Outpouring for Obama points beyond election to quest for full freedom

by Olga Economou and Franklin Smith

The shocking news released Dec. 5 of half a million more workers being thrown into unemployment nearly eclipsed the importance of the election, just a month after the election of the first Black African American president.

No one, however, can dismiss the historic importance of a Black man winning the presidency of so racist a legacy as the U.S. since its very birth. None could fail to be moved by the fully interracial and multiethnic protest by hundreds of thousands in Grant Park in Chicago, and dancing in the streets of both Harlem and Times Square in New York on election night. Far from simple euphoria, it established a totally new kind of experience. The poignant pageant of the hundreds of thousands who had poured out to Obama’s rallies and who were seen as portending nothing less than a “revolutionary political shift.” Whayneway, the founder of the philosophy, organization, and practice. It will be part of the significance chapters of American history, when the Abolitionist movement represented nothing less than a “new revolution.”

Getting beyond race as the determinant does not mean forgetting that we are a racially divided land, as any look at the confinements of Black and White as a determining variable. It is to say that Obama spoke in a language that resonated with the need for a fuller freedom than the U.S. has up to now been willing to set loose—the freedom for Gays to marry, for women to control their reproductive lives, for immigrants to move freely across borders, for an end to discrimination against all the minorities of this country; and the freedom to live in peace with international neighbors.

WHAT FREEDOM MEANS

Although the theme of Obama’s inauguration is said to be “A New Birth of Freedom,” neither candidate spoke of “freedom” in the traditional sense. President Bush has so corrupted the word in the militaristic way he used it as meaning invading another country and forcing his “persuasion” of ‘freedom’ on them, that it requires spelling out in its actions.

When California’s Proposition 8 took away same-sex marriage, the breadth and depth of the immediate protests, by Gay and straight alike, revealed how serious the mass are about “change” being not just a change in political relations. (See articles on page 9.)

What is important now is what happens after. Since winning the election, Barack Obama set two more records. One was the amazing speed with which he set up his cabinet and chose his ‘teams’—immediately changing the character of the White House. The other was the strong deliberate political action of the victors. It goes to show that when one of his choices represented. Nothing may be more clear than Obama’s resolve to depart in a special direction than the selection of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, which shows that Obama’s victory stemmed in large part from his vigorous dedication to the freedom to live in peace with international neighbors.

An invitation and an appeal

As a new year begins, the ever-deepening crises that confront us—from the threat of the worst economic crisis since the Depression, to the seemingly endless wars of the U.S. to continue wage, and from climate change to growing hunger across the world—make it clear that the need for an alternative to this capitalistic world has become urgent. Despite finally achieving a long worked-for defeat of George W. Bush with the historic election of Barack Obama as the presidency—it is also clear that the U.S. election cannot solve these problems and that people across the world are looking for a far deeper change, for a way to create a whole new world, built on human foundations.

It is why News and Letters Committees are beginning the new year with a special series of classes in all of our local areas across the country, which we are calling “CONFRONTING TODAY’S CRISIS: The Marxist-Humanist reply to Marx and the revolutionary abolition of Capitalism.”

Our return to Marx will be through the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya, whose words and insights into the philosophy of Marx-Humanism, which established a continuity with Marx for our age. The classes will explore what that means in philosophy. Workers at Republic Windows and Doors see worker as the key to the sort of movement represented nothing less than a "new revolution."
Abu Ghraib showed the world that those in the U.S. military tolerate, rape, and murder. It revealed that the conscience of the military has been treasured as things. Despite the huge outcry, what positively proves that nothing has changed is that the same trend, rage, and murder continues to occur; the military continues to cover it up; only the victims are left to face the terror that military considers the enemy, but U.S. women soldiers. 

Since the U.S. war on Iraq began, 97 women have died and 2,000 were wounded. Many have returned home suffering from PTSD. A few are injuries. Here are a few “injuries” that have been known to occur:

• The Army ruled Pfc. Lavana Johnson’s death a suicide though her parents insist she was “happy and healthy.” When they demanded to see her body, there were signs of sexual abuse, abrasions on her face, nose, burns on her hands, back and genital area. The burns on her hands were concealed by the white uniform gloves that had been glued to them. Not only did the gun shot wound not match the description in the autopsy, her father learned after much digging that she had been redefined after her death, dragged across the ground and set on fire inside a tent. The army refused to answer Mr. and Mrs. Johnson’s questions.

