

THEORY / PRACTICE
NEWS & LETTERS

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Who lost to SEIU?

by Htun Lin

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) announced the results of the recent union election at Kaiser Permanente in California. The media declared that the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) had won a "decisive victory" to continue to represent some 45,000 Kaiser workers by fending off a challenge from an upstart union, National United Healthcare Workers (NUHW).

The final vote was about 18,000 votes for SEIU and 11,000 for NUHW. Most journalists failed to mention that about 16,000 did not vote for any of the available choices.

This was no victory, no vote of confidence, for any of the parties concerned. This vote came out of a climate of fear and disinformation manufactured by SEIU, with the help of management. SEIU not only slandered the opposition, but the Kaiser-SEIU Labor-Management-Partnership (LMP), in clear violation of federal regulations, openly colluded in denying bonuses and wage increases to workers who favored NUHW.

NUHW had filed numerous complaints with the NLRB, but federal agents deliberately did not act until the voting was over. The NLRB is only now issuing fines against Kaiser management. As with all corporate fines, they will be absorbed as just another cost of doing business.

Nearly \$40 million was spent by SEIU to win this election. That level of spending for 18,000 votes

continued on p. 3

BLACK/REVIEW

Is Black education related to freedom?

by John Alan

Editor's note: To highlight what is missing from current debates on education reform, we reprint John Alan's column from the June 1993 N&L.

This June [1993] the New Jersey Educational Commissioner, Mary Fitzgerald, will take control of the Malcolm X Shabazz High School and the rest of the Newark, N.J., school system. Last spring the Oakland, Cal., School Board consented to the Latino community's demand that the curriculum of two middle schools be focused on Latino culture and history. Several years ago, African-American parents compelled Detroit's Board of Education to open three experimental African-centered schools.

What connects these three school districts is the general knowledge that public school systems of the inner cities are failing to educate Black and Latino students. The New Jersey officials have chosen to see this as a management problem, while Black and Latino parents see it as a cultural identity problem. Implicitly, what African Americans and Latinos are saying is that the crisis in their children's education is related to their own alienated condition as non-whites in U.S. society.

LEVELS OF THE PROBLEM

Mary G. Bennett, the principal of the Malcolm X Shabazz High School, caught the relationship between society and the crisis in Black education when she told

continued on p. 8

ON THE INSIDE

p. 4 WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

Dialectics of revolution

p. 8 EDITORIAL: End Afghan war!

p. 2 Congo, capitalism and rape

p. 5 Dunayevskaya's place in Left history

ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Campaigns intensify counter-revolutionary onslaught

by Gerry Emmett

The FBI raids upon the homes of anti-war and international solidarity activists on Sept. 24 were an eerie moment. They brought back memories of similar attacks upon the right to dissent, from the Palmer Raids of 1919 with their mass arrests and deportations, to the shame of 1950s McCarthyism and the vicious COINTELPRO attacks of the 1960s. Recent Court rulings that extend the government's oppressive powers of surveillance, and that redefine "terrorism" so loosely as to cover almost anything it chooses to label as such, guarantee future civil liberties battles in the courts and in the streets.

It is sadly ironic that at this moment, when the crisis of capitalism has shown itself as both deep and intractable, some of the most reactionary impulses from U.S. history have moved to take center stage. As the 2010 mid-term elections approach, the bankruptcy of bourgeois politics stands clear.

HOPE RUNS INTO WALL OF PRAGMATISM

Many who supported President Barack Obama's historic campaign now feel a deep sense of disappointment. His "pragmatic" approach to crises in jobs, housing and healthcare has satisfied no one except perhaps some Wall Street investors whose stock market gains have not translated into real economic growth or job creation.

The gulf between Obama and his electoral base was clear at the Oct. 2 march on Washington. Although the leaders of various labor and civil rights organizations were campaigning for the Democratic Party, the agenda they stated in their demands was far to the left of that—a demand for jobs and a sustainable recovery; funds for human needs, not militarism and war; withdrawal of all troops and mercenaries from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan; and justice, civil rights and a renewable energy future at home.

The march was a restatement of the genuine hope for change that was felt when the Bush administration was ended two years ago. This is what brought the tens of thousands who attended.

In contrast to such serious demands, President

Obama's pragmatism has led him to simply preside over an economic crisis that is rooted in the nature of capitalism itself. A new stage of crisis can be traced back to the 1970s and it has been worsening since then, with every seeming recovery ending up as a popped bubble and new crisis. This stagnation has long been the great unspeakable taboo for U.S. politicians. Segments of the Right and the bourgeoisie have gone to great lengths this year to make sure this remains true.

The Achilles heel of American "civilization" has always been its profound racism. In response to the election of this country's first Black president, sections of corporate America that opposed his "mandate for change" allied with racists and conspiracy theorists who had long existed in the depraved netherworld of history.

As counterpoint to Obama's failure to truly challenge the system, the rise of the Tea Party to ascendancy in the Republican Party represents nothing less than the threat of neofascism. A hard look at some of the current crop of candidates proves any other conclusion to be a simple delusion. For example, the Republican candidate for New York Governor, Carl Paladino, was revealed to have sent the most vile racist and misogynist emails out to a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. He didn't hesitate to joke about the deaths of Black men.

ULTRA-RIGHT CURRENT ROILS MAINSTREAM

Yet Paladino won his primary, even though every single voter who supported him had to know full well what he represented. The racist proclivities of other Tea Party candidates are also undisguised, from Rand Paul (Kentucky Senatorial candidate) saying he opposed enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for "private businesses," to Rich Iott (Ohio Congressional candidate), who dresses up in Nazi uniforms and celebrates the military prowess of Nazi Germany. And the sorry list goes on.

It isn't just the candidates, or even the Tea Party itself, but the eruption into mainstream politics of all sorts of ultra-reactionary elements that even the Republican Party used to keep at arm's length. There has

continued on p. 10



Oct. 2 "One Nation Working Together" rally in Washington

French workers vs. state and union leaders

What follows are excerpts from an in-person report.

Montpellier, France—People ask me what it's like living in France during these massive one-day strikes and popular mobilizations against the conservative Sarkozy government's pension "reforms." These cuts would push the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62 and the age for receiving full benefits from 65 to 67.

On the one hand, it is thrilling to see millions of citizens in the streets as well as hundreds of thousands of workers striking in defense of their hard-won social rights defying an increasingly reactionary government. What is most heartening is that the "troops" seem to be more radical than the union chiefs and Socialist Party politicians. Recent polls showed the French public not only supports the one-day strikes (which make life hell for commuters and parents of schoolchildren); nearly half are in favor of an open-ended general strike to make the government yield—a strategy advocated by the far-Left parties like the New Anti-Capitalist Party (NPA) as well as by militant rank-and-file workers and local unions who are chomping at the bit.

