

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Job cuts guarantee needless deaths

by Htun Lin

Healthcare rationing? Death panels? We've been constantly subjected to these scary phrases from the right-wing propagandists, warning us that with President Obama's healthcare reform, government bureaucrats will pull the plug on grandma. Demagogues from that end of the political spectrum have been trying to reduce Medicare spending since its inception and refused to increase Medicaid a few years ago, even when that meant a lot of grandmas and disabled were thrown out of nursing homes in states facing budget crises.

The truth is that, long before we had heard of Obama, we already had healthcare rationing by HMOs and insurance industry death panels. We have heard horror stories about insurance industry bureaucrats whose decisions often deny lifesaving remedies. In addition, an estimated 18,000, young and old, working and unemployed, die each year from treatable ailments because they don't have access to affordable healthcare.

What has not gotten any play in the news are the further casualties and deaths from speed-up of healthcare workers. Our own unions have been allied with management's cost-control directives. They say we should be glad to have a job, we should help the company downsize, help them outsource our jobs, and that our well-being is dependent on the bottom line of the corporation.

Speed-up has caused an overall decline in the quality of healthcare in this country. That is the business-

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BLACK/REDVIEW

Haiti's terrorist army

by John Alan

As John Alan is ill, we are reprinting his column from May 1992. It remains a significant description of the relations between Haiti and U.S. imperialism, now with the addition of UN troops aiding in the repression of Haiti's people.

Haiti has not been a top story in the news in recent weeks. According to Haitians living in the U.S. with contacts in Port-au-Prince, Haiti is still a fearful place to live. The army and the police continue to persecute people believed to be supporters of ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. And the OAS (Organization of American States) economic embargo is a cruel farce; it does nothing to hurt the army and the wealthy, but is creating a near famine among poor Haitians.

As for the negotiations between the National Assembly and Aristide for his return to power, there is no movement. The army leaders have veto power over the negotiations and are adamant in their opposition to Aristide's army "reform" proposal.

With last September's bloody coup in mind and the continuing arrogance of the army's leadership, it's time that we take a brief look at the history of the Haitian army. Why has it been a source of political power ever since the U.S. Marines left Haiti in 1934?

First, it is obvious that the Haitian army does not exist to defend Haiti against an external military force. And second, while the army can't be separated from the existing class relations in Haiti, it remains clear that its original role as the *Garde*, i.e., the U.S.

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Afghan lives and freedom sucked into U.S. quagmire

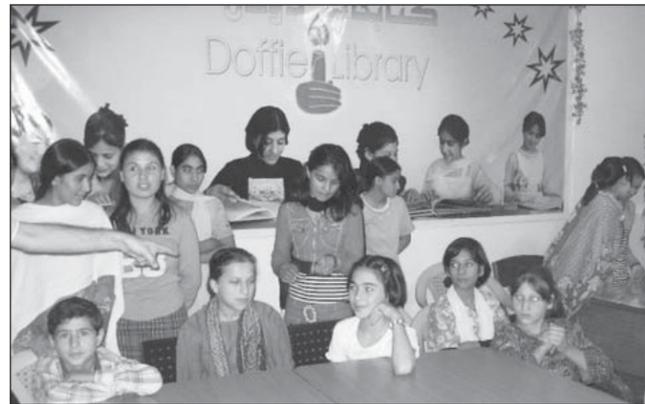
by Terry Moon

Afghanistan: 30 years of war; a decade of drought; a fraudulent election and government rife with corruption; a murderous Taliban army growing in technical sophistication and strength; eight years of a U.S. occupying army whose purpose has always been U.S. self-interest. This is the reality that is the daily life of Afghans.

Yet those Afghan lives are the last thing considered in all the wrangling in the U.S. around the fraud-ridden election, and Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal's much anticipated assessment of the U.S. war effort there. Rather, all are concerned with the popularity—or non-popularity—of the war, not only with the U.S. electorate, but even within the Democratic Party. The main concern is damage control.

The Taliban's purposeful targeting of allied troops from Germany, Italy and Canada has strengthened internal opposition in each of those countries, scaring allied leaders, fearful only of not being reelected.

In the face of McChrystal's devastating assessment calling for at least 40,000 more U.S. troops and years of commitment to keep from losing the war, President Obama, who appears reluctant to commit more troops, said, "The first question is: Are we doing the right thing?"



Orphanage for girls in Afghanistan. When asked what they want to become, they say they want to be doctors, engineers and teachers.

Code Pink www.flickr.com/photos/codepink/

What does he mean by "the right thing"? The U.S. has never done "the right thing" when it comes to the people of Afghanistan. The exact opposite is the case.

The latest failure of the U.S.'s supposed initial aim in 2001 of "bringing democracy to Afghanistan" was U.S.-sponsored leader Hamid Karzai's complete disdain for the right of his own people to choose their leaders. Karzai has revealed himself as a gross opportunist who has fostered incompetence, cronyism, and extreme corruption in his own government. He has sold women's deep desire for freedom for the most paltry gains and appointed misogynists, hard-line Islamic fundamentalists, criminal

warlords and drug profiteers to his cabinet.

So corrupt was the election that up to one third of the votes cast for Karzai need to be examined for fraud according to European Union election monitors, while the UN Electoral Complaints Commission ordered a recount of ballots in 10% of polling places. That 10% involves 1.35 million of the 5.66 million of the total votes cast or 24%. There were reports of "phantom polling centers"; of people showing up to vote and all the ballots being already marked and cast; of districts where every single ballot was marked for Karzai; of polling places

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Rising fascism grounded in American racism

The tens of thousands who participated in the reactionary Sept. 12 march on Washington, D.C., signaled an ominous new challenge from the far Right. The march was filled with racist attacks: pictures of President Obama as a "witch doctor" with a bone through his nose; signs telling him to "go back to Kenya," questioning his U.S. citizenship; Obama as Hitler, as Stalin, as Satan. It conjured up images of the worst in U.S. history, and attempted to negate everything that is revolutionary in that history as well.

Obama's response has been measured and pragmatic, even to denying that racism is an issue. But this open display of the most vile racism toward him was also directed at the heart of the needed American revolution. It is no accident that on Sept. 12 racist signs and slogans were side-by-side with fascist ones such as "Oust the Marxist dictator! They did it in Honduras, we can do it here!" and "We came unarmed—this time!"

THE RADICAL RIGHT'S BID FOR POWER

This rhetoric is the mark of such reactionary and neo-fascist groups as the John Birch Society, the neo-Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan and the LaRouche organization, who all participated. These forces are making a bid for control of the Republican Party—the march was addressed by a number of "mainstream" Republican politicians, like Sen. Jim DeMint (SC) and Rep. Mike Pence (IN).

The organizers of this movement are highly conscious of what they aim for—state power. To gain it they have even studied the Left, as announced on the organizers' *FreedomWorks* website: "...the Left...[has] us beat when it comes to symbolism, activism, and dominating the public debate....We have to remember that this is a March on Washington, which should conjure up images of the street protests in other countries. If we want the politicians to pay attention, we believe it is imperative that we keep our edge, tailor our message narrowly and maintain the populist imagery."

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, right-wing militias have again begun recruiting and spreading across the national landscape. A number of law enforcement officers have been shot and killed by right-wingers upset by Obama's election, and a census worker in Kentucky was recently found lynched with the word "Fed" written across his chest. The potential for much greater violence was seen in Oklahoma City

in 1995. When the idea of armed opposition to the government comes together with the historic racism embodied by the far Right, it becomes nothing less than a warrant for genocide.

DIALECTICS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

All of this reactionary rage is directed against the multi-racial support that brought Obama to the White House. As *N&L* said at the time, "It is impossible to discount the percentages of youth, women, immigrants, and Black voters who participated in the election, some for the first time in their lives. But the dimension most crucial was the number of white workers who cast their vote for a Black candidate" (Dec. 2008/Jan. 2009). The Right aims to demoralize and destroy the movement that carries this hope for a real change.

There is much that President Obama can be criticized for, including his conciliationism and pragmatism, and his continuing support for Bush's wars. But care must be taken to separate that critique from the attacks by the Right. *N&L* has challenged the anti-war movement to take a revolutionary internationalist ground, as opposed to that of reactionaries like Hitler-apologist Patrick Buchanan, or racists like Lew Rockwell and others who have courted the anti-war movement.

In the dialectics of the needed American revolution, the Black masses as vanguard come together with labor at historic turning points. Today, revolutionaries have both opportunity and responsibility to connect with the legacy of Abolitionism and of Marx's development of the philosophy of revolution in permanence. It is our responsibility to the needed American revolution, to world revolution, to human history.

This has always been the Marxist-Humanist position: "By the 1860s, the Black dimension became, at one and the same time, not only pivotal to the abolition of slavery and victory of the North in the Civil War, but also to the restructuring of [Marx's] *Capital* itself. In a word, the often-quoted sentence: 'Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black skin it is branded,' far from being rhetoric, was the actual reality and the perspective for overcoming that reality. Marx reached, at every historic turning point, for a concluding point, not as an end but as a jumping-off point, a new beginning, a new vision" (*American Civilization On Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*, Raya Dunayevskaya).

—Gerry Emmett

Childcare & Marx's vision of the future

by Beth Sandner and Urszula Wislanka

This article is based on a discussion at the Institute for Critical Study of Society in Oakland during an International Women's Day Celebration on March 8, 2009.

California's budget crisis occasioned draconian cuts in funding for education and social services, including services for children. Of the \$15.5 billion in budget cuts, K-12 schools took the biggest hit, \$6 billion; universities \$2.8 billion; medical services \$1.3 billion; plus almost another billion from in-home support services and children's health insurance programs.

The present crisis calls for revisiting Marx on many fronts, but especially what he considered the most fundamental way we reproduce our humanity: the man/woman relation and the social endeavor of raising children. For capitalism, what counts as real is only what produces value. Education and healthcare, whole areas of life, are of concern to capitalism only as an "expense," which it seeks to minimize. Since the dawn of capital-

ESSAY

Crystal Lee Sutton



The desperate need for healthcare reform became even more a reality on Sept. 11, when we lost one of our own. Crystal Lee Sutton died of brain cancer at 68 because her insurance company refused to cover treatment for her illness.

The inspiration for the 1979 movie *Norma Rae*, Sutton called her case and thousands like it "an example of abuse of the working poor...how can it take so long for them to decide when it could be a matter of life and death? It is almost like, in a way, committing murder." By the time the insurance company decided to cover her medication, it was too late. She died two months later. —MJG

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

Women in Uganda celebrated a victory in August after intense public protests led to the re-arrest of the police commander, James Peter Aurién, for the self-confessed murder of his wife. Domestic violence is a daily occurrence in Uganda, with 78% of women experiencing some form of abuse. In 2008 over 70 women were killed by their spouses, with the number on the rise.

—Information from *Inter Press Service News Agency*

Women's and human rights organizations in Mexico are fighting the confirmation of Arturo Chávez Chávez as the country's new attorney general, accusing him of covering up the mass murders of women and the disappearances of men in Ciudad Juárez in the late 1990s. Mothers of femicide victims organized a public protest in Chihuahua City, with Women in Black and other groups staging similar demonstrations.

—Information from *Mexidata.info*

Women have been the target of violence for nearly two decades in Haiti, despite five years of UN peacekeepers. Kidnapping, criminal violence, gang warfare and armed confrontation have increased the number of reported cases of sexual violence against women and girls. Last year the number of rapes increased 40% from 1,100 to 1,600. Nicole Magloire, of Haitian Violence Against Women, feels these numbers are due to women feeling safer reporting the crimes.

More than 200 women and men from 17 states traveled to Nebraska at the end of August in support of Dr. Larry Carhart, one of the few physicians in the U.S. to provide late-term abortions. Federal marshals stopped protecting his clinic despite the right wing's murder of Dr. George Tiller in May, and a new campaign targeting Carhart by Operation Rescue. Pro-choice demonstrators outnumbered anti-choicers 3-to-1.

—Information from *Feminist News*

ism, women are noticed as "contributing" only when they become a source of direct exploitation.

In the chapter on "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry" in *Capital*, Vol. I, Marx describes how capitalists intensified extraction of surplus labor within a given working day by revolutionizing production, by introducing machinery: "The labour of women and children was...the first thing sought for by capitalists who used machinery."

Women who enter the paid workforce receive lower wages. Women with children earn even less, and fields caring for children—which are largely made up of women workers—are among the lowest paid. It is symbolic of what is valued: women's work when it is entirely outside the market is unnoticed and unpaid; as it is brought into the market, it is lower-paid. Childcare workers' pay hovers at minimum wage.

Yet women with very young children are increasingly in the workforce. Before World War II, 25% of mothers with young children worked outside the home, reaching 77% in 2000. U.S. government policies on welfare by 2008 forced 75% of single mothers to work!

These increased numbers mean fewer adults at home to share in the care of young children or to be in the neighborhood to create a loose network of support for children. In numbers greater than ever, families are depending on paid care for their children.

EDUCATION AS EXPENSE TO BE MINIMIZED?

We see increased commodification of childcare today. Quality care for children depends on relationships. Yet maintaining profit in the childcare industry, as in any other, depends on cutting labor costs—forcing low wages. That leads to high turnover, disrupting successful relationships. Labor costs are also reduced through higher ratios of children to adults, also preventing nurturing relationships. Some of the fastest growing childcare businesses in the 1980s and 1990s were childcare chains: KinderCare, La Petite Academy and others.

Whether a value-creating activity or not, for capitalism education and care of children are only an expense to be minimized. Marx's chapter on machinery denounces the "intellectual desolation" of workers' children. Where schools were mandated, capitalists provided a semblance of education, by counting hours in a "school room" often staffed by illiterate "teachers," which substituted for actual education.

In many places Marx derides what passed for education: the classroom setting, the anointing of knowledge as a special privilege, passing through examinations, etc. As the opposite of stunting growth, he poses development of the whole human being:

"That monstrosity, the disposable working population held in reserve, in misery, for the changing requirements of capitalist exploitation, must be replaced by the individual...available for the different kinds of labor...the partially developed individual, who is the bearer of one specialized social function, must be replaced by a totally developed individual..." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 618).

