out of the clear blue, a few short days after he himself argued against Republican opponents who urged a blockade, J.F. Kennedy made the shocking, unilateral, warlike pronouncement of blockade. Outside of Khrushchev's break-up of the summit as a result of the U-2 plane spy incident,² when the two nuclear giants were pitted against each other with no intermediaries, the people of the world were never closer to the brink of nuclear holocaust. The present confrontation is not limited to verbal threats and busted summits. It is now clear beyond peradventure of doubt that both Kennedy and Khrushchev are mad enough to plunge the world into thermonuclear war. If a summit meeting should result and stave off the day, it clearly will be only a delaying action. It is likewise clear that Cuba has become the possible locale of the outburst, as Berlin has been and remains to this day another focal point, but that what is involved is the United States-Russian competition for domination of the world.

It is at this point that the movements opposing war show their own negative character. The falling into a trap is inevitable when one does not view positively what they are fighting for, instead of only what they are fighting against. Thus though the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (and Committee of 100) are supposed to be for banning the bomb, they had not a word to say against its spread to yet another country, in this case Cuba. Obviously, the Trotskyites, along with the Communists, are not the only ones who think of "good" bombs (Russian) and "bad" bombs (American). The professional nuclear disarmament people have now discovered that, in Cuban hands (or at least on Cuban soil for these are not really in Cuban, but in Russian, hands), the bomb inspires them to the following slogan, "Viva Fidel, Kennedy to Hell."

OK, let's take up Fidel. Even without a bomb, he has moved so far away from the revolution he led that it is hard to see what he is making of Cuba other than a satellite of Russia, and I don't mean it only as a storer of missile bases, but as an outpost of single-party state-capitalism. In the misnamed speech, "Marxism-Leninism," delivered on Dec. 2, 1961—nearly a year ago, that is—Fidel expounded his conception of why an "integrated revolutionary organization," that is to say, a single party in which the Communists and what was left of the July 26th Movement³ merged. From urging his comrades "to overcome (their) scorn for military academies" through his love of The Plan ("I always had a plan") as against the "anarchism" represented by opposition to him ("I am not going to ask what Manolo Fernández⁴ represented, because I believe he represented trash; he was a 'mad anarchist'") to his glorification of Khrushchev ("one has only to read Khrushchev's report to the 22nd Congress....The building of socialism follows a well-beaten path by now"), this petty-bourgeois idiot sees the truly independent third road—against both U.S. and Russia and for a new humanist society—as an incursion of the "strict

standard of selection" which must characterize "a party of leadership." Now if only the workers will continue to work, only harder, and agree that "The Ideal System of Government Is the Party System," he can continue to lead "collectively"—a la Khrushchev in Russia.

Anyone can—though it must be admitted that Fidel doesn't do it very well—repeat generalizations of Marxism on the role of the working class. The proof, the only proof, that it is a way of life, not a mere weapon of propaganda, is its realization in life. No such thing is true in Fidel's Cuba, where not a single organ—from the trades unions to the peasant unions, from the state to the party—is any longer controlled by the working people. Nevertheless, because so many in the nuclear disarmament movement have been forged as "againters" rather than as proponents of a totally new society, the Communists can set so fatal a trap for them that they forget what their very reason for existence is—opposition to nuclear armament—and shout "Viva Fidel."

On this life-and-death question, at this life-and-death moment, we can under no circumstances allow ourselves to be

2. On May 1, 1960, a U.S. U-2 spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers was shot down over Russian air space, causing the breakup of a U.S.-Russia summit on disarmament.
3. The July 26th Movement was a revolutionary group organized to overthrow Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista. Fidel Castro came to be its leader.
4. Manolo Fernández was a Cuban labor union leader who was ousted by the government shortly after Castro took power.

swallowed up by this curious movement. If nothing else can be left unsullied, let's at least make sure that our Marxist-Humanist ideas remain the beacon for future generations as they are for ours. Therefore we must unfurl our banner, and proceed with our opposition to both poles of world capital, putting in their rightly subordinate place those who "follow the leader," be that Khrushchev or Kennedy.

III. The Testing Point

At the same time, we cannot minimize the totality of the crisis by considering that, Kennedy having finally exposed himself as no different from the Republicans who had urged blockade before and now urge invasion, things will be in any way easier for the building of a Marxist-Humanist movement. It is not only the Birchers⁵ that will take upon themselves the role of extra "enforcers." The hysteria created by the administration is much more ominous than that created by a Sen. Joseph McCarthy who had no such power as Kennedy. Whenever a political position was proven wrong, there

were those among the Marxists who tried to misuse a Marxist statement about the whip of the counter-revolution helping the revolutionary development. Its ultimate tragedy was Stalin's idiotic statement, "After Hitler, us." First, the statement about the whip of the counter-revolution referred to it urging the revolution on when it is already in process but has not yet reached full fruition, as, say, between February and before October 1917, when the Kornilov episode exposed Kerensky⁶ and allowed the full development of the Russian Revolution. In a non-revolutionary period, the problems confronting Marxist-Humanism are made harder, not lessened, by the blockade, for the man who has the means to start a nuclear holocaust does not forget for a

moment his power to press down upon the opposition to his war-provoking policy.

Take even the minor question of Kennedy's timing his announcement of nuclear bases in Cuba to when it would be most useful to the Democrats running for election. Two percent one way or the other may win him the election of a Governor or a Congressman. Once won—or lost—however, he has to be concerned not with a 2% margin but with the fact that *over 60% of the American people are opposed to invasion of Cuba*. As the capitalist ruler he is, he then turns the power against his own people. Everyone who is not for his suicidal policy becomes "the enemy."

Of course, we increase our activity, not lessen it. Of course, we know the universal opposition to war and can build on that. Of course, we build our organization along with developing our ideas comprehensively, but we can do so only by being fully conscious of all the obstacles in the way. This is why the preliminary statement emphasized that:

"We have no power other than those of ideas, even as the working people have no arms other than those of their labor power. Therefore it would be folly to act as if by opposition we mean the kind of arms that only the bourgeoisie has. They—both Kennedy and Khrushchev—have arms and ships and missiles and prisons and jet bombers. They can afford to play games as to who is the 'aggressor' and 'deceiver' and who is the violated and deceived while they jockey for best position to attack. We refuse to get into any such arguments.... Our position must be as unique as it is, not either 'popular frontist' or pretense to power.'..."

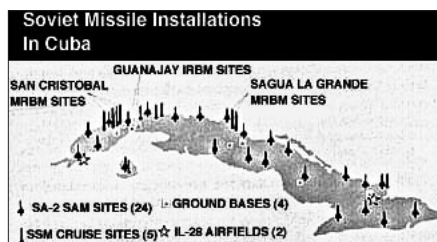
Everything we now do—whether that be a front-pager, a pamphlet, an educational, activity in a strike or picket line—must bear the positive stamp of Marxist-Humanism and the totally new foundations for a truly human society. Johnny put it succinctly enough when he said that we must learn to express our ideas clearly "in 25 words or less," that is to say, with full consciousness that our time is not unlimited.

While we are under no illusion that times of such heightened crises are propitious for building a mass organization, we are sure that the new sense of urgency is just the impulse needed to intensify our activity in a way that the meeting of the movement from theory with that from practice will not be left to chance. It is a time of testing of individuals as well as ideas and organization.

—Raya



Women protest the Cuban Missile Crisis at the UN, 1962.



5. The extremist right-wing John Birch Society, still active today, claimed that labor unions and the civil rights movement were Communist conspiracies. One of its founders was the father of the billionaire Koch brothers.

6. Alexander Kerensky, a socialist opportunist, headed the Provisional government set up following the February 1917 Russian Revolution. General Lavr Kornilov led a failed counter-revolution against Kerensky in August. Lenin's Bolsheviks helped defeat Kornilov, opening the way for the October Revolution.

ESSAY

The 200th anniversary of Hegel's absolute method

by Ron Kelch

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.

—Hegel

Today's global search for a new world against the "dictatorship of capital" is seen in waves of revolutionary mass self-activity and organization in public squares. This global drive for freedom is happening on the 200th anniversary of Hegel's absolute method which meant so much to Marx's philosophy of permanent revolution. Marx's philosophy takes on new meaning with every revolutionary event.

In 1812 Hegel made a startling proclamation, and demonstration in his *Science of Logic*,¹ of an absolute method in which the concept (Notion) determines itself. The philosophical world and the world of revolutionary theory continue to be alternately attracted and repulsed by Hegel's assertion in his 1812 Preface that "a given particular is not subsumed under this universal" (*Science of Logic*, 28) of absolute method. Rather, Hegel says, absolute method is the movement through which the particular, the given, the concrete, etc. determines itself.



Then the dialectic is no longer a spectator sport as it was in the "introductory" *Phenomenology of Spirit* where the philosopher traced how consciousness, in its movement through each stage over 2,500 years, worked out the way it knows its object as itself. Hegel's *Logic* starts directly with the movement of the concept, thought itself, as the organization of the historical movement of consciousness. However, Hegel's concept, which has its own self for an object, is no mere turn inward. Rather, the freedom of the concept emerges out of this movement to engage life and spirit as a new unity of theory and practice.

MOVEMENT THROUGH THE NEGATIVE

While Hegel's self-determination of the concept is not "mystical," it is counterintuitive because it does not begin from "the understanding"—the particular conceptual framework through which facts emerge. Rather the conceptual framework, the paradigm, is a moment of the universal of thought's power of the negative. The conceptual framework through which facts present themselves as given comes out of the negation of its predecessor, just as what is currently taken as the given will likewise be negated and its negation will generate a new positive, a new set of given facts. The movement through negating specific, determined content always implies a new positive and never stops. Hegel aimed to overcome the pervasive prejudice which forgets this movement of the concept and repeatedly falls back into viewing thought as a general empty negative.

In the *Logic's* 1831 Preface to the second edition, a prescient Hegel asserted that thought's movement through the negative even shapes "the empirical and natural sciences" where "the study of nature compels us to fix the categories" (*Science of Logic*, 32-33). Today it is commonplace to acknowledge that scientific revolutions occur through negations of given facts driving paradigm shifts. Thus, the Ptolemaic earth-centered universe gave way to the solar system and Newton's grand synthesis. Its negation, in turn, produced Einstein's world in which every fact is different from Newton's world. 2012 is also the 50th anniversary of Thomas Kuhn's groundbreaking *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, after which "paradigm shift" became practically a cliché but which Kuhn proved captured a crucial moment in the true development of the most empirically oriented natural sciences.

