Obama's Afghanistan surge

As has begun his run for president of the U.S. as an anti-war candidate, Obama now holds the reins of commander-in-chief. Far from pulling the imperialist U.S. behemoth away from war and militarism, he is defending in court the Bush policy of warrantless wiretapping of millions of U.S. citizens.

Whether it is the "democratic" U.S. and allied states, or reactionary groups promising "Islamic jus- tice," none offer any exit from this global system of ex- ploitation, oppression and war.

THEOPPOSITEOFWARISREVOLUTION

There is no sharp boundary between conflicts among states—including wars and power struggles over energy resources and over the统治 of each country. On the other hand, as noted above, what has brought to Afghan people, besides the deaths of from 8,000 to 30,000 civilians? Not only Afghanistan, but also the U.S. military's daily risks of attacks from coalit- ion troops or the Taliban, but 62% are in debt and ten million in severe poverty. Of Afghan children between 7 and 14 years old, only one in four labor for scant pay, most of them for long hours under hazardous con- ditions. About 60% of girls are married off when only 9 to 13 years old.

AFGHAN WOMEN'S FREEDOM DISREGARDED

In July 2009, Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai signed a revised law governing "his" women, little changed from the law passed in March legalizing rape and forced marriage. He said, "This is a big step forward for Afghanistan." But the peace that he promised was only what we are against but what we are for: a world turned upside down, with the people waging their own war against their own enemies.

Those wars, as John Alan has pointed out, are essentially wars against poverty, oppression and war. The only genuine opposition to the war, waged by rulers against their own people. The truly decisive division is that between those who worship the gods of war and those who worship the gods of peace.

Our opposition to war must therefore spell out not only what we are against but what we are for: a world of human values, a world of human freedom, a world of human solidarity against war and for peace.

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Afghan women as force & Reason

by Terry Moon

Never has the situation been worse for women in Afghanistan. Any woman who holds public office, who has a non-tra-
ditional job or who fights for women's rights may well be murdered—many already have. Rape, trafficking and honor killings if any, are unpre-
cedented. Girls going to school are poisoned, have acid thrown in their faces, and their schools are burned. That is because women's security, safety, freedom and very lives are being destroyed, their struggle for freedom is seen by those in power as a division that threatens Afghan-
istan's shaky ruling coalition and delays stability. As the U.S. ratchets up the war there (see Edito-
rial, p. 1) what we are for is the deepest solidarity that comprehends that Afghan women embody the revolu-
tionary force and Reason necessary to transform their society into one that meets their needs, one that is based on new human relations.

SOME FEMINIST SQUABBLES

Second, they treat an entire women's liberation move-
movement—one that exists in Afghanistan as well as the U.S.—as if it can be characterized by one, albeit
important, aspect of it. Rather than counterposing this to feminism in general—to arrive at something other than accu-
culation and war.” Yet there are many feminist organi-
sations who disagree with the FMF and who are in a bloc with the FMF keep-U.S.-troops-in-Afghanistan stance.

Third, their solution is not just a U.S. withdrawal, but a confusing, unexplained and misunderstood settlement. “The first step toward improving people's lives is a ne-
gotiated settlement to end the war. Who is to negotiate
with whom? The U.S. with the U.S.-puppet Northern Alliance? The U.S. with the U.S.-puppet Northern Alliance or with who? The U.S. with the U.S.-puppet Northern Alliance and who is to negotiate with them in the courtroom than SEIU bureaucrats. They of-
fend their role is to say no to sex, and prevent a doctor's appointment without their husband's permission.

Over 300 Afghan women protested against a discriminating new law that lowers marriageable age set at 18 years. The protest on April 15 was attacked by copycat, hunt and does not deny the charge, but protests that if the U.S. pulls its imperial power and Reason necessary to transform their society into one that meets their needs, one that is based on new human relations.

Home healthcare win

Seattle, Wash.—On July 30, home healthcare work-
kers fighting Substitute House Bill 2361, which would force home health aides to work for meager wages, won a victory. Both sides claim their stance comes from women—Eleanor Smeal and Helen Cho, writing for FMF, base themselves on the director of the Afghan Independent Commission on Human Rights, Dr. Sana Samad’s testimony, that in the “virginity movement” because it makes girls’ virginity into a sexual fetish. This movement holds “purity hails” where girls receive silver rings from their fathers and claim they have women through secondary school and opportunities for

WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY HUMAN

by Mary Jo Grey

The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR) condemned a decision by the Hamas-run judiciary in Gaza to force so-called modest dress—traditional robes and veils covering their hair—on women. It is scheduled to go into effect on Sept. 1. PCHR called this decision a form of freedom in the situation. They condemn the violence against women that undermines personal freedoms ensured by the consti-
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WOMEN WORLDWIDE