How is such an individual to develop? The struggle for care and education of our children has always been the struggle of workers and has achieved most when the workers' movement is at its peak. Public education and work rules for families and children are part of the battleground of class struggle: on one side schools serve as "child care" while parents are at work, on another they are fought for as rights by and for people who never before had access to formal education.

STRUGGLES FOR EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

The first big leap in public education was during post-Civil War Reconstruction, which brought free public education to the South. The struggle for rights and access to schooling continued in 1903 when Mother Jones led a caravan of striking children from the textile mills of Lexington, Pa., to the home of President Theodore Roosevelt in New York, calling for an end to child labor and the provision of schools. Still, industrialists who opposed child labor reform laws viewed it as "foolish to give certain classes of children an education and an opportunity to develop, because they are designed by God and nature to be of a lower order" (Felix Adler, "Child Labor in the United States and Its Great Attendant Evils," *Annals of the American Academy*, 25:554).

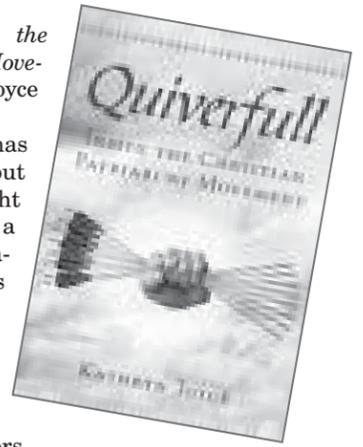
Organized workers and African Americans, through continued demands for access, brought federal funding into early childhood care during the Depression and Civil Rights Movement. Federal funding was provided for early childhood care in World War II to allow the increase of women in the workforce. *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954 reflected the struggle, with the victorious ruling stating, "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," but without any promise for equal funding. The 1960s War on Poverty initiated Head Start, until the Obama administration the only time since WWII that funds have been dedicated to young children. Many victories have been won in the form of concessions from the state, which mediates social conflicts in order to preserve capitalism.

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Ideological babies

Quiverfull: Inside the Christian Patriarchy Movement, by Kathryn Joyce (Beacon Press, 2009).

Kathryn Joyce has written a book about how the religious right is largely based upon a movement to restore patriarchy and how this is harmful to women and society. Meaning "rule of the fathers," patriarchy is a society where women are submissive to men, and fathers are in complete control of their families.



Joyce investigates the patriarchy movement's extreme manifestation, "Quiverfull," where women postpone sex until marriage, after which they have as many children as possible. Quiverfull children are meant to be an "army of God" (a Biblical reference comparing a father's children to his quiver full of arrows) that will "reclaim" the culture of the U.S. and the world for the religious right. The children are homeschooled, taught creationism and taught that the founders of the U.S. intended it to be a fundamentalist Christian country.

SEPARATE AND UNEQUAL EDUCATION

Boys are sent to religious right colleges to be trained as leaders—the "heroes" who will change society. Girls, who are not allowed to attend college, are trained in housekeeping and childcare and taught they are the property of their fathers until they become the property of their husbands. It is drilled into girls that submission to men is for their own good because they are more easily deceived, more deceitful, and more sinful than men. Wives are trained to police their negative thoughts towards their husbands, and taught that if husbands abuse them it is the wife's fault.

Some matches are arranged to join prominent families. But even a man who is not successful in the outside world can have a position of respect as the "lord" and "patriarch" of his home in a Quiverfull community, even though these large families end up in poverty. Although Quiverfull is extreme, all of its positions have filtered into mainstream conservative Christianity.

The main goal of the patriarchy movement is destroying feminism. The movement is especially critical of liberal churches that have accepted an "egalitarian" feminism that allows women to have careers, contraception, and equal relationships with men. It says that these will lead to a "radical" feminism that approves of abortion and gay rights and that will lead to "social anarchy" caused by "individual rights."

Joyce describes how the movement has established gynecologists and pharmacists who refuse to write or fill prescriptions for contraceptives. She describes movement activists who want to outlaw women's suffrage, no-fault divorce, day care centers, Head Start, stem-cell research and in-vitro fertilization, and end laws that punish child abuse. They want to replace pensions for individuals with those for male heads of households and return to sex-segregated job listings. She describes how such activists have already been appointed to positions in the U.S. government. For example, Dr. David Hagar was appointed by the Bush administration to the FDA to oppose contraception and abortion.

INTERNATIONALIZATION OF OPPRESSION

The patriarchy movement arose within mainstream churches and spread to other denominations and congregations, sometimes taking them over as it did with the Southern Baptist Convention. This movement has infiltrated the UN and established a bloc of antiabortion nations. Religious right groups have joined with Mormon leaders and the Vatican to establish the World Congress of Families (WCF) to fight women's and gay rights internationally. The WCF also works with Muslim groups, although they use the fear of an Islamic takeover of Europe to influence Europeans to have large families. They promote the racist notion of a "demographic winter" which claims white Europeans are dying out to be replaced by "foreigners" if they don't start reproducing more quickly.

Patriarchal oppression of women occurs internationally in fundamentalist Jewish and Muslim societies without the influence of the Christian religious right. Joyce interviews a doctor at an Israeli women's clinic whose clients are Jewish ultra-Orthodox. They are under the same pressure as Quiverfull women and suffer medical problems and even death from the constant pregnancies as well as constant labor in the home. The doctor describes these women as becoming "de-selfed" to the point where they can't say that they want to stop having babies.

Joyce doesn't propose answers about how to stop the patriarchy movement. However, this is a very important book that needs a wider distribution because it exposes the extremes to which the religious right will go to take over society and explains the harmfulness of patriarchy to women and society. —Adele

SK Hand Tools strike over healthcare

Chicago—I work for SK Hand Tools, employed by this company almost 23 years. We're on strike now over unfair labor practices. Our employer unilaterally and without notice took our insurance away as of May 1. Maybe three weeks later, we started finding out we were no longer covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, when people started going to the doctor or filling their prescriptions.

Instead of paying the co-payment, they were asked to pay the full amount. One guy had to have emergency surgery for a hernia, and it cost around \$20,000, so he still owes a big portion of that. There's a guy that, maybe a year and a half ago, had a kidney transplant. He needs dialysis. Once you have surgery, especially a kidney transplant, you have to have continuous care like dialysis and medications.

We're out here 24/7. We're learning as we go—99% of us here have never been involved in a strike before. It's amazing how much support we are getting. There is also a great unity between all of us—we are Mexican, Polish, Vietnamese, everything. It's like a little UN and everybody gets along. We feel very close. Everybody brings food some days; we take turns.

We are with Teamsters Local 743, and we've gotten a lot of support from other locals. Gov. Quinn was here and gave us a lot of support. A few weeks ago Dan Hynes (the Illinois Comptroller running against Gov. Quinn) was here. We've had so much support. Jobs with Justice is here, and so many locals I can't even name them all. A lot of restaurants have come and donated food. We need a lot of support, a lot of people to come up here and strike with us.

WORKSHOPTALKS

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as-usual "death panel" already practiced by HMOs and nursing home chains. Preventable death and injuries from accidents arise from HMO cost-cutting measures and divestments, resulting in hospital bed eliminations, reductions in clinic services and ER closures.

Kaiser HMO's immediate reaction to impending healthcare reform was to announce more layoffs, including nearly one third of Oakland's housekeepers. Nearly all housekeepers told me they had no faith that SEIU will really fight these layoffs.

As one Black housekeeper put it, "They say they want to improve performance and reduce the time it takes to get rooms ready. But tell me how they're going to do this by laying one third of us off? You know what's going to happen? They're going to make the rest of us work three times faster."

Cost-control ideologues fail to view the whole healthcare issue as one of safety, not just finance. Every day yet another safety measure is eliminated in the hospital. Built-in redundancies were originally created to prevent accidents, much in the same way airlines use redundancies in their planes to prevent accidents.

For HMO managers, it's all about emulating manufacturing's "just-in-time" delivery, as if healthcare were just another product like shoes and tires. Our former CEO, Dr. David Lawrence, once said, in a moment of candor, "If [the HMO industry] were in the airline business, we would have been shut down a long time ago."

Every day our nursing supervisors are ordered by budget directors to send nursing staff home in the middle of their shifts if the patient total goes down. Nurses are called back to work "just in time" only in the last hour, and only if the patient census goes up. They make sure there is no buffer for the emergency situations that arise. Nurses are constantly overworked and missing their lunches and breaks. With labor costs under such tight controls, the HMO has reported handsome quarterly profits. These profits didn't stop our HMO from announcing a new round of layoffs.

Safety and prevention are the essence of healthcare in rebuilding the health infrastructure. Dealing with the imminent threat of catastrophic epidemics, like SARS and antibiotic-resistant TB, require treatment for all humans, immigrant or not, because such illnesses know no nationality.

For a moment President Obama, in his speech to Congress, turned the question of healthcare away from the tug of war over costs, which healthcare workers experience every day. Obama cited a letter from Sen. Edward M. Kennedy to be read after his death. He wrote that healthcare was "above all a moral issue; at stake are not just the details of policy, but fundamental principles of social justice and the character of our country."

From the point of view of those who are struggling to provide quality care, speaking about healthcare as a moral issue, something we "ought" to do, is inadequate. It is about reclaiming the very meaning of our labor. Must our labor be only a means to life under the regimen of capitalism, or can it be directly about enhancing the well-being of ourselves and others?



Strikers from Teamsters Local 743 picket SK Hand Tools after the company unilaterally canceled their health insurance.

We might be having a rally soon in front of Sears because we manufacture Craftsman tools for Sears. We manufacture tools, hand tools. Most of the people are setup and operators. We set up and operate our own machinery. I work on the stamp machine, putting the part number on all the parts.

These machines are very difficult to run. We always say that we have to hold them together with rubber bands and band-aids because that's how old they are. We know how to set them up because we've been working on them for so many years. We have to put little shims in.

Scabs are working in there now. If they make a ratchet wrong, if it's not assembled properly, somebody could get hurt. I know of six scabs who came in there yesterday. I heard today they're interviewing for jobs. We're hoping that it will be very difficult for them to set up.

We used to have a crew that cleaned the offices and bathrooms. They got rid of the cleaning people. We used to have security. They don't have any more security. They say, If you want a clean bathroom you clean your own.

We're in the middle of negotiations. The reason we're out here is unfair labor practices. SK also has a plant in McCook, Ill. Between that plant and here on 47th we have 70 or 75 workers. The boss is asking for \$4 an hour from us for six months to help them move McCook over here. I moved a couple of years ago from one apartment to another and I didn't ask him for any help.

On top of that, he wants 20% of our wages. A lot of us have four weeks vacation because we've been here so long. He wants to cut that down so everybody gets two weeks. This guy wants an arm and a leg and then some. Anytime he wants to he can fly back and have free healthcare—he's French.

We're not going to give up. Everybody is supporting us. And we support them too. Everybody needs healthcare. Not just the people here at SK. I want to ask people, if it happened to you, what would you do? Everybody needs to stand up for their rights and not just say, I have no choice, because I need my job. Stand up for your rights. Demand what you're entitled to.

—Woman worker

March on Wall Street

Bronx, N.Y.—After the Wall Street firm Brynwood Partners bought Stella d'Oro Bakery Co. in the Bronx, it tried to break the union by insisting on a contract that would have cut wages by 25% and destroyed many benefits. This provoked an 11-month strike by Local 50 of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) in August 2008.

Brynwood hired scabs, and the union appealed to the NLRB. Activist groups and Stella d'Oro workers formed the Stella Workers Solidarity Committee (www.stelladorostrike.com). The NLRB finally ruled for the Union, directing Brynwood to take the workers back and negotiate in good faith.

Brynwood then announced it would sell Stella d'Oro to the anti-union company Lance, Inc. Lance plans to close the plant, which has been in the Bronx for 70 years, and move production to its non-union plant in Ohio, putting unionized workers here out on the street.

The Solidarity Committee organized a rally and march on Sept. 25 at the headquarters in Manhattan of Goldman Sachs, a major stockholder in Lance. The new AFL-CIO President, Richard Trumka, was at a forum in New York City on Sept. 21 and recognized the Stella d'Oro workers, but he neglected to announce the rally scheduled for Sept. 25.

Union leaderships have given money and published articles in their newspapers but they have failed to mobilize their thousands of members to participate in rallies and boycotts. The finance capital elite which controls both parties is being bailed out while the working class bears the brunt of capitalism's economic crisis.

Companies are downsizing and workers are losing their jobs and their homes, yet their union leaders, who are mostly wedded to the corporatist Democratic party, have been incapable or unwilling to mobilize their rank and file to fight back. As owners of factories, such as the Stella d'Oro company, seek ways to maximize profits by downsizing or moving to cheaper labor areas, only a united and massive response by unions will be able to resist these attacks on workers.

—Tom Siracuse

Hyatt workers sit in

Chicago—Hundreds of hotel and restaurant workers and their supporters demonstrated in front of the Park Hyatt Hotel near the historic Water Tower on Sept. 24. The demonstration was organized by Local 1 of UNITE HERE in support of 6,000 hotel workers negotiating a new contract in Chicago, and in support of the 100 Hyatt housekeeping workers in Boston who were recently fired.

Up to 200 people were arrested when they sat down to block the street as an act of civil disobedience. They were peaceful but determined. Most participants wore red shirts that said, "We are not afraid!" on one side and, on the other, had the name of one of the large hotels that were represented—the Drake, Hilton, Congress and Sheraton among them.

The hotel industry has been cutting staff, forcing more overtime and speed-up from remaining workers, and avoiding benefit payments. Healthcare benefits are a major issue. One Latina worker said, "It is a good idea to be out here today. It's our benefits. They want to cut out coverage of our health insurance." Another Latino worker said, "They would like to give us a five-year contract with a 1% raise. They're playing dirty. They're making all this money from us, but we don't see it."

Earlier, a delegation led by Angela Norena, one of the fired housekeepers from Boston, had appealed to Penny Pritzker—of the billionaire Chicago Pritzker family and a Hyatt Hotel director—to reinstate the fired Boston workers. Pritzker refused to answer them.