HEGEL'S CONFRONTATION WITH KANT

In his time Hegel confronted the philosopher Immanuel Kant. Kant, to his credit, recognized that the Newtonian synthesis was not just about what was "out there," but was impossible without pure categories of thought. Yet Kant was so "overawed by the object" that he stopped the dialectical movement dead with a purely thought-up abstraction, the "thing-in-itself" (*Science of Logic*, 51). Kant posed the "thing-in-itself" as a barrier that thought could never penetrate.

Hegel confronted the mental barrier Kant erected against revolutionizing philosophy even as the French Revolution revealed the power of thought to totally

break with the old in the arena of human institutions (spirit), resulting in a new Napoleonic landscape. Hegel's absolute method came out of soberly facing that new landscape, and the terror from which it emerged, as being no conscious realization of the positive in the power of the negative. For Hegel, such a conscious self-realization would become absolute Spirit, not as any fixity but as totally new beginnings in human freedom.

In other words, if a conceptual movement can shape the natural sciences, how much more does the negation of the negation, the positive in the power of thought's negation of the old, hold for the human world where logic is the specifically human attribute? While logic, which for Hegel is the self-determination of the concept, is at "the very heart of things," the concepts that shape humans' relations with each other and with nature come within thought. Thus, thinking can move beyond "instinctive activity" to reveal the concept as "an intelligent and free act," that is, an act "performed with awareness of what is being done." In so doing "spirit begins to be free" (*Science of Logic*, 37).

MARX'S NEW BEGINNING FROM ABSOLUTE METHOD

Marx, too, begins in 1844 from what is specific to the human species—labor as free, conscious, life-affirming activity in contrast to alienated labor, reduced to a mere means to life (*CW*, 3:276). Distinguishing himself from Hegel, Marx insists on **beginning** from the concept explicitly embodied in the whole human being.

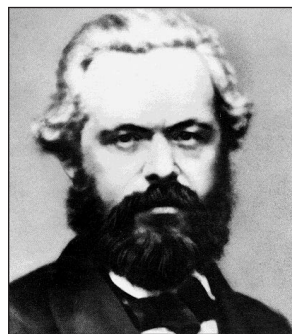
As with Hegel, this specifically human species character could only emerge in its own right as "negation of the negation" (*CW*, 3:329). "Positive humanism, beginning from itself" is not negatively counterposed to nature because human labor is itself a dimension of nature. Nor is positive humanism a fixed concept external to labor like collective property. It is, rather, labor which constantly transforms or negates the given state of nature as well as human nature. Only when labor is alienated does this negation express itself as a logic external to the human being like the accumulation of capital. Rather, negation that begins from positive humanism is accompanied by a negative return to self (negation of the negation) in which each one recognizes the constant expansion of human capacities in their own work, especially in cooperation with others (*CW*, 3:341-42).

Marx could launch such a new perspective on human liberation in total continuity with Hegel's absolute method because method itself is subject to dialectical development. It is why Marx could say in *Capital* that his dialectic is the "opposite" of Hegel's "Idea" as "creator of the world" and yet avow himself a "pupil of that mighty thinker" (*Capital*, 102) whose dialectic is "the source of all dialectics" (*Capital*, 744). At the very start of his focus on labor in the 1843 introduction to the *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, Marx warned that one "cannot abolish [Hegelian] philosophy without realizing it" (*CW*, 3:180). Realizing Hegel's self-determination of the concept had a pull on Marx, from his 1841 doctoral dissertation and his first critique of Hegel to the end of his life. That was when Marx explained Hegel's (*Science of Logic*, 238-313) critique of that most thought-centered of fields, mathematics, in particular the invention of calculus.

MARX'S CRITIQUE OF NEWTON

Marx's 1881 *Mathematical Manuscripts* showed, against Newton's and Leibniz's mystical form of calculus, that calculus comes out of the "negation of the negation" of the quantum in ordinary algebra.² Like Hegel, Marx criticized Newton for merely using calculus as an operational extension of his theories about external planetary motion. This critique, written toward the end of Marx's life, corroborated a central theme of Hegel's *Logic*, namely that fixing the idea in an abstract materialism does not allow the idea to speak for itself, nor is it conducive to a genuine empiricism, that is, letting the world speak for itself in its absolute difference.

It wasn't atomism (the theory that all matter is composed of individual particles) as an abstract materialist philosophy that interested Marx when, in his 1841 doctoral dissertation, he claimed Hegel missed something in the ancient atomism of Epicurus. As a young Hegelian, Marx confronted how to move forward after Hegel's total philosophy of freedom co-existed with a world of unfreedom. Many post-Hegelians turned inward, focusing only on the inadequacy of philosophy because of its non-realization. Real progress, said Marx,



would only come from "the party of the concept" which instead turned "against the inadequacy of the world which has to be made philosophical" (*CW*, 1:86).

What interested Marx is that Epicurus introduced the element of freedom in the atomism of Democritus where everything is the result of a mechanical necessity of atoms creating different combinations as they fall through the void. Epicurus added the dimension of freedom asserting that atoms freely "swerve"³ into each other and mix it up.

Marx, in *Capital*, drew on Epicurus' view of atomism to criticize the capitalist cult of isolated individuals operating as atoms while the thoroughly social character of their lives is determined by relations among things, commodities and capital (*Capital*, 172). The 1871 Paris Communards, who created a new way of organizing their lives, made it clear to Marx that the form in which reality presents itself to those who create that reality through their labor is absolutely a function of human relations.

The absolute opposite of the self-alienating commodity-form is social individuals, recognizing themselves as such through freely associated labor, that is, freely, consciously created human relations in production (*Capital*, 171). Further, the self-alienating commodity-form arises, not from sensuous experience, but rather from the "power of abstraction." The "power of abstraction" specifically sets humans apart from the beasts because whenever humans engage each other and nature they do so through abstractions (*Capital*, 90; *CW*, 30:232). Any new beginning in human "atoms" freely mixing it up is, as well, a new beginning in the self-determination of the concept.

DUNAYEVSKAYA: ABSOLUTE AS NEW BEGINNING

Hegel's absolute method—the self-determination of the concept through the negation of the negation—underwent another development when Raya Dunayevskaya confronted the problem of "what happens after the revolution?" She was working out the meaning of the transformation of the great 1917 Russian Revolution into its opposite—a totalitarian one-party state. Absolute method never bows to a new given—especially one that is a fixed identity, like collective property.

Rather, it provides a new vantage point for the future after the revolution. Far from Marxism being an external mediating force like a vanguard party to lead, absolute method is an organization of thought that can be a force for a new beginning in the conscious self-realization of the freedom idea. What is key is that the self-development of the freedom idea is seen as a dimension of the spontaneous movement.

MASSES IN MOTION: A FORM OF THEORY

For Dunayevskaya, the action of masses in motion is not just a force or content for a preexisting theory, but is itself a form of theory. That form of theory manifests the power of abstraction. The reason in mass action often undermines the dualities or paradigms which shape the prevailing view of the world. Thus, it was the Black masses in the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955-56 that brought the U.S. out of McCarthyism and shifted the perspectives on freedom from "us vs. them" to contradictions within this country. So, too, the Hungarian revolutionaries created new Workers' Councils and rediscovered Marx's original humanism as a weapon against state-capitalist totalitarians calling themselves "Marxists."

Organization that recreates Marxism for our epoch is the "party of the concept." That "party of the concept" has to explicitly bring the creative power of the negative into the fray in a way that it does not just undermine prevailing dualities but becomes recognized in-and-for-itself. Hegel's "self-bringing forth" of the freedom idea can be recognized as immanent in the masses' reach for totally new human relations and self-organization in the public square. Absolute method as new beginning shapes a new unity of theory and practice insofar as a new reality created by the movement is not, once again, experienced as a given but as a moment in a permanent movement of the concept as an "intelligent and free act."

3. A new book by Stephen Greenblatt, *The Swerve* (Norton, 2011), tells of the 15th century rediscovery of Epicurus through Lucretius' "On the Nature of Things." This rediscovery of Lucretius' life-celebrating ode to Epicurus, for whom death was nothing to fear, animated Renaissance humanism against the Church's obsession with the beyond, especially death, and the suffering that will ensue if Church dictates are not followed.



1. Hegel's *Science of Logic* (Humanities Press, 1989). Also Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (International Publishers: New York) is referenced as "CW" with the volume number and page number in the text, except for the commonly used Ben Fowkes translation of *Capital* (London: Penguin, 1976).

2. For a summary of Marx's argument see *The Fetish of High Tech and Karl Marx's Unknown Mathematical Manuscripts* by Ron Brokmeyer (Kelch), Raya Dunayevskaya, Franklin Dmitryev, et al, now available online at: <http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/003870963>

GLOBAL CRISES, GLOBAL REVOLT HIT CAPITALISM

"Reactionary U.S. election shows capital's contradictions" (Sept.-Oct. *N&L*) is good in that it is written in plain language and shows that it is not capital that creates jobs, but that in fact labor is the source of capital. I like that it does not end with hopelessness.

**Teacher
Bay Area**

The crisis is not only economic but environmental. The consensus among climate scientists is that global warming is real, primarily caused by human activity, and is a threat to our future. The world population has reached 7 billion people who are releasing 26 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere annually. It all stems from the fetish of commodities at the point of production. We need to achieve a 90% reduction in carbon dioxide by the year 2050 to have a chance at sustainability. Freely associated labor would be the activity needed to accomplish this goal.

**Subscriber
Chicago**

Even when capitalism works the way it's "supposed to," the economy moves toward crisis. At some point finance capital and whole countries have to be rescued. No matter which way we go, capitalism is bent on self-destruction. Dunayevskaya wrote that it doesn't mean it is automatic, but needs a hefty revolutionary push from masses of workers. Yet it isn't just workers who have to rise up. All of humanity must take part in delivering the final blow.

**Asian American
Northern California**

It is believed today that the old can be left behind—the big factories, the uneducated workers—and we will move into a new capitalism. But food, clothing, iPhones still depend on sweated labor. Surplus value comes from that variable capital, the human being who is increasingly being removed from production and forced into the world of low-wage, no-benefit work of service, distribution, etc. In reality capitalism produces commodities, not wealth.

**Kevin M.
Chicago**

LABOR AND LIFE

Javier's article in the Sept.-Oct. *N&L*, "West Coast port shutdowns and forms of labor struggle," makes it clear that it is not new that the labor leadership betrays striking workers. Even when leaders are good activists, they fall under the illusion that capital employs people and give in to automation. Such mental barriers are at the root of the betrayals. The workers' question, "What

kind of labor?" is part of the revolution but reaches beyond it, to a vision of labor after the revolution. So it's not just a question of "advancing the struggle," but of how both labor organizations and revolutions get transformed into their opposite.