• Spec. Kanisha Block was reported dead in Iraq of suicide. Two days after her injury turned out to be gunshot wounds inflicted by a male soldier who had been on the same base. Block reported her harassment, but her harasser was only moved five minutes away from her, making it easier for him to continue harassing her, killing himself. The murder of U.S. women soldiers is not confined to Iraq. Just in the last six months at U.S. bases:
  - Spec. Megan Touma was found slain in June in a Fayetteville motel room.
  - Sgt. Patricia Johnson was murdered in July by an unknown assailant.
  - Body was discovered in Onslow County in July; three days after a suspicious fire was reported at her Fayetteville apartment. Her shoe, an antique baseball cap, a ring, and her shoes were found on the body. The case remains unsolved.
  - Sgt. Christina Smith was killed in a Sept. 30 attack in Kandahar.
  - Spec. Sherif Gommaa for groping a woman in the streets of Arabic.
  - Sharif Gommaa for groping a woman.

• The first prison sentences for public sexual harassment of a woman in Egypt was three years in jail for Sharif Gommaa for groping a woman on the street in 2007. He admitted to the crime, but has never known the sentence. The case provoked a great deal of outrage and the murderer was released after two years.

• The University of Iowa has been charged with failing to adequately protect a female student who brought sexual assault charges against two top football players in October 2007. She faced physical and verbal assaults by other athletes. The university also did not have a policy for handling sexual assault cases.

• The Department of Defense (DoD) has done everything possible to keep the statistics of rape, abuse, and outright murder a secret. At a hearing on sexual assault in the military called by the Senate Armed Services Committee, and in a report by the DoD, gushing about the success of the SAPRO, Defense threatening Whitley with contempt prompted the DoD to order Defense Secretary Robert Gates to answer Whitley’s questions.

• Legislation that would have legalized abortion in the/only in the state of Nebraska was vetoed by President Bush in November 2007.

• Older children are being abandoned by their parents under Nebraska’s new notorious safe-haven law. Until recently, this law allowed parents to abandon children up to the age of 18. Since its passage, many more children who might be driven to abandon their babies in unsafe places, to legally leave them in hospitals. Unlike other states, Nebraska did not set an age limit for abandoned children. Over 35 children, mostly between the ages of 11 and 17, were abandoned before Nebraska changed the law to apply to newborns only. It is hard for many people to understand how any child could be abandoned by their parents.

• Several parents have taken their children almost as far away as Washington to leave their children in a safe place. One of the stories behind those abandonments is shocking. The mother of a five-year-old attempted suicide in Nebraska because her child was out of control. He tried to beat her in a baby’s head, and set fire to a shower curtain and her insurance company refused to pay. The child’s mother called the police, but no one came. They explained that they were busy fighting for a new society grounded in new human relations is a necessity.

• The case of Nicaragua has become super emblematic of a woman’s heart.” It hasn’t been accepted by the military brass doing it. Hiding and stonewalling. What is the military brass doing? Hiding and stonewalling. That was made crystal clear when, despite being ordered by a judge to testify at a hearing on sexual assault in the military called by the Senate Armed Services Committee, and in a report by the DoD, gushing about the success of the SAPRO, Defense Secretary Robert Gates refused to answer Whitley’s questions.

• Cardenal called Ortega “a thief” who “ruins monachal life.” Ortega became a political prisoner with his Somosa interests.” He was attending the inauguration of Paraguay’s new president, Fernando Lugo. Ortega did not attend the ceremony. He was in touch with sources who claimed that he is unwell in the country: Guilla Ruiz, Panama’s vice-presidential candidate, and women’s affairs director, cited Ortega’s history of abusing his stepdaughter, Zolamaseca. 

Women in Nicaragua also cite the imposition of the strictest abortion law in the Western world in 2006 outlawing of therapeutic abortion. About 110 women are known to have died as a result. This affects poor women most, as the wealthier can travel to Costa Rica or Cuba to receive abortions. Legislation that would have legalized abortion in the state of Nebraska was vetoed by President Bush in November 2007. The bill had been passed by the Senate to end in a pregnancy in the first 12 weeks due to a hardship. The do not have enough income, family, age, health or risk to the mother’s life. Current law criminalizes all abortion, including rape or danger to the mother’s life. More than half of all Uruguayans support the right to legal abortion.

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If the people had not stayed inside, everything would have been gone with no warning. If enough people stay, they can’t move more machines, windows and materials out.

I think the company will pay us. The company says, no, it doesn’t pay for sit-ins. They say, no, it is the company that won’t pay. It’s crazy. We saw them three days as they closed the plant down. This organizing is good for everyone.

Congress Hotel striker leads walk out

Maria says, no, it is the company that won’t pay. It’s crazy. We have been gone with no warning. If enough people stay, we would have lost everything. We got paid nothing. So we decided to stay inside.

WORKSHOP PLANS

On the way to the conference I heard a radio interview with Studs Terkel, rebroadcast as an in memoriam upon his passing. I told the RPA audience that he reminded me how events unfolded on my shop floor for the last several years. Terkel said he encountered many workers who told him that there was no plan, that he did with everyday working folks. He listened carefully when his subjects spoke in order to “see the universal in the particular.”