The very diverse crowd of Black, Latino, Asian and white workers and supporters at the demonstration chanted "Si se puede! Yes we can!" Spirits were high. You could read the determination in the faces of everybody there. In the words of one Black woman worker, "It was a fantastic display of the power of people when they come together."

—Gerry Emmett

AFL-CIO in the crisis

Detroit—Nothing close to suspense occurred during the AFL-CIO Convention Sept. 14-17 in Pittsburgh, even though the labor federation of 57 unions with 11.5 million members elected new leaders, including President Rich Trumka, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler, and Executive Vice-President Arlene Holt Baker. Trumka, former president of the United Mine Workers union before being tapped by outgoing President John Sweeney in 1995 to be his running mate to lead the AFL-CIO, had served as secretary-treasurer for 14 years.

JOB LOSSES

The AFL-CIO executives lamented the huge loss of membership resulting from automation, outsourcing of jobs to other countries and to low-pay areas in the U.S., the economic collapse, the ceaseless attacks on unions by corporations and the anti-labor policies and practices of the Bush administration.

They emphasized the need for new organizing programs. Trumka declared that a force of 1,000 professional union organizers would be sent next year to organize the unorganized, with special focus on young, low-paid and minority workers, including immigrants. Pablo Alvarado, representing 41 work centers that make up the National Day Laborer Organizing Network, pointed out that every day there are 120,000 day laborers exploited and underpaid by their employers.

INVISIBLE WORKING CLASS

It is interesting that the only speaker to use the expression "working class" was labor secretary Hilda Solis. The others referred to workers as "middle class." A further indication of this is the effort now underway in the AFL-CIO to find another word for workers. Too many people, they say, don't consider themselves workers. Are all the workers in the mills, mines and factories now going to be associates, like at Wal-Mart?

President Obama, like the other speakers, favored the card check provision that has been stripped from the Employee Free Choice Act, but did not forcefully refer to the need to support it. Card check would force employers to recognize a union if a majority of the workers signed a card in favor of a union. Losing it represents a dramatic defeat for the unions that had made card check the centerpiece of their legislative goals.

Almost all the resolutions could be supported by anyone. But then there were resolutions calling for the repeal of Saddam Hussein's anti-labor laws in Iraq; support for ending the Cuban embargo; and support for the return of Honduran President Manuel Zelaya.

Instead of pointing to the need to replace the present economic system that has created economic meltdown and is sending unemployment to record levels, the leadership of the AFL-CIO continues to speak in terms supporting existing "free markets." This comes as no surprise. After all, the AFL-CIO is a labor bureaucracy that long ago demonstrated its capitulation to and cooperation with corporate leaders in opposition to the aspirations of the working class in America.

—Andy Phillips

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

*Editor's note: November marks 20 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall, which crystallized the collapse of state-capitalism calling itself Communism in all of East Europe. As the East European revolts and the work of socialist humanist dissidents were both crucial for the development of Marxist-Humanism, we present brief excerpts from a lecture Raya Dunayevskaya gave on her books **Marxism and Freedom, Philosophy and Revolution, and Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution** in relationship to the rise of Solidarity followed by martial law in Poland, 1980-82. Presented by the author on Feb. 14, 1982, the lecture was titled: "From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution—in Actuality, in Thought, in Vision."*

It may sound stratospheric to give a talk called "From Revolution to Revolution to Revolution," when we are witnessing a counter-revolution as brutal as that against the Polish people by their own state-capitalist rulers, propped up by Russia, and, on our own continent, the genocide against the Salvadoran people by a junta Reagan is not only propping up but training in that genocide. Nevertheless, it is not stratospheric. The truth is that we cannot forget that, for 18 long months, the Polish workers, women and youth have been creating a union that is not just a union, but combines economics, politics and ideology. Nor can we forget that, before Poland, there was the Iranian Revolution. Between them, they opened so many new doors to the transformation of reality that they have given us a different vision of the future.

Let us take one single district—Silesia—one of the most active not only in 1980, but in 1970. It was there that many lives were taken when the counter-revolution opened its attack on Dec. 13 [1981]. But you cannot kill the idea of freedom; you can only drive it underground when a revolution is that deep. And it is precisely that depth, and that concreteness, that both allows us to see a bit of the future, and makes it necessary to turn back 137 years [to 1844], to that same district of Silesia when it was not the miners but the weavers who were in revolt. Because Marx had discovered a whole new continent of thought and of revolution, and named his philosophy a "new Humanism," he was able to see in that weavers' revolt a new stage of revolution that challenged private capitalism.

PHILOSOPHY BECOMES CONCRETE for each age in a new way. I had begun to study the nature of the Russian economy as state-capitalism when the world was suddenly confronted with the Hitler-Stalin Pact. By the time of Stalin's death in 1953, the study became not just an analysis of the monstrosity Russia had become but a search for a philosophy of liberation as well as for the struggles that would be fighting against totalitarian state-capitalism. When the 1953 East German revolt brought Marx's 1844 Humanist Essays onto the historic stage with its slogan "Bread and Freedom," it illuminated the struggle against Communist totalitarianism as a struggle against both economic exploitation and political tyranny. Theoretically, too, Marx's new Humanism had to be made concrete for our age. That search, for me, began several weeks before the East German uprising, with the letters on Hegel's Absolute Idea I wrote in 1953.

Their pivotal point was the concept that the Absolute Idea meant not only a new **unity** of theory and practice, but a movement from practice to theory. It was this breakthrough on the Absolute Idea that presented the challenge for a new relationship of theory to practice and provided the vantage point for the emergence of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S. in two ways:

1) By no means had it first appeared in our age. It had always characterized that relationship of objective to subjective. Specifically, our analysis of the immediate situation became the form for viewing all historic struggles from 1776 to our day and determined the structure of **Marxism and Freedom**.

2) My translation of Marx's Humanist Essays became the first to be published in English when they were included as an Appendix to **Marxism and Freedom**.

WHAT BECAME MOST exciting in 1979, when the Iranian revolution erupted, was that some of the young revolutionaries not only began to translate into Farsi Marx's Humanist Essays as they found them presented in **Marxism and Freedom**, but decided to translate also the book's chapter on "Worker and Intellectual at a Turning Point in History: 1848-1861." They didn't need help in being opposed to Khomeini, but they felt they would not be able to win if their opposition was only activity and not philosophy.

1848 had become a crucial point of reference also for those who participated in the 1905-07 Russian-Polish Revolution. It is this which I deal with in my lat-

East European revolt and the re-creation of Marx's Marxism

est book on **Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution**. Luxemburg saw, through her experiences in that revolution, that it wasn't the leadership of the German Social-Democracy but the masses in motion who transformed her little Polish party of "seven and a half" people into a mass organization of 30,000 overnight. She also saw new forms of revolt: the General Mass Strike of trade unions whose demands were not only economic, but completely political.

In 1907, when the Russian revolutionaries held a Congress in London, it was not only the events of 1905 but their relationship to 1848 that was up for discussion. It was Luxemburg who said: Yes, 1848 was very great, but something was new in 1905. It was not only that politics and economics had been united in the General Mass Strike. **It was that 1905 was not the last of the 19th century, but the first of the 20th century revolutions—with many more to follow.**

THE 1960s PRESENTED US with a similar problem: How are the new rebellions of our day—of the youth, Blacks, women, the Third World—related to the Marxism of Marx? As we listened to the new voices from below, we felt a compulsion to "translate" Marx's Marxism for our age. It was the period, also, of the sudden appearance of the Sino-Soviet conflict and of our raising the question: Could there be war between two state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist?

Just as a new chapter on that Sino-Soviet conflict was added to a new edition of **Marxism and Freedom**—and was preceded by the pamphlet, **Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions**—so **News & Letters** published **American Civilization on Trial**, an analysis of American history from its earliest days. There we contrasted the triangular trade of slaves, between Africa, the West Indies and the U.S., to the triangular exchange of the ideas of freedom. At the same time, **News & Letters** published a whole host of new pamphlets—from **Workers Battle Automation to Freedom Riders Speak for Themselves** and **The Free Speech Movement and the Negro Revolution**—where the new voices of the youth, workers, Black revolutionaries in the U.S. as well as in Africa, could be heard.

In a way, all these pamphlets could be considered a "second book" on Marxist-Humanism in the context of an actually developing new revolution from below.

ONE HISTORIC FACET keeps us returning to the question of Poland. In Marx's day it was the 1863 rebellion which became ground for establishing the First International Workingmen's Association in 1864. When that period came to a climax with the 1871 Paris Commune, Marx did more than just refer to the Poles as the greatest fighters of the Commune. He found further illumination for his **Capital** in the chapter on the fetishism of commodities, even as the Civil War and the struggle for the eight-hour day had led him to re-structure his greatest work.

In our day, it is again the Polish struggle for freedom that so integrates the objective and subjective needs that it eliminates the division between theory and practice. I am especially proud of the chapter on East Europe in **Philosophy and Revolution**, which begins with a description of Poland, December 1970, that reads as if it were describing 1980, including even the city, Gdansk. The reason it can sound so current is because so many East European dissidents helped me

to write that chapter. But that is not the point now. The point today is what to do now that the counter-revolution has moved to crush that revolution.

It is easy to express our solidarity with Solidarity in the form of demonstrations or sending food. What is not as easy is to grapple with the also-needed critique. What did it mean for Jacek Kuron to think that, if they had a "self-limiting revolution," then maybe they could win? The counter-revolution will not stay its hand just because you say you don't really mean an all-out revolution. They know that, once unleashed, the masses in motion will move to full freedom. What must be ended is the separation of theory from practice.

It is such concrete life-and-death struggles as these that make it necessary for us to dig into what Hegel meant by "second negativity" and what Marx meant by "revolution in permanence." It is precisely that which is the thesis of the new book.

WE MUST SKIP a good deal of the new book, both as it concerns Rosa Luxemburg and today's Women's Liberation Movement and concentrate, instead, now that we have all of Marx's major works, on what is not only new but especially unique in Part Three of the work: "Karl Marx—from Critic of Hegel to Author of **Capital** and Theorist of 'Revolution in Permanence.'" We will see there, for the first time, that two years before Marx broke with bourgeois society, he had, in his doctoral thesis of 1841, already begun the search for where to begin anew when you break with Hegel's idealism and want to create an entirely new unity of idealism and materialism as you turn to the real world and the workers' actual battles.

We will also see there, in Marx's study [in his **Ethnological Notebooks**] of **Ancient Society** [by Lewis Henry Morgan], not only a fourth form of society, the Asiatic Mode of Production; not only a discovery of Primitive Communism; and not only a new view of Women's Liberation; but so sharp a distinction from his closest collaborator, Engels, as to re-evaluate the whole question of post-Marx Marxism. And for the first time, we will return from Marx to Hegel—on, however, Marx's new ground of the movement from below as well as the self-determination of the Idea for one's own age—and see how this means taking on the responsibility for the task of our age: the transformation of reality. Permit me, therefore, to quote my conclusion:

"It isn't because we are any 'smarter' that we can see so much more than other post-Marx Marxists. Rather, it is because of the maturity of our age....Only live human beings can re-create the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'

"What is needed is a new unifying principle, on Marx's ground of humanism, that truly alters both human thought and human experience. Marx's **Ethnological Notebooks** are a historic happening that proves, 100 years after he wrote them, that Marx's legacy is no mere heirloom, but a live body of ideas and perspectives that is in need of concretization. Every moment of Marx's development, as well as the totality of his works, spells out the need for 'revolution in permanence.' This is the absolute challenge to our age."

East European revolt as seen in the Trilogy of Revolution

Marxism and Freedom, from 1776 until Today

The myth that the Russian totalitarian State is invincible was suddenly and strikingly shattered. On June 17, 1953, the workers in the East German satellite took matters into their own hands on the questions of speed-up....*For four hours, the only power in East Berlin belonged to the workers....* The East Germans...answered, in an unmistakable affirmative, *Can man achieve freedom out of the totalitarianism of our age?*

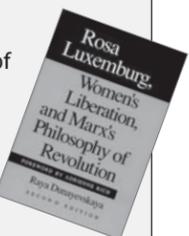
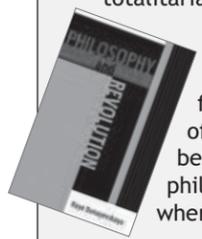
Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao

[The 1956 Hungarian Revolution] was concretized not only as an opposition to Stalinism, but as a form of workers' rule—workers' councils....This decentralized form of controlling their conditions of labor at the point of production became a new *universal*....[The masses] refuse any longer to be only the force of revolution, for they are also its reason, active participants in *working out* the philosophy of liberation for our age. They have begun. Is it not time for intellectuals to begin, with where the workers are and what they think, to fill the theoretic void in the Marxist movement?

Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution

The revolts that erupted in East Europe in the 1950s—and that continue to this day—left not an iota of doubt that, in fact and in theory, the masses were rebelling against *existing* Communism, seeing it as the imperialist state-capitalist tyranny that it is. The rebellious men and women thereby made it clear that Marx's designation of his philosophy as "a new Humanism" meant either classless, totally new human relations in life and in philosophy, *or it meant nothing*. The decisive determinant in Marx's thought was "revolution in permanence."

To order, see ad, p. 7.



Eyewitness report on Honduras resistance

Editor's note: These reports, translated from Spanish by Brown Douglas, were sent to N&L by Francesca Gargallo, a Latin American writer and feminist. The first dispatch is an eyewitness report she wrote while in Honduras with the Feminist Writers Network.

Tegucigalpa, Honduras—"When the media is silent, the walls inform the people" was the message written all over the streets of Tegucigalpa, a city in its 84th day of resistance to the coup d'état. The Resistance movement has become not only a path towards the masses' dignity, but the most participatory reclaiming of democracy on the American continent. It's a movement that posits a new relation between the political and the private with its slogan: "Against the coup d'état, against the coup on women."