**Activist
Bay Area**

The last lines of the "Workshop Talks" column in the Sept.-Oct. issue were something I couldn't stop thinking about. They were about something Marx had been looking for in the future as "making labor, at last, not a mere means to an end, but an end in itself." I kept thinking, we go to work to make a living, and then I asked myself, "What is the purpose of our life?"

**Manel
Los Angeles**



HURRICANE HORRORS

Because Sandy affected everyone, it opened ground for relationships between

people, which does not mean that Black, poor, Latino, and the elderly weren't hit harder. It also revealed Marx's maxim that having one basis for science and another for life is a lie. There is fear, for example, that industrial pollution (like dioxins in New Jersey's rivers stirred up by the storm) was carried in the mud that now coats so many shoreline homes. Occupy Sandy has been in the forefront of assistance to those hardest hit. Can new beginnings be made from understanding the commonality of suffering from the storms?

**Susan Van Gelder
New Jersey**

Hurricane Sandy is an example of what happens to the disabled during an emergency. With no power, life-saving home medical equipment cannot be used. With no elevators, people in wheelchairs cannot get out of their apartments to buy food or to get their medications. Lack of transportation means that their aides cannot get to them. People have been forced to leave their disabled loved ones in bed for days because they have no help to dress them or get them out of bed or to the bathroom. Several disabled people have died in buildings that were flooded and they were unable to get out.

Rescue workers going door-to-door in one high rise found a 73-year-old woman who was taking care of her 97-year-old disabled mother. They were out of food and water, and their worker

APPEALS FOR SUPPORT FROM RUSSIA, COLOMBIA

An appeal from the Russian leftists to their comrades in the struggle:

We, the representatives of Russian leftist organizations, turn to our comrades all over the world with an appeal for solidarity. This call and your response to it are very important to us. Right now we are facing not just another instance of dubious sentencing by the Russian "justice" system or another case of a human life broken by the encounter with the state's repressive apparatus. Today the authorities have launched against us a repressive campaign without precedent in the recent history of Russia, a campaign whose goal is to extinguish the Left as an organized political force. The recent arrests, threats, beatings, aggressive media attacks and moves towards declaring leftist groups illegal all point to the new general strategy on the part of the authorities, much more cruel and much less predictable than that of recent years...

Please, send your reports on solidarity action and any other information or questions to this email: solidarityaction2012@gmail.com.

Solidarity is our only weapon!

United, we will never be defeated! To see this letter in its entirety go to: <http://newsandletters.org/Announce/Russia.asp>

Community leader Felix Manuel Banguero was among 27 Afro-Colombian and Indigenous activists arrested by the Colombian military in June, accused of ties to the FARC guerrillas. Some of those arrested were already under threats by the right-wing paramilitaries that the government claims no longer exist.

Banguero was serving as Cultural Adviser of the town of Guachene. He has a long history of community activism, and was a significant figure in the struggle for Law 70, which in theory guarantees that Afro-Colombian lands and culture must be respected. His arrest is one more example of how little the Colombian state wishes to comply with its own written laws.

To support Felix Manuel Banguero and others arrested please contact Charo Mina Rojas of Black Communities Process International at charominarojas@gmail.com.

**Gerry Emmett
Chicago**

READERS' VIEWS

was unable to get there. The woman couldn't leave her mother alone to attempt 15 flights of stairs.

**Disability rights advocate
Chicago**

THE ELECTIONS

The discussion of voting or not voting in the Sept.-Oct. Readers' Views was answered in the affirmative by other RVs. The knockout punch came from an article on "Tensions over race in Occupy Chicago." It may be difficult for revolutionaries to defend voting, yet it is something that we can't throw away on the road to revolution. The Republicans know the value of the vote, which is why they are trying so hard to suppress it.

**Voter
Bay Area**

Obama's re-election was a victory against hatred and the extremist Right. I was a volunteer for Obama in Iowa and Chicago. Now that he's won, it's time to pressure him to fulfill his stated commitment to human rights and reducing poverty, which he never mentions. Even though I like him and some things he has done like the healthcare bill, I oppose him for continuing Bush policies like keeping Guantanamo open and attacking Pakistan with drones, killing many civilians. Where he's very dangerous is the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) allowing him to jail activists like us for suspicion of terrorism.

**Patriot for peace and justice
Chicago**

On Nov. 7 citizens in Michigan voted to repeal Public Act 4, the emergency manager law passed by the legislature in 2011. There was formerly a less draconian law passed in 1990, Public Act 72, that was in effect when Public Act 4 was passed. Two pending lawsuits claim that Public Act 72 was repealed when Public Act 4 was passed, one brought by the Flint City Council, and one brought by the Sugar Law Center on behalf of various citizens. In any event, the former law did not give emergency managers the power to void union contracts or simply bypass local governments; it was aimed only at financial management.

The election results show that the emergency manager was unpopular across the state. Voters in only eight counties out of a total of 83 counties voted to keep Public Act 4, even though very few counties were directly affected by it. Only in Berrien County, where Benton Harbor is located, did voters living in a county directly affected by Public Act 4 vote to keep it.

**Lawyer
Flint**

A 14-year-old girl, Malala Yousafzai, gets shot in the head by Taliban thugs who feel brave for shutting up a kid who demands education for all girls and boys. You could say they're crazy in Pakistan. But is it really different from the craziness of Todd Akin in Missouri, who believes women who are "legitimately" raped can't get pregnant? In case you think he's some sort of Republican oddball, don't forget that exterminators say for every cockroach you see, there are 500 you don't see. (I apologize to the actual insects for using them as an example.)

**David
Oakland, Calif.**

TODAYNESS OF RAYA'S ARCHIVES

The 1964 "From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya" article in the Sept.-Oct. *N&L* was so relevant that it's scary. It was about the nomination of Barry Goldwater by the far-right Republicans, but I fear the extreme right wing today is far better organized. I appreciated the seven footnotes the *N&L* editors added

to the article to identify names and incidents today's readers might not remember, but Dunayevskaya's article remains otherwise completely relevant to today.

**Longtime Supporter
Los Angeles**

I loved Dunayevskaya's column, "Historic roots of far Right threat to U.S." (Sept.-Oct. *N&L*)! It is historical, and the footnotes extend it to today. I have one quibble: comparing the Right to cancer is not quite right, it's more like AIDS, in that it gives opportunities to other diseases.

**Supporter
Bay Area**

"Historic roots of far Right threat to U.S." speaks about politicians igniting fears in the middle-class. It could have been written today, about the election we just had. This is what the prison expansion of the last few decades is about. The hysteria about releasing anyone from prison is fueled by instilling fear of "the criminal," which has become a code word since Bush Sr.'s election. Ruling through fear is so contemporary it is remarkable to have that pointed out in a historical perspective.

**Ursula
Bay Area**

PHILOSOPHY AND REVOLUTION

Freedom for one is the very basis of freedom for all. This principle is the contrast between bourgeois and revolutionary journalism. Gerry Emmett in "Syrian revolution fights Assad's genocide, world powers watch" (*N&L*, March-April 2012) lets philosophy speak for itself, full of passion, through the voices of subjectivities in a global movement.

**Prisoner supporter
California**

The need of movements for a philosophy of revolution rests on the "quest for universality"—which is the drive of human beings to be whole and free. We could see it in Arab Spring, in Syria, in the outpouring against the shooting of Malala Yousafzai in Pakistan. The desire for the right to self-development is universal. We need to be more explicit about a philosophy of revolution giving action a direction today.

**Women's Liberationist
Chicago**

At Occupy Wall St. (OWS) one can engage in dialogue with people about topics from anarchism, to the elections, to Marxist-Humanism. At OWS Free University I attended classes which were Marxist in orientation. There is still a movement made up of people looking for a solid theoretical and philosophical base for their actions. Some are open to Marxist-Humanism because of our rejection of the vanguard party and embrace of the totality of Marx's thought. Marxism still has the power to change individuals and create new fighting forces ready to change the world.

**M. Gilbert
New York**

It wasn't just to pass the time that at every Occupy site I visited there was a library and time set aside for presentations and discussion. In a better world time is the space for human development, as Marx said it was. When we set aside time to examine matters and "do" philosophy, we move closer to the revolution Marx called for that will finally herald the beginning of human history.

**Marxist-Humanist
California**



EDUCATION AND LIBERATION

The question of "reform" means very different things to the Obama administration and to teachers, students and parents. "Reform" for some has come to mean the top-down imposition of an education to meet the new needs of capitalism—which does not include poor and minority children becoming workers, thinkers and real citizens in society's future. It also means an evaluation system that even conservative supporters recognize is not based on valid measurements, but only designed to wrest control from unions and to de-professionalize teaching, transforming it into "tutoring for test prep." So they tried to make it look like teachers and their unions oppose reform. *That* kind of reform, we do oppose.

**Retired teacher activist
New Jersey**

I enjoy your paper but I would like to see more articles/analysis on Chicanos. Learning of labor and Black oppression is always educational, being that slavery built America and U.S. labor, e.g., the Wobblies, have had important strikes and are essential history. But there are others who have suffered oppression like Chicanos who got their states stolen and First Nations people who got even more land stolen. Many movement papers hardly touch on these peoples.

**Jose
California**

Years ago music education in the Philadelphia school system was excellent—many good musicians came out of that system. Later, it was watered down and ultimately destroyed. At Bennington College in the past, students and teachers made up their own curricula, but later a lot of music teachers were fired so that the kids could be prepared for the business world. The humanism of a liberal education became secondary to survival.

**Jazz musician
New York**

I'm a teacher and heard a report on the attacks on ethnic studies in Tucson that made me feel I can't begin to teach what I want. I have to teach the myth

that everything is fine when it is awful. The event of Malala Yousafzai being shot in the head for wanting an education in Pakistan is not just about "over there." It's reflected in the rapists who fill our military. And we are constantly menaced by violence from the state. I feel a real sense of urgency because it's obvious that capitalism is the problem, while the Left gets all tied up in knots over a discussion of "tactics."

**Teacher
Bay Area**

It is not just the "Old Guard" that refuses to acknowledge that teachers are part of the working class, which has been under attack for hundreds of years, but especially since the 1970s. It was brought out during the teachers' strike here in Chicago that this strike was part of the larger class struggle, and without that conviction you get stuck with "working within the rules."

**Longtime teacher
Chicago**



There has been a change of consciousness because of the strike. The Chicago Teachers

Union put back on the map what you mean by struggle and how you can win even a limited strike. The question that remains to be worked out is how to bring the rest of the working class together with us.