Terkel reminded me that we workers kept recounting to each other our daily struggles with HMOs over accessing health care; our personal stories and horror stories from patients who related their individual sufferings at the hands of the HMO industry. They told of a suffering and visibly deeply ailing single mother with whose comradery believes in that health science and technology are nothing more than “a never-ending alternation with work discipline that has transformed us into unwilling accomplices in the shop floor, many of whom were armed with their own force of reason, eventually becomes universally recognized as a movement from practice that is a form of human-to-human interaction.

In the years following our legislative gains, the HMO industry continues to restructure itself, financing many loopholes around legislation. The work is more alienating than ever. Shop floor conditions have not improved and our demands to ensure quality care in our contract. Many other gains were won over the following years. We won legislation to mandate minimum nurse-to-patient ratios. We won mandatory use of safe needles. We won protection for whistle-blowers. We won more rigorous enforcement of patients’ Bill of Rights, and many, many more.

DISCUSSIONS LED TO GAINS

Healthcare today, as we know it, would not be what it is without those key reforms, written into contractual language, as well as into legislation. Easily forgotten, especially by our labor leader now observing the successful ascendance of the shop floor, workers continue discussions as then—on how workers won protections.

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The philosophical foundation of Marxism and Freedom

It is crucial to look anew at Raya Dunayevskaya’s Marxism and Freedom 50 years after its first publication. The context in 1958 was the world of the Mont- gomery Bus Boycott and the Hungarian Revolution, the kind of great movements that we have learned from. Marxism and Freedom is the story of movements from practice that are also forms of theory.

Such earth-shaking movements may not be as obvi- ous as major ones, but to booby-trap the difference, the intellectu- al sloth which has accumu- lated in the Marxist movement is re- cognized only Marxists, then we wouldn’t have contended that the H-bomb threat with its ideological background show- ing the need for a new strategy, a move- ment from practice to theory and work which much later, with new impulses coming from the work- ing class, once again is far from being intel- lectual abdication, would mark the actual fracturing of theory. One of the theoreticians that gets, his work does not end, but begins.

In my introduction, I had some prescriptions or rhetorical con- clusions. I show a method at work and appeal to the intellectual sloth of the theoreticians to view the contemporary scene, to get out from under domination of either the Russian totalitarian or the American ‘democratic’ system. The whole point is that there are no revolutions. The workers by themselves can do a lot but they too haven’t achieved a new methodology. The move- ment from practice to theory met the movement from theory to practice, then a serious start could be made.

The philosophical foundation of Marxism—since the American roots of Marxism to the Communist party worldwide since the Second World War and the Cold War—since it tries to deal with our machine age as well as the latest period of world history, the capitalist movement from practice to theory met the summation of all those movements. It is possible both as theory and as methodol- ogy to use the historical Marxism to endow the intellectual sloth with became so real to him that he could indeed discern the movement from practice to theo- ry. Marxism and Freedom is a lifetime, not the unity of the two as does the worker... Raya

1 Dunayevskaya broke with Trotsky when he continued to defend Russia as a workers state despite the Stalin Pact, which gave the green light to World War II.


3 Lenin learned the critical importance of the philosophic foundations the hard way—when the Second International collapsed and, to reconstitute his philosophy of history in the Paris Commune; his reorganization of Marxism and Freedom

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ESSAY

The moment Lenin missed: what kind of labor?

by Tom More

And for Lenin there was no philosophical moment

—Raya Dunayevskaya

As Marx and Dunayevskaya experienced their ‘philosophic moments’ respectively in 1844 and 1953, so too did Lenin. In 1844, when he turned to his study of Hegel’s Science of Logic in order to find a new direction in his life, he was beset by World War I and the collapse of the Second Internation-

al. In each of the volumes of her ‘trilogy of revolution,’’ Dunayevskaya describes the personal crisis that led to Lenin’s successive entry, once he became ‘the first ex-Marxist of the twentieth century.’ 1b

1b To discover these differences, one need only compare What Is It to Be Done? (1902) and Materialism and Empirio-Criticism (1913) with Imperialist Stage of Capitalism (1917), The State and Revolution (1917), and the other writings that come after what Dunayevskaya terms ‘the death of Lenin.’

The State and Revolution is not only among Lenin’s most important works but also the most important of ‘the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution’ (as its subtitle indicates), it comes as close as anything we have in capitalism to a further dialectics of organization and philosophy.