Before June 28 nobody would have thought that 10% of the Honduran population would self-organize peacefully in the streets against a takeover. On that day President Zelaya was taken from his house in his underwear by soldiers brandishing a Congressional order. He was placed on a plane and whisked off to Costa Rica. This liberal president was just beginning to come around to the people's demands to redistribute wealth, and for agrarian reform, political reform and social justice. His "sins" were having raised the minimum wage, signing on with ALBA [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, an organization led by Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez promoting welfare-state policies and trade in Latin America—translator], and proposing an official inquiry into whether the Honduran people wanted to vote for constitutional reform in the November 2009 elections.

Since morning broke on June 28, people of all stripes and organizations have grouped before the presidential palace: peasants, street vendors, labor unionists, a considerable number of feminist women, teachers and indigenous people. Right then and there they founded the Bloc in Resistance to the Coup.

Meanwhile, the head of Congress declared himself the President of the Republic. This political hijacking was driven by the most conservative sectors of society: rich media magnates, sweatshop owners, huge ranch estates and the fast food industry. This set afoot daily demonstrations against the State in Crisis.

The direct mass participation in organized resis-

tance has engendered a reflection on important questions such as what kind of democracy is necessary for Honduras, how to unmask the violence—both at work and in the home—against women, the killings of movement leaders, and what exactly to demand of the State. Finally, we took up the question of what to propose in a Constitutional Assembly. These dialogues were all organized during marches, pickets and demonstrations. **They demonstrate the masses' preparation for the fight to improve their conditions, as well as the ability to take advantage of the space opened up by Zelaya in the six months prior to the coup.**

Today the Honduran people are resisting the state's kidnapping by a minority of the population, the oligarchy. That's why, Monday through Friday, we've marched on the street now known as the Boulevard of the Resistance. We enter marginalized neighborhoods where gangs, drug dealers, and pimps have robbed the people of the use of public space.

Coming from all the regions of Honduras—from the sweatshops in San Pedro Sula, to the agrarian area of Olancho, to the Atlantic coast with populations of Garifunas and African descendants, to the forest regions with indigenous populations—countless marches have converged on Tegucigalpa over the last two and a half months. The diversity of participation includes the COPINH (Civil Council of Indigenous and People's Organizations of Honduras) and the OFRANEH (Fraternal Organization of Black Hondurans), and even clergy.

But two or more people in the Resistance movement are murdered every week. Like in the rest of Latin America, women are murdered in such a way that the violence against their bodies sends a dual message of fear and intimidation to the whole population.

On Sept. 15, Independence Day for Central America, more than 600,000 people (10% of the population) came

out on the streets of every city of the country to oppose the coup. The military, on the other hand, had its own march that succeeded in gathering no more than 30,000 at most. The military march was too scared by the multitude of people declaring a "Second Independence Day" to come very far into the city.

It's worth asking, "What future does the Resistance point to?" It is obvious that the coup will not be able to govern. They haven't only been shunned by the international community (only Israel and Taiwan recognize the Micheletti government); the whole of Honduras repudiates them. The farmers have taken over the National Agrarian Institute and won't let the coup-appointed government ministers take their positions. The sweatshop workers have increased their demands for dignity, health, and good pay in the workplace (the placard that one sees in the marches reads "Work, yes. But with dignity!"). Regional commerce has collapsed.

The coup-makers seek to keep themselves in power in November elections. They hope to take advantage of their control of the media to propose two candidates, the nationalist Porfirio Lobo Sosa

and the liberal Elvin Santos. In spite of all of this, the Liberal Party is divided, with one part supporting the demand for the immediate return of Manuel Zelaya. The Democratic Unification, a small Left Party that has opposed the coup in Congress, insists that the elections will only be fair after the return of Zelaya. **For its part, the Resistance has already demanded a Constitutional Assembly ("Elections, no! Constitutional Assembly, yes!" is another popular slogan adorning the walls of Tegucigalpa).**

Feminists, teachers, and unionists are starting to unite, while the farmers and peasants have organized themselves into three Confederations and 24 collectives and have proposals for comprehensive agrarian reform. Nonetheless, it's not clear what will draw these causes together. For instance, in a religious country like Honduras, how will the interests of farmers and Christian workers' unions jibe with the demands of women for a free and voluntary motherhood? Without women, no democracy is valid. And that is more than just a slogan written on a wall.

—September 19, 2009



Garifunas perform during a mass march against the coup

ESSAY

Childcare & Marx's vision of future

continued from p. 2

Capitalism, however, dismantles workers' gains on the basis of changing needs of producing value. Today's reality proves that we need to abolish capitalism and its state in order to achieve a society in which individuals can fully develop.

Recently, a grassroots group of early childhood teachers and providers in California raised three demands: 1) Increased pay and benefits. Childcare will not be a decent place for children if this work is not valued. 2) More opportunities for professional development and coursework that meets their needs. Working people are ongoing learners who want opportunity to enhance their knowledge. 3) Early childhood teachers must be included at the table when decisions are being made, and they are fighting to have a say over their work. They are fighting against being totally alienated from their labor.

EDUCATION IN THE FUTURE?

Marx had a distinctive perspective on the future of education. When labor is no longer alienated, education will be integral to life from start to finish as part of the development of the whole human being. Or as Marx put it in the chapter on machinery: "... the education of the future...will, in the case of every child over a given age, combine productive labor with instruction and gymnastics...as the only method of producing fully developed human beings" (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 614).

Understanding and promoting the importance of care for children is part of the struggle to hold on to our humanity. At stake is what is fundamental and human in the parent/child relationship. Marx said the relation between man and woman "reveals the extent to which man's natural behavior has become human...the extent to which he in his individual existence is at the same time a social being." We read this to mean that what is specifically human is not the biological imperative of creating the next generation but what we make of that material necessity through our explicitly social relations. Traditional women's work, caring for each other, our elderly and our children—these ideas and possibilities are caught up in the work and thought of childcare workers as they struggle to keep that work human. They address the question **now** of what is human labor.

When commodification takes over the way childcare is socialized, it risks de-personalizing deep personal relationships. At the same time it holds the promise of making the problem more visible, putting into the public sphere the importance of the care and socializa-

tion of our children. Now some of this takes the form of the educational adequacy movements that can drag you into the muck of proving through testing, standards, and credentials, that what you are doing "works." Early childhood teachers have fought to keep social and emotional development included in the standards, and to limit reliance on testing; they push for curricula that teachers have control over and for funding to improve the lives and work conditions of the people taking care of children.

CHILDCARE AND REVOLUTION

Women as women, not just as proletarians who happen to be female, have consistently raised this aspect of capitalism's inhumanity. Women have been at the forefront of every revolution. Fighting for issues that women raise **as women** is crucial to the next revolution's success in making a new beginning in human development after capitalism. Childcare workers experience a contradiction: is their purpose educating children for the needs of capital or is it the development of the whole human being? Resolving the contradiction in their work can set afoot a new human being.

The heart of the struggle is overcoming the commodity fetish. It means new human relations in production, which under capitalism are social relations between things—commodities and capital. Without overthrowing capitalism's alienated labor there is no escape from commodification. The question it raises is, what kind of labor replaces it? Women are challenging **now** what labor means when it is **not** the alienated labor under capitalism. What is human labor? The issues women keep bringing up of care and education are one way to visualize the opposite of alienated labor even before the revolution, as the future we want to create.

In the *Critique of the Gotha Program* Marx talks about the transition to a new society. He says: "Before [the part of the total product to serve as means of consumption] is divided among the individuals, there has to be deducted again, from it...that which is intended for the common satisfaction of needs, such as schools, health services, etc. From the outset, this part grows considerably in comparison with present-day society, and it grows in proportion as the new society develops."

Childcare providers' demands may seem to be very modest. But these issues have been part of every revolutionary movement since the Paris Commune and probably before. Marx spoke to their aspirations by envisioning a totally new beginning when we no longer separate the development of "productive forces" from "the all-around development of the individual."

—Francesca Gargallo, September 24, 2009

U.S. STRUGGLE FOR HEALTHCARE REFORM

The Mad as Hell Doctors' national tour in support of healthcare reform stopped here Sept. 25 to support striking workers at SK Hand Tools (see story, page 3). Doctors, nurses and other supporters walked the picket line and held up banners supporting a single-payer plan for healthcare reform.

Barbara Matthews, of the Mad as Hell Doctors, said, "We're supporting the workers who have lost their healthcare without warning. We support a single-payer plan where this kind of injustice wouldn't happen. It would redirect the money that goes to insurers into a single agency to pay healthcare providers directly. There would be no restrictions on free choice because all providers would be covered. There also wouldn't be the huge overhead we have now with the insurance companies, no huge staffs being paid to deny claims. Healthcare should be a human right, not something for a company to make profits."

The Mad Docs' support of our picket line was appreciated. As one striking SK worker put it, "We've been out 30 days but it feels like yesterday. When the boss comes by and sees us smiling, he doesn't like that!"

**Strike Supporter
Chicago**

A group of us healthcare and labor activists handed out informational leaflets at several Whole Foods stores in San Francisco in August, as part of an on-going action organized by members of the United Food and Commercial Workers. It was to protest an article by Whole Foods CEO John Mackey, who has vigorously crusaded against healthcare reform, and who even said in a *Wall Street Journal* article that if people get sick, it's their own fault. He also has a long history of union-busting. Our leaflet, calling for ousting him as CEO, was generally well received by a widely varied crowd.

After a manager came to sniff us out and left, a young Hispanic worker came out laughing. He said, "The people working here love your campaign, even if they're scared to talk. The health plan he gives us is disgusting. Since you started doing this, sales have dropped down to half. We're glad." This was music to our ears out on the sidewalk. Underneath the glitter of San Francisco, there is a lot going on. Heads up.

**D. Cheneville
Oakland, Cal.**

In "When Unions Think Like Capitalists" (June-July *N&L*), Htun Lin makes the core point that a union can be a worker's best friend, or worst backstabbing enemy. As a former union member I know he is right. He is also right about the "highfalutin" rhetoric over universal healthcare, which is socialized medicine by another name.

The great socialist thinkers of the 20th century—Albert Einstein, George Orwell, Raya Dunayevskaya, George Bernard Shaw and their like—did not

mince words or engage in semantic games. They spoke to reality. Lin also accurately implies that anyone who believes this administration is going to deliver bona fide socialized medicine by any name needs to realize it ain't gonna happen. As one writer in *Time* recently put it, "The only guy who really called this right

was Karl Marx."

**R. Zani
Tennessee Colony, Texas**

Paul Krugman's indictment of President Obama's reform efforts, in the Aug. 21 *New York Times*, seemed to me an important criticism precisely because he doesn't come at it just from an "economic" point of view, like Obama's technocratic "experts" on healthcare. The "wonks" have taken over the Obama administration. He is increasingly looking like Clinton redux, trying to satisfy everybody. It's why even his progressive supporters are starting to abandon Obamacare. Krugman characterized it as a "trust problem." I would call it an "ideological" problem.

**Healthcare worker
California**

IRAN

The articles on Iran in the June/July issue were refreshing. It was good to read reports on the disputed election from a leftist perspective. None of the coverage I have read mentions the widespread support Ahmadinejad enjoys among Iranians in the nation's countryside. They are overwhelmingly religious and conservative and view Ahmadinejad as a regular "fella" as opposed to the clerics that have dominated the executive since the 1979 Revolution. To many people in the countryside, Ahmadinejad is treating the urban elitist population centers with the same neglect and disregard that, in their eyes, characterized the regimes of Rafsanjani and Khatami. Thank you for providing a view from the Left.

**R. Holbrook
Waynesburg, Pa.**

HOMEOWN GROWN FASCISM

There are many ominous tendencies being reflected in the reports of the demonstrations against healthcare and other administration policies. While some of this is legitimate anger against the unemployment and bailouts in Wall Street, there are also undertones of racism and rabid right-wing demagoguery that are alarmingly reminiscent of the rise of fascism in Germany and Italy. It must be remembered that fascism emerged from the legitimate concerns of the German people that grew out of the Great Depression, and Hitler and his Brown Shirts, financed by German capitalists, succeeded in channeling that discontent into anti-Semitism and the

OPEN LETTER TO RON HUBERMAN

I want to send this Open Letter to Ron Huberman, the new CEO of the Chicago Public Schools. I need to know when does he plan to change the name of Bartolome de las Casas Therapeutic Occupational High School? It needs to be changed, since Bartolome de las Casas was one of the main advocates for using individuals from the continent of Africa as slaves. In his own writings de las Casas says Africans were not completely human beings. I'm waiting for his reply.

I have a replacement for the current school name: it should be Toussaint L'Ouverture School. Here are three reasons for that choice:



1) Toussaint L'Ouverture was born in Haiti, where Jean Baptiste Point DuSable was also born. Mr. DuSable was the first individual other than Native Americans to build a permanent dwelling in what is now Chicago.

2) Toussaint L'Ouverture helped end slavery in Haiti.

3) Toussaint L'Ouverture fought under General Casimir Pulaski in helping the Thirteen Colonies (U.S.) against England.

Sincerely,

**George W. Smith, Jr.
Chicago**

READERS' VIEWS

horrors of a fascist regime. Fascism does not come from abroad. It comes from home, and we must all be aware of that.

**World War II Veteran
Detroit**

I see a pattern in the way businesses are using the crisis in today's economy to have workers compete for jobs and barely make a living wage, which they hope will result in workers not making any waves about the treatment they get or the corruption they see. I see a pattern also in the rise in hate groups that is reported by Morris Dees and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

**Sue
Chicago**

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND ECOSOCIALISM

Franklin Dmitryev's essay on ecosocialism in the August-September issue shows that ecosocialism has an objective of abolishing capitalism and a theory



of how to achieve new social relations that, however, don't have human beings at its center. It is at this crucial point

that the objective and the theory are not in sync. Marx's philosophy of revolution spells out specifically what is unique to capitalist relations that needs to be overcome if a new set of social relations is to be created.

Capital's integument is value production and its inverted relationship of subject and object. It is thereby human alienation. Only in uprooting value production in its alienated form can humanity regain itself. It can then become human activity in all its moments, as in labor, man/woman relations and which also includes human beings' relationship with nature.