**Retired teacher and activist
Chicago**

The teachers' strike was a labor dispute in many ways. But teachers are unique because their "product" is children, so they have to take special care to protect them. Both parents and children were missing from the bargaining table. Who is going to speak up for them?

**Parent of involved children
South Side Chicago**

AMERICAN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL

Next year will mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of *American*

Civilization on Trial (ACOT), but it's not a number that compels us to study it today. Many of the "facts" of Black History which were rescued from obscurity by *ACOT* appear in K-12 social studies textbooks, but *ACOT* lives on because in the context of a philosophy, it reveals the revolutionary dialectic of American history. That is, unlike bourgeois history books, *ACOT* describes the interrelation of mass movements and ideas emerging from them.

**Susan
New York**

One of the consequences of Obama having been elected as the first Black president is that it gave added impetus to the illusion of a post-racial society. Obama shied away from making race an issue. In the debates, race was spoken of only in the code words the Right uses. It gives people an underestimation of "Black masses as vanguard" and the potential of a new revolutionary explosion ahead.

**Marxist-Humanist
Chicago**

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE

Your pamphlet *Pelican Bay Hunger Strikers* did a good job documenting the event in prisoners' own words. Today they have yet to obtain the five core demands except some tokens. Our oppression continues, but we gained a new prison movement, still in an embryonic stage but moving forward. The truth is the state ending solitary confinement will not fix our conditions any more than a bailout would fix the capitalist system.

Prisons today are tools used to control the masses while upholding the national oppression of the mostly Chicano, New Afrikan and First Nations here in California, but including other oppressed peoples across America. The 2.4 million captives will continue to rise up in revolutionary convulsions that will continue until a Socialist revolution reaches our shores.

**Prisoner
Pelican Bay, Calif.**

Please send me some literature so I can get a better picture of what you are



all about. What exactly is "Marxist" literature? Do you support political prisoners? Radical Social prisoners? Or POW's? Those groups are

very interesting, but they are always just complaining. They act as if they are fighting capitalism but they aren't doing anything about the problem except complaining. I have a lot of questions and would like some information about your organization.

**Prisoner
Tehachapi, Calif.**

Your paper keeps me aware of the real issues facing common people. I love "Queer Notes." I'm Gay. Your paper helps me think of others' plight. If I were free, I would volunteer to join the fight in some of these causes.

**Prisoner
Huntingdon, Penn.**

I came across a copy of *News & Letters* from the summer of 2005. It was still powerful and very informative. I'm housed in long-term segregation (maximum security) where I've been incarcerated for 12 years. It means no TV or any other way to keep up with world events or other things that interest me. Being able to do that through someone sponsoring a subscription or sending me earlier copies would be greatly appreciated.

**Prisoner
Westville, Ind.**

N&L does an excellent job in reporting on issues that exist throughout the world communities. It would be good to see you create a section in the paper where we, as a community, can collectively discuss our understanding of the issues so our solutions become an integral part of redeeming every oppressed community in struggle.

**Prisoner
Crescent City, California**

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

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM NEWS & LETTERS

Books

by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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

by CHARLES DENBY

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

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por RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

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- Filosofía y revolución: De Hegel a Sartre y de Marx a Mao**...\$10
- Rosa Luxemburgo, la liberación femenina, y la filosofía marxista de revolución**.....\$10
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- El Poder de la negatividad: Escritos sobre la dialéctica en Hegel y Marx**\$10
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Pamphlets

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

- News and Letters Committees Constitution**.....45 ¢ postage
- Marxist-Humanist Literature Catalog** A full list of publications (includes many not listed here) available from News and Letters Committees.....65 ¢ postage

Archives

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

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Afro-Colombians throw off shackles

Editor's note: Witness for Peace sponsored a speaking tour for Afro-Colombian activist Francia Márquez Mina. In Chicago she spoke at a number of universities and a community meeting co-hosted by CAMI (Committee against Militarization of Our Youth). Below are excerpts from her talk.

I want to speak of what my community, and Colombia, are living through. Of 10 million Afro-Colombians, 3 million have been displaced from their homes. Many of our people have been massacred, and we are still often threatened. Leaders of the resistance are often killed.

Multinational corporations like AngloGold Ashanti mining want the mineral rights in our areas, and others want to impose monocrops like sugar in our farmlands. Coca-Cola, Halliburton, Monsanto, Glencorp, GreyStar and others are here. We have won the right to be consulted on development issues in court, but Colombia is very corrupt.

Everything is done to protect and continue this exploitative system. The Constitutional Court on Dec. 13, 2010, ordered a mining project in my community, La Toma, to stop because they had not consulted with us. But just last week the Ministry of Mines and the National Mines Agency said that they have not suspended the titles because they do not have the GPS coordinates. That is a lie, since they had the coordinates when they gave the titles. That is the kind of struggle we have.

When a river on our land was dammed for electricity, we still ended up paying the highest rates.

The Black Communities Process is a conglomeration of movements, community councils, and individuals organized to defend our rights as Black people. We organize in *palenques*, named for the runaway slave enclaves, in local areas, which form larger networks, which work with other groups nationally on these issues.

The U.S. has given \$8 billion dollars to the Colombian government to carry out a pacification program similar to the one in Afghanistan. It really makes the military here just the security arm of the multinational corporations. Besides that, most of the previous Congress also had ties to the *narco-traficantes*.

It is the poor in Colombia and the U.S. who end up paying, whether through violence and displacement or



addiction and imprisonment. We didn't make the rules of this game, the economics of the situation did. We should change this entirely by making our own rules.

Right now the government is negotiating "peace" with the FARC. We support a peace process. But Afro-Colombians, Indigenous peoples, and the poor have many questions. The negotiations are only between two parties. They leave out our concerns. This can result in just one more armed group being absorbed into bourgeois politics, as has happened so often elsewhere.

For us the problem didn't begin with the guerilla war 50 years ago, it began 500 years ago when the land was conquered and we were brought here to be enslaved. With the Indigenous and others, we've formed an inter-ethnic committee to present our views. The government has so far refused to address our issues and concerns.

The government talks about a peace process, but they still plan to roll back people's rights. How can you have peace this way? We think this will only further the current exploitative economic model.

We can spend a lifetime talking about development models, but in the end it's up to us to change it. We are fighting for a new model, not just for ourselves, but for humanity. Multinationals have the money to buy those in power. We don't have money, but we have the will to fight to the end.

My own life as a woman has changed in this struggle. I have two children and was always with them, but now I am often away speaking and looking for allies. Women have been forced to organize. Before, everyone concentrated on their own problems. Now we are beginning to grow crops, work with youth in the community, and criticize machismo in our families. We have been inspired to demand our own rights.

We can't allow our planet to be destroyed. Hurricane Sandy was a product of the abuse we inflict on nature, and it didn't discriminate. Our ancestors fought for us to be here, and we must fight for future generations. I will do what is necessary to defend our land and community, and I'm not willing to subject myself to physical or mental shackles once again.

Life After Death: Echols exposes system

Life After Death by Damien Echols (Blue Rider Press, 2012).

In the 1980s and 1990s many people, even respected psychologists, believed that satanic cults were committing acts of child sexual abuse and human sacrifice all across America. This hysteria was partially fueled by the since debunked theory that therapists could use hypnosis to recover repressed memories of past trauma. Even feminists pressured each other

to believe the "ritual abuse survivors." Not many people discussed the fact that the religious Right promoted this modern witch-hunt with the purpose of convincing people of the need for a fundamentalist Christian government to combat the supposed growing influence of a real devil. While the "satanic panic" has faded from the mainstream, it has left a legacy of true innocent victims—many people incarcerated for non-existent crimes.

The case of the West Memphis Three, Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin, and Jesse Misskelley Jr., was slightly different in that there was an actual crime. In 1993 in West Memphis, Ark., three little boys were found dead, and the rural, small-town locals, including law enforcement, immediately decided that the perpetrators could only have been Satanists. Ordinary potential suspects were ignored in the rush to incarcerate Echols, who describes in his book how he was scapegoated for his love of heavy metal music and wearing black. **Even more shockingly, he explains how his poverty-stricken, fundamentalist community would regularly ostracize anyone who had any interest in self-development.**

When Echols was unable to complete high school due to bureaucracy, he went to the library to continue learning. His interest in the deeper meanings of life led him to explore spirituality, ranging from Catholicism to esoteric (mystical or "occult") religions including Wicca and Thelema, which fundamentalists carelessly confuse with Satanism. Even before the crime, the police harassed him for their own entertainment. Echols

explains in *Life After Death* that he and his family and friends were later interrogated, and were unaware of how the police had violated their rights. He briefly describes the now famously mishandled trial and the lies of the media and lawyers. Echols was given a death sentence and Baldwin, implicated by being his friend, was given life. So was Misskelley, an acquaintance with a borderline I.Q., who gave a false statement under the duress of a brutal interrogation. Echols also states that the West Memphis police had botched the case and refused help from federal agents to cover up their own massive corruption and drug dealing.

In the book, Echols describes in detail the hellish conditions of death row and states that Baldwin has described the rest of the prison system (which practices slave labor in Arkansas) as not much better. Guards commit violent assaults that would get anyone else sent to prison. **The prison system deliberately erodes the inmates' health with poor food, confinement, isolation, unsanitary conditions, temperature extremes, and vermin.**

Even when hopeful of being released, Echols was afraid he might first die from a "Russian roulette" of causes. Most people on death row are executed illegally because they are mentally ill or mentally challenged. Even mentally healthy inmates easily develop mental illness and do not receive treatment. Echols has been rightly praised for his determination to keep his sanity and continue his self-development on death row by his studies in spirituality, philosophy and history as well as physical exercise, but he explains that the 18-year ordeal has left lasting emotional and physical damage.

However, inspired by a quote from Viktor Frankl, "What is to give light must endure burning," Echols, along with Baldwin, has vowed to find the real killers and fight for others unjustly convicted. Echols knows the West Memphis Three were only freed due to years of intensely persistent effort by his wife, his supporters, and celebrities. **He has written a very scathing expose of poverty, fundamentalism, and the legal, justice, prison, and mental health systems.** I hope *Life After Death*, which is also beautiful and humorous and destined to be both popular and a classic, will inspire readers to cultivate the same drive for justice, focusing not only on individual cases but on changing the basic structures of society. —Adele

Fighting evictions

Van Nuys, Calif.—The Hernandez family home is one of 40,200 properties currently in foreclosure in California. Javier Hernandez purchased the house in 2006 and for several years he made his payments. When the bank raised the interest rate, the mortgage payments went up. The Hernandez family found their purchase price exceeded the current value of the house. They started the process of loan modification to reduce the principal and interest rate.