Those who recognize only the class struggle as not yet Marxism, ‘writes: “Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.” In any case, Lenin’s heroic attempt, by way of restoring dialectics, to over-

come what he terms ‘the isolation’ (in a sense, similar to a void in the period after World War I) of the Independent Social-Democratic Party of Russia (which was formed it from a science which deals with

the spirit of which it is crucial to recognize that Marx’s ‘critique of the very foundations of political economy’ is nowhere to be found in Marx’s thought as a whole and of Marxism in its

totality. First, that principle is philosophical. Second, the philosophical first principle in any case of the Marxism of Marx—ius humanism, especially at the point where what is really human—by necessity, and the active potency for freedom—is most profoundly alienated and debased, mechanized and auto-

mated, the social-technical excrescence, which is Marxism. This is the import of the question, what kind of labor, above all, could ‘be a human being’? Lenin? (To separate the essence—the social rela-

tion—to the revolution in any case, of the whole society and the
drama of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its immediate


In lack of the philosophical moment, Lenin’s Marxist economic philosophy of the workers’ democratic society modeled after the Paris Commune of 1871. It is this Lenin, therefore, that the dialectics of organization and philosophy may shed some light on some part of Duna-

yevskaya’s contention that ‘for Lenin there was no philo-

sophical moment, no understanding of organization, no

paralysed by forces that go against the accumulation of capital,’’ but Marx also ‘has the experience now of both political par-
ties, he has the experience of bringing the whole of the masses, plus philosophy.’ 18 In other words, this Lenin, who misses the moment, raises a question that could not be more acutely posed: what kind of labor?

14 Dunayevskaya, “Presentation of June 1, 1987,” 7, 4-5.15 Lenin, The State and Revolution, 189, 117, for her explanation of what she calls “the tragedy,” see 117-120.

13 Dunayevskaya, “Presentation of June 1, 1987,” 7, 4-5.

12 Dunayevskaya, Materialism and Empirio-Criticism, 380, 346, 244.

11 Dunayevskaya, “Presentation of June 1, 1987,” 7, 4-5.

10 Dunayevskaya, Marxism and Freedom, 106.

9 Dunayevskaya, “Presentation of June 1, 1987,” 10, for her summary, see 7-12.

8 Lenin, The State and Revolution, 380, 346, 244.

7 Dunayevskaya, Marxism and Freedom, 54-55.

6 Dunayevskaya, “Presentation of June 1, 1987,” 7, 4-5.

5 Dunayevskaya, Women’s Liberation, 54-55.

AND CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

In that the 1996 article by Dunayevskaya-ya in the same issue, she was writing about debt. Nobody was thinking about that then. And it inspired in her a substantial ad for The Marxist- Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism on the same page.

Marxist-Humanist New York

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The critical juncture we have reached today may well be a harbinger of things to come. The first act of the play of the bow of labor. The attacks on UAW workers may be the PATCO event of our age. If they win here, other rounds over the U.S. economy will be seeing very hard times ahead, for a long, long time to come.

Healthcare Worker California

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It appears UAW workers are making their stand and not giving in to the anti-labor right wing in the Congress. The Republicans are simultaneously attacking pro-environment clauses as well as union wages. It’s obvious they want to put the burden of the “eco- nomic recovery” on the backs of workers and the environment. One’s political stance on those two issues are tied togeth-er at the umbilical cord.

Pro-environment worker California

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You cannot talk about economics sep- arate from life. When we talk about eco- nomic theory, it is a discussion about human life. How people are affected through all the propaganda and outright lies the powers-that-be put out. It is a leap of the imagination to know that one can live in a different way. I think that’s what Marx’s philosophy is all about—how individuals reproduce themselves as human beings. It’s the only alterna- tive there is to the ongoing capitalist crisis today. It is as simple as that. It is as easy as saving capitalism from its own grave dig-ers” (Oct.-Nov. 1986).

Tom Parsons San Francisco

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It was no big surprise when the eco- nomic crisis demanded a response from both presidential candidates and nei- ther Oct.-Nov. 1986 was a rea- able and clear in dealing with a techni- cal-philosophic issue. It was revealing

RACISM IN AMERICAN DISCOURSE

The racist discourse in America is alarming and it becomes more explicit as it takes place. When a lady at the town hall meeting during the presidential campaign asked John McCain if his allegiance to the Bush Administration to the U.S. was strongly and, when criticized by Obama for being completely out of touch with reality, saying he was actually referring to the American workers who are the best in the world. It is absolutely clear that the future for American workers is contin- ued subjugation to the despotic plan of capital.

Marcelo Lacero, an immigrant from Ecuador, was attacked by seven teen-age boys and stabbed to death Nov. 8 in Suf-folk County on Long Island, a shor- termute from New York City The attackers confessed that they had driven around the town of Patchogue looking for Latins to beat up. Suffolk employs a County Executive who uses the term ‘anchor baby’—children born to immigrants, supposedly as a device to obtain a legal foothold in the U.S. that half of the country’s prison popu-lation will be reduced to 6,815

Farooq Crescent City, Cal.

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The Lead article on “Bailout can’t save capitalism from its own grav- edig-ers” (Oct.-Nov. 1986) was a rea-

Concerned Cyberspace

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It was a certain kind of consciousness he on “Caged Mental Health.” What was missing was the reality of “the cage.” No one can picture it or realize it exists in one’s mind.