**Faruq
Crescent City, Cal.**

For Marx, capital's technological force and scale of social production were flawed because of humans being dominated by their own production. Ecosocialism is based on an analysis of self-alienation but often forgets the struggle side—the human side. It returns to nature as something external.

**Healthcare worker
California**

Three hundred demonstrators trekked from downtown Richmond to the Chevron oil refinery in Point Richmond here on Aug. 15 to protest Chevron's plan to process a heavier, dirtier crude oil. The fact is that doing so will only add to the 1,000 tons of pollution and greenhouse gases the plant already emits annually. Chevron insists it isn't what goes into the refinery that matters, but what comes out. Protesters counter "dirt in = dirt out" since it is not likely Chevron would take in an obviously cheaper raw material only to spend inordinate amounts of time and money cleaning it up.

**David M'Oto
California**

WORKERS NEEDING HELP

Baldemar Velasquez, president of FLOC (Farm Labor Organizing Committee), spoke at a Central United Methodist Church's Peace and Justice service about the need to help change working conditions of FLOC field laborers harvesting tobacco, vegetables and fruit in North and South Carolina, Florida and the Midwest, including Michigan.

The work is done under deplorable, dehumanizing conditions, now mostly by Latin American immigrants. Back in the 1970s I had relatives who worked as tenant farmers. Everybody didn't "go north." What got my attention was that African Americans working the same fields were kept separated from the Latin Americans. Their stories are about the same sub-level wages and mistreatment by employers and contractors but it's the old "divide and conquer" that's being played. Velasquez sees the need to continue the fight for Civil Rights. Although it's an uphill battle with few successes, FLOC is ongoing in the struggle.

**Ray Robeson
Detroit**

THE GERMAN ELECTION

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right Christian Democrats may have won the recent election, but the good news about the election results was that the small third parties made significant strides in gaining popularity, which may mean that the two main parties (Tweedle Dum, Tweedle Dee) are being abandoned by the populace. Perhaps Germany will lead the way for America to experience a future fall of the bi-partisan parties of Wall Street, and the emergence of grassroots popular parties, who are now ill-funded, ill-organized and unrecognized. That is mainly by design of the establishment, and the electorate's sheepish following of the donkey and the elephant. Then again, perhaps Germany is not a good example to follow. The most memorable time a "third party" made headway there, wasn't it the beginning of the Third Reich and the emergence of a little-known "Congressman" named Hitler, campaigning for his version of "Socialism" for Germany?

**Observer
California**

KOLAKOWSKI'S LEGACY

Kevin Michaels' excellent piece on "Kolakowski's legacy" (Aug.-Sept. *N&L*) shows the positivism of his earlier work. He wrote in *Main Currents of Marxism*, "Marxism had been the greatest fantasy of our century. It was a dream offering the prospect of a society of perfect unity, in which all human aspirations would be fulfilled and all values reconciled."

Then he continued, "Marxism has been frozen and immobilized for decades as the ideological superstructure of a totalitarian political movement, and in consequence has lost touch with intellectual developments and social realities. The hope that it could be revived and made fruitful once again proved to be an illusion. As an explanatory system it is dead, nor does it offer any method that can be effectively used to interpret modern life, foresee the future, or cultivate utopian projection." Kolakowski further argues that Stalinism was not a perversion of Marxism thought, but rather its natural conclusion.

Obviously, our Marxist-Humanist vision is different. The lines I've just quoted remind me of living under capitalism.

**Jerry
Chicago**

A CRITIQUE OF THE LEFT

I have a critique of the Left: many use academic language to impress others, and things are not explained to the masses. In fact, they are confused by leftists trying to impress one another. We need to debate terms, because people want to grasp ideas. Language is very important.

**Studying Marx
New York**

MANY FIGHTING HONORABLY TO END ILLEGAL WAR

Lt. Ehren Watada's three-year fight with the Army is over. His resignation has been accepted and he will be discharged, although not honorably. He is "glad to bring the chapter to a close and move on." He is 31 and may want a life.

As for the Army, it is probably relieved Watada let it off the hook. He was not "answering a higher call" as one well-meaning Congressman claimed. He was following the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), according to which it is one's duty to disobey an unlawful order. The lieutenant has consistently maintained that the U.S. prosecution of its war in Iraq is illegal. The Army has dodged a bullet in not having to defend in a court of law its attacks on the Iraqi people.

I hope Ehren Watada returns someday to finish the fight if only to clear his name and that of many others who also had the courage to do what they believed was right.

**Sansei
Oakland, Cal.**

This is an update on new programs initiated by the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO): "Cover Me" will empower military service members through education of their rights under the UCMJ and through the military regulations that will protect them. We are making contact with members of the chaplain corps, on-base social workers, mental health professionals and patient representatives to encourage their strong support. In just the three months since June, "Cover Me" volunteers have assisted with 17 CO applications and provided advocacy on discharges for 59 Marines, 26 Navy, 90 Army, 5 Air Force and 45 Reservists. We are now launching a new program to assist LGBTQ active duty service members.

CCCO cannot, however, survive without the continued help of generous supporters.

**Wendy Carson
Executive Director, CCCO
405 14th St. #205, Oakland, Cal. 94612**

Many veterans returning from the

wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are finding conditions at home so intolerable that they are becoming increasingly desperate. This often results in broken families and rising suicides when the jobs they had are no longer available because of the economic meltdown and their frustrations spin out of control. We know the right-wing militia groups have stepped up their recruiting efforts among the returning veterans who are disciplined and have many military skills. Desperate people can make desperate decisions, and I see more desperation in the U.S. today than ever before in my lifetime.

**Old Veteran
Detroit**

**DEBATING THE
LGBT MARCH —
FOR EQUALITY OR
LIBERATION?**

There's a debate going on about whether or not to support the upcoming Oct. 10-11 March in Washington for gay rights. Before Obama was elected, many of us felt we were going to get some rights. But there has been a lot of disappointment so it's understandable why the march was called. For it to be a success there have to be a lot of us there. And for it to work we have to make specific demands.

How do we defend equality—which is what the March was declared to be calling for. Will the March do that? The leaders are talking about non-violent civil disobedience, marches, lobbying. We can do all of that, but what we are working for is important to be clear about. Ultimately, how do we defend equality? Part of my way of seeing what is involved is through the philosophy of Marxism. What is important to me is being able to live your life meaningfully. A quote from Rosa Luxemburg that Raya Dunayevskaya discussed in her book



Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution speaks to that. It was from one of Luxemburg's letters from prison to a woman comrade in which she wrote:

"See to it that you stay human... Being human means joyfully throwing your whole life 'on the scales of destiny' when need be, but all the while rejoicing in every sunny day and every beautiful cloud."

That—being human—is where we want to go.

**Elise
Chicago**

I don't support the March for a number of reasons. The one demand on equal protection is narrow and simplistic and gives power to the politicians rather than the people. It is unrealistic to pressure politicians to reverse bad legislation. The history of the Civil Rights Movement shows that once the pressure is lifted, the impact of the laws gets chipped away. You see it with the right to abortion. I'm against Prop. 8, but the institution of marriage is very sexist and I feel it should be abolished. The patriarchal institution sets up a power dynamic on queer couples, especially regarding property and child custody. I think we should fight for universal healthcare so all could benefit, not just those in relationships.

In my view we need to create a movement that demands our liberation, not just equality. I think we should fight for universal healthcare, and against having poor youth slaughtered in our society. We have to oppose queer bashing and fight for the rights of queer seniors, as well. We also need to fight the violence against transgendered people.

**Darrell
Chicago**

I am with the Gay Liberation Network and what makes us unique is that we're based on the politics of solidarity, which means that if we expect other oppressed groups to support us, we have to make it clear that we support their demands. So we get involved with issues like immigration rights, universal healthcare, and we've been to a number of demonstrations in support of youth

who were gunned down by police, without asking what their attitude was on gay rights. We've been involved in the campaign to free Mumia as well as anti-war marches. One of the things that led to the passage of Prop. 8 was not reaching out to these other communities.

Some of us are organizing a picket line around the White House. We'll call for Obama and the Democrats to be held accountable and make it clear we don't depend on them to hand us our rights on a silver platter.

Marriage rights are important to a lot of people, so I say yes, fight for that democratic right and also fight for the overthrow of capitalism. Democratic rights are indivisible. We have to fight for all of them.

**Member GLN
Chicago**

WHO READS NEWS & LETTERS?

We appreciate your continued efforts in making visible the issues that concern us and affect women, as well as the need for key partners to take action. Your publication is a very useful resource and a good addition to our documentation center, where it will be utilized by various researchers, activists, and students who visit the center. We look forward to continued collaboration.

**Juliet Were Oguttu
Isis-WICCE, Plot 23 Bukoto Street
Kampala, Uganda**

Your labor reporting always covers strikes and labor news not covered anywhere else. Thank you.

**Stanley Rosebud Rosen, professor
emeritus of University of Illinois
Santa Fe, NM**

N&L remains unique and an inspiration. The Perspectives for this year were excellent and well-developed and I agree with mostly everything.

**Richard Greeman, co-founder of Praxis
Research and Education Center
France**

Editor's note: The Marxist-Humanist Perspectives for 2009-2010 are available upon request.

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Books

by RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

- Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao** 30th Anniversary edition, 2003.....\$24.95
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EDITORIAL

Specters haunting G-20

The leaders of the world's biggest economies met Sept. 24-25 at the G-20 summit in Pittsburgh. As with previous G-8 summits, which the G-20 has now officially replaced, the state guardians of the world economy were cocooned by a massive and often brutal police presence, from thousands of demonstrating youth, labor and peace activists. Aside from agreeing to peer review each other's economic policies, the summit was basically lots of happy talk about having saved the world economy from going over the abyss when one year ago an economic meltdown of the system of finance capital threatened an immediate onset of a Great Depression.

What was "saved," with huge and continuous infusions of public monies, was the finance sector, led now by even bigger too-big-to-fail banks again making record profits and fueling yet another speculative bubble. The \$700 billion TARP bailout was only the beginning. The Federal Reserve Bank is now in the midst of a \$1.45 trillion spending program to buy bad assets from big banks, sending them on their way to repack-age risky investments.

Underneath the G-20 happy talk is anxiety over the creation of value in the real economy, where the damage from the world economy's first contraction since the 1930s is permanent; where unemployment, called a "lagging indicator," is now officially at 9.8% in the

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

Marine-trained predecessor to the current army, was for Haitians to fight other Haitians. During the U.S. occupation the *Garde* participated in joint action with the Marines against peasant nationalists, killing at least 6,000 peasants led by Charlemagne Peralte and Batraville. Another 5,500 peasants died in forced labor camps the *Garde* ran for the occupiers.

These figures are only the official estimates; no one knows the exact number of Haitians killed and executed by the Marines and the *Garde*. The record of the 1921 U.S. Senate hearings on the massacre of Haitians is filled with details of atrocities.

If one digs into the history of the development of the Haitian army, only one conclusion emerges: it has played an objective role in establishing U.S. hegemony in Haiti.

There is nothing new in the U.S. practice of setting up puppet armies to terrorize indigenous peoples in the Caribbean and Central America. However, the Haitian army is unique; it is the oldest and largest puppet army in the Caribbean and has long been the pathway to power for a succession of dictatorial presidents, including Francois Duvalier. Duvalier played internal politics with generals to establish his personal hegemony over the army, but now neither he nor his son Jean-Claude Duvalier is around; only the army remains.

The present stalemate between the totalitarian



Student protests continue in Haiti in 2009 over cancelled classes.

army and the forces of liberal reform has brought Haiti to a crossroads in history that could go either way. The masses of Haitian people could impose their own solution by uprooting the army or "reform" could be imposed from the outside.

In the U.S. Senate, Bob Graham is recommending that George H. W. Bush get the so-called democratic governments of this hemisphere to organize a multinational "peacekeeping force to assure Haitian stability." The key word is "stability," meaning that they don't want the masses to engage in their own self-determination.

The trouble with outside "liberation" is that it is limited to the goals of the "liberators." It is hard to believe that Senator Graham's idea of "liberation" is the same as that of a worker getting low wages in an American-owned firm in Haiti.

The absolute opposition to the Haitian army comes from the Haitian masses who want to uproot the army, which is an outpost of American imperialism. If the Haitian masses did that, it would be a great historic leap; precisely the type of historic leap that their slave ancestors made when they translated "The Rights of Man" to mean self-emancipation and rose up in revolt against their French slave masters.

U.S.; where real investment has collapsed because even a much reduced rate of profit cannot be attained until a lot more of the capital built up during a series of speculative booms has been destroyed; where new tensions between the U.S. and China, now merely sparring over trade in tires, could bring global finance to a standstill.

The world's producers of value, workers, especially the poor, are the ones really suffering. Though nearly half the world's population—over three billion people—live on less than \$2.50 a day, according to the World Bank the crisis pushed another 90 million people into extreme poverty—living on less than \$1.25 a day.

The Great Recession may be declared over by the lords of finance, but investment for growth in the real economy where value is created has come to a standstill. In place of a sub-prime mortgage bubble, new economic activity has come from stimulus spending and inventory replacement. Behind the photo ops, tensions among the G-20—in particular the "G-2," the U.S. and China—are fermenting over global trade imbalances. Every economy—except the U.S., whose dollar is the world's reserve currency—faces structural adjustments aimed at the standard of living of its poor and working people under the impact of such imbalances. For now, the only thread holding back a blow-up over the dollar among state-capitalist finance centers is not very reassuring: "mutually assured financial destruction."

The barriers to productive investment, and therefore to accumulation in the real economy, portend an even more total day of reckoning. For capital that can only mean a deeper collapse, wherein finance capitalists, whom Marx called the mere "trustees" for capital's social ownership of production, will continue to transparently loot the public treasury to preserve the irrational capital relation at all cost. But this is also transparent for ordinary working people who are outraged and looking for a way to free themselves of being socialized according to the needs for capital accumulation. Never before has there been a greater need to return to Marx, not only for his prediction of total crises, multitudes of unemployed and a falling rate of profit, but his concept of liberation and human solidarity beyond capitalism.

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

Youth! If of a certain race, creed, or economic background, this five-letter word can be lauded as a blessing—or touted as anathema.