On the other hand, the unions used the same dilatory tactics of spaced one-day public sector work stoppages in 2009, and the government simply bided its time until summer, when the French go on vacation, and rammed the cuts through parliament late one

night. And this wasn't the first time these tactics failed.

Ever since the runaway general strike of 1995, every time the French have massively demonstrated and gone on national strikes in opposition to government attacks on their labor and welfare rights (as in 2009, 2008 and 2003), the official leaders of the unions have imposed the tactic of spaced one-day national work stoppages and demonstrations—designed precisely to "demonstrate" to the government their ability to call out their troops (and thus presumably to rein them in). These demonstrations inevitably run out of steam. Time is always on the side of the government and the capitalists in the class struggle. The masses' only strength is in numbers and resoluteness, and their most effective tactic is to stay mobilized, spread the movement to all sectors of the economy, go for broke and paralyze the country until the bosses give in—as they did in 1936, 1968 and 1995.

The strikers and demonstrators want to use their mass power to force the government to rescind the cuts, as the Chirac-Juppé government was forced to do in 1995 when rank-and-file assemblies ignored the unions' cautious tactics and took matters into their own hands. Paradoxically, this victory was a stinging defeat not just for the government but also for the

continued on p. 3

Congo, capitalism and rape

by Terry Moon

The latest tragedy in Congo was so horrific that it actually made a few headlines in the U.S. bourgeois press: for three days at the end of July and into August, well over 200 women including over 50 girls, in the village of Luvungi in North Kivu province, were raped and brutalized while UN peacekeepers were based just up the road. These attacks were carried out by the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and the Mai-Mai militia. Since then, Margot Wallstrom, the UN special representative on sexual violence in conflict, discovered that Congo government troops (FARDC), sent to protect the villagers and enforce a moratorium on mining in the mineral-rich area, have been looting, raping, and murdering the people they were sent to protect.

WOMEN 'DEMOLISHED'

Women who've experienced the brutality that is the Congo say, as Wallstrom reports: "A dead rat is worth more than the body of a woman." The recent rapes in Luvungi included singling out grandmothers and elderly women as a way to shatter social taboos and any semblance of normality or the ability to simply live one's life. One of these grandmothers described her experience to a *New York Times* reporter by saying she had hardly eaten "since I was demolished."

While a BBC reporter was insensitive enough to speak of how rape in war is a usual occurrence, the war in Congo is not the FARDC against the many rebel groups, or the rebels against each other, it is all of them against Congolese civilians. It is a feeding frenzy for minerals, for capitalist wealth. Wallstrom pointed out the obvious: "It is evident that communities in lucrative mining areas are at particularly high risk. The mineral wealth that should be the source of their prosperity is instead the source of their greatest suffering."

Karl Marx articulated this contradiction in 1856: "In our days, everything seems pregnant with its contrary: Machinery, gifted with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labor, we behold starving and overworking it; the newfangled sources of wealth, by some strange weird spell, are turned into sources of want.... This antagonism between modern industry and science on the one hand, modern misery and dissolution on the other hand; this antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch is a fact, palpable, overwhelming, and not to be

**WOMAN
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controverted."

Congo attests to this "palpable," and "overwhelming" "antagonism between the productive powers and the social relations of our epoch," but I wonder if even Marx, who certainly saw his share of human barbarity, could imagine the planned obliteration, the "demolishment" of Congolese women.

WHERE IS 'BLOOD' COLTAN?

The reality of Congo, where 5.4 million have perished since 1996, reveals the breakdown of civilization of which Marx spoke. In our world, more important than human life—especially if that life is Black, African, and female—is Congo's diamonds and gold, 30% of the world's cobalt, 10% of its copper, and, critically, 80% of the world's coltan—a mineral vital for cell phones and electronics. The world was able to seriously hinder the selling of "blood diamonds," mined in war zones to fund warlords, invading armies, terrorism, etc., most produced in Africa. **But fine diamonds are a consumer commodity, whereas so much of Congo's riches are consumed by capital.** This explains why there is no real effort to label "blood" coltan, "blood" cobalt, or "blood" copper—no real effort to stop the flow of materials gathered and mined over and under the raped, mutilated and murdered bodies of hundreds of thousands of civilians.

How long will the world let Congo bleed? Until all the civilians are dead? Until all the women have been raped and mutilated? Until the country is completely plundered of all its natural resources? Sexism is the form that brutality and war take in Congo, and at the same time capitalism is the driving force of the inhumanity that has held sway there for decades. Nothing shows more clearly the necessity for the transcendence of capitalism by a new, and actual **human** society.

Congo's first lady, Olive Lembe Kabila, did lead a march of thousands of women Oct. 17 demanding an end to mass rape. Significantly, the march went through Bukavu, where some of the most massive rapes occurred. Now, if she would just demand that her husband's army also stop raping and killing villagers, that would be something!

As we wrote in these pages in February of 2008: "Capital, with all its wealth, all its guns, all its power, cannot solve the problem of Congo. The solution is a human one and to help unleash its power, we need to extend our deepest revolutionary solidarity to those in Congo who are fighting against war, rape, and the deepest poverty and exploitation. The time is now."

Chicago Latinas demand a library

Editor's note: Women in the Mexican-American community of Pilsen have been occupying a field house on the grounds of Whittier Elementary School for over a month to keep authorities from demolishing it. Two women who occupy the building and one supporter tell the story of their occupation.

Chicago—My name is Virginia. This week it will be one month of the occupation of La Casita (The Little House). We sleep inside La Casita at night. Many people have donated food, supplies and money. The mothers in the community are helping, cooking and bringing food. We have a meeting every day about what we are going to do.

We are fighting to keep La Casita from being demolished. We need a library for the children, and a space for other activities like GED, English and sewing classes. The school is very small and we don't fit in it.

Now Chicago Public Schools (CPS) said they are going to leave it for six months and they want us to leave, but we don't know what will happen after that. Last week they cut off the gas but restored it after a few days. *Las mamás* (the mothers) went once again to speak with Ron Huberman, the CEO of CPS.

The majority here are mothers of students. Our alderman, Daniel Solis, promised that he is with us but we've only been receiving pure lies, false promises. The Alderman, the Board of Education, CPS ignore us. This has to stop.

People learn from being in the struggle. We are defending the rights of our children. We are learning how to defend their education. It appears that it will take a lot of time, night and day. And the cold will come soon.