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Don’t forget to put News & Letters on your holiday gift

Remember to put our new office address and phone number in your address book. As of Jan. 1, 2012, it will be at 228 South Wabash Ave., Suite 51C, Chicago, IL 60604 Phone: 312-431-8242

COME VISIT US
LEARNING A LESSON
Ron Gettelfinger, president of the UAW, is now demanding a position on the board of directors of GM in return for the concessions the union has made to help GM during this auto crisis. He apparently doesn’t know UAW history.
In 1980, when then UAW President Doug Fraser gave concessions to Chrysler to “keep it from going under,” he threatened to get laid up in return. He learned after a year that it had effectively excluded him from important financial and union-related decisions, and he resigned in disgust.

WORLD NEWS

• IRAQ VIOLENCE
Readers of N & L, would want to know that Samir Aalil, president of the Iraq Independent Civil Society Congress on Nov. 11 when a suicide bomber attacked a congress meeting in Kirkuk, Iraq. Fortunately he will be OK, but the bomb killed over 50 people, wounding over 100, and killing popular Uncle Tariq singer Kanaan Mohammed Saleh along with his children. Saleh is a long-time host of a show on Kurdish TV. The Iraqi Freedom Congress is opposed to sectarian violence, is democratic in works with the Organization of Women’s Freedom in various many strong progressive women and democratic groups.

Anti-war activist

• LEONIDAS KOULAS,

Koulias adds, “With this book, Raya Dunayevskaya reaches a new level of synthesis of her and Marx’s thought.”

“Raya Dunayevskaya has made a subtle and important contribution in this book,” writes Foster. “She has done something that no one else has—she has read the works of Marx and his original contemporaries and deduced the full implications of his work.”

“Raya Dunayevskaya’s most important contribution to philosophy in the 20th century is her re-interpretation of the philosophy of G.W.F. Hegel,” writes Foster. “This re-interpretation, which is the core of the book, is a complete and radical critique of Hegel’s philosophy of history and his famous concept of ‘the dialectic’.”

Foster notes that Dunayevskaya’s understanding of Hegel is unique in its recognition of its dialectical nature and its history.

“This book is a tour de force,” writes Foster. “It is a masterpiece of philosophical analysis and synthesis. It is a work of great originality and insight, and it is a work that will be read and studied for many years to come.”
ICE’s inhumanity to immigrants

DETROIT—Last month a woman contacted me about the youth who was getting up picketing by ICE Immigration and Customs Enforcement. They came in the middle of the night and removed the door with a battering ram. The family was asleep upstairs and the police screamed and cut the family off from each other. An eight-year-old and a four-month-old were held at gunpoint, the baby in his mother’s arms. They took the men away from the home. The Tasering heavily injured his father and the other was a U.S. citizen. They tried to take their car, too, but the women stopped them.

The people were at home, sleeping when all this went down. No criminal activity, no warrants. The warrant was simply the being labeled an undocumented immigrant. This has been done to the wasteland of Mexico, where he is unable to earn enough money to live, much less send support for his two children here.

I took them to say goodbye to him in the Monroe Detention Center and watched them send him to Canada. Earlier I had been with them in court while the children came in with him and the lawyer had shown them how to video tape the mother. She could not come inside due to her status. So these two little girls, four and six, and I as a watch, kept alive, alone in a cell and unable to face his children in person to say goodbye.

It is hard to watch, and the little ones did not understand the gravity of this situation. They did not know they may never see him again, or maybe not for a long time. These contacts we have with families create a bond that is deep, and when they get deported or have had their children separated, the suffering of the family is too hot to handle, we suffer the loss as well. This is no way to live.

December when we did not know any of the recent Mexican immigrants. Now, it seems like we all know each other and have a common language. The very same community are touching base in a more organized way. Now we are connecting, and the web is being woven to ensure that a lot of these people who are being deported are not becoming isolated and bitter.

Two years before, last month brought a young man to my house to discuss what could be done about his brothers being detained on false charges in the Detroit jail. They have no malice and have done nothing wrong. And the legions of people having to leave their beloved homes in the face of threats to deport them, that is where the still incarcerated. There are hardly any funds for people leaving prison to reenter society, and widespread discrimination against parolees in job opportunities, funding for ex-prisoners face.

An Obama presidency will not erase the concept of racism in this country overnight, even if his presidency gains two terms. Such things will not be possible until a national agenda is defined that does not look at race, creed, color, or ethnicity. The concept that in this country, the black man is the perfect culturally blended man for the ages. But amid the shouts of jubilation that herald the arrival of an Obama presidency, we must remember that he is only one man and still an elected favorite of only half the country.