In the world of Barack Obama, youth are at the core of his ideas for the future of the U.S. So it should not be surprising that he, like presidents before him, would wish to address this future constituency, allowing students to hear from "their" president.

At another time in history this would not be an issue, but those who feel the U.S. has changed, need look no further than Texas or Wisconsin to see an overwhelming constituency of those who feel that a message from a person of color has no place in their child's education.

The opposition to Obama's school address is said to be a product of ultra-conservative Right activists such as Rush Limbaugh, and though this is partially true, to attribute this completely to such individuals would be a smoke-and-mirror illusion that hides the real problem.

What is truly amazing is the number of Black and white intellectuals—both liberal and moderate—who seem taken aback by the vehement opposition to the core ideas Obama presents: universal healthcare; wars on poverty, illiteracy, broken families, joblessness—things that have been on the agendas of presidents in the past, and that will be on agendas of presidents in the future.

What is equally amazing is that those very same persons can't bring themselves to verbalize the fundamental problem that has tainted the U.S. experience since the country was founded: the issue of race.

Race is as viable today as it has been throughout this country's history. In the South, it took a \$2.3 billion settlement against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1999 for the government to admit discriminatory actions towards Black farmers. Ironically, the USDA has blocked many claims to that settlement.

In New Orleans, people of color have essentially been blocked from returning to the city due to "the stark exposure of an economic apartheid" (*Colorlines*, July-August 2009) which has been going on for nearly four years.

In California and other border states, children of immigrants born in this country will not have the same rights as other children born in this country because of the status of their parents. Shades of Dred Scott abound.

Fortunately, the hatemongers and doomsayers are not in the majority, for if they were, neither Barack H. Obama nor any person of color would reside in the White House as anything but a servant.

The fact that a Black man was elected as president is an achievement in itself, but what's more an achievement is that for the first time in its history, this country has to actually address race openly.

Racial, class and gender politics extend well beyond the scope of Obama, or any president regardless of

Victims of police killings

Inglewood, Cal.—On July 28, 75 people—mostly Black with some Latinos/as—attended a town hall meeting here to address the continuing killings and beatings of unarmed youths by Inglewood police. The police were invited but did not show up.

Participants spoke of police attitudes and shootings of Black youths, and problems of gang violence. They spoke of racial profiling and police seeing all Black and Brown youth as hardcore gang members. One person said the police use a South Gate Latino gang's racist attitude toward Black gangs, to have them fighting each other.

Suggested improvements included petitions for reform starting with "human rights" for youths, putting cameras on police cars, re-enacting every incident of police killing/brutality for the community at large, and "make noise." The meeting ended with an announcement of an organizing meeting for a demonstration.

Over 100 spirited people, mostly youths, marched with family members of seven recent victims of the Inglewood Police Department in August. Demonstrators included members of Community Call to Action; Youth Justice Coalition, a multi-racial group that opposes racial profiling and the criminalization and imprisonment of poor youths; and Cease Fire Committee, a community gang-intervention coalition founded after Stanley Tookie Williams was executed.

One speaker said the practice of lying on police reports must be stopped; another said the Inglewood Police Review Board has no power over the police department.

All slain youths were either Black or Brown and unarmed. Thirteen-year-old Devon Brown and 14-year-old Rafael Ramos are two examples. Demonstrators carried posters memorializing victims of various police departments, including the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department), Los Angeles County Sheriff, Torrance Police and Downey Police. In 2005, three-year-old Suzie Poro Lopez, held in her father's arms, was killed by a hail of bullets from the LAPD. Taisha Miller, a young Black girl, was similarly killed by Riverside Police while sitting in her car. These are all old cases where police are never punished, even when victims are unarmed and/or shot in the back.

—Basho

Obama and U.S. youth

their name or the color of their skin, and ultimately the U.S. experience will have a new chapter written that expands upon its better virtues.

What scares closet bigots the most is that at the tip of this revolutionary process will be this nation's youth, living in a time when a Black man—or a woman—or any person of color, can actually become president.

The definitive aspect of the U.S. experience will be written by the generation of youth who were not tempered by a sense of hopelessness, but rather those who grew up in the time of the Obama presidency.

Corrupt Calif. prisons

Los Angeles—A recent newspaper article reported on the overcrowding and terrible conditions in California prisons. I know about this because my son is in prison. In the past, I have been active with a group of mothers who have sons in prison and were trying to change prison conditions. There is not equal justice. We were trying to change the huge difference in those sentenced for cocaine inhaled as a powder and crack cocaine. Black crack users were ending up with much longer sentences than whites who used the white powder. I see this difference as well when some Afro-American youth are charged with Grand Theft Auto for stealing a car, while white youth are charged with joyriding.

But a lot of problems in prisons affect both white and Black: the harsh three-strikes-and-you're-out prison sentences, the terrible medical care you get, etc. They even charge the prisoners for seeing a doctor.

At the heart of the prisons I see two problems: First, there is no real attempt at rehabilitation, and second, there is so much corruption. Young men no longer get any education or training when they are in prison. They come out worse than when they went in. I know an intelligent young man who came out and then went right back in for selling drugs. It is terrible to see them come out and go right back.

The corruption is on so many different levels. It used to be that when you wanted to send something for someone in prison you went out and bought it and sent it to him. But now my family has to go online and order what they want from a company which sells it at three times the price you can get it by yourself. In Los Angeles County the former sheriff's daughter is running the concessions for small items like candy in the local jail, again at high prices. These various companies and operators are making lots of money from prisoners.

But the worst is the corruption when it comes to drugs. There are more drugs in prison than in the streets. It couldn't happen without the corruption of many officials. If you have the money, you can get what you want.

—Georgiana Stewart

Iranian regime can't crush mass movement

Once again the determination of Iranian people to shape their history was on display when hundreds of thousands took over the streets throughout Iran on Sept. 18, thereby transforming the officially sanctioned Quds (Palestine) day into a day of protest against the enemy at home.

In addition to the chants of "down with the dictator," the most popular slogan was "dictator, dictator, this is our last message: the green nation of Iran is ready for uprising," thus challenging the government that unless it resigns, their patience will soon come to an end.

Contrast this self-confidence with the complete insecurity of the state in its inability to crush the opposition with all the means in its arsenal—political, ideological and military. Perhaps one would then be able to appreciate that Iran today is the scene of two contending powers: a thoroughly delegitimized state, and the power of masses in motion that has created a whole new reality.



Solidarity vigil in Berkeley, Cal., on Sept. 24.

Let's be clear. For months now, the existing political regime has tried everything to prevent the re-emergence of the masses on the streets: mass arrests and frame-up trials, shutting down of all remaining opposition websites and print media, even



Sept. 18 demonstration at Tehran University

canceling all heretofore sanctioned events on the calendar, combined with total militarization of society, the hunting down of people chanting on the roof tops, and a constant barrage of threats. Nothing, absolutely nothing has succeeded in breaking the spirit of the people.

Quite the contrary, the brief "interlude" between outright street protests was rife with movement: from the ongoing weekly protests of the Mourning Mothers, to sporadic outbreaks of demonstrations in the streets and the Metro stations, to activism of a different kind—mass political dialogue on the sidewalks, in taxicabs, at home and at the workplace. One reporter, whose name is withheld, wrote from Iran (<http://globalpost.com/print/3636975>) that the workplace is where "everybody does nothing except find ways to get around blocked websites and read the day's news." Moreover, calls for a political mass general strike are gaining momentum.

Will this signal the beginning of the end of the Islamic regime? More importantly, will this movement for freedom be able to usher in a new society based on new humanist relationships the day after the overthrow of the existing state? Will the insatiable desire of Iranian masses for outright freedom find expression in a philosophy of liberation that assures its continuous self-development?

—Raha

Social and economic problems grip Spain

The working class of Spain has been hit hard by the world economic crisis. The Spanish homeowners are experiencing the same difficulties as U.S. households— inability to pay the mortgage due to aggressive lending by financial institutions, and massive unemployment. Spain has the leading unemployment of all European nations, close to 19%.

The crisis is seen in higher prices for basic commodities and less quality. Even the daily loaf of bread weighs much less than last year.

The economic crisis is combined with the political crisis of the two leading parties of Spain, Partido Popular (PP) and Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE). They attack each other daily, since legislating the remedies to ease the crisis is at a dead end. Workers are losing their jobs while government officials debate about who gets unemployment benefits and how much. Workers in the streets are shouting, "We do not need 425 Euros. We want jobs." A person needs a bare minimum of 1000 Euros per month to live.

The reemergence of ETA, the Basque separatists, is another social ill for Spain. The recent killing of two *guardia civil*, the attempted bombing of their residential building in Burgos—which could have killed 1,500 family members including women and children—and bombs exploding in restaurants in Mallorca, scared away many tourists from the beaches of Spain, further-

ing unemployment.

After the unification of Europe, Spain's once abundant agriculture sector cannot even provide enough potatoes for itself and imports 60% of potatoes consumed. This is the direct result of the European Federation policy of subsidizing Spain's farmers not to cultivate from 2005 to 2009. At the same time Opel car manufacturing closed its doors in Zaragoza to reopen in Germany. Thousands protested their lost jobs in the streets. Quantel, the telecommunications giant of Spain, this year laid off more workers in Salamanca. About 150 workers lost their jobs and got no support from their union or the city.

We need to smash this ridiculous economic structure where we bail out the very same industries who are throwing us onto the streets.

—Correspondent in Spain

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2. Paid In-County Subscriptions	33	32
3. Sales through dealers, carriers, street vendors, counter sales	1805	1779
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	163	163
C. TOTAL PAID AND REQUESTED CIRCULATION:	3656	3671
D. FREE DISTRIBUTION by mail (samples, complimentary and other free)		
1. Outside-county	34	26
2. In-county	5	1
3. Other classes	5	2
E. FREE DISTRIBUTION outside the mail	0	0
F. TOTAL FREE DISTRIBUTION	44	29
G. TOTAL DISTRIBUTION	3700	3700
H. COPIES NOT DISTRIBUTED:	300	300
I. TOTAL	4000	4000
J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	99%	99%

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Silencing Mexican voices in Michigan

Detroit—The small group, Centro Obrero, is working on the immigration section of the upcoming U.S. Social Forum in Detroit. During the past weeks, we held a meeting at the home of a Mexican family whose status, like so many people's, is all over the map: green card holders, permanent residents, undocumented, U.S. citizens. That makes for some complicated family dynamics. People in the neighborhood live under rules and policies where many have no influence and cannot vote.

So I asked for the gathering to explain to them the Office of Charter Commission, and why I am running for it in the city-wide election. We discussed political life in Detroit, and why Mexicans don't vote when they can. We talked about the effects of the repatriation, how people were told not to speak Spanish, not to live where Mexicans live, and not to have any unnecessary contact with the government. That means no census, no financial aid forms for students of our generation, and certainly no running for political office.

Recently a neighbor called and asked if I would accompany a woman to the police station to make a missing person report on her teenage daughter, who had not been seen in five days. The woman was frantic and was putting up posters in the neighborhood, but also wanted the police to help her find her daughter. I went along with her to help translate.

While we were there, we spoke to another person in the lobby waiting to make a complaint. The officer at the desk in the Southwest District (read *BARRIO*) told me that if "you are going to speak another language, you have to go outside." I made a report to the commander at the precinct and we will take it from there. This was a big issue in a department that is already under a Justice Department consent decree and has recently gone from bad to worse.

I got thrown out of a second place by police in the last month, at TRW Automotive in Livonia, Michigan. Several people gathered, along with two Mexican workers from the Reynosa, Mexico, TRW plant who came to the Michigan headquarters to share their workplace concerns with the owners of the plant. Livonia police were called before we could ask for the manager. The police came and made us leave without even asking what we wanted or why these workers traveled thousands of miles to air their grievances nonviolently. The company has their own police force.

We will not go away when we are shut out or shut down. We have a right to make police reports in any language. We have a right to demand respect on the job and the right to go to any lengths to seek justice. We have the right to enter into electoral politics and fight to get the representation we need.

We will not be moved. We are here to stay. Stay tuned for the outcomes of these battles, big and small. We will not remain silent in the face of this official disrespect.

—Elena Herrada

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Washington, D.C., murder and hate-crime victim Tony Randolph Hunter will not get justice. Originally charged with voluntary manslaughter, Robert Lee Hannah accepted the prosecution's offer to plead guilty to misdemeanor assault. Using the "gay panic" defense, Hannah said he beat Hunter after Hunter sexually propositioned him. Hannah will be sentenced to a maximum of a mere 180 days imprisonment or \$1,000 fine or both.

Uruguay's legislature became the first in Latin America to legalize adoption by Gays and Lesbians, further solidifying the nation's reputation for being the most progressive in that region. The bill—which allows adoption by unmarried couples—awaits signature by President Tabare Vazquez. Also, Germany's Constitutional Court ruled that Lesbians and Gays can adopt their partner's children if they are related to them.

Some notable actions in the U.S.:

- A second round of GLBT kiss-ins occurred in mid-August, after actions in July, protesting the arrest of gay couples who publicly displayed affection in Texas and on the grounds of a Mormon temple in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- On Sept. 13, hundreds rallied against the raid of the Eagle, an Atlanta gay bar. Witnesses said no reason was given for the raid and no one was arrested, yet every patron was made to lie down on the floor while many of their personal items were seized.
- In late September almost 200 Brooklyn Technical High School students counter-protested members of the Westboro Baptist Church whose anti-Gay and anti-Semitic message was to show "what good looks like." The students drove the Westboro people away 15 minutes before their protest was scheduled to end.

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Afghan lives, freedom sucked into U.S. quagmire

continued from p. 1

closing early, opening late, or not at all.

Women were severely disenfranchised. Although much was made of the fact that a few women ran for office and two for president, their faces were banned from the ballots, posters torn down, travel restricted, their very lives threatened. The turnout of women voters was much lower than the last election. Many polling stations for women, which are separate from where men vote, never opened. Furthermore, a woman's husband can vote for her, thus stealing her vote at his whim. Tribal chiefs, or warlords, boasted of casting votes for whole villages. If a runoff election happens, at the earliest in October and perhaps not until April, it leaves a leadership vacuum that the Taliban are already filling.