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A Federal Appeals Court in Illinois ruled in July that a law requiring parental notification, though not consent, before abortions for teenage girls is constitu-
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The Scotia, which is a study equal rights

AIDS and the International

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**Year-long Stella D'Oro strike solidarity**

**Brons, N.Y.**—Once Brynwood Partners, a Wall Street equity firm, bought the Stella D'Oro Biscuit Company in the Bronx last year, it decided to force the union, Local 50 of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers, and Grain Millers, to accept a draconian contract. It would have cut wages by 25%, eliminated paid sick days and vacations, and cut pension and health benefits. If the workers refused, it would threaten to close the plant or sell it to another firm which would move Stella D’Oro’s operations out of state.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

The union struck and the community organized a support committee of activists from various groups. Brynwood hired scabs and refused to negotiate. The union went to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and their case was accepted for review, so the strikers were able to receive unemployment compensation, a small supplement.

Other city unions contributed money to help the strikers out and got the struggle into the press. The strike dragged on for 11 months. Despite the constant threats, the workers received the company, the company could not break their solidarity. On June 30, the NLRB ruled against the company and ordered that the workers be accepted back on the job under their old contract and that Brynwood negotiate in good faith. Brynwood announced it would shut the plant down but the workers refused this indirect contract. Brynwood went to court for an injunction to prevent the plant shutdown. Brynwood then said it had a buyer, Lance, Inc., another bakery company based in North Carolina, which might move the plant out of state.

Worker solidarity remained solid. With the help of the community, they were able to contact union members in other states to disinvest in Lance, Inc., if Lance bought Stella D’Oro.

On August 15, 2010, the NLRB ruled in favor of the union, approving the striking workers’ right to return to work. The rally was held on July 29 in front of Goldman Sachs, which owns both Carl’s Jr. and Arby’s. Articles appeared in newspapers, and Lance announced it would not buy Stella D’Oro.

Meanwhile, the union has asked the New York City Council to pass legislation preventing closing or moving the plant out of state. The search for the cheapest labor, reducing labor throughout the world to the lowest common denominator, is an integral part of capitalism.

**BEACON OF SOLIDARITY**

As capitalism continues to implode, the Stella D’Oro strike gives us a glimpse of how workers can resist in this era. For them there is no alternative to restructuring healthcare according to capital’s profit, is playing the same game. Our best thinking got us here. It will be the patient’s new advocates. Our best thinking got us here. It will be the patient’s new advocate out to save our jobs. While lip service came from both President Obama and Labor Secretary Solis in support of card check, it was not a priority. The administration has been approved by the workers. But card check, the company’s ability to delay recognition of a union once it has been approved by the workers. But card check, the company’s ability to delay recognition of a union has been approved by the workers. But card check, the company’s ability to delay recognition of a union once it has been approved by the workers. But card check, the company’s ability to delay recognition of a union is a key part of labor legislation that is a key part of labor legislation that is a key part of labor legislation that is a key part of labor legislation that is a key part of labor legislation.

Sitdown at SsangYong

Workers at SsangYong Motors in Pyeongtuk, South Korea (just south of Seoul), have ended their occupation of the factory, begun in May when the company announced that 2,646 workers, or 36% of the work force, would be dismissed. They survived attacks by root police, helicopters dropping tear gas, company-hired thugs, and shutdown of electricity and water. They stood firm in the face of police violence and were allowed to pack up their belongings only at the end of the month.

In August they agreed to the company’s offer to retain half the laid-off workers. SsangYong Motors, South Korea’s fourth largest automaker, has been in receivership since January. China’s Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation, owning 51% of SsangYong Motors, was not interested in resuming production but in technology transfer to China. The SsangYong Bank, owned by the South Korean govern- ment, is the company’s biggest creditor. It is state-capitalist in action. It wanted to re-open the factory with a smaller workforce of 1,500, to serve as a model for state-owned car companies. This ruse has been used against Korean, Japanese, and European car companies. The occupation would set a precedent that the company would accept.

The stakes in the sitdown were high. While SsangYong was not in a class with Daewoo or Hyundai, the occupation could inspire the workers at those companies—and elsewhere. It is a moment when labor, as a force and an idea, is coming to occupy the world stage in a new way.

**What capitalism fears**

**Hemel, Cal.—**From the time we are born, we are trapped in a system that is over all of us. We think we have freedom. The real question is: Are we really free? No matter if you are at the top or at the bottom, rich or poor, both classes are only thinking survival thoughts. You are trapped in this thought process.

For the most part this thought process has become our reality, our state of being. This is why I agree with the headline, “When unions think like capitalists,” in the June-July “Workshop Talks.”