I am Ana. Sometimes I'm here from 6:30 AM to 9:00 PM. We are collecting books. The children from the school come and check out books from the new library. Because the school's classrooms are very small, there's not room for enough books and no library. My daughter in 4th grade said, "Mama, I have already read all the books in the school."

It's very important that we all struggle for the education of our children. This is an experience I've never had. One day we decided as a group that we were going to stay here day and night, sleep here. The next afternoon people from CPS came to knock down the lights. There was a pregnant woman, a lot of running around, chaos. The third day, people from CPS surrounded us with yellow tape, as if we were terrorists. There were

about 40 police officers, ambulances, CPS people at the door. They said we would be arrested. This experience has made me a stronger person.

While we are mostly women, fathers help too. My husband works the night shift and comes to relieve people when they need it. The men support us but we are here 100%. We moms were the ones who decided that we would stay here. We get a lot of support from the community.

I'm Maria, a supporter, and for me this is important because it's a community struggle. It's parents addressing their needs, saying it's important that their children attend school every day. It also brings out the bigger issue of inequality in schools. Why is it that this school has no library? Why are they knocking down this space that is useful to the community, that serves it? Why are their needs not being taken into account? They've tried time and time again to resolve this. It's incredible that they stood up for what they believe in and what is rightfully theirs and should be there for their children and the community.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Artemis

Participants at the 25th National Gathering of Women in Paraná, Argentina, denounced physical attacks on feminists by right-wing Catholics who infiltrated their workshops on "Women, Contraception, and Abortion," resulting in injuries. Feminists shouting "No More!" physically ousted the anti-abortion fanatics. That same night, thousands of women marched, singing chants against the dictatorship of the church and for women's right to make decisions about our own bodies, including the right to abortion.

* * *

Women's groups are working to change the U.N.'s 10-year checkup document on its Millennium Development Goals. It treats gender equality and women's empowerment as "key goals" rather than as "basic human rights." A goal of elimination of barriers to girls' education cannot be reached by just focusing on schools and scholarships. It is also necessary to abolish discriminatory employment, land-inheritance laws, and gender-based violence. Other goals have similar limitations.

California nurses strike for healthcare



Unszula Wislanka / News & Letters

Oakland, Cal.—On Oct. 12-14, nurses at Oakland's Children's Hospital staged a three-day strike over the proposed takebacks in their healthcare benefits. Practically all the nurses (95%) walked out. Here is what some said:

Martha: I've worked at Children's Hospital, Oakland, for 24 years and we always had a choice of two plans, Kaiser HMO or Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) that allows us to bring our families, especially our children, to this hospital to be treated. Currently neither has a monthly cost to it. We proposed accepting a one-year wage freeze, which would save the hospital millions, if we could maintain our healthcare benefits. So far they haven't responded.

ALWAYS A STRUGGLE FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Many employers are attempting to take advantage of the economic crisis and push reductions in wages and benefits for their employees. The only appropriate thing is to fight back, as the workers at Castlewood are doing, as well as the hotel workers in San Francisco right now. We have not been in any negotiations over the last 28 years when Children's hasn't cried poverty, when we haven't had to struggle for improvements in patient care and in our contract standards.

The solution for us here is the union movement. The California Nurses Association (CNA) managed to raise the standard for patient care, which is our number one issue. Workers should control the work. That's what unions are about. Working together collectively we can make a difference.

Young male nurse: I am a new nurse. I've had the benefit of all the progress nurses made. There is not enough happening to push back. We are standing up for healthcare. Everyone needs medical care. You should not have to worry about access to it, nor have to budget for it. It should be available to everyone.

Anna: One thing that is especially poignant with me is that the hospital is trying to herd us all to have our children seen at Kaiser. As a nurse who worked here for 10 years, gave my heart and soul to it, I want my babies to be seen here, where I work.

Children's is at the bottom of wages and benefits as well as training in the Bay Area. We were actually told that we get "psychic benefits" by helping the underserved. I agree with it to some extent, but "psychic benefits" don't pay rent and don't put food on my family's table. The same thing happens to teachers, too. They get low pay and benefits because they want to do a good job for the children regardless of pay. We are fighting for them too.

WE ARE SAYING: 'ENOUGH!'

Susan: Nurses got ratio laws passed, which control the number of patients that a nurse has to care for. That is really significant, not just in terms of our work-load, but the patients' care. A lot of our negotiations have revolved around that. But this strike came down to our healthcare coverage. We are all strong proponents of single payer, which would change healthcare for the whole country. But in the meantime, most people get their healthcare through their employer, and because we are a stronger union, a lot of other workers' benefits are tied to our benefits. Some of us nurses could afford to pay more for healthcare, but we know that none of the housekeepers can. Even the residents settled on everything except healthcare, and agreed to take whatever we get.

Training is another huge issue for us. We have to fight to get it. Floating, for example. If the census is down in the nursery where I work, but high in some other part of the hospital, I may be sent to work on the post-surgical floor, working with 10- or 12-year-olds, who have different ways of taking medications, different chartings and different diseases. I understand the need for that, but give me some training!

It goes beyond that. They say, "Everyone is getting healthcare benefits cuts. What makes you different?" My answer is, somebody needs to stop it. Somebody needs to say "No!" And if it is not healthcare workers who do this, who is it going to be? If we accept the take-back, that is more fuel for other employers to force their workers to take it. Somebody needs to say "enough" and to turn it around. So that is what we are trying to do.

Superheroes in Honeywell lockout

Metropolis, Ill.—As you approach the tiny town of Metropolis, as far as 25 miles out you begin to see the lawn signs declaring "Proud Supporter of USW Local 7-669."

Metropolis is known as the place with the larger-than-life Superman statue outside city hall. But the over 6,000 residents know their town should be more famous for the Honeywell plant—the only uranium conversion plant in the U.S.

The milled uranium product known as yellow cake that comes from the mines is transformed at Honeywell into UF6 gas, a fuel used to power nuclear power plants, in a four-step process that involves some of the most dangerous chemicals known to man. Thus it is not surprising that 42 workers have died of various cancers and another 27 have contracted cancer in recent years. A few workers have received severe hydrofluoric acid (HF) burns. Honeywell denies any connection between their production process and workers' ailments.

During contract negotiations that began last spring, workers sensed that Honeywell wanted a strike. Honeywell's final offer asked workers to accept a practical elimination of the seniority system, the right to contract out jobs and replacement of the pension plan with a lump sum payment plan.

Most concerning was the demand to substantially increase workers' healthcare premiums, co-pays, and deductibles by thousands of dollars annually and the complete elimination of retirement healthcare.