Ulises Hernandez, Javier's brother who had been talking to the banks said, "Bank of America (BOA) led us to believe that if we missed payments the loan could be modified!" This is a standard foreclosure scheme. After three attempts for a loan modification, BOA sold Hernandez' home at an auction. Ulises said, "When they auctioned the house it was worth half of what we purchased it for."

On Aug. 21, the Hernandezes found an eviction notice on their front door giving them five days to vacate their house. They decided to resist eviction and gathered support from activists from Occupy San Fernando, Occupy LA, Occupy the Hood and from other foreclosure victims. They built a barricade around the house and surrounded it with Occupy tents. They called the property Fort Hernandez.

On Aug. 26 they awoke expecting the police but instead found media vans along their street. A few days later, BOA finally reached out to the Hernandez family. But after months of police harassment, on Oct. 29, 75 Los Angeles Police officers in riot gear blocked off the street and proceeded to tear down the barricade of Fort Hernandez with chain saws. Occupiers built another one. —Basho

EDITORIAL

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to events on the ground in Syria. These powers hope that the newly founded National Coalition of Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces will have more credibility with Syria's people than the SNC, and so give them greater leverage as the foundation of a post-Assad government.

It is the Syrian people's struggle that these world powers are responding to. The recently proposed Chinese "peace plan," which recognized the areas liberated from Assad's regime control, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's call to "negotiate a settlement" (issued in Saudi Arabia) show they've been forced to recognize the Syrian people's revolutionary gains—if only in the interests of undermining them. As with French President François Hollande's call to arm the rebels vs. U.S. President Obama's reluctance to do so because they may threaten Israel, it is more a division of labor between imperialists than a difference of aims. This is the unspoken, counter-revolutionary equation that has always been the background of their response to the Syrian Revolution, as to the Arab Spring in general.

FIGHTING FOR NEW HUMAN RELATIONS

For both Syrians and Palestinians—and for humanity itself—the stakes couldn't be higher. As in Palestine, the provision of arms to the most fundamentalist groups, however unrepresentative of the larger struggle, has had consequences. For one, starving the larger rebel groups of weapons has allowed Assad to drag out his last days in genocidal bombing campaigns that never had to happen. Protesters in Syria Oct. 19 said, "America, your silence is complicit in thousands of our deaths."

Besides that, some episodes of rebel sectarianism, bloody reprisals, and even war crimes have been traced to the fundamentalist fighters. These have been used to discredit the revolution itself, despite the far greater crimes of Assad and the *shabiha* government thugs. Most important, the Syrians have shown that they are able to criticize their own revolution, even demonstrating against actions of the Free Syrian Army when called for.

The revolution won't be decided by force of arms, but by the new human relations created. What is decisive is the kind of revolutionary vision that allows a youth like Loubna Mrie, an Alawite woman activist, to look beyond sectarianism and embrace a greater idea of freedom as the power that can destroy the reactionary regimes that threaten human existence. She has opposed Assad's effort to promote hatred between Sunnis and Alawites with her very life, saying, "I decided I would join the revolution and die for the revolution and never go back."

Now opposition to all reactionary state powers and ideas is a life-and-death necessity in the Middle East. Only on revolutionary ground can the questions of Israel and Palestine, or Iran, be settled, and anything less courts disaster and genocide. Now is the time when we must fight for a vision of freedom. The old world has gathered around Syria, Palestine, and the Arab Spring like jackals offering their rotting teeth in return for our humanity.

Kurdish prisoners on hunger strike

Below are excerpts of a Nov. 5, 2012, statement by Kurdish prisoners on hunger strike in Turkey since Sept. 12. Now thousands more prisoners are joining the hunger strike, making it one of the largest hunger strike protests in history.

To the attention of the public; to the attention of all democratic people and human rights circles:

We, prisoners of freedom, are by this action announcing to the whole world our most basic human, social and political rights, which are legitimately ours—like our mother's milk is ours. We demand that atrocities end.

Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his crew should know that this tyrannical order, this sultanate of cruelty will bring no prosperity to those who carry it out. Those who prosper will end up in a dreadful state of being.

We are asking the whole world: Who can ignore our right to defend ourselves in our native language? Who can deny our right to education in our mother tongue? Who can find it normal that a people's leader is kept in isolation and tortured? Who can reject a dialogue with our leader, who is the only assurance and the sole key to our living together? We are demanding that anyone who calls herself human respond to these questions!

We are saying "Enough already," "Edi Bese!" to this system that ignores us as a people, refuses our existence, and denies our liberty. To resolve the Kurdish issue peacefully and democratically, for our peoples to live in sisterhood and fraternity, for our dignity and freedom, we are laying our bodies down for death.

Our action is also an appeal to conscience, a cry of an oppressed people, a way of calling off the insults hurled at our people, and through us, at all humanity.

Our demands are addressed only to the JDP

(Justice and Development Party) government. Our action will end when we achieve our goals. Until then new people will join us every day.

To our people and to the public:

The hunger strike that we began on Sept. 12 is in its 54th day as we write this.

As of today, we are entering a new stage. From Nov. 5 forward, we will continue our action with the involvement of 10,000 people. Beginning Monday, Nov. 5, 2012, all of the allied prisoners except for the sick, the elderly, and the children will go on an indefinite hunger strike without rotation.

We are inviting to sobriety all people who approach us casually rather than seriously, who use all means to break and denigrate our strike, and who are responsible for twisting reality by misrepresenting our truth.

We are saying, "Let us prevent any outcome that could endanger the willpower of our peoples to live together and our social peace." It should be known that a resolution cannot be achieved by ignoring our demands, decrying our action and lying on television, in Europe, and in front of the whole world. On the contrary, the path to peace goes through a constructive engagement.

To our beloved Kurdistan and our families:

Our hunger strike, joined by the insurgency of our people and transformed into national unity and willpower, will play a historic role. We wish and expect that our people and friends become convinced of this as well.

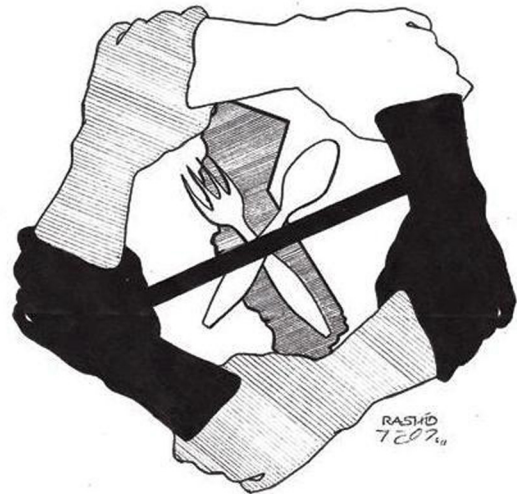
We are calling on our Turkish sisters and brothers, on all peoples living in Turkey and on all responsive parties in question to contribute to our resistance, to support and to give a hand to our people, who are now standing up.

The winner will be our people, the winner will be freedom, the winner will be peace, the winner will be the future and democracy of our people. Those who lose will be the enemies of liberty.

Pelican Bay prisoners aim to end hostilities

Agreement to End Hostilities

(NOTE: All names and the statement must be verbatim when used and posted on any website or media, or non-media, publications)



August 12, 2012

To whom it may concern and all California Prisoners:

Greetings from the all PBSP-SHU [Pelican Bay State Prison-Security Housing Unit] Short Corridor Hunger Strike Representatives. We are hereby presenting this mutual agreement on behalf of all racial groups here in the PBSP-SHU Corridor. We have arrived at a mutual agreement concerning the following points:

1. If we really want to bring about substantive meaningful changes to the CDCR [California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation] system in a manner beneficial to all solid individuals, who have never been broken by CDCR's torture tactics intended to coerce one to become a state informant via debriefing, now is the time for us to collectively seize this moment and put an end to more than 20-30 years of hostilities between our racial groups.

2. Therefore, **beginning on October 10, 2012, all hostilities between our racial groups... in SHU, Ad-Seg [Administrative Segregation], General Population, and County Jails, will officially cease.** This means that from this date on, all racial group hostilities need to be at an end... and if personal issues arise between individuals, people need to do all they can to exhaust all diplomatic means to settle such disputes; do not allow personal, individual issues to escalate into racial group issues!!

3. We also want to warn those in the General Population [GP] that IGI [Institutional Gang Investigators] will continue to plant undercover Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) debriefer "inmates" amongst the solid GP prisoners with orders from IGI to be informers, snitches, rats, and obstructionists, in order to attempt to disrupt and undermine our collective groups' mutual understanding on issues intended for our mutual causes (i.e., forcing CDCR to open up all GP main lines, and return to a rehabilitative-type system of meaningful programs/privileges, including lifer conjugal visits, etc. via peaceful protest activity/noncooperation, e.g., hunger strike, no labor, etc. etc.). People need to be aware and vigilant to such tactics, and refuse to allow such IGI inmate snitches to create chaos and reignite hostilities amongst our racial groups. We can no longer play into IGI, ISU [Investigative Service Unit], OCS [Office of Correctional Safety], and SSU's [Special Service Unit] old manipulative divide and conquer tactics!!!

In conclusion, we must all hold strong to our mutual agreement from this point on and focus our time, attention, and energy on mutual causes beneficial to all of us (i.e., prisoners), and our best interests. **We can no longer allow CDCR to use us against each other for their benefit!!** Because the reality is that collectively, we are an empowered, mighty force, that can positively change this entire corrupt system into a system that actually benefits prisoners, and thereby, the public as a whole... and we simply cannot allow CDCR/CCPOA – Prison Guard's Union, IGI, ISU, OCS, and SSU, to continue to get away with their constant form of progressive oppression and warehousing of tens of thousands of prisoners, including the 14,000 (+) plus prisoners held in solitary confinement torture chambers (i.e. SHU/Ad-Seg Units), for decades!!!

We send our love and respects to all those of like mind and heart... onward in struggle and solidarity...