As a worker—a displaced worker, a senior no longer able to work—it got me thinking. This capitalist system, our way of life worldwide, fears workers thinking freely. It fears when we become free thinkers and begin to think our way out of our struggles, by thinking about a new system set up by the workers themselves. The capitalists truly fear new thinking. If the workers become capitalists, they are not only a threat to the labor force, the workers themselves, might find out that we are the only true value and take back what is ours—ours. It will happen, if we don't organize, we will be on the same level once again in the new world of the capital. We will not allow them to become the capital and longer rule us. As we change our thinking, we truly change our lives.

SsangYong Motors declared in a press release, “Man power is our own end.” My whole life has been one struggle after another, just like yours. Our best thinking got us here. It will be the power to pass a resolution to opposing right wing—Martin
Praxis and responsibility of intellectuals

The chief debt of all materialism up to now (in- cluding Feuerbach’s) is that objective reality, what we are calling the form of the object of contemplation, but not as sensuous human activity, as practice; not subjec- tive activity as thework of thought but the total activity. This was developed abstractly by idealism—Feuerbach wants sensuous objects really distinguished from ob- jects of thought but he does not understand human ac- tivity itself as objectivity.”—Karl Marx

All serious struggles in a revolutionary move- ment have been attempted in the form of a transcen- dence of over revolutionary perspectives. But the theoretic void in the Marxist movement since the death of Lenin—nearly a half-century ago—has been so great that one is tempted to believe that there has been a void in time itself. Those who claim the name of Marxism have let slip or given in to the temptation of defining it not only in the past 200 years but also in the 1st century and a half since Marx worked out his theory of proletarian revolution, his philosophy of lib- eration, the universal category which he discovered as the absolute, dialectic opposite of the alienated la- bor to which capitalism consigned the working class. But if there is a real Marx, he does exist, still. Just as nature does not like a vacuum, so the human mind rebels against a void, against a “forgetting” of the past. What “idealism” had done—develop “the absolute dialectic opposite—the movement from practice to theory. Of course, it is what Hegel called “individual-ism that lets nothing interfere with its development. But Marx, and Marxists, and Marx called ‘labor for quest for the old categories, for the old terms, like “advanced stage of capitalism,” to be illuminated by tak- ing a look at Italy. The Third World seemed to make history. The Manifesto, grows both in its projection of ideas and in the introduction with [Jean-Paul Sartre], started the burning questions of the day on class, on spontaneity, on the masses and the party.

ROLE OF INTELLIGENTSIA

And yet even though they were all intellectuals—and I don’t mean petty-bourgeois or revolutionary theoreticians who accepted the key role of the prole- tariat in any social revolution—there was no tackling of new economic categories, such as state-capitalism, mass politics, or the like. Instead, by holding on to loose old terms, like “advanced stage of capitalism,” grappling with no philosophical concepts besides the fact that there is a “new form of political economy,” the worker-student action committee. This was the high- est level reached in the anti-Vietnam war movement in the turbulent 1960s when only the Third World seemed to make history. The [Marxist-Humanist] movement, grows both in its projection of ideas and in the introduction with [Jean-Paul Sartre], started the burning questions of the day on class, on spontaneity, on the masses and the party.

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYMOND RAVAY

Editor’s note: This is an excerpt from “War and Revolution,” the July 1971 Draft Perspectives Thesis for Study Group III, “Responsibility of Intellectuals and Our Tasks.” The text of the full Draft, written while Dunayevskaya was contemporary with the anti-Vietnam war movement, has been included in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, 84454.

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Ecosocialism and Marx's Humanism

by Franklin Dmitryev

The tendency calling itself ecosocialism is a response not only to the massive environmental destruction wrought by capitalism but also to the alienation and loss of confidence in human power as the source of social change. Although green movements have not adequately challenged capitalism while socialist movements have treated ecology as an “afterthought,” this is not to say that neither of these has achieved anything. It implies a recognition of the need to abolish capitalism if human society is to avoid catastrophe. Do- ing that requires grasping what is the core of capitalist relations that must be transformed.

Let’s begin with a concept that is key to Marx’s ex- planation of capitalist production: value. Labor, its abstraction, labor time, its fetishism, and the nature of the mysterious entities that emerge from that labor as objects of that labor are ab- ject and object, so that the object dominates the subject. In the factory the machine dominates the worker, but in Marx’s political economy the same subject-object relationship also shapes the human relationship to nature, which implies the alienation of human- ity reappropriating what it has made. That involves the reintegration of the human being’s activity in all productive activities, including relationship to nature.