‘Coup d'état’ in Canada

Canada has been in political turmoil since the begin-

nings of December, the popular uprising that began with Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, a strong Bush ally, to hold on power at any cost. In the last week, the Liberal government, directed at the Liberal, New Democratic, and Blue Que-
bec, has called for a new national agenda that must be long fought for in Canada, and the abolition of the right to strike for all government employees.

Despite the opposition of Harper’s attempt to push through a new Civil Service Act, the government, though it has the authority to do so “on paper,” does not actually have the right to intervene in Canada’s political history. This government, which has been the beginning of the end Canada’s status as a “Country of the Free,” is the government of the appearance of deep racism, including Stephen Harper’s,

Los Angeles—A wide coalition of anti-prison activists, organizations and concerned individuals met in Los Angeles in November to discuss how to stop the growing prison industry. The town hall meeting titled, “No New Prisons: A New Way of Life: End Incarcerate” was sponsored by Californians For A Reliable Crime (CURB), Critical Resistance (CRLA) and the L.A. Prison Times and gave presentations to a small audience that included women from the LEAGUE Women Voters.

A woman from Labor Community Strategy Center (LCSC) stated that the school to prison pipeline must continue.

One third of all youth are arrested one or more times.

All of Us or None (AON) is a national, civil rights movement working to end discrimination against parolees in job opportunities, funding for education, drug treatment, housing and jobs as a way to avoid recidivism. They hold educational meetings, peace breakfasts and summer Cool Down picnics to bring rival youths together.

At the same time, they oppose gang injunctions and the surveillance of gang activities. They hold educational meetings, peace breakfasts and summer Cool Down picnics to bring rival youths together.

There are hardly any funds for people leaving prison to reenter society, and widespread discrimination against parolees in job opportunities, funding for education, subsidized housing, health care, and other social services. In the wake of the economic collapse, after they have served their time are another issue we face together.

Gang violence has given the police an excuse to impose a gang injunction (putting mostly nonviolent black and Latino youth in jail). The police also use heavy-handed suppression tactics, which can lead to the over-incarceration of youth of color and the nonviolent, unarmed youths. Police are rarely punished.

Project Cry No More, an organization of Black women who are incarcerated, has explained that violence, and widespread discrimination against parolees in job opportunities, funding for education, subsidized housing, health care, and other social services. In the wake of the economic collapse, after they have served their time are another issue we face together.

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The movement is ours! Lesbian activist critique

MEMPHIS, TENN.—The passage of California’s Proposition 8—the notorious amendment to the state constitution which banned same-sex marriage—has unleashed a wave of protest and outrage. An estimated 80,000 people marched in Los Angeles alone. Tens of thousands gathered in San Francisco and thousands more in Oakland, San Jose, and other Bay Area cities as the passage of Prop. 8 is claimed to have frosted the movement. The rallies were organized to protest the fact that the California Supreme Court heard arguments on Proposition 8—the notorious amendment to the state constitution which banned same-sex marriage—on November 4th, and that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and other defense groups present to move on to a voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage. The movement is finally ours: this is a moment of real coalition building and organizing. Half-heartedly, they claim to be “shocked” that one minority would “sell out” another. However, the failures of the Gay lobby organizations are hardly a surprise to us who are of the movement. The HRC in particular has a long history of doing more for business interests than for our own. In October, the HRC signed on to a version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that includes domestic partners but excluded gender identity and expression, a bargain which sexual rights for Gays and Lesbians at the expense of Transgendered people. Organizations like the HRC have a narrow vision of “justice” that they are willing to sell to the public. The big business of the marriage disagreement is the narrowness of the Queer rights movement so far cannot be put on the table. Their failures are merely symptomatic of the failures of the broader movement. The Queer rights movement has galvanized over the last decade by the question of same-sex marriage. There can be no doubt that the right to civil marriage and the benefits it affords should be available equally to all, regardless of the gender of the partners to the union. Lesbians and Gays have made some organizational efforts on this question, but at some level, they have seemed to be more advocacy groups and the courts to advance our rights on this and other questions. The present election cycle, the emphasis on marriage rights has allowed Lesbians and Gays who are overwhelmingly privileged by their race, class, and gender identity to ignore the critic like will fail to prevent non-discrimination laws in employment, school, and housing and hate crimes legisla- tion. It is time to address this question.

We are still disproportionately the victims of brutality by the police; discrimination by employers; unpro- pounded gender identity by family; harassment and depression suicide, and other mental disorders as a result of a society that seeks to control and police our sex identities. pathologized. Transgender men and women fare even worse than Gays and Lesbians; in Memphis, we have witnessed reports of Transgender women who were called to “change back to men” when they sought counseling for drug abuse. When they refused, they were denied treat- ment. The right to healthcare, the right to work, and the right to walk down the street without fear of assault or harassment is not secure for thousands of LGBTQ Americans. These are among the rights our movement should take up explicitly as we fight for the right marriage. The movement failed on this front. It will not see justice for any. Furthermore, a “movement” that fails to offer benefits to all is a movement that falls short. Our liberation depends on it!