Presented by the PBSP-SHU Short Corridor Collective: **Todd Ashker**, C58191, D1-119, **Arturo Castellanos**, C17275, D1-121, **Sitawa Nantambu Jamaa** (Dewberry), C35671, D1-117, **Antonio Guillen**, P81948, D2-106

And the Representatives Body: **Danny Troxell**, B76578, D1-120, **George Franco**, D46556, D4-217, **Ronnie Yandell**, V27927, D4-215, **Paul Redd**, B72683, D2-117, **James Baridi Williamson**, D-34288, D4-107, **Alfred Sandoval**, D61000, D4-214, **Louis Powell**, B59864, D1-104, **Alex Yrigollen**, H32421, D2-204, **Gabriel Huerta**, C80766, D3-222, **Frank Clement**, D07919, D3-116, **Raymond Chavo Perez**, K12922, D1-219, **James Mario Perez**, B48186, D3-124

Honduras three years after the coup

La Voz de los de Abajo (Voices from Below) sponsored a delegation to Honduras in September, three years after the 2009 coup which deposed the elected President Manuel Zelaya.

Under his successor President Lobo, violence escalated. Seventy Aguán *campesinos* (peasants) were murdered in three years.

Honduras' homicide rate is the highest in the world. Lawyers, politicians, human rights workers, LGBT people, journalists and *campesinos* are murdered regularly.

RULE BY OLIGARCHY

On Sept. 9, 500 private guards, police and soldiers trashed peasant shacks in Aguán. After the *campesinos* surrendered, thugs pelted them with tear gas canisters and threw tear gas into bystanders' houses. The Chicago group and an official international delegation were fired on when they tried to investigate.

One by one the leaders of MARCA (Authentic Campesino Reclamation Movement of the Aguán) have been picked off. In September Antonio Trejo Cabrera, a civil rights lawyer, got a call while at a wedding. Upon stepping outside, he was riddled with bullets, presumably on the order of oligarch Miguel Faccusé Barjum.

"This is a war against the *campesinos* and anyone who offers them support—human rights workers, lawyers or international delegations. But the *campesinos* keep on keeping on," said Victoria Cervantes of the delegation.

PLANTATION ECONOMICS

Faccusé and his corporation Dinant terrorize *campesinos*, Afro-Honduran Garifuna and Indigenous in the Aguán Valley. Faccusé's plantations of African palm are run much like the pre-Civil War South. Faccusé gets Clean Development Mechanism credits for "greening" Honduras, although almost all the crop is sent North to be burned. The jungle, a true source of clean air, and productive farmland were given to oligarchs. 1.6 million hectares of land is devoted to monoculture, while child malnutrition among the *campesinos* is 60%. Thus continues the "greening" of Honduras.

Campesinos face another threat: charter cities. The government wanted to grant private jurisdictions to its oligarchs, but the Supreme Court has blocked the plan. The idea is a bigger threat to the Garifuna because, although a charter city could only be established on unoccupied land, the Garifuna could be removed from their land. "[T]he government is selling the country piece by piece, and Analisis Afrodescendiente describes this as the second phase of the 2009 coup." (See <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2012/10/02/honduras-charter-cities-threaten-garifuna-communities/>)

Women hold very few offices and get little respect. For example, journalist Dina Meza received an extremely vulgar, menacing letter from Comando Alvarez Martinez, a graduate of WHINSEC (School of the Americas) which included, "(you will) end up dead like the Aguán people". (See <http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/10/09/honduras-now-open-for-political-murder/>)

Add horrible prison conditions: the Feb. 16 major fire that killed over 350 inmates at Comayagua was the third in a decade. Comayagua housed twice its official capacity. To prevent escapes guards held the doors closed too long.

FREE JOSE ISABEL MORALES

Jose Isabel Morales, "Chavelo," a member of one of the campesino movements of the Aguán, has been in prison for three years. He was convicted and sentenced without any evidence that he committed a crime. Sign a petition for his release at hondurasresists.blogspot.com.

A vigorous minority in the U.S. House of Representatives has called for an end to military aid for Honduras. U.S.-made weapons, which Honduras is required to buy with the "aid," not only are being used by the Lobo government to suppress protest, but the "aid" is a subsidy to the U.S. and Israeli military industries.

—January

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

On National Coming Out Day this year, youth in particular showed the way. Texas Tech University's Gay-Straight Alliance members told coming out stories. People wrote their sexual orientation or gender identity on a door provided by the University of Florida's Pride Student Union. Virginia's George Mason University held an ice cream social, a speakout/open-mic event, and an amateur drag show.

* * *

Human Rights Watch called for an immediate investigation of violence against gay-friendly bar 7FreeDays Club in Moscow, Russia. Masked men from the homophobic group People's Council stormed the bar. Property was destroyed and patrons were kicked and had bottles and chairs thrown at them. This attack came as many regions in Russia passed laws against "homosexual propaganda."

* * *

Nepal held South Asia's first ever LGBT sports festival. Cheered on by thousands of supporters, more than 250 athletes participated. Conditions for Queer people have been slowly improving since 2006 and Nepal's Supreme Court said in 2007 that the government must do away with all homophobic laws. Pride parades and Queer beauty contests have been held. A boy who underwent sex-change surgery in Thailand was welcomed home. Queer people are no longer beaten and arrested in Kathmandu.

* * *

In August, a Queer Pride parade was held in Uganda for the first time. Some participants were arrested, but the Queer community attended the parade, parties, and a film festival anyway. In Uganda lawmakers call for laws with long sentences for "promoting" homosexuality and death for "aggravated homosexuality."

Obama's re-election doesn't end clash of two worlds

continued from p. 1

Indiana. Akin and Mourdock just made the mistake of making it too clear that they believe every pregnancy, even from rape, is a gift from God that must not be questioned—and they were soundly defeated, with a decisive women's vote against them, as were several other Senate candidates. The same fate befell a proposed amendment to Florida's Constitution that would have prohibited use of public funds for abortions or health insurance covering abortion.

When the primaries had barely started, women were already organizing, galvanized when state legislatures' ongoing attacks on Planned Parenthood were joined by the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation, a move that they saw as supremely political from an organization formed to fight breast cancer.

The attack by reactionary state governments on women's right to an abortion—including mandating invasive vaginal ultrasounds and forcing doctors to lie to women or allowing them to withhold vital information from patients—caused women to organize in every state. No matter how Republicans denied that there was a "war against women," women saw it and knew it as a violation of their human rights.

Republicans voted against the Lilly Ledbetter equal pay act but hoped to capitalize on the poor economy's negative effects on women. Most women rejected these attempts but know that the challenge is to keep up the pressure rather than letting all that organization fall by the wayside because there is now a supposedly pro-choice president. It was President Bill Clinton, after all, who gutted welfare.

After four years of Obama's pragmatism and caving in to reactionaries, much of the margin that returned him to office had to do with voting against the Tea Party and the Religious Right. That does not cancel the significance of the big gender gap—even bigger among unmarried women—the gap among the poorer half of the electorate, and the huge Obama margin among people under 30, Blacks, Latinos, Asians and Gays.

LGBTQ STRIDES

As against the passage in 2008 of California's anti-Gay Proposition 8, this year voters approved same-sex marriage in Maine and Maryland, upheld it in Washington state, defeated a Christian Right initiative to ban it in Minnesota, and elected the first openly Gay Senator, Tammy Baldwin of Wisconsin.

It was a stinging defeat not only for the evangelical Christian Right but for the Catholic Church hierarchy, which basically campaigned against Obama by hysterically accusing him of attacking religious liberty—that is, the "right" of employers to deny health insurance coverage of contraception for women. The Church also campaigned against abortion and, along with the Mormon Church, spent millions to oppose the marriage equality initiatives.

Labor faced a mixed outcome. Measures in California and Florida blocked cuts in education and public services; the minimum wage was raised in Albuquerque, N.M., and San Jose and Long Beach, Calif. Anti-teacher referenda were defeated in Idaho, South Dakota and Illinois, but one passed in Alabama. Michigan voters repealed the state's anti-labor "emergency manager" law but defeated a union-backed amendment to put the right to collective bargaining in the state Constitution.

Most seriously, labor—both organized labor and the working class as a whole—has to confront the large number of white workers who voted for Romney. Romney won 59% of the white vote, and nearly two thirds of white men, including many workers. The fact that such a weak candidate could gain nearly half the national vote is sobering. It can only be explained by the appeals to sexism, homophobia and above all racism.

In the face of the President losing the majority of the white vote, those who exploit racism in order to drag us ever closer to fascism are not just going to give up. The Tea Party and the Christian Coalition may be spent vehicles, but their members are still venting hysterical rage. If they agree with rightists from Fox News blowhard Bill O'Reilly to the neo-Nazi Stormfront who are mourning the death of "the white establishment," will they turn away from primarily electoral means to impose their will?

VOTER SUPPRESSION AND MINORITY RULE

Their leaders, however, have not given up on transforming the electoral arena through voter suppression. The Supreme Court—which established its anti-democracy credentials by selecting George W. Bush as President in 2000 and opening the floodgates for corporate campaign money with the Citizens United decision in 2010—has accepted a case challenging the Voting Rights Act. There is a real chance that the Court will gut the Act, which was instrumental in blocking several of the recent crop of voter suppression laws. And

while the administration did fight those laws, it has no objection to the most important voter suppression instrument: the racially biased criminal injustice system, coupled with laws that disenfranchise felons.

It is true that the core of today's Republican Party is dedicated to preserving white rule over people of color, even after whites become a minority in the U.S. The greater truth is that both major parties are part of maintaining rule by a minority: the capitalist class. Though a small minority, the capitalists dominate the political system precisely because of their economic supremacy.

Campaign contributions are only one of the ways that economic power is deployed. In 2012, it added up to an estimated \$6 billion for Presidential and Congressional campaigns, with another \$1.8 billion for state and local races and ballot initiatives. That sea of money, enough to feed 1.5 million poor families for a year, was slanted toward the Republican side, but failed to deliver total control of the federal government to them.

It did, however, remind both Republicans and Democrats who fills their feed troughs. It illustrates yet again how self-defeating it is for labor unions and mainstream environmental, women's, Gay, Latino and civil rights groups to chain themselves to the Democrats—as if that will yield more than a few crumbs. It is true that there is more than a whiff of fascism in today's Republican Party, and the Right's electoral defeat gives movements from below more room to develop, but that will not stop the Democrats from compromising with the Republicans, or from trying to co-opt any independent movement.

SECOND TERM AGENDA vs. WORKERS

However much both of the capitalist parties had tried to co-opt the Occupy rhetoric of the 99% and the 1%, President Obama's victory speech laid out a second-term agenda replete with the kinds of anti-working-class goals that the Occupy Movement had risen against in the first place. He identified "the challenges" as "Reducing our deficit. Reforming our tax code. Fixing our immigration system. Freeing ourselves from foreign oil."