C.D. Stelzer/FOCUS/midwest

When the union announced their willingness to continue to report for work past their contract expiration date in the hopes of reaching a settlement, the company seemed frustrated. On June 28 the company locked out its union workforce.

Honeywell brought in replacement workers weeks before the lockout. Given fears that scab workers would not be welcome in town, they are housed 40 miles away in what union workers call "scab city."

But because the scabs lacked the training necessary to operate a nuclear fuel processing plant safely, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) prevented the company from performing the final two steps of the production process. Honeywell couldn't produce a saleable product.

It was hard for Local 7-669 to understand why the company was willing to go to such expense in carrying out the lockout. But then they discovered a "force majeure" clause in the company's contracts with their customers, which provided that a strike or lockout could allow Honeywell to break those contracts.

The company was locked in at a price of \$5 to \$6 per kilogram of UF6, while the current market price for UF6 is closer to \$11 or \$12. Could Honeywell be using the lockout to command a higher price?

Meanwhile, the toxic substances processed at Honeywell are a danger not only to Honeywell's workforce, but to the entire town and region. Once in the 1960s and again in December 2003 there have been accidental releases of HF at the plant. In the 2003 incident, 75 homes had to be evacuated.

On Sept. 5, with NRC's okay, the company attempted to resume full production. But that same afternoon a loud boom was heard for miles. NRC officials confirmed what the workers expected—that in bringing the plant back on line, the company had blown up one of the fluorine scrubbers.

Local 7-669 was preparing for a labor action for months prior to the lockout. A key element was the creation of Contract Action Teams. They also stocked a food pantry, school supplies and baby care items. These preparations sent a message to management that the local was not going to give up without a fight.

Management began plant distributions of a leaflet titled "Just the Facts." Immediately the union countered with "Just Some More Facts," styled to be nearly identical to the company flyers, but demolishing their arguments.

Honeywell sent a mailing to employees' families arguing that union members needed to make concessions or lose their jobs. The union mailed out the actual contract proposal that explained why they could not accept the contract.

In the past, the negotiating committee worked largely behind closed doors, only consulting with the members when they reached an agreement with management. According to a worker, "Now everything is done out in the open." That has been a key element of their strong solidarity.

The workers seem convinced that, given the uniqueness of their specialized skills, the company will find it impossible to replace them permanently. And federal labor law forbids permanent replacements in the case of a lockout.

But as the conflict wears on, the company is slowly bringing production back on line. As of Sept. 10, Honeywell had restarted production with the NRC's blessing. In the meantime, the well-being and perhaps the continued existence of a small Illinois town on the Ohio River are endangered.

—Jerry Mead-Lucero

Secret UAW-GM deal

Detroit—More than 100 UAW workers from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana picketed the UAW headquarters here Oct. 16 to protest a two-tier wage agreement made secretly by UAW leaders with General Motors (GM). It would permit GM to pay 40% of the workers about \$14 an hour, half the regular \$28 an hour. Workers feared this would set a precedent for future concessions.

The plant in Orion Township, 30 miles north of Detroit, is to produce a subcompact car. GM claims that subcompact cars cannot be profitably produced if workers receive \$28 an hour. There are 1,100 workers involved, and both retirements and transfers are involved.

GM executives stated that they aim to have all Orion plant workers making \$14 an hour by offering sweetened incentives for Orion workers to retire, and by offering transfers for other tier-one workers to a Lordstown, Ohio, GM plant. GM will not allow any new Orion workers to receive the regular rate.

UAW President Bob King said the two-tier agreement at Orion only applied to subcompact production workers. But he added that other plants would get the same agreement if they introduced subcompact cars.

RANK AND FILE'S FEARS CONFIRMED

This confirms the fears of rank-and-file workers about the expansion of secret two-tier wage agreements. They know of the recent UAW effort at an Indianapolis plant to implement a two-tier plan that the workers had voted down.

At the Orion plant the workers did not have a vote. The UAW bureaucracy learned from the Indianapolis experience, so the UAW leaders and GM simply imposed the secret agreement.

There are many troubling indications from King about his attitude to contract negotiations next year between the UAW and the auto companies. Rank-and-file autoworkers have long known that their so-called leaders are working hand-in-hand with the auto companies, reflected in the repeated leadership expressions of the need for cooperation with management and that "we're all in the same boat."

The workers know better. Their working circumstances will certainly shorten their lives. In the past older workers could move to less demanding jobs. Now they work under unbearable conditions to force them to retire so the companies can hire new workers at the lower second-tier wage negotiated over workers' opposition.

KING'S TRANSFORMATION INTO OPPOSITE

King has also indicated that pattern bargaining, where the same national contract would apply to all autoworkers and companies, is a thing of the past. Moreover, the UAW is now part owner of GM and Chrysler. Both companies are involved in payments to the UAW trust fund to finance autoworkers' healthcare, which is certain to influence all future negotiations.

King revealed in a recent newspaper interview how much he has moved into management's corner: "Overall, we are not going to put one company to the disadvantage over the other companies...Job security, getting investment in our facilities, pushing forward on the newest technology—all of those things are important...We are constantly working together to improve quality and productivity to make sure that they stay competitive. So that is how we will be doing the 2011 negotiations."

The transformation into opposite is complete. King, who started out as a militant rank-and-file fighter at Ford Motor Company, is now the articulate mouthpiece whose task is to convince the workers that the longtime goals of management for greater productivity—which means more layoffs, more speed-up, more robotic production, and obedience to management's demands for more profitability—are now his and must be goals of the workers too. This sets up inevitable confrontations between King and the autoworkers.

—Andy Phillips

WORKSHOPTALKS

continued from p. 1

amounts to about \$2,000 per vote. That cost is our cost. Our shop brings SEIU \$40 million in dues per year. It is an abomination that our money was used to defeat us.

SEIU even outsourced much of the campaign to out-of-state organizers, using robo-calls and other harassment techniques perfected in its hostile takeovers of competing unions.

Union business agents consider our shop a cash cow. It is hard to distinguish between the SEIU and "revenue-enhancement" drives of management. The LMP removed quality care as a union issue, which had been an obstacle to Kaiser's "revenue enhancement" as the top priority. Management payback was to help SEIU in this election.

Now it's difficult to distinguish SEIU tactics from standard corporate tactics to intimidate and instill fear during organizing campaigns. It was willing to break any law and use intimidation, all to convince workers that the power was against them and that they could not succeed. It even fired hundreds of its own dissenting shop stewards. This, as any organizer can tell you, is what management does all the time. This time management was SEIU.