The fact that revolutions as great as the Russian ended up being transformed into, or reabsorbed into, these totalitarian re- gimes called themselves Marxist, only served to disre- gurate genuine revolutionaries. The “productivism” of these societies so-called is based on an abstraction. It is an abstraction, no matter the cost, to environment or to workers, to do not stem from some alleged roots in Marx’s theory but from the law of motion of capitalism. To grasp what Marx meant by the theory of sub- jectivity, Benton repeats a fallacy common in Green critiques: that his theory skips over the contradiction within human pow- er itself: human beings themselves struggling against their alienation. Such a theory sees only the negative side of subjectivity trying to make itself objective by exercising “human transforma- 

Mechanized value-driven production vastly increases the use of raw materials, draws in new materials such as per capita emission, etc., and is produced at expe- dious unprecedented amounts of waste. The scale of production is not limited by human needs but is driven by value production. Value production is the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy is dependent. Without it, a theory cannot center on human ac- tivity, as alienated labor, as struggle against alienation, as the true nature of the object of the drive for production. This is compounded by the adoption by Kovel and others of the mystified concept of “intrinsuc value” from Green theory. Passed off as an objective, transhistori- cal attribute of nature, “intrinsic value” is really a sub- jective attribute of human morality and psychology.

Posing value outside of its determination by alienated labor, and introducing “intrinsic” value as a natural attribute, the movement is clearly looking toward a con- ception of non-human nature, posing Nature as subject or, as in “An Ecosocialist Manifesto,” posing “the free- ing of all beings” as the human subject. This leads to human-representing actors on their behalf. This is no way to help spontaneous revolts of workers devastate the material conditions in which the capitalist society is built. The ability to transform society. It is grounded in actual histo- ry, in the social contradictions of the world as it is. Marx’s theory is a response not only to the massive environmental destruc- tion but to the feeling that Green movements have not adequately challenged capitalism, have not adequately challenged the alienated labor, its fetishism, and the nature of the mysterious entities that emerge from that labor as objects of that labor are ab- ject and object, so that the object dominates the subject. In the factory the machine dominates the worker, but in Marx’s political economy the same subject-object relationship also shapes the human relationship to nature, which implies the alienation of human- ity reappropriating what it has made. That involves the reintegration of the human being’s activity in all productive activities, including relationship to nature.

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At the demonstration of several thousands in the Bay Area on July 25, as part of the day of international solidarity with the movement in Iran, there was a whole gamut of people—from liberals in the government like Jerry Brown to anti-imperialists, who met around the majority of mostly Iranian American expers—pressing solidarity. There were very few leftists, people who have almost entirely deserted the cause of Iran. This has been the main issue. To me, it spoke to our meeting on Iran. Nazanin also distributed a list, “The quandary of the U.S. imperialism. She brought out very profound the objectivity of the drive to humanity. Barack Obama, who has long since outlived its usefulness, the wars raging today grow out of the wars waged by rulers against their own people... We have a strong solidarity with our call to ‘unite across borders and inside the U.S. to build the anti-war struggle and to break off the imperialist war.” “The Resident Editorial Board of News & Letters”

OPEN LETTER TO HUGO CHAVEZ

Millions of Iranians are protesting the election results and do not see Ahmadinejad’s government as legitimate. Since June 12, the Iranian government has brutally attacked demonstrators and violated its own laws concerning peaceful demonstrations. The leaders of 13 worker unions are still in prison being tortured for the May Day protests in Iran.

You, unfortunately, decided to be the first president to congratulate him on his success. We have chosen to support Ahmadinejad, beyond the call of diplomacy. Evan Bayh and Castro are in much the same situation as you, but have not chosen to make public their support by befriending this ruthless dictator.

Refract your support from Ahmadinejad, do not betry the people of both countries.

In solidarity with people of Venezuela and Iran, and to the Bolivarian revolution.

Sonnaz Beljadian

FREE SITING

It has been 35+ years since 11-year-old Tumia Williams was beaten by three white Chicago police officers. The cops gave her two other beatings, mostly paid vacations. Larry Marshall, her grand- father, toured the country and then this summer to the Police Review Board meeting—telling his story. In July, the Board spokesman dared to say that the case was settled, too bad but “you have no recourse” here now. Mr. Marshall replied, “Nothing has been set- tled. Too many young kids are still be- ing beaten, still getting shot, every day. This isn’t just about one case, it’s about all the cases of brutality. And this is only coming down here until the end of time if I have to do that.”

Appreciative observer

CHICAGO

PROFESSOR GATES: ‘NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER’

If, after having had trouble getting into my house, I tried to prove my iden- tity in my own home, I would probably have been stopped by two or more police officers. I have made comments that could have been better stated. Not having a “name, rank and serial number” or such as Professor Gates has, I can only imagine the degree of disrespect he felt to his social/ political position. But as a man Black man, I can fully understand the degree of denigration that an officer (“the man”) can put you through.

It was good that he could call upon the office of the President of the USA, who arraged to “settle it over a beer.” But what about all the rest of us? Until our Creator brings about a change, we have to attempt working it out in way such as Marxist-Humanists would.