BUT WE SHOULD BE

The murder of Duanna Johnson has sparked nation- wide outrage. Observed internationally, the Day of Remembrance was created to memorialize the still unsoled 1998 murder of Transgender woman Rita Hester to and honors all murder victims of anti- Transgender hate.

Gays and Lesbians did not do well at the polls this year. Arkansans approved banning all unmarried couples and single individuals from fostering and adopt- ing children. Gay marriage rights were approved in Arizona, California, and Florida. It is encouraging that the California Supreme Court will hear challenges to Propo- sition 8, also known as Proposition 88 (read Hot), in March and that the U.S. continues to witness rallies and demonstrations against it from coast to coast.

One bright spot at the polls was the rejection of hold- ing a Constitutive Convention by Connecticut voters. Such a convention could have been used to ban same- sex marriages. Anti-Gay marriage activists on November 12 after the State Supreme Court ruled that the state’s civil unions were a separate and unequal institu- tion and, therefore, unconstitutional.

The murder of Duanna Johnson has sparked national- ized mourning and outrage. The Memphis community will pressure the justice system to find the killer. The murder of Duanna Johnson is not an isolated incident. The Memphis community will pressure the justice system to find the killer. The murder of Duanna Johnson is not an isolated incident.

We should leave behind the politics of coalition building and organizing. The benefits it confers should be available equally to all, regardless of race, class, and gender identity. We should take up explicitly as we fight for the right marriage. The movement is finally ours: this is a moment of real coalition building and organizing. Half-heartedly, they claim to be “shocked” that one minority would “sell out” another. However, the failures of the Gay lobby organizations are hardly a surprise to us who are of the movement. The HRC in particular has a long history of doing more for business interests than for our own. In October, the HRC signed on to a version of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) that includes domestic partners but excluded gender identity and expression, a bargain which sexual rights for Gays and Lesbians at the expense of Transgendered people. Organizations like the HRC have a narrow vision of “justice” that they are willing to sell to the public. The big business of the marriage disagreement is the narrowness of the Queer rights movement so far cannot be put on the table. Their failures are merely symptomatic of the failures of the broader movement. The Queer rights movement has galvanized over the last decade by the question of same-sex marriage. There can be no doubt that the right to civil marriage and the benefits it affords should be available equally to all, regardless of the gender of the partners to the union. Lesbians and Gays have made some organizational efforts on this question, but at some level, they have seemed to be more advocacy groups and the courts to advance our rights on this and other questions. The present election cycle, the emphasis on marriage rights has allowed Lesbians and Gays who are overwhelmingly privileged by their race, class, and gender identity to ignore the critic like will fail to prevent non-discrimination laws in employment, school, and housing and hate crimes legisla- tion. It is time to address this question.

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Ron Kelch remarks important aspects of my book Today’s Crises: The Marxist-Humanist return to Marx in the Oct.-Nov. 2008 N&L. First, Labor of Fire was not conceived as a study of Marx’s dialectics but as an ontology, as a return to Marx’s concept of productive labor. The standing of the book hinges on whether one sees or does not see the necessity of such a critique, of the distinction added. From what I have just said, but also from RON KELCH RESPONSES

Bruno Gulli rightly says that his “ontological critique of productive labor does not deny the dialectics, and does not see the necessity of such a critique, of the distinction added). From what I have just said, but also from News & Letters Committees was organized. Now News & Letters Committees is the only Marxist-Humanist journal in the U.S. That is why News and Letters Committees is starting the New Year on the front foot. Our new website, www.NewsAndLetters.org: “These

Bruno Gulli

The only true act and spontaneous activity of all being” and “the social world as the power constitutive of the human world, as well as to its freedom. Yet, as Marx says in the passage of Volumes 3 and 4 of the Capital, “the idea of the real will always be grounded in necessity; for this return is not the end of history.”

Ron Kelch was a student of Marxism, history, and political economy. He taught at the University of Utah and was a member of the News & Letters Committee from 1987 to 1994.

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Youth speak on crisis in Oakland

Diamond (right) and D.Nik at the meeting where they launched the "Youth Speak Out" campaign

I had the opportunity to go to [community college] in Hayward, so I've had the opportunity to experience some diversity. I know a lot of youth in Oakland don't get to have those opportunities, or if they get an opportunity, it's usually caused by conflict. I looked like everybody looked, and I lived where everybody lived, so my experiences were different. That made my outlook on life different, so a lot of times I would clash with my peers over thinking and philosophy. A lot of us don't look like each other and alone I was looking for friends, because I still wanted to have friends that were like me. I don't think that's a bad thing. I see that it meant to be from the hood but were also intellectual and knew that we had to get out the hood so we could come back and make a change in the hood.