Countless SEIU leaflets contained propaganda disinformation which claimed that a vote for NUHW was a vote which "puts at risk" all the "hard-won gains" in the current contract. Kaiser already had denied contractual raises to nurses in southern California who voted for NUHW.

The message was clear: Wages guaranteed by the contract, bonuses and even job security were put at risk by voting for NUHW. This was followed by the clincher—"And who can afford that in this kind of economy?"

The phrase "in this kind of economy" was constantly repeated by SEIU during the campaign, and Kaiser backed them up with a threat to take away the minuscule raises guaranteed in our existing contract as well, in clear violation of federal law.

SEIU also got to "organize" other shops by making sweetheart deals with sweatshop employers. For SEIU "this kind of economy" is an opportunity to organize for the benefit of capitalists and promote their bottom line.

As one rank-and-filer said: "I hear people say, Be thankful you have a job. That is such a 'lie down and let management walk all over you' copout!...The sad thing about this situation is that SEIU upper echelon and management have become very intimate over the years and SEIU has lost its focus on caring for its members.... Kaiser profited over \$2 billion last year and they still 'had' to lay off employees.

"How can SEIU sit back and let this happen? Because they are just as sleazy as the management they are pretending to oppose."

Business unions approach union organizing just like any other kind of business, looking at the bottom line, our job security be damned. That's why, though SEIU received 18,000 votes in this election, 27,000 of us did not vote for SEIU; 16,000 did not vote for either SEIU or NUHW, both of which support the existing LMP. Now is the time for us workers to think about organization in a totally new way.

French workers vs. state and union leaders

continued from p. 1

unions, who were delegitimized as responsible "social partners" unable to control their troops.

Similar mass struggles are happening all over Europe, where the same neoliberal cutbacks are being imposed in the name of paying "the debt" created by bailing out the banks. Yet here again, the left politicians and union leaders, far from seeking strength through international solidarity, remain staunchly isolated within their national boundaries, despite the obvious fact that the European Union has created a common economic zone! But the unions and left parties depend for their "franchise" on the national state, which subsidizes them directly.

One hopes the French people, who are always full of surprises, will find some way out of this impasse in which their "representatives"—the union leaders and the official left parties—are apparently their worst enemies.

—Oct. 15, 2010

A week later, the biggest "surprise" is the entrance en masse of French youth, considered "apolitical," into the arena of the social struggle. All over France, high schools are being blocked by their students, while the

presence of beautiful young faces is overwhelming in the huge nationwide street demonstrations that keep intensifying.

This massive mobilization of French youth should not come as a surprise. Last year there were weeks of strikes and protests among high school and university students against education cutbacks, and in November 2005 there was serious rioting among mostly French-Arab and French-African youth in the ghetto-like projects that surround Paris and other French cities.

The second "surprise" since last week has been the mobilization of the truckers (mostly independent) and the refinery workers, which has resulted in gasoline shortages at service stations all over France and deliberate slowdowns ("snail actions") by trucks on the highways. This is all the more remarkable in that the French truckers, who can retire at 55 under a special dispensation, are striking purely out of solidarity.

More and more, the movement is in the hands of local committees and worker assemblies, who vote to continue and expand the symbolic one-day strikes called by the cautious national union leaderships.

—Richard Greeman, Oct. 21, 2010

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: For the centenary of Raya Dunayevskaya's birth, we present excerpts from her March 21, 1985, lecture at the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Wayne State University, Detroit, at the opening of a three-month exhibition of the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection (RDC). The concluding part appears here, continued from the September-October issue. The full lecture is included in the RDC, #8394.

THE 1970S ALSO SAW the emergence of a new revolutionary force: Women's Liberation, which had grown from an idea whose time had come to become a *Movement*. Its uniqueness expressed itself in women's refusal to put off for "the day after the revolution" the questions they demanded answers to. The so-called Marxists at first would not even bother to listen to the women who proclaimed that "male chauvinism" was by no means restricted to capitalism. It not only appeared *before* capitalism, but is present right now and has reappeared *after* the revolution. It must be faced here and now. The women insisted that the Left must face the male chauvinism *within* that movement, and must recognize the need to grapple with this question *before, during, in, and after* the revolution.

It became the impulse for the third major philosophic work, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, which completed what we call the "trilogy of revolution." Here is how I therefore summarized today's Women's Liberationists' demands:

"Don't tell us about discrimination everywhere else; and don't tell us it comes only from class oppression; look at yourselves. You will have to understand that our bodies belong to us and to no one else—and that includes lovers, husbands, and, yes, fathers.

"Our bodies have heads, and they too belong to us and us alone. And while we are reclaiming our bodies and our heads, we will also reclaim the night. No one except ourselves, as women, will get our freedom for us. For that we need full autonomy."

For me, it became necessary here to also focus on one of the inadequacies of the Women's Liberation Movement: its disregard of Rosa Luxemburg. Indeed, this was a stimulus for my new work, though my scope was by no means limited to unearthing Luxemburg's heretofore unknown feminist dimension.

When I began my study, it was just on Luxemburg—and the intended climax was to have been the year 1910. This was the year when her flash of genius, in grappling with the new phenomenon of imperialism, resulted in her break with Karl Kautsky, the leader of the German Social Democracy. This was some four years before the outbreak of World War I and the Second International's betrayal. It was four years before any male Marxist, Lenin included, saw the coming betrayal.

AND YET, SUDDENLY, even this seemed to me to be inadequate, because Luxemburg remained a member of the German Social Democracy as if her break with Kautsky was "personal." I felt the need for a decisive philosophic grappling, which I worked out as Part III of the so-called Luxemburg book: "Karl Marx: from Critic of Hegel to Author of *Capital* and Theorist of Revolution in Permanence."

In a word, though she was way ahead of any great male revolutionary leader in exposing Kautsky's opportunism and his quiescence toward the growth of imperialism, her methodology of analyzing imperialism and her critique of Marx's Accumulation of Capital had to be characterized as a half-way dialectic. That is to say, though she was an unflinching fighter against imperialism and the Social Democracy's opportunism, she nevertheless refused to consider "nationalism" as subject, as a new *revolutionary* force.

As against such a half-way dialectic, Marx's multilinearism of human development, of paths to revolution, as they related to so-called backward countries, to Women's Liberation, and to nationalist opposition—all made me question not only Luxemburg but all post-Marx Marxists, beginning with Frederick Engels, whose unilinearism permeated the whole German Social Democracy. Post-Marx Marxism, to me, became a pejorative.