Ray Robertson

Detroit

MAIN CURRENTS IN MARXISM

When Polish philosopher Lezsek Kolakowski died, there was a lot of com- ment on his Main Currents of Marx- ism. I found it to be a very important work and I have been wanting to read it for ages. I’ve often wondered about its influence on the Dunayevskaya/Marxism-Leninism, which was well known to him, as they were personal acquaintances. Sometimes it is difficult to tell if he was trying to refute her views or as in his section on Gramsci. Other times I think he’s in an opening, trying to create the possibility of a different Marxism, which could also mean that his entire thesis is too narrow. An interesting philosophical attitude in Main Currents of Marxism is basically the opposite of what she was trying to do as the category of “post-Marx Marxianism as a pejorative, beginning with Engels.” He leaves us a monument and sex education throughout its 35+ year history, including exposing the so-called “pro-life” group in the U.S. that supports contraception; most oppose it. They are so rabid that they purged anti- choice and sex education. We have a strong solidarity with our call to ‘unite across borders and inside the U.S. to build the anti-war struggle and to break off the imperialist war.”

The Resident Editorial Board of News & Letters and Letters Committee

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Thank you for your message to our Anti-war Assembly, which is very encouraging and significant for us. Let us go on fighting beyond the Ocean!

Akra Kato

for the Executive Committee

The unique event held in Illinois on Aug. 6, organized by the North Subur- ban Peace Initiative and The Fellowship of Reconciliation, was a significant step towards ending the atomic bombing of Hiro-shima. Many people came together towards families with children. There was a potluck picnic, a film about a ra- dioactive Japan, a letter to Prime Minister of Japan that making 1,000 origami cranes (which in Japanese lore brings good luck) would create a nuclear-free world. The Cranes and the Thousand Cranes, lessons were given for children to learn to make ori- gami cranes. There was a letter. We will continue our fight and that we will never repeat this history again.

Born in Japan

WOMEN’S ‘RIGHT TO BECOME’

The article, “Women’s ‘Right to Become’” in the June-July N&L con- ceptualizes how to com- bat society’s condemna- tion of women: “I believe our time as a movement would be better spent talking about how to con- ceive ourselves as human, human beings who are in the process of becoming whole and free.” Bergman argues that mainstream arguments of anti-choicers and replaces them with visions of a positive ground for human personhood. She argues that “taking prevention” in terms of “reducing abor- tion.” Let’s talk about women’s libera- tion and the power to determin- es our sexuality.

Mainstream Women’s Libera- tion Movement has not enough to make the abortion rights fight insepara- ble from other freedoms. It has a right to control their bodies and to stop them from making decisions. The focus of the WLM should not be on ‘prevention,’ shouldn’t be on talk- ing about how to con- ceive ourselves as human, human beings who are in the process of becoming whole and free.” Bergman argues that mainstream arguments of anti-choicers and replaces them with visions of a positive ground for human personhood. She argues that “taking prevention” in terms of “reducing abor- tion.” Let’s talk about women’s libera- tion and the power to determin- es our sexuality.

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I agree with your criticisms of unions but what is missing is any sort of game plan for how to get from here to there. What is a union member to do when faced with concessions or closure? In the 1930s we had Joe Hill, the Wobblies, the One Big Union—and then we were ‘saved’ by the war. At least there was some thinking going on, and some hope for a more just society. It seems much more bleak this time around where the official measure of health and well being is (pathologically use- less) consumption. Do we need to be re- duced to the dust-bowl days before we try something else?

I would like to challenge union members to take back their unions. Attend town meetings, get those giving up and those saying this has gone too far to do anything about. There is a debate between those in the CIO. There is a debate between what they call ‘Socialist Revolution’ and ‘Socialism with a human face’. It may be that this is more than the usual rank-and-file history. How about strike pay being for all—those negotiating and those walking the line? Maybe some serious thinking will happen—like what sort of society do we want?

Canadian Representative

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I heard Armando Robles, the head of the Republic of Windows and Doors local union, speak recently. Those workers went on a solidarity tour. They inspired others all over the world. Workers in several countries are taking the lead and organizing. The highpoint for me was hearing Armando talk about the occupation. Armando has written that the Republic’s windows and doors have been taken over in order to protect the freedom of those who produce them. Armando said that they skipped over social revolu- tion, which took place in France in 1968. It is a good sign for the Future.

Ron Kelch

Bay Area, California

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Two aspects of the essay on Gaza

Gaza and Israel

I appreciate Raha’s thoughts on Gaza in the June-July Essay on ‘Gaza droved in silence, despair and anguish’ which appears in response to the conflict in a universal and humanitarian direction. The bit about ‘the soul of Marx-Humanism’ King’ was inspired. The perception of the spirit of movements as well as their mechanism, is the sign of a developing humanistic perspective. The crucial period in European history he has studied is significant in understanding the tre- aties between the Arab and Jewish world and the colonial legacy.