Though he mentioned "the destructive power of a warming planet," anything he has done about global warming is a drop in the bucket compared to the magnitude of the problem—and will be wiped out by his plans to "free ourselves from foreign oil"—which means first and foremost expanding fracking and approving the Keystone XL Pipeline to carry bitumen from Canada's tar sands.

"Fixing our immigration system" was a nod to the Latino vote, but what Obama and the Democrats have been pushing as the Dream Act is a half-measure that would leave in place the U.S. economy's structure. The existence of a superexploited undocumented work force is essential to its functioning, both for the direct profit-making of agriculture, construction, restaurants, and so on, and as a weapon to force all workers to accept worse wages and conditions. In addition, Obama has presided over more than 1.2 million deportations in his first term, surpassing any other President.

Finally, "reducing our deficit and reforming our tax code" is the banner under which Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and other social programs will be attacked.

Obama's speech vaguely mentioned fighting for new jobs, but said nothing about the reality of capitalism's ongoing depression. He did not mention the five million people unemployed for six months or more, and that Black unemployment is twice that of whites. He did not mention that living standards for working people have been falling for a decade, and that many of the added jobs he celebrates have been low-paying part-time jobs without benefits. He did not mention the epidemic of foreclosures and the spike in homelessness.

Instead of these pressing matters, Obama identified "deficits and debt" as the "first order of business." Social Security is not running out of money, as is often claimed, but he supports the Bowles-Simpson Commission, which recommended cuts to Social Security and Medicare. To avert the "fiscal cliff," an artificial product of Tea Party politics, Democrats and Republicans are angling for a deficit-reducing deal that would depend mainly on cuts to social programs. A small rise in taxes on the rich will give the cuts a populist covering.

MILITARISM vs. NEW OPENINGS

The military, however, is likely to be spared. The U.S. has withdrawn troops from Iraq and is reducing U.S. troops in Afghanistan—but at the same time the administration is projecting a "strategic pivot" to the Pacific to confront the rising power of China. And drone strikes will continue, no matter how many civilians they kill (see "Yemen: famine, drones and freedom," page 12).

The revelation, two days **after** the election, that Iranian warplanes had shot at a U.S. drone five days **before** the election was a pointed reminder of the possibility of war against Iran. Obama's reluctance to wage such a war is no guarantee that he can avoid being dragged into it, especially since Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu has been trying to start one.

In his brief victory speech, Obama twice referred to the U.S. retaining "the most powerful military in history." However, the Arab Spring and the leftward move of much of South America have shown a determination to get out from under U.S. domination.

Neither that international domination nor the division into two worlds within this country, neither the recurring economic crises nor the steady descent into climate chaos can be abolished through the electoral process. What is needed is the kind of leap to freedom that can only come from below, from masses in motion, from the unity of all races, women and men, Gay and straight, immigrant and citizen, organized and unorganized, and, crucially, theory and practice.

Whether it is the revolts in the Arab lands and Latin America, the strikes and occupations in Europe, the Occupy Movement and Walmart strikes in the U.S., or still newer movements, the drive of the struggles for freedom is what must be built on. These new openings need to be developed, their contradictions faced, and a banner of total freedom unfurled to give them a direction toward the establishment of a new human society.

Massive London march against austerity



London, England—The leader of the opposition, Ed Miliband, was heckled on Oct. 20 at a mass demonstration here against austerity cuts.

The Labour Party leader had addressed the crowd to garner support for his stand against the ruling coalition of the Liberal Democratic and Conservative parties. Mr. Miliband claimed the government's cutbacks were "too far and too fast," which prompted outrage from assembled activists committed to opposing cuts *in their entirety*.

"Now of course there will still be hard choices," claimed Mr. Miliband, "and I do not promise easy times...I have said whoever was in government now there would still be some cuts, but this government has shown that cutting too far and too fast shows that this policy of austerity is not the answer to Britain's problems."

In an apparent attempt to calm the crowd, Miliband then posed as Left, promising to tax bankers' bonuses if his party was returned to government. Britain's Conservative coalition has gained notoriety for its budget policy of cutting corporation tax whilst raising the Value Added Tax (similar to a national sales tax) in what many see as an attempt to soften the blow to the private sector whilst hitting the consumer. The Conservatives' hostile policy to welfare, trade unionism and European Union human rights legislation has further eroded their popularity as the UK struggles alongside the rest of the Euro zone in the face of economic turmoil.

The Oct. 20 demonstration, organized by the Trades Union Congress in association with the Coalition of Resistance, saw some 150,000 trade unionist and political activists on the streets of London.

"I'm on this demonstration to say loud and clear that I am not happy with this coalition's austerity program," said Mark Osgood, 33, a trade unionist and member of the leftist Labor Representation Committee from Portsmouth. "It is damaging to the economy, working people's living standards and, what's more, offers no solution. I do not agree with a single cut to the jobs of working people, who did not cause this crisis. It is a once in a lifetime opportunity for the ruling class to roll back the size of the state and open it up to the private sector. They're grabbing the opportunity with both hands."

"Only industrial and political action will be sufficient to make the necessary changes," said Osgood. "The next stage should be a one-day general strike. Working people in Europe and the world over are all in the same boat, and the more we can link up with workers in other countries the better. As Karl Marx said, '...working men have no country!'"

—Dan Read

Readers: We want to hear from you! Write to us or email us! See contact information, p. 11.

Disability rights: The fight to stay alive

Chicago—The U.S. disability rights movement has a rich and diverse history. It is the only class of people that you can suddenly become a member of at any time or place. It does not discriminate by color, sex, income level, age, ethnicity or sexual preference. But for those who have had no experiences with disabled people, there is often no knowledge of the movement's history and sometimes lots of misunderstandings.

One of the heroes of the movement was Ed Roberts, who had polio as a child and was mostly paralyzed.

Fortunately, his mother was a good advocate. Ed got into the University of Calif. Berkeley in 1962 but the university had no place to put him as he slept with an iron lung. They put him in the infirmary. The other students formed a group called the Rolling Quads and started making demands: curb cuts, accessible buildings, lifts on buses. They had a huge impact on the university, then on the city of Berkeley. As they graduated, they formed the first center for independent living in the country.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 stated that any facility receiving federal money had to be accessible. The Health Education and Welfare (HEW) Secretary at that time, Joseph Califano, blocked its enforcement. In response, people with disabilities sat in at the ten regional HEW centers. In San Francisco they took over the HEW office and did a 25-day occupation. The Black Panthers smuggled in food for them. This was the longest occupation of a federal building.

ADAPT was founded in Colorado in the 1980s. Leader Wade Blank had been involved in the civil rights and anti-war movements. ADAPT has chapters all over the country. Chicago ADAPT demanded lifts on buses and shouted down Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) officials at board meetings. They won in the courts about a year before The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, with a mandate that the CTA would have to become accessible over time.

ADA did not signal the end of our struggle but a new beginning. ADAPT fights to keep people out of nursing homes and in the community. We fight for community and home supports so the disabled can live independently. We fight to have abusive institutions closed and have won the closing of several of them.

The ADA has been under attack since it passed. Its protections have eroded. In one case, Chevron is claiming that a man would be doing harm to himself by taking a specific position. The ADA provides that an employer cannot discriminate against someone with a disability, which is exactly what Chevron is trying to do. If Chevron wins, it will weaken the ADA by allowing employers, not employees, to decide health issues. In the sections of the ADA related to employment, the scope of the act has been so drastically narrowed that only a small amount of the estimated 54 million disabled Americans remain covered.

Among the most serious problems that the disabled face are the cuts in Medicaid that went into effect July 1, 2012. Medicaid was bad before the cuts, now this vital lifeline has been cut even more, affecting those who need the services the most. Many people have been cut

from the program; dental care has been cut altogether except for emergencies; medical supplies have been cut and/or quantities limited; special permission is mandated to get more than four prescriptions; people are being thrown out of vital home care programs because they are no longer "disabled enough"; the hours of personal assistants have been cut, leaving many disabled without the help they desperately need. Tragically, the waiver program for technology-dependent and medically fragile children has been gutted, meaning some children can no longer live at home. **To have to give up your child to an institution is a horrible price to pay for the government's inhumane decisions.**

Movements for social change contain seeds for a new society—the positive in the negative. The disability rights movement, for example, shares much with other movements,

including the civil rights and women's movements. Disability activists are inspired by these movements.

The disability rights movement gives us a glimpse into what a new society could look like and an idea of what it means to be human, to have new human relations. It makes me think of a quote from Karl Marx: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." People with disabilities show more than anyone how this is true. You can't apply equal standards to people because they are not equal. People can't compete on an equal basis. The disability rights movement shows how ridiculous this idea is and, in doing so, points to what a new society could be.

—Disability rights activists



One of many demonstrations opposing Medicaid cuts, this one in San Francisco, Feb. 2011.

Uszula Wislanka for News & Letters



by Suzanne Rose

London, England—A disability campaigner who set up an e-petition to stop government benefit cuts has vowed to continue her fight, after gaining more than 62,000 signatures. E-petitions need 100,000 signatures for a debate in parliament. Though the petition has failed in this regard, it is not the end for the campaign. Pat Onions, who is blind, said the government is treating disabled people as "worthless commodities" but that "doing nothing is not an option." The cause has struck a chord with people who feel the cuts are falling disproportionately on the disabled.

* * *

Zambia—The government is considering a bill honoring the principles expressed in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The bill promotes, among other things, access to justice, participation in political and public life, the right to education, employment and freedom of movement. It also prohibits torture, exploitation, violence against and abuse of people with disabilities.

* * *

Los Angeles—The County Sheriff is looking for a man accused of raping a mentally disabled woman on a city bus. The man followed her to the back of the bus and raped her. A single witness tried to alert the bus driver that the rape was happening, but nothing was done.

* * *

Hollywood—A 64-year-old woman in a wheelchair died one day after she fell backwards down the escalator at the Hollywood/Highland Metro Red Line station on Oct. 16. Brenda Carter and her attendant used the escalator because the elevator was out of service.

Québec gains a breathing space

Québec, Canada—The election of Pauline Marois as Premier of Québec has brought some change and a small but significant breathing space by getting rid of the utterly corrupt government of former Premier Jean Charest. There are openings to look at problems anew and make needed changes.

Marois attempted to reform the healthcare tax by abolishing the flat tax as a way to distribute the contributions more equitably according to income. It would impose new taxes on profits, dividends, and other monies from financial speculation. Problems arose when she tried to make it retroactive for all of 2012 with the hope of reducing the government deficit. It was impossible to implement, as there was no way to trace all previous transactions. She had to start the tax from where it is possible to follow the money trail.