Engels's unilinearism was glaringly revealed in the very first work he wrote after the death of Marx—*Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Engels claimed it was a "bequest" of Marx, but it expressed anything but Marx's view either on the Man/Woman relationship or on the relationship

Dialectics of revolution: American roots and world Humanist concepts

between advanced and backward societies. Nor was there any similarity between Engels's view of primitive communism and Marx's.

FOR A MOMENT, LET US now turn away from all these philosophic-sociological-political-economic developments, to a story from my personal life. The incident I'm diverting to happened when I was 13 years old and had been but a single year in the U.S. I was leading a strike against the school principal. Her name I still remember—Tobin. And she exacted corporal punishment for so little an infraction as coming five minutes late. Also, she forced all to memorize Shylock's speech, where he demands his pound of flesh. (I am telling this story with hindsight, of course, but my memory was refreshed by the *Chicago Tribune* story of that day, which had carried a sensational article and picture of the strike.)

I am doing so to illustrate the difference between an idea in embryo and in full development; between process and result, as well as the whole question of a child's perception, when great revolutions occur and for how long these impressions last.

The story took place in 1924 in the Cregier public school in a Chicago ghetto. I credited my supposed bravery to the Russian Revolution of November 1917, which had burst upon the scene six years previously and had left an indelible impression on me of great doings, like equality and comradeship. I was an illiterate child then, living in the Ukraine, who had refused, two years previous to 1917, to engage in

khabar (bribery) in order to be among the one percent of Jews who gained the "privilege" of being able to sit in the back of the school room.

NOW LOOK AT AN altogether different historic period, a different life, and there, too, we will see what a child's perception is, when born during great turning points in history.

When I returned to the U.S. from being with Trotsky in exile in 1938, the one who made a great impression on me was the famous French syndicalist Alfred Rosmer. In 1919, he had switched to communism, and then, in 1937-38, had become head of the International Committee for the Defense of Leon Trotsky. He was returning to France via New York and I thought I would show off its beauties by taking him on a ferry ride to Staten Island.

As we reached Staten Island, Rosmer said: "Oh, yes, I know, I was born here." Naturally, I thought he was pulling my leg, but no, he was serious and proceeded to prove it by telling me the story of his early life. It turned out that his parents were Paris Communards from 1871, who, after its defeat, escaped to the U.S. His mother was pregnant and gave birth to him on Staten Island. He simply was never interested in claiming American citizenship. France and the Paris Commune never left his memory, not because he was there, but because of all the stories he heard from his parents.

This only released in my mind still another remembrance—this time from when I was 15 years old, and Eugene V. Debs was making his very last appearance at Ashland Auditorium in Chicago. It was 1925. He was so eloquent a speaker that he made you feel the *presence* of any person he mentioned in his life. He was very proud of the fact that he had known the great Abolitionist, Wendell Phillips. It was Wendell Phillips who, after the Civil War, made a transition from Abolitionism to Socialism. It is he who had said: "Scratch a New Yorker and you'll find a Communard."

Two points are involved in this remembrance of things past: *One* is that embedded in embryo in the past is the presence of the next step, whether or not one is fully conscious of it. *Two* is that presence of the future inherent in the "here and now" characterizes also the first instinctual reaction which is philosophically called "first negation." What makes you move to the second negation creates a new *humus* for future development.

Marx's magnificent, original, historic unchaining of the dialectic was the creation of such a *new humus*. This unchaining began, of course, with his refusal

to consider that Hegel's Notion was related only to thought.

ONCE MARX DISCOVERED A NEW continent of thought *and of revolution*, the task he assigned to himself was that of uniting Philosophy and Reality. The proof of that unity came from uncovering the hidden *Subject*—the driving forces of the revolutions-to-be—the Proletariat—and at the same time focusing on the Man/Woman relationship, as alienated and alienating, which must be totally uprooted as the way to full human relationships.

Marx had rejected Feuerbachian abstract materialism, not alone because it failed to see the social relationship. He opposed Feuerbach as well for rejecting the *revolutionary* Hegelian principle of "negation of the negation," a principle Marx cited again even in his technical *Mathematical Manuscripts* of 1881-82.

Instead, his concept of revolution-in-permanence contended that only *after* the historic transcendence by the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism would there first *begin* the development of a new human society and a new Man/Woman relationship.

Now listen to Marx in his last decade, writing on his relationship to Hegel—which he left with his papers for Engels for Volume II of *Capital*, but which Engels left out:

"My relationship with Hegel is very simple. I am a disciple of Hegel, and the presumptuous chattering of the epigones who think they have buried this great thinker appear frankly ridiculous to me. Nevertheless, I have taken the liberty of adopting...a critical attitude, disencumbering his dialectic of its mysticism and thus putting it through a profound change...."

BETWEEN MARX AND OUR AGE only Lenin seriously returned to Marx's roots in Hegel. But while Lenin commented profoundly and brilliantly on the whole of *Science of Logic*—including the Doctrine of the Notion, where he embraced *and concretized* Hegel's principle that "Cognition not only reflects the world, but creates it"—he nevertheless concretized only the single dialectical principle of transformation into opposite; of every unit containing its opposite *within* itself.

Unfortunately, other questions, especially the one on Organization, Lenin left untouched within the vanguardist confines of his 1902-03 *What Is to Be Done?*

Our age has focused on the dialectics of revolution as *the* determinant. Nothing, including Organization, the Party, can find any escape route from that determinant. Even the Absolute Method itself is but the *road to* the Absolute Idea, Absolute Mind. When the

Self-Thinking Idea comes with the Self-Bringing Forth of Freedom, we will have actual total freedom.

Though I have but a few moments before concluding, I do wish to give you a brief view of my new book, *Women's Liberation and the Dialectics of Revolution: Reaching for the Future*.

The first thing I noticed in rereading that 35-year compilation of articles—with a focus on a single revolutionary force as Reason, Women's Liberation—is that the Dialectics of Revolution is characteristic of all the four forces we singled out in the U.S.—Labor, Black, Youth, as well as Women. All are *moments of revolution*, and nobody can know before the event itself who will be the one in the concrete, particular revolution.

THIS DETERMINED MY 1985 Introduction and Overview to the new book, which culminated in what we call the "Trail to the 1980s."

In a word, no matter who the specific revolutionary force turns out to be—Labor, Black, Youth, Women—the whole truth is in the dual rhythm of any revolution: the overthrow of the old society and the creation of new human relations. It requires the spelling out of that dialectic in its totality with *every individual* subject.