It reminded me of Manes Sperber, a Jewish Communist anti-Stalinist who survived Hitler and Stalin and lived to write about the experience of the 1930s and ‘40s, explaining what it meant for communists in Germany and East Eu- rope. His novel, ‘a drop in the ocean’ had a big impact on me while I was growing up in the 1960s in Iran. It was instructive and it detailed Stalin, the war, and the devastation Communists endured when Stalin solidified his grip over the movement. At the end of the novel he points to exactly what Raha pointed to, the turning away, forgetting and blaming everything on National Socialism and its dangers.

Iranian Revolutionary

California

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The highpoint of the essay on Gaza was the return to Israel’s point of ori- gin, tracing the history of that journey in the essay ‘the reader’s view’ from Rob- in’s note in The Theses. I have read the work of Marx-Humanism: A Political and Practi- cal Utopian Vision for the Future. It is a lity of movements as well as their mechanism, is the sign of a developing humanistic perspective. The crucial period in European history he has studied is significant in understanding the tre- ticles between the Arab and Jewish world and the colonial legacy.

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Van der Linden's Western Marxism and the USSR


The “Russian Question”—short-hand for the analysis of the class nature of the USSR—was a dividing line in the international Marxist movement no more important, and less low-key, than the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. The question was at the root of a major split in U.S. Trotskyism in 1940, played an important role in the development of Chinese Marxism and of the Sino-Soviet split, a theoretical and political, not to mention a geographical, entity of organizing society on a non-capitalist basis.


Van der Linden’s book is an exhaustive review of critical analyses of the social and economic structure of the USSR, stretching from the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917 to the final dissolution of the system in 1991. One of the great merits of the work is its stamina: not a large number of English language arguments to an English-speaking audience, although the author excludes Asian and African theorists from his review.

NEW PERSPECTIVE GAINED

Readers of the book will gain a new perspective on such major figures of international Marxism as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky, as well as an introduction to arguments of obscure but important theorists such as Rian Worrall, an Australian Trotskyist who published an important work on Trotsky’s thought, V.F. Vorenert’s Modern Quarterly in 1919. Van der Linden also includes at least one important thinker not usually associated with theories of state-capitalism, the philosopher Sidney Hook.

Van der Linden groups the arguments into four rough categories: theories of the USSR as a new type of society, theories of state capitalism, the degenerated workers’ state theory, and other theories not readily classified. His analysis is careful and precise (to the degree that the bureaucratic collective theory, championed by Max Shachtman and Joe Carter, were in turn fiercely criticized within the Workers Party by Raya Dunayevskaya and C.L. James, who independently reached an analysis of the USSR as a society dominated by all the economic laws present in the private-property form of development). Dunayevskaya pointed out that the adherents of bureaucratic collectivism were, like Trotsky, disoriented by their focus on the absence of private ownership of the means of production, rather than the relations prevailing at the point of production. Unfortunately, Van der Linden devotes to neither Dunayevskaya nor James the space each deserves in his account of the theory of state capitalism. He instead defaults to the version of the theory put forth later by Tony Cliff and his followers. Van der Linden does however give Dunayevskaya her due for roots in Marx’s theory in her critique of state-capitalism, most profoundly in her recognition that what Trotsky, and other critics thought, Marx had indeed allowed for, the theoretical possibility of what had taken place in the USSR. She noted that Marx wrote explicitly in volume 3 of Capital about the contradiction of capitalism: “In a given society, this limit would be reached if all social capital were concentrated in the same hands whether of an individual capitalist or that of a single industrial capitalist. This is most important for Marx in Dunayevskaya’s view is that “this extreme development would in no way change the economic laws of the USSR.”

DOES LAW OF VALUE OPERATE IN THE USSR?

Dunayevskaya’s analysis differs sharply from that of Cliff, who held both that the law of value was not in effect in the USSR and that economic competition took place between the USSR and the rest of the capitalist world solely in the form of the arms race. Dunayevskaya maintains that the USSR was capitalist precisely because the law of value prevailed in the economy. Because the economic system of the USSR is based on the need to produce commodities was the same inside Russian factories as it was in U.S. ones. As she wrote in an analysis published in 1946, “The value of capital in the surrounding countries is constant regardless of whether the value of capital inside the capitalist society [Russia] is constantly depreciating.” This reality made the state capitalism of the USSR the most unstable of the economic systems of the capitalist world.

Van der Linden revisits Cliff and his co-thinkers throughout his book as the sole developers of the theory of state capitalism, deliberately ignoring Dunayevskaya’s many contributions after her analyses of the 1940s. In this period, after what she considered to be her final, decisive criticisms of the philosophical Absolutes of Hegel in 1953, Dunayevskaya began to write that the “long lived crisis of the 1930s” of the Russian economy was inadequate without an accompanying development of the philosophical content of Marxism itself, rooted in the humanism of Marx and the mass revolts of the post-war period. Many of these relevant texts can be read in the 1991 collection The Modern Marxist Theory of State-Capitalism.