Marois stood up to federal Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and has established better international relations between Québec and other countries. The election of François Hollande in France has been good for Québec. The former President of France, Nicholas Sarkozy, openly detested French-Canadians. Hollande is friendly to Québec, and when he and Marois met in Paris in October, they established important new cultural and educational links.

More important is that Marois' election has removed one of the last barriers, the former Charest government itself, from the investigation by the Charbonneau Commission of the massive corruption in Québec—especially in government construction contracts.

Unfolding is a picture of vast corruption that has been going on for over 30 years. Often, mafia operatives were the actual intermediaries between parties in a system of collusion with kickbacks and a quasi-monopoly on construction contracts. From 30% to 40% of government construction projects were hugely overpriced and poorly done and will now soon have to be redone.

In recent days, Montréal Mayor Gérald Tremblay and Gilles Vaillancourt, Mayor of Laval, were forced to resign. Former Deputy Premier Nathalie Normandeau is deeply implicated in corruption and may face charges. So much is coming up that people are calling it the "bottomless pit." In fact the entire Québec Liberal Party is tainted and it is even possible that ex-Premier Charest may be criminally liable.

Another scandal involves police brutality. A Montréal police officer, Stéfanie Trudeau, known as "Matricule/Badge 728," stopped a group of young demonstrators, illegally took their cell phones, and then shouted obscenities at them.

Too bad for her, she accidentally hit the auto-dial on one of the phones, and her tirade went into someone's voicemail. The next day it was on the radio, then on TV, and then on the internet. Former Officer Trudeau is now pounding the pavement in an entirely new way.

Elsewhere in Canada, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty, the youthful darling boy of fiscal conservatism and social liberalism, resigned on Oct. 15 without a clear reason. "Something's up," as the expression goes, and it's something to watch.

Canada is still a mess but we now have some wiggle room to figure out what to do next, and a truer picture of our society. The movement for a new human and collectivist society is now standing on higher ground, and we'll get there some day.

—Ti-Ouistiti and D. Chêneville

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WORLD IN VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Demands for freedom and dignity drove the Arab Spring. In Tunisia, in Tahrir Square in Egypt, in Daraa, Syria, and elsewhere these weren't abstract, but concrete efforts to create new human relations under conditions of dictatorship, capitalist crisis, endemic corruption, spiraling food prices and environmental degradation. While bourgeois commentators have rushed to declare the Arab Spring over, Yemen reveals that all these issues remain determinants. The overthrow of dictator Ali Abdullah Saleh was one episode in a continuing struggle.

This year Yemen has been gripped by its worst recorded famine. One of every two Yemenis is affected by the food crisis, with a million children now at risk of malnutrition. The UN considers up to five million Yemenis as being "food insecure." Billions of dollars in promised aid hasn't materialized, and much of what has come goes to infrastructural development that doesn't meet the immediate need.

The concurrent water crisis has added to the problems. Sanaa, Yemen, is in danger of becoming the first national capital to literally run dry.

U.S. SEES CRISIS AS A WAR ZONE

With all its problems, Yemen remains a destination for refugees from crisis-ridden Ethiopia and Somalia who seek work in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Over 70,000 arrived this year. They have little protection, and are often subject to kidnapping for ransom. Many women simply disappear. The crisis is regional and worldwide as well—it is part of humanity's crisis.

While the world has looked away from Yemen, the U.S. has looked and seen only a new battlefield in its endless "war on terror." Innocent Yemenis in al-Majalla, Abyanin, Marib and elsewhere—who weren't seen as human beings but as just collateral damage—have been killed by drone strikes

Mali on the brink

The deep contradictions Mali has been experiencing are about to become even more intense. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has agreed to send several thousand troops to join Malian troops in an operation to take back the northern part of Mali. The area has been primarily under fundamentalist, al-Qaeda-linked, Islamic rebel control for months. (See May-June and July-August *N&L*.) It is reported that the U.S. and/or France will provide air support.

Tens of thousands of refugees have fled the reign of terror that several fundamentalist groups—Mujao in Gao, Ansar Dine in Kidal, and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Timbuktu—have inflicted on the population. The dysfunctional interim government in Mali has been completely unable to protect its citizens in the northern part of the country, and requested military intervention by West African states.

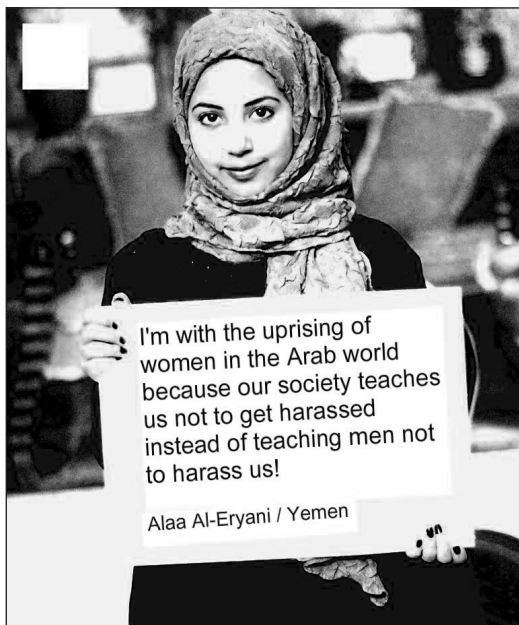
This is a double tragedy: Not only is there tremendous suffering of the civilian population, but the liberation movement of the long suppressed Tuareg people in northern Africa for autonomy/independence has now been buried under a fundamentalist push in Mali.

A military operation by ECOWAS with the assistance of the West may uproot the fundamentalist groups, though this is by no means certain. What it will not do is provide for genuine self-determination of Mali's population, nor of the Tuareg people. —E.W.

Yemen: famine, drones and freedom

controlled from thousands of miles away.

While most Yemenis have no sympathy for al-Qaeda, they remain resolutely opposed to this kind of extrajudicial execution and outright murder. In the words of lawyer Heykal Bafana: "America has lost the war. If you trash your own values, if you rip up your Constitution and destroy the very freedoms that you say define America just for the purpose of this 'war against terror,'



Yemeni women's struggle for liberation is very much a part of the revolution at Change Square. A young woman expresses herself by sending her photo to *The Uprising of Women in the Arab World*. See "Women Worldwide," p. 2.

then you've won the war for al-Qaeda. Because there is no longer an America that's recognizable."

Yemenis see the drone strikes as one more in a long series of insults and injuries, including the U.S. government's long-time support for the Saleh regime. These insults continue, for example, when U.S. Ambassador Gerald Freiestein

recently talked about business opportunities in Yemen without mentioning the current famine.

As journalist Shatha al-Harazi said, "They talk about universal values and human rights. But their actual doings speak for themselves." The thinking of the U.S. government, where every human relationship must be reduced to commodity exchange, remains light years from the concrete struggle for new human relations that has existed in Yemen, and which continues in the occupation of Change Square.

A REVOLUTION THAT CONTINUES

Change Square in Sanaa, the center of the revolution against Saleh, remains filled with tents, people and ideas. This bright light exists and contains those who are still fighting for Arab Spring and a new society, especially, of course, the women. The youth, women, workers and national minorities always recognized that getting rid of a dictator was only a first step. "We didn't come here to fight against one person. The goals of the revolution have not all been achieved," student Ibrahim al-Khatib told the *Guardian Weekly* (Aug. 21, 2012).

There is unity among the opposition in wanting to be rid of the remnants of the dictatorship that include Saleh's son, Ahmed Ali, who still controls the Republican Guard. Saleh himself remains in Sanaa and continues to wield significant political influence.

Beyond this are the continuing demands of women and youth for a new way of life and the need to respond to the global capitalist crisis. Beyond this remains a battle of ideas.

This battle won't be easy. Between local oppressors, the neighboring Saudi oil-kingdom theocrats and their capitalist allies, the revolution in Yemen has powerful enemies. But the revolutionary Reason embodied by the freedom fighters can be more powerful if it articulates

a philosophy of revolution that breaks those mental shackles and discloses a path to freedom as well as solidarity with all those the world over who fight to be free.

It is toward that end that Marxist-Humanists in the U.S. work. It is this which leads us to follow the development of the Yemeni revolution and solidarize with it. We are one with our sisters and brothers and will do all in our power to help you. The struggle continues.

Post-election Venezuela

The reelection of Hugo Chávez as president is an important moment in Venezuela and Latin America as a whole. After more than a decade in power—during which his administration practically eliminated illiteracy, drastically reduced misery and poverty, including far greater access to food and healthcare, and improved housing—the majority of the population continues to support Chávez as against the right wing neo-liberal forces supported by the U.S.

At the same time it is necessary to be aware of the limitations of this win, and the difficult problems and contradictions within the Venezuelan social process:

- The personalization of the social changes in Venezuela. Much of the election was focused on being for or against Chávez. His personality, his will, his ideas and actions, have come to represent the transformative process. Can Venezuela arrive at the deep changes needed if the changes are only embodied in a single individual, and not a social movement of the masses?

- Because the project has not fully developed as a social movement from below, changes are dependent on a state and local bureaucracy which often uses the revolutionary process for individual, narrow ends, as opposed to a process that further develops and deepens the revolution. Corruption and putting brakes on social change is everywhere within the state, and rather than being rooted out from below, it depends on the word of Chávez to check or not check it. Centralization of power has substituted for the movement from below, and with this the danger of state-capitalism is ever present.

- Objectively, Chávez's project has been a nationalist and democratic one, important and necessary, but not a socialist one, despite much rhetoric. Venezuela is more dependent than ever on the most crucial commodity in the world, oil, including its sale to the United States. The establishment of socialism needs to move toward breaking the law of value. This can only be done from below; and not alone in a single country.

- Genuine socialism is international in its viewpoint. Chávez is international in establishing an alternative trade structure, ALBA, and promoting solidarity. However, his primary focus has been anti-imperialism. This is not wrong in and of itself. But Chávez's anti-imperialism has been narrowly focused—only against the U.S. This has been reduced to "the enemy of my enemy is my friend," as in his support of Iran's repressive regime, which crushes its own people. An internationalism, which is viewed only through the lens of a narrow anti-imperialism, is not the internationalism of socialism.

- Chávez has been willing to explore some ideas of Marx and Marxism. However, a much fuller exploration of Marx's philosophy of revolution is needed throughout Venezuelan society, particular among the masses.

All of this is *not* to deny the great importance of the social processes taking place. However, the possibility of success is dependent on eliciting more profoundly the actions and ideas of the Venezuelan masses, and on a fuller development and clarification of Marx's ideas in relation to Latin American realities. —Eugene Walker

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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