This is true not just as a summation, but rather *as a new beginning*. Just as Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence" made it clear that the revolution does not end with the overthrow of the old but must continue to the new, so you begin to feel this presence of the future in the present. This is the time when every man, woman and child feels this *newness* precisely because it is now rooted in such new beginning.

And here is how I'm ending my new, fourth book: "With Marx's first founding of his new continent of thought and of revolution, he wrote: 'To have one basis for life and another for science is *a priori* a lie.' The truth of his statement has never been more immediate and urgent than in our nuclear world, over which hangs the threat to the very survival of civilization as we have known it."



Dunayevskaya giving this lecture at the Archives in 1985.



One of the display panels from the Centenary meeting at the Archives in Detroit, Sept. 18, 2010.

Dunayevskaya's place in the history of the Left

by Kevin Michaels

Raya Dunayevskaya deserves a prominent place in the historical self-understanding of the U.S. Left. She was acknowledged in her lifetime not only as a leader in theory by working-class militants like Charles Denby, author of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal*, autoworker and thinker Felix Martin, and the Scottish Marxist-Humanist Harry McShane, but also as a serious contributor to the interpretation of Hegelian philosophy by scholars like Louis Dupre and A.V. Miller. She has, however, not yet been accorded the rightful position her sixty-plus years as an activist and thinker in the revolutionary movement entitle her. In large part she has been relegated to a subordinate position in what can be called "C.L.R. James studies," stemming from her intense collaboration with James and Grace Lee in the remarkable period from 1941 to 1955.

A much-needed new and profound encounter with the life and work of Raya Dunayevskaya will, however, not be simply an exercise in revising the history of American radicalism, but will be a contribution towards overcoming false antinomies that continue to impede the development of both practical and theoretical challenges to the domination of capitalism and the thinking that helps perpetuate it. Categories traditionally coupled in opposition, such as "Old Left" vs. "New Left," class vs. race, class vs. gender, and spontaneity vs. organization, will appear in a new light when examined in the context of Dunayevskaya's work. The centenary of her birth presents us with an opportunity to begin that encounter.

A LIFETIME OF DOING AND THINKING

Dunayevskaya's lifetime of work commenced in the early 1920s in the ranks of the then still-revolutionary Communist Party, at that time called the Workers Party of America. She participated in the work of the American

Negro Labor Congress, which was forged in the effort to include African-American workers in the international revolutionary wave that began in Russia in early 1917. She contributed to the organization's paper, the *Negro Champion*, which was edited by Lovett Fort-Whiteman.

Dunayevskaya can legitimately be considered to be among the first of the American Trotskyists, having been expelled from the youth section of the Workers Party for defending Trotsky in 1928, even before an explicitly Trotskyist organization had come into being.

Dunayevskaya participated in many of the historic struggles of the Great Depression, including the defense campaign for imprisoned labor leader Tom Mooney, the 1934 San Francisco general strike, and solidarity efforts for the striking Arkansas sharecroppers of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. She was also in the thick of the Trotskyist movement and served in one of the most important positions in the Left Opposition, that of Russian language secretary to Trotsky in exile in Coyoacan, Mexico, in 1937. She was present at the historic commission of inquiry held there in April of that year, which was chaired by philosopher John Dewey for the purpose of allowing Trotsky to publicly respond to the mountain of charges made against him in the Moscow trials of 1936.

The dramatic world events of the late 1930s presented revolutionaries with enormous challenges, and Dunayevskaya was among the few to rise to the occasion. The Fourth International was thrown into theoretical disarray over the class analysis of the USSR and the signing in 1939 of the Hitler-Stalin pact. Dunayevskaya developed an analysis of the USSR as a moment in the development of world capitalism since the great crisis that began in 1929. It represented an extreme form of tendencies toward centralization residing deep within the logic of capitalism itself. But the fact that capital had been centralized into the hands of the state did not mean that capitalism itself had been overcome.

The analysis of state-capitalism developed by Dunayevskaya, C.L.R. James, and Grace Lee (the Johnson-Forest Tendency), was distinguished by its firm foundation in Marx's analysis of the categories of capital, unlike the analyses of bureaucratic collectivism tendered by Max Shachtman and Joseph Carter of the Workers Party, and the degenerated workers' state position of orthodox Trotskyists James P. Cannon and Ernest Mandel, then known by his pseudonym Germain.

This strong foundation in Marx's critique—in both the *Capital* and the then almost unknown *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* of 1844—led Dunayevskaya

to an encounter with the dialectical philosophy of Hegel, through a close reading of Lenin's own profound engagement with Hegel's *Science of Logic* in 1914. The course of this work, begun in 1949, culminated in 1953 in what she considered to be her "philosophic moment," two letters written in May of that year which contained a striking interpretation of Hegel's Absolutes of Idea and Spirit. This contribution, although made in the context of the collective theoretical work of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, contributed to the eruption of sharp philosophical differences between Dunayevskaya, on one hand, and James and Lee on the other. The group, at that time called Correspondence Committees, split in 1955 and Dunayevskaya and her co-thinkers founded News and Letters Committees. She began developing what she called Marxist-Humanism, in advance of the consolidation of the Marxist Humanist thinkers of Central and Eastern Europe. Her first major published work, *Marxism and Freedom*, appeared not long after the Hungarian Revolution erupted, which definitively confirmed the analysis of creative mass revolt on both sides of the Iron Curtain that she had been developing since the death of Stalin and the revolt of the East German workers in 1953.

Dunayevskaya knew and corresponded with a wide array of important cultural and political figures of the Left. Even a small sampling of the variety of her correspondents may surprise those who wish to limit her to a small corner of the Trotskyist movement. Many of the letters she exchanged during her life are available in her archives, on deposit at the Reuther Library at Wayne State University and in microfilm as *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*. The Irish-American novelist and literary critic James T. Farrell took her class analysis of the USSR seriously and wrote her at least two long letters in 1946 discussing her theory. The art historian, critic and independent Marxist Meyer Schapiro and his wife Lillian were friends, and Schapiro contributed a serious comment in 1956 on the draft of *Marxism and Freedom*. Joseph Buttinger, the émigré Austrian socialist and co-founder of the journal *Dissent*, was a frequent and long-term correspondent. Her international correspondents included William Dixon Colley, a pioneering journalist in post-independence Gambia who edited a newspaper called *The Nation*; Jean Malaquais, novelist and author of *World Without Visa*; and Silvio Frondizi, an Argentinian lawyer, author, and revolutionary who was murdered in the wave of political repression during the Isabel Perón years.

In short, she was someone who was seriously interested in radical ideas. Those who were open to such ideas recognized the fact and acknowledged her contribution.