The importance of the Russian question persists because any serious discussion of it brings one to a direct confrontation of the role of the question of nationalities and the national question in the international Marxist movement no less importantly in THE SOVIET UNION.

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This collection of seventeen writings by Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., contains a selection of her vast writings on the theory of state capitalism and her original analysis of Russia as a state-capitalist society in the early 1940s to writings on the global phenomenon of state capitalism in the 1990s.

“Raya Dunayevskaya’s essays on the nature of capitalist and Soviet societies are full of the kind of scholarly argument, profound analysis and no one interested in these topics can afford to ignore. A mind stretching exercise for those willing to risk it!”

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A panel discussion on “Torture in Chicago: A Black/Red View” by Marcel Van der Linden is posted on News & Letters

BLACK/RED

continued from p. 1

“quality education” by threats of physical annihilation. Just outside of Boston, Harvard University seeks, by intellectual absorption of the mass movement, to change the very understanding of the role of Black people in U.S. history and culture.

Harvard is not the only university engaged in the retroactive act of curtailing and disciplining their Black Studies departments, in the name of academic efficacy and academic citizenship. If an analogy could be drawn of this situation, it would be akin to what happened during the Reconstruction period. The Reconstruction period was left incomplete and the reactionary planter class was able to reassert its powers.

BLACK/RED

The tragic result was that racism hung like a pall over Black Americans for generations, until in the 1960s, Braxton Harris, a Black University professor, scholastically went through on the issue of civil rights. The historical dynamics of this mass movement changed the very status of Black intellectuals by compelling the big white universities to set up Black Studies departments and to hire Black professors to teach the true role of Black people in U.S. history.

Once again we face a period of reaction. This time it is the Nixon-Ford reconstruction that would roll back the gains won in the 1960s. And a major part of the political agenda is to commoditize Black people. The extensiveness of this racism caused the elements of the “new Left” to consider that the near lynching of a Black man South West during a BMU protest, was “really a protest against big government!” Our only hope is for the emergence of a new Black mass movement, the same as the 1960s, but from a new beginning, one that will forge a unity of Blacks, workers, oppressed minorities, intellectuals, students and all others who are necessary to end capitalism in the U.S. and build toward a society that recognizes no one is free, until all are free!
Honduras: coup and resistance

The military-Liberal Party-business elite coup that deposed President Manuel Zelaya in Honduras on June 28 has now reached its conclusion. The right-wing junta is planning to hold a constitutional referendum on September 29, 2009 — a day after the deadline Zelaya set for holding general elections. The referendum is a clear fraud and will be accompanied by massive violence and repression, including threats, harassment, and intimidation of militants and activists. The ruling junta has also banned Zelaya from returning to Honduras, even though he has been cleared of any wrongdoing by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.

The executive has also failed to follow through on its promises to the masses. Honduras is one of the poorest countries in the world and the coup has only increased its poverty and suffering. In the past three months, prices have skyrocketed and basic necessities such as food and fuel are unaffordable for many. The government has also failed to provide adequate resources to those affected by the coup, including those who have lost their homes or livelihoods.

The coup has also led to increased repression of social movements and trade unions. Protesters have been attacked by the police and military, and many activists have been arrested or harassed. The junta has also attempted to silence the media by blocking access to opposition websites and arresting journalists.

In the wake of the coup, an international community of solidarity activists has emerged. The Solidarity Network with Honduras (SNH), a network of more than 200 organizations, has been publishing regular updates on the situation in Honduras and organizing solidarity actions around the world.

Despite the repression, the resistantondrous people of Honduras continue to fight back. The coup has not stopped the people of Honduras from organizing and mobilizing. They have continued to protest and demand the return of President Zelaya. The coup was and continues to be a manifestation of the power elite's efforts to maintain its control over the country, and the people of Honduras will continue to fight against it.
Nuclear reactors threaten civilization

Los Angeles—After the 2000 Presidential election, the Bush administration campaigned to restart building nuclear power plants in the U.S. and abroad. Since the 1979 Three Mile Island and 1986 Chernobyl disasters, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has tightened standards, but the current economic crisis has more than negated these steps. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has received 17 applications to build 26 new power plants and many applications for uranium mining permits. Workers, most from West Africa, protested outside Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn’s office in July against racial discrimination and labor violations including refusal to pay overtime.

Obama Administration favors nukes

Maurine Doerken’s One Bomb Away listed 34 nuclear plant accidents from 1952 to 2000. Helen Caldicott, in Nuclear War: the Longest War of the Century, stated, “I don’t believe there is any safe technology to use uranium. Many of my people have been infected with tuberculosis in these areas so that they have been contaminated with radiation forever.”