As we go to press, Obama is reported to be mulling over his alternatives. While claiming he only wants to do "the right thing," his over-



Malalai Joya

whelming pragmatism only asks, "will it work?" He has said, "There is no immediate decision pending on resources, because one of the things I'm absolutely clear about is you have to get the strategy right." When the question is only what will work, and the bottom line is fighting al-Qaeda, then the "right" strategy is not about the freedom and self-determination of the people of Afghanistan. For the Afghan population equally abhorrent as a troop increase is the strategy for more Predator drones that bomb civilians along with the Taliban, cruise missiles that massacre even more civilians, raids by Special Operations commandos, and payment to warlords to do things the way the U.S. wants. This strategy in Pakistan has created hatred of the U.S.

AFGHAN DEMOCRACY IN HISTORY: MYTH AND REALITY

The disregard of the Afghan people's deep desire for freedom is unseparated from the racist myth that Afghans don't understand democracy, that they have a tribal mentality, and are not ready for modernity. History reveals a very different reality.

As long ago as 1959, *purdah*—the banning of women from public life—stopped being mandatory and women began to enroll in universities, which became co-educational. Women also began to enter the paid workforce and the government.

Afghanistan could have experienced a new beginning after the bloody coup of 1978. As the Marxist-Humanist philosopher Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1980: "The coup which brought the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) to power had popular support. It established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, confiscated all the royalist lands and holdings, announced land reforms and the abolition of all feudal and pre-feudal relations. The party had won power in a single day of fighting because there had been great unrest in that poverty-stricken land, directed against [then President] Daoud..." This new beginning was not to be. Dunayevskaya continues: "...within a short year—the fratricidal factionalism within the PDPA...saw the revolution devouring itself. Land reform lagged behind; women's liberation was hardly begun; disease and poverty were still rampant. And not too far in the background stood Russia, ready with aid and arms and wanting, above all, not to see a genuine social revolution anywhere."*

Russia's invasion plunged the country into war that did not end with their departure in 1989 or even with the fall of the Russian puppets in 1992, and the establishment of an Islamic State with an Islamic Jihad Council. Burhanuddin Rabbani—later the titular head of the Northern Alliance, a loose conglomeration of warlords—was proclaimed President, while warring factions continued to slaughter civilians. In opposition to the brutal Rabbani regime and other warlords, the Taliban was born in 1994 with Pakistani support, and advanced rapidly, promising to unite the country under one leadership and to end crime and corruption. Many accepted them as a better alternative than the horrible conditions under Northern Alliance warlords.

* "Carter's Drive to War," *News & Letters*, March 1980.

By September 1996 the Taliban captured Kabul, made an alliance with the extreme anti-woman fundamentalist party Hezbi Wahdat, and the warlord Dostum, who was recently invited by Karzai back into the country and government. The Taliban imposed horrendous conditions on the entire population, but especially on women. In 1998 they captured Mazar-i-Sharif and massacred thousands of civilians.

SQUANDERED NEW BEGINNINGS

Afghanistan had other chances to become a place where its citizens could enjoy some freedom, but the U.S. smothered every recent opportunity. One was the July 2002 *loya jirga*, a traditional political meeting of tribal leaders and representatives. It met to set up the government structure.

The U.S. decreed the forces responsible for countless brutalities under the former Rabbani government as the decision-makers at this *loya jirga*. It did not start that way. As *loya jirga* delegates Omar Zakhilwal and Adeena Niazi tell us: "Men and women mingled openly and comfortably. In tolerant and lively exchanges, we discussed the compatibility of women's rights with our Islamic traditions. Women played a leading role at these meetings....The one issue that united the delegates above all others was the urgency of reducing the power of warlords and establishing a truly representative government."

There was a grassroots movement to nominate the former king, Zahir Shah, as head of state as a counterbalance to the Northern Alliance. Then the U.S. stepped in and postponed the *loya jirga* for close to two days while it strong-armed the king into renouncing any role in the government-to-be.

After any semblance of democracy was destroyed by the U.S., Zakhilwal and Niazi report, "the atmosphere at the *loya jirga* changed radically. The gathering was now teeming with intelligence agents who openly threatened reform-minded delegates, especially women. Fundamentalist leaders branded critics of the warlords as traitors to Islam and circulated a petition denouncing the Women's Affairs Minister Sima Samar as 'Afghanistan's Salman Rushdie,'" implying she should be murdered as a heretic. Terrorizing their critics, the warlords came out in control of the country.

Another possible new beginning came with the process of ratifying the Afghan Constitution. That *loya jirga* on Jan. 4, 2004, was touted by the U.S. government and press as a breakthrough for human rights—particularly women's rights. Nothing could be further from the truth. Of course a constitution can't make women free, but the Afghan Constitution is so flawed that it created a framework for the strengthening of warlords and the further Islamicization of the state.

The intimidation, silencing of differing views, undemocratic and sexist nature of the proceedings were made public by a 25-year-old social worker. Malalai Joya took the floor and demanded to know: "Why have you again selected as committee chairmen those criminals who have brought disasters for the Afghan people? In my opinion they should be taken to the World Court."

The assembly chairman, Sebahatullah Mojedidi, tried to have her thrown out. Abdur Rasul Sayyaf, the Northern Alliance deputy prime minister, gave a 15-minute tirade against Joya, slandering her as a communist and "criminal." In addition, Mojedidi refused to allow a vote on a petition with over 151 signatures from *loya jirga* members to change the country's name from the "Islamic Republic of Afghanistan" to the "Republic of Afghanistan." He publicly called them "infidels," thus placing them in danger of assassination.

The Constitution says that "no law can be contrary

to the beliefs and provisions of the sacred religion of Islam." This opened the judiciary to people like the then chief justice, Fazl Hadi Shinwari, who told representatives of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom that he accepted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights with three exceptions: freedom of expression, freedom of religion and equality of the sexes. "This is the only law," the chief justice told them, pointing to the Koran.

The U.S. and its minions did nothing to democratize the Afghan Constitution. Rather it was women, ethnic Hazaras, ethnic Uzbeks and others who put their lives in jeopardy as they tried to make the Constitution a document that represents their aspirations for a free multiethnic Afghanistan.

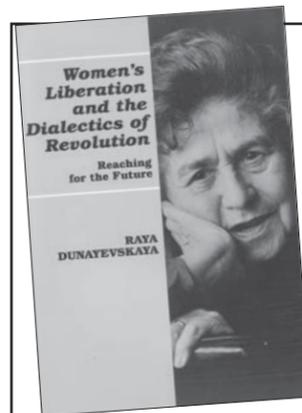
In all the scenarios spun out of the heads of U.S. leaders, none of them consider either the desire or the ability of Afghan people to govern their own lives and nation. Yet that is the only solution.

Here is how Shazia, a member of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) who spoke recently in the U.S., put it: "If the troops leave Afghanistan, of course for a few years there will be wars... Years and years of struggle is needed....We will give sacrifices. But we will do that ourselves. Because history has shown that no country can grant peace and security to another country as a gift. That is the responsibility of that country, that people, to gain those values...by their resistance and by their struggle."

And this is part of what Malalai Joya said on the day of the Afghan election: "Democracy will never come to Afghanistan through the barrel of a gun, or from the cluster bombs dropped by foreign forces. The struggle will be long and difficult, but the values of real democracy, human rights and women's rights will only be won by the Afghan people themselves...."

As we put it in our Editorial in the last issue of *News & Letters*: "The truly decisive division is that between the rulers and the ruled in each country. The only genuine opposition to war comes from the revolt and resistance of the people, whether that be the uprising in Iran sparked by the stolen election or the mass resistance against the coup in Honduras. As *News and Letters* Committees has asked since our founding, 'Are you with the people struggling for a totally new way of life, or with capitalism fighting to perpetuate itself?'"

"Our opposition to war must therefore spell out not only what we are against but what we are for: a world of new human relations, beginning at the point of production, and encompassing all the dimensions opened up by humanity's many-faceted struggles for freedom."



Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future
by Raya Dunayevskaya

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in this new edition to a whole new generation. It was never more needed."

—Adrienne Rich

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Québec: Taking Back 'Les Plaines'

The 250th anniversary of the Sept. 13, 1759, fall of Québec City to British forces was marked by a massive demonstration of a new type on the Plaines d'Abraham (Plains of Abraham). Over a 24-hour period, over 20,000 people took part in a speak-out about Québécois and Canadian history called the "Moulin à Paroles," "Chat-terbox" in English.

In each of three eight-hour cycles, 156 historic documents were read aloud by various people, including well-known personalities. Amongst these documents were the horrible Durham Report of 1839 which called for an end to the use of the French language in Canada, Pierre Laporte's plea to former Québec Premier Robert Bourassa to save his life during the 1970 "October Crisis," and Bourassa's somber June 22, 1990, discourse after the collapse of the Meech Lake Accord.

The hitch came when parts of the 1970 FLQ (Front de Libération du Québec) Manifesto, read by the Haitian singer Luck Mervil, were included in the programme. This gave Québec Premier Jean Charest and Québec City mayor Régis Labeaume a pretext to turn down their invitations to participate and to denounce the event as "separatist."

Originally, federal officials had planned to stage a costume re-enactment of the battle as a cutesy touristic spectacle. But after many people objected and threat-

ened to protest, those plans were cancelled. Planning officials then claimed that there had been threats of violence and made veiled allusions to "terrorism." We are used to such slanders in Québec. As is often the case, the most serious assaults on the rights of Québec's people have come from elements of our own "elite."

The "Moulin à Paroles" was a huge success. As people listened to the speeches, they mingled amid dozens of literature tables, kiosks, and discussion groups on historical, political, social and philosophical issues. This was a time to delve back into our real history on our own terms. We must expose the fraud of "multiculturalism" set in place by Trudeau in 1968, which is a cloak to hide the imposition of English-language corporate culture upon the entire country. It trivializes the real history of the peoples of Canada—French, English, Amerindian, immigrants—by reducing their experience to mere "culture," and it obliterates the history and struggles of French-speaking Canadians.

In contrast to that policy, the Québec of today is an increasingly pluralistic society in the true sense. Regaining the Plaines d'Abraham is part of the process of regaining the dignity of our thoughts and ideas, of our history as one of freedom, of real living human beings, and an understanding from which we can perceive and determine our own future.

—P.J. Ville de Québec

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Protests against climate suicide

Chicago—The urgency of countering climate change was on the minds of the 80 of us who rallied in the Loop on Aug. 31 for action on the issue. Events like this are showing that the more mainstream environmental groups—like 1Sky, which called this rally—are connecting more with people of color and workers, who have long battled pollution whether or not they were recognized as "environmentalists."

However, the contradictions of this movement were visible. Mainstream activists delivered an uninspiring, technocratic message that touted various technologies and included advocating a carbon tax, which would proportionally be heaviest on the poor. Supposedly, this would not hurt people already struggling to afford rent, food, utilities and healthcare, because a portion of the taxes paid would be used to help low-income people. Speakers did not seem to realize that such aid would be dropped if the tax ever passed Congress.

How is it that the urgency we all shared did not come through in the speeches? Only one mentioned Hurricane Katrina, which is the very real wound

Healthcare 'reform'

Flint, Mich.—Real objections to the two major healthcare bills before the U.S. Congress are lost in the noise from the right wing about "death panels" and "rationing."

HR 3200, which has three somewhat different versions, and the bill proposed by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus, are variations on the same idea: individuals and employers are required to buy health insurance or be penalized if they don't. The major difference is that the Senate plan does not have the "public option" of the House bill which would allow individuals and employers to buy insurance from a government plan. Both have penalties for not buying insurance: 2.5% of adjusted gross income in the House plan, and a flat charge of \$750 to \$1,500 in the Senate.

IN EITHER CASE, paying the penalty does not mean that you have health insurance, only that you would not go to jail. There would still be a substantial number of people not able to afford health insurance but who will be penalized. This could amount to 20 million people according to Healthcare-Now.

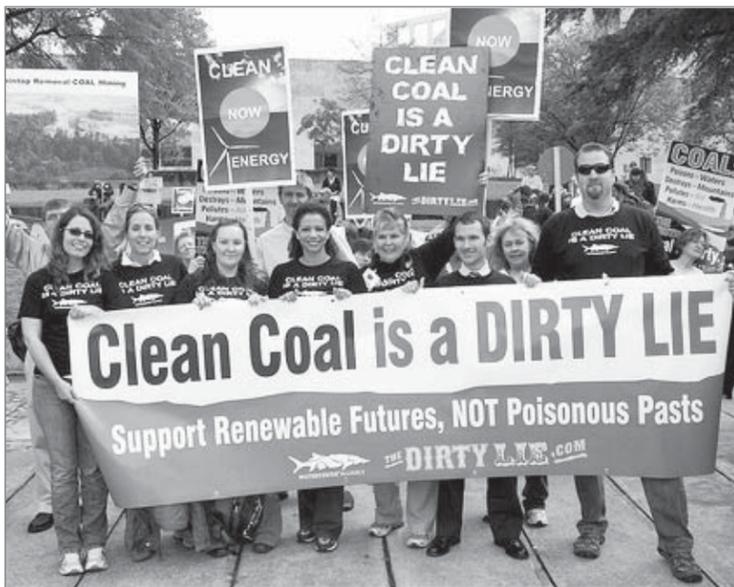
A family of four with 35-year-old parents earning \$30,000 per year would be forced onto Medicaid by the Senate bill. For people above the Medicaid level there would be tax credits available, a form of subsidy that would be worthless to an unemployed person. A 35-year-old single person earning \$30,000 per year would have to pay premiums after the tax credit between \$2,000 to \$3,000 per year under either plan.

The 1976 Hyde Amendment has prohibited the use of federal funds for abortion. It is unclear whether abortion would be covered under either plan, since federal funds are not directly involved except through tax credits. Any real healthcare reform would repeal the Hyde Amendment, since more people will be forced onto Medicaid, which does use federal funds. Republican senators are proposing amendments that would require private health plans to cover abortion only as a special rider that would more explicitly prohibit use of federal funds.