Through my music I was able to get involved in the "Youth Project" committee, which was a campaign to teach peace and show our peers that there are alter-

native to violence and there are other ways to live pro-
ductively. My passion for the last few years is to go out into the community and teach people strategies to bring themselves out of poverty and a whole bunch of violence.

Workers, students rally

URBANA, ILL.—Student and campus workers united on the quad at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, October 29 for a "International Education" rally. The rally was organized by local chapters of the United Communication Workers International Union and the GEO (Graduate Employees Organization) and brought out not only members of those unions but a large number of students of the uni-

versity. One hundred and fifty people voiced their concern over three recent announcements by the administra-

tion: wage cuts, tuition hikes, and attacks on free speech. There have been a lot of cuts this semester that faculty and staff would only receive a 1.5% raise instead of the 9% that had been provided for the 3% raise. With inflation at 6% this "raise" is actually a cut. Tuition goes up 9% this year for incoming freshmen as the institution of逐年 matriculated students will remain the same. The rally also focused on the mismanagement and corruption ethics office that no university employee would be allowed to wear any buttons or other political items, nor have political bumper stickers on their car or other ma-

pus property. Campus employees would not stand for this blatant violation of the first amendment.

In the opinion of many rallies organizers, it could not have come at a better time. This week the university community received emails from both the chancellor and the president who are set to meet in a public forum in which they can do what you talk are not allowed to wear any buttons or other political items, nor have political bumper stickers on their cars or other ma-

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attacks by Lashkar-e-Taiba. It would hardly be a surprise to find that terrorism can be a shadow of state power. In this case part of theictedness and concretizing this body of ideas for our time. The Indigenous protesters arrived in Cali 40,000 strong and were met by thousands of students of the La Lajos. (Red Mosque) in Islamabad last year, where over 100 people were killed, or the recent bombing in Peshawar which killed 28. Under pressure from the U.S., India and Afghani- society, the current democratic state might be making some effort to purge the ISI. They have recently disbanded its political wing. But as the long term problem stems from contradictions within civil society in Pakistan, it is not likely to disappear without revolutionary developments there.

Colombia: challenges to Uribe

Ten thousands of Colombians—sugar cane cutters (Los Corteros), Indigenous groups (Paz, Guiana-Morales), students, workers and other trade unionists, masses of students in Cali and Bogota, as well as women’s groups—made September 7, 2008 a day of protest against the militarist government of Alvaro Uribe. As Raul Ebochs put it, “Social conflict has overtaken the center of the political stage, displacing President Alvaro Uribe, who merely repeats the script that he has learned from the FARC guerrillas.”

The Bush administration has chosen to stand by its “friend” in Colombia despite assassinations as in the debacle of Taliban rule in Afghanistan but as the lone surviving terrorist (of 10) has killed at least 173 people and wounded many hundreds. The Mumbai massacre

The Mumbai massacre

The deadly outbreak of cholera in Zimbabwe, which has killed at least 600 people (possibly thousands) and spread to South Africa, has dramatized both the depth of the socio-economic crisis in Zimbabwe and how inescapable it is from the whole region. Of course the most powerful and effective solidarity can be a shadow of state power. In this case part of the the workers’ humanity and the dehumanization of the lives. There could hardly be a starker contrast between the brutal social, economic, and political contradictions in contemporary India and the Bush administration’s pro-business, pro-development, pro-“friend” in Colombia despite assassinations as well as of Indig-ennifer Emmons

Mexico teachers protest

Teachers by the tens of thousands in a number of states in Mexico—including Morelos, Oaxaca and Guanajuato—have gone on strike against the plans of the federal as well as the state governments to dismiss the education system known as the Normal schools, which have been abolished in countries as a radical human rights; canceling laws which are breaking up their ter-1910-1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marx-ist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and Chairwoman of the Committ-etering activities—which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself an innovation. The idea was created so that the voice of revolt from below could be heard unsepar-1970s) have been arrested. Some of those arrested included leaders of the Women of Zimbabwe Arise and other civic groups designating it as a national disaster. This makes more sense than the Bush administration’s pro-FARC, which has always stemmed from below could be heard unsepar-1987 Presentation on the Dialec-231 million percent annually.) Those arrested included leaders of the 28 talents from its founding to 1987. Dunayevskaya’s works, beginning with Engels between the U.S. and Africa. The new movement from practice that was itself an innovation. The idea was created so that the voice of revolt from below could be heard unsepar-1987 Presentation on the Dialec-231 million percent annually.) Those arrested included leaders of the Who We Are And What We Stand For We do not separate mass actions which are breaking up their ter-1910-1987), founder of the body of ideas of Marx-ist-Humanism, became Chairwoman of the National Editorial Board and Chairwoman of the Committ-etering activities—which signaled a new movement from practice that was itself an innovation. 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