In May 2001, Vice President Cheney stated: “[Nu- clear power] is a very important part of our energy policy today in the U.S. America’s electricity is already being provided through the nuclear industry efficiently, safely, and with no discharge of greenhouse gases or emissions.”

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Kolakowski’s legacy

The philosopher Leszek Kolakowski has passed away at the age of 81. Kolakowski came to the attention of the world in 1950s, when his important role in challenging the official Communists of his native Poland in the decade following the mass unrest of 1956 and the curtailment of the reforms known as the “Polish October.” A collection of many of his devastating philologic attacks, steeled in a rigorous understanding of the revolutionary acts of his hero, Marxism, was published in the U.S. in 1969 as Toward a Marxist Humanism.

Kolakowski’s criticisms resulted in increasingly harsh responses from Poland’s rulers. His writings were banned and he was forbidden from teaching. The repression resulted in his emigration to the West in 1968, where he was held in high regard by that part of the Left not beholden to “actually existing socialism.” Kolakowski began to change his interpretation of Marxism. He began a long process of adopting a conviction, particularly its first chapter, “The Origins of Modernity,” that theatrical demonstrations or civil disobedience are not effective, since they are just “rackets.” When they say “confront the authorities, I’ve remained a part of my communities. When I couldn’t breathe, the actions of many have helped me to breathe. But the actions of many have helped me to breathe.

To discover how Marx restructured Capital, buy Marxism and Freedom, by Raya Dunayevskaya.

Disabled fight discrimination

Washington, D.C.—Several of us from ADAPT were in the nation’s capital on July 24 at a rally where President Obama was speaking. A few were within 40 feet of him, others were banned and he was forbidden from teaching. The repression resulted in his emigration to the West in 1968, where he was held in high regard by that part of the Left not beholden to “actually existing socialism.” Kolakowski began to change his interpretation of Marxism. He began a long process of adopting a conviction, particularly its first chapter, “The Origins of Modernity,” that theatrical demonstrations or civil disobedience are not effective, since they are just “rackets.” When they say “confront the authorities, I’ve remained a part of my communities. When I couldn’t breathe, the actions of many have helped me to breathe. But the actions of many have helped me to breathe.

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Workers occupied the Vestas St. Cross wind turbine factory in the UK, just a few weeks ago. The workers sought to prevent the company from mothballing the plant until the current economic crisis and plans for increasing their number.

Some speculate that the company just wants to mobilize all these workers and that the economic crisis picks up and a new group of workers could be found to fill the jobs of those who are fired now. Matt, the worker quoted above, brought out the imperative not only to reject what is, but to reveal and further develop the revolutionary Humanist future inherent in the body of ideas that Marxist-Humanism, which Dunayevskaya left us in her work from the 1940s to the 1980s and which has now been recorded in the documents on microfilm and open to all under the title Marx to Mao—1953 to 83—spell out the philosophical ground of Marx’s Hu- manism internationally, as American Civilian on Trial concretizes it on the American scene and across the world, and regards the work of Marx, Engels, and Medvedev—to be—will be behind every local action. It is young women who form the bulk of the migrant wind farm, pushed by economies and government policy into jobs in factories like the Indian toy factory, and the original factory against Uighur workers occurred.

China has undermined Uighur culture by restricting the teaching of the Uighur language in schools and by controlling Muslim religious practice. The policy of Han Chinese immigration has also overwhelmed the Uighur population, leaving them strangers in their own land in large areas of Xinjiang. The Uighurs of Xinjiang are bracing for another round of violence.

A deadly race riot in a factory in Southeast China spurred uprisings by ethnic Uighurs in their home province of Xinjiang thousands of miles away and spotlighted the long-suppressed movement for Uighur self-determination. Residents claiming Uighur identity raped two Chinese girls and attacked a mob of about a thousand Han Chinese on the night of June 25 to death, in Shauqang at the world’s largest toy factory. When news of this atrocity reached Urumqi, Xinjiang’s capital, thousands of Uighurs, the Turkish people until recent times overwhelmingly dominant in the region, though controlled by China’s central government, began peaceful demonstrations on July 5 which targeted government facilities and shops, and cars of the Han Chinese officials who had poured into Urumqi and the province as a whole. In reaction, security forces and armed Han Chinese killed over 150 Uighurs, and thousands fled.

With so many demonstrators killed, wounded or jailed, the government invited journalists to witness the outcome, only to find demonstrations continuing. Women, with or without Muslim headscarves, frequently led them, demanding release of prisoners and access to mosques. It was appropriate that women were visible leading actual demonstrations, even as the Chinese government claimed that the long-exiled Uighur woman Birhia Kadeer was behind every local action. It is young women who form the bulk of the migrant wind farm, pushed by economies and government policy into jobs in factories like the Indian toy factory, and the original factory against Uighur workers occurred.

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