THERE IS A REAL need for healthcare reform. The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies calculated in 2002 that 18,000 people die per year in the U.S. from lack of health insurance. The number of uninsured in the U.S. was 46.3 million in 2008. The number of uninsured is growing, in part as a result of the loss of relatively well-paying jobs that provided health insurance.

Proponents of the House plan with the public option, and even proponents of the Senate plan, speak of being "realistic" and "incremental reform." There is nothing realistic about plans that at best cut the number of uninsured only in half and either put people in jail or force them to buy health insurance they cannot afford. There is no reason to think that either plan would lead to a single-payer system. The only immediate reform worthy of the name would be a single-payer system that covered everyone and all medical procedures, including abortion.

—Dan B.



On April 20 protesters in North Carolina agitated against the building of a new coal plant at the Cliffside facility in Rutherford County.

gouged into the world's consciousness—not only as the disasters global warming holds in store but how before and after any disaster the racist, capitalist USA stands ready to sacrifice people based on their skin color, sex or class.

The same dynamic is playing out on a world scale, as seen in three international summits in September. On the one hand, the President of Maldives, an Indian Ocean island nation, movingly appealed to the special climate session of the UN to save his country from disappearing under the rising seas. On the other hand, the two biggest emitters of greenhouse gases—the U.S. and China—put forward only half-measures falling far short of the reductions scientists say are needed. In the spirit of capitalist competition, the U.S. and China are heading together down a suicidal path rather than let the other gain an economic advantage. China's President Hu even resurrected George W. Bush's scam term "carbon intensity," which Hu promised to reduce by an unspecified amount, that is, emissions will keep growing but not as fast as the economy.

Encouragingly, many protests in the U.S. and other countries raised global warming while the UN met and later as the G-20 summit took place. Many more will happen before and during the climate treaty negotiations to come in Copenhagen in December, as will sit-ins to prevent more coal-fired plants from opening. Still, what is missing is discussion of how deep the social transformation needs to be to break out of capitalism's suicidal path, and how it can come to be. As long as that is missing, our movement will continue to focus on technical solutions, legislation, lobbying and treaties, and will be unable to raise the banner of a truly sustainable society based on new human relations.

—Franklin Dmitryev

'Fracking' in New York

A large number of gas exploration and energy companies are pushing to extract natural gas using hydraulic fracturing—"fracking"—from southern New York State. This involves drilling vertically from 6,000 to 8,000 feet into the earth and then horizontally for up to one mile.

Millions of gallons of water and over 247 chemicals, 90% of which are toxic, are pumped deep into the ground to force natural gas to the surface under pressure. Depending on conditions, 20% to 40% of the toxic mix remains in the ground where it can contaminate the water table, and 60% to 80% is pumped to the surface into pools of toxic sludge that can leach back into the soil and groundwater, common occurrences where fracking is practiced.

Because of a Bush-era exemption in the law, gas exploration companies are not required to disclose the list of chemicals nor their amounts or concentrations.

The affected area includes most of southern New York State, and has already been taking place in much of Pennsylvania, almost all of West Virginia, and most of eastern Ohio, with widespread damage. The Catskill/Delaware watershed is also threatened, which could affect the water supply for New York City.

Most of the plans were made quietly. Now that the state Department of Environmental Conservation has released its Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement, opponents are allowed only 60 days for objections. It is being railroaded through.

There is a growing movement of community groups, citizens, local governments and civic leaders to stop this. Despite the argument by proponents that gas extraction will bring prosperity, damage to the water table can ruin agriculture, seriously contaminate drinking water, and threaten the wine and tourism industries, with the resulting loss of jobs—on top of general environmental destruction and destruction of quality of life.

We are determined and need all the help we can get. To learn more and become involved, here are four websites: www.shaleshock.org; www.ogap.org; www.nyh2o.org; and www.propublica.org. Fracking needs to be stopped NOW or it could lay waste to one of the most beautiful regions of the country. Real people live here and we don't want to be driven from the land and the life we love.

—New York Environmental Activists

Berkeley STRIKE!

Berkeley—The Sept. 24 labor union strike and student/faculty walkout at University of California, Berkeley, reminded many at the noon rally of the campus in the 1960s. Picket lines at every entrance and thousands jamming Sproul Plaza harkened back to another labor/student collaboration, the 1969 Third World Liberation Front Strike. This time workers led the way. In mid-July the ten-campus, 11,000-strong University Professional and Technical Employees (UPTE) union chose to strike on the first day of classes in response to the University's proposed salary decreases and work furloughs, prompted by state budget cuts.

Faculty and students decided to follow suit by calling for a system-wide walkout. Undergrad student fees are scheduled to rise 32% over last year's. UC President Mark Yudof, empowered by the UC Regents to ignore administration/faculty shared governance, has called the \$10,302 tuition "a bargain." One picket sign at Sproul read: "Education Is Not A Commodity."

A concern expressed by several speakers was the accelerating trend towards privatization of public education. That message resonated strongly with students at the rally who had walked out of nearby community colleges. I attended one such school, Laney College in Oakland, when a governing board member advocated toughening entrance requirements in order to matriculate "higher caliber" students.

The massive statewide walkout reflected an urgent sense among workers, professors and students that low-income people are being left behind. It was a call to reject an unacceptable future in which a \$10,000 tuition could one day become a "bargain" at your local community college.

—David M'oto



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Kraft labor solidarity

Chicago—A group of us held an action Sept. 17 in solidarity with Kraft-Terrabusi workers in Argentina. We raised a banner and passed out flyers to workers leaving the Kraft plant at Kedzie and 73rd. A video was made of solidarity messages from a group of African-American women workers from the plant and Gerry Emmett of News and Letters Committees (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xKcm18J2w2g>).

In General Pacheco, Argentina, workers held a series of assemblies in June to demand a pay increase. Because of the H1N1 flu epidemic, on July 3 they picketed to demand better sanitary conditions. Calling the picket a "violent takeover," the company fired 160 workers without severance pay. In response, workers stopped production, occupying the plant for more than five weeks, and blocking the Pan-American Highway six times. At times students and workers set up solidarity roadblocks in Buenos Aires and other cities.

The day after our action here, the company stopped paying the 2,600 workers still employed. Their message was to stop the blockade if they wanted to feed their families. Workers rejected this attempt to divide them. After a Sept. 21 roadblock by 250 workers, the Labor Ministry ordered the company to pay the wages owed.

Kraft declared it would not pay, and called 300 police to storm the factory, shooting tear gas and rubber bullets at occupiers and their supporters rallying outside, including children. They detained 65 people within the factory and wounded four. On Sept. 28 an enormous march was held in Buenos Aires and roadblocks were set up in several provinces in support of the workers. Subway workers held three work stoppages, and protesters tied up traffic in Buenos Aires with roadblocks three days in a row. Rank-and-file workers denounced the heads of the CGT labor federation and the food and beverage workers union, Moyano and Daer respectively, who called the Kraft workers "ultraleftists" and in effect supported the repression.

Solidarity actions have also taken place in Brazil and Colombia, and more will follow in Chicago. We hope the determination of the Kraft-Terrabusi workers will be a rallying point for international solidarity, as well as for the struggle of workers in Argentina to take control of their workplaces—a struggle ongoing since the economic crisis of 2000 sparked occupations, roadblocks, and neighborhood and worker assemblies. There are now dozens of plants under worker control, with ominous maneuvers by the capitalists to use the state's repressive forces to end them.

—Solidarity activist

WORLD VIEW

Egyptian textile workers' actions spread

by Gerry Emmett

Labor actions continue across Egypt, including among workers in the textile industry. The largely government-owned textile industry employs about a third of Egypt's industrial labor force. Textile workers are poorly paid, but in the past have had job security to compensate for that. However, in recent years the government has been attempting to privatize the industry, which is labor-intensive and undercapitalized, resulting in job losses, pay cuts and benefit cuts.

Last month workers at Mahalla al-Kubra's Aboul Seba textile factory clashed with security forces when they were prevented from demonstrating against unpaid wages and received notices of 15 days mandatory unpaid holiday leave. The Delta town of Mahalla has been an important center of the Egyptian workers' movement for decades.

Women textile workers have played a vital role in Egypt's labor movement in recent years. Their militancy was described by one union leader at Mahalla's Misr Spinning and Weaving plant this way in 2007: "The women [workers] almost tore apart every representative from the management who came to negotiate. The women were more militant than the men. They were subject to security intimidation and threats, but they held out."

Indeed, that very significant strike, which opened a new era for Egyptian workers, began when 3,000 women workers walked off the job and challenged the male workers to do so as well, chanting "Where are the



Striking workers at Mahalla al-Kubra's Aboul Seba textile factory.

men? Here are the women!"

The world and life experiences of Egyptian workers are far removed from President Mubarak's corridors of power, as well as from the religious fantasies of the Muslim Brotherhood. But workers' struggles are making themselves felt. For the first time, in May of this year, the state-controlled General Union of Textile Workers (GUTW) was compelled to recognize a strike by Tanta Flax and Oil Company workers. The government union did this because it recognizes the threat to its existence in the many calls for independent unions in Egypt today.

When the GUTW withdrew support for the strike, workers refused to end it. Rather, workers have now begun to move from strictly economic demands to political criticism of the government itself.

Wildcat strikes have spread in other sectors of the economy as well. So far this year there have been over 200 strike actions. Even government workers have become more militant, with a nationwide strike by property tax collectors and a threatened strike by postal workers. The new, independent tax collectors union is the first independent union formed in Egypt in 50 years.

It must be recognized that some of the most vibrant and significant of today's labor struggles are taking place in the Middle East, whether in Egypt, or among Iraqi oil and government workers and teachers who

still struggle against Saddam Hussein's old anti-labor laws which remain on the books of the new "democracy," or among the combative Iranian workers who are also beginning to form independent unions and participate in the mass outpouring for freedom following the stolen election.

Fundamentalism contested in Aceh

In April parliamentary elections, voters in Aceh rejected hard-line Islamist parties. But the outgoing parliament is using its last days to pass a variety of measures that include requiring women to wear headscarves, possible death by stoning for "adultery," and whipping for premarital sex or homosexual activity. Some current lawmakers declined to endorse these new measures, but none voted against them.

The current governor of Aceh, Irwandi Yusuf, is a former leader of the armed resistance, the Free Aceh Movement (GAM). He was elected following the 2005 Memorandum of Understanding with the Indonesian government, which granted Aceh limited autonomy. He has been silent on the proposal, but his government has so far refused to ratify the parliament's legislation.

Aceh is usually claimed to be one of the most religiously conservative regions of Indonesia. But during the freedom struggle, GAM made some exemplary calls for the independence movement to reject the support of reactionary fundamentalist groups. The many women who participated in Aceh's struggle will be unlikely to accept the current proposed legislation. It would be tragic if Aceh fell now to such reactionary tendencies. It is to be hoped that the new parliament will reject such an outcome.

Latin American Notes

Mexico

While the U.S. economy is supposedly in recovery (though unemployment continues to skyrocket), no such recovery can be claimed for Mexico. The economy has been in free-fall, first in relation to the global economic crisis, particularly in the U.S., and second in relation to the swine flu problems of this spring. The economy is expected to decrease by some 7% for the year. Almost half of Mexico's population currently live in conditions of poverty.

There has been a continual increase in numbers of the poor during President Calderon's first three years in office, including an estimated poverty rate of 61% in the countryside.

This economic statistic does not speak concretely enough to the raw reality of widespread poverty and outright misery that affects so many ordinary Mexicans today.

Nor does it speak to the developing resistance:

- An organization has been formed in Mexico City called "Women and Single Mothers Without Housing," who are fighting for a place to live, education, worthwhile projects and self-employment.

- In the state of Tamaulipas, residents of an informal neighborhood, *Mano a Mano* (Hand to Hand), fought to keep their makeshift housing before being expelled with clubs and tear gas by Tampico police, who arrested 200.

South America and the U.S.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) has voiced opposition to the proposed U.S.-Colombia Defense Cooperation Agreement which would allow "U.S. access to three Colombian air force bases...two naval bases, and two army installations, and other Colombian military facilities." The stated reason for the bases agreement is to fight drug trafficking. However, the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador openly wonder whether these bases have another purpose: to keep an eye on these countries in terms of their anti-U.S. rhetoric and policies, and to keep in check the rise of Brazil as the dominant economic power of the continent.

The proposed Colombian base agreement comes after the Ecuadorian government of Rafael Correa declined to renew the Manta base pact with the U.S., which had allowed a U.S. military presence in Ecuador. UNASUR was founded in 2005 as a South American political, military, financial, and energy alliance. Its entry into a debate on the U.S.-Colombia military arrangements marks a possible new stage. Not to be forgotten in Latin America-U.S. military relations is the re-establishment of the U.S. Fourth Naval Fleet in 2008, with responsibility in the Caribbean and South America. Its new deployment, in relation to the decade-plus-long rise of progressive social movements and new governments, is taking shape this year.

—Eugene Walker

Neo-fascism in UK

On Sept. 11, anti-fascists and local residents battled members of the neo-fascist English Defense League (EDL) in Harrow, northwest London. The EDL had targeted a new mosque for attack. Similar fighting has broken out in a number of other cities in recent weeks.

While the violent radical Right is again visible, the British National Party (BNP) has taken a different tack. Taking cues from other European neo-fascist groups like the French National Front, Belgian Vlaams Belang, and Austrian Freedom Party, Nick Griffin's BNP has engaged in an effort at "re-branding" itself.

The "new" BNP will "...use the saleable words: freedom, security, identity, democracy. Nobody can criticize them." It means downplaying traditional themes of anti-Semitism and racism in favor of a more fashionable prejudice against Muslims, and the non-existent "Islamification of Britain."

The cosmetic change has paid off in that the BNP has succeeded in winning two seats in the European Parliament along with 55 local offices. Other groups, like the EDL and Combat 18, have moved to fill the thug vacuum with attacks on immigrants, Muslims, Roma and Irish Republicans.

These British and European neo-fascists have found allies in the U.S., who also represent different strategies but the same racist ends, from David Duke to Patrick Buchanan.

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.