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OLD ANTI-NOMIES: RACE, CLASS, PHILOSOPHY

One area of the U.S. Left's interpretation of its history that is in need of an encounter with Dunayevskaya's contribution is the relationship of the Left to the African-American struggle against racism. There is a strong school of historical writing since the early 1980s that seeks to rehabilitate the role of the Communist Party in this area. Historians such as Theodore Draper had established the standard (and not inaccurate) interpretation of the Communist Party as totally beholden to the political line dictated by Moscow and willing to sacrifice the particular interests of African Americans (for example, the CP's lukewarm support for, then total opposition to, the March on Washington Movement organized by A. Philip Randolph). In reaction, writers like Maurice Isserman (*Which Side Were You On?: The American Communist Party During the Second World War*, 1982) and Mark Naison (*Communists in Harlem During the Great Depression*, 1983) seek to argue that the CP played a nuanced and positive role.

While the writings of C.L.R. James on the African-American struggle during the 1940s are widely (and deservedly) acknowledged, it is far less known that Dunayevskaya worked and wrote extensively in this area during the same period. In fact, she served as the Johnson-Forest Tendency's spokesperson in organizational debates on the official Workers Party line on the race

question. Since Dunayevskaya was a critic both of the Stalinists' limiting of the African-American movement and the Trotskyists' underemphasis of it, new insights into this subject stand to be gained that can widen our understanding beyond that of the "traditionalist" and "revisionist" schools of thought.

A further area of needed recognition of Dunayevskaya's contribution is the course of the history and development of the twentieth century U.S. Left itself. The history of the American Left is often interpreted as divided into the class-centered Old Left, which spanned the period from the rise of the socialist movement in the late nineteenth century to the repression of the McCarthy era, and the more diverse New Left, which, inspired by the Civil Rights Movement, emerged in the early 1960s and paved the way for the Women's Liberation Movement, the Gay Liberation Movement, and the identity politics of the 1980s. An examination of Dunayevskaya's work will reveal that this interpretation is inadequate.

Having grown up in the organizations of the Old Left, Dunayevskaya saw first-hand the extreme limitations of the movement's tendency towards an exclusively class-centered focus, whether it was the legacy of the conservative approach to the race question (that socialism had nothing to offer African-Americans outside of the question of class), or the perpetuation of the sexism of capitalist society within the theory and practice of the movement itself.

The Old Left by and large did not distinguish itself by an interest in philosophy. One of the great contributions of the Johnson-Forest Tendency was its pursuit of the philosophical currents of Marxism within the context of the U.S. revolutionary movement. This immersion in dialectical philosophy enabled Dunayevskaya to find a way to theoretically overcome false oppositions such as class vs. race and class vs. gender that had burdened the movement for so long and were preventing it from confronting the challenges of the post-war world.

This is how I interpret the moving passage in her philosophical letter to Grace Lee of May 12, 1953, in which she enthusiastically comments on the paragraph in the final chapter of Hegel's *Science of Logic* where he uses the phrase "personal and free" to describe the human being. The individual, with all of his or her complexities and needs, is now formally recognized as being at the center of the struggle against the deformations of capitalism. No longer can the individual be totally subsumed into just one oppressive aspect of capitalist society.

This philosophical insight, along with the others she made in the letter and the even more profound one that followed on May 20, 1953, positioned her to move forward into the challenges of the time, at a time when her co-thinkers James and Lee were distancing themselves from philosophy. Dunayevskaya was theoretically prepared to recognize the emergence of new forms of revolt against oppression and comprehend them within the context of capitalism, without denying their particularities, a task in which she immersed herself until her death in 1987. This accomplishment does not fit neatly into the common distinction between Old and New Left and calls for a thorough reexamination of these categories that can potentially benefit us today.

It would be difficult to find a figure in the history of the U.S. Left who contributed as much of substance as Raya Dunayevskaya did during her lifetime. Her co-thinkers of the period 1941-1955, C.L.R. James and Grace Lee Boggs, currently have a higher profile in the writings and discussions of the Left than she does. While Dunayevskaya's importance is by no means unacknowledged, we still have a long way to go before the depth and breadth of her intellectual work is recognized.

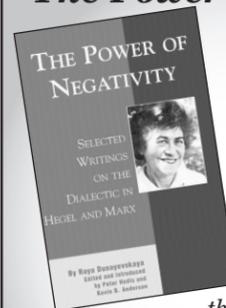
The feminist and radical writer Meridel Le Sueur, whose work of the 1930s and 1940s was rediscovered by the women's movement of the 1970s, wrote in a moving letter of appreciation for Dunayevskaya's *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, "Your contributions are so great, illuminating this memory comes up green like corn found in caves for a thousand years, moisture and heat and they make cob again."

Given the coincidence today of a severe global economic crisis with an equally severe theoretical crisis of the Left, the time to reach a fuller understanding of her work—and the figurative regeneration Le Sueur depicts in her letter—has never been more urgent.



Raya Dunayevskaya and Natalia Trtosky in Mexico, circa 1937. They stayed in touch even after Dunayevskaya broke with Leon Trotsky.

The Power of Negativity by Raya Dunayevskaya



"Dunayevskaya's varied attempts to explain the importance of Hegel's absolute idea and theory of negation for the traditions that followed, but also for the hoped-for revolution, are as clear and convincing as any I've seen from her pen. It's a truly impressive display, and one that will delight as well as instruct most readers."

—Bertell Ollman, New York University
Order on page 7

FBI RAIDS—AN ATTACK ON ALL OF US

On Sept. 24, teams of FBI agents from the "Joint Terrorism Task Force" served search warrants and grand jury subpoenas on anti-war and solidarity activists



rights of peaceful activists must be opposed and we should stand with them to protect those rights. Although News and Letters may have differences with some of the philosophy expressed by these groups, we consider that these Capitalist State actions represent a drive to intimidate all who would resist this criminal system. An injury to one is an injury to all.

If any activists are confronted with this situation in the future, they should refuse to answer any questions and say that the agents must contact the person's lawyer and speak with him or her. Contact, if possible, your local chapter of the National Lawyers' Guild, or a competent local criminal defense attorney.

**Member of the National Lawyers' Guild
New York City**

Editor's note: See our statement on the FBI raids on page 10.

As African-American activists engaged in the many struggles for social and economic justice and human rights, we are outraged by the recent FBI raids on anti-war activists alleging they have connections to terrorism. We have seen these government attacks on African-American leaders and activists during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, Jr., and members of the Black Panther Party, among others, were assassinated, jailed, beaten and driven into political exile for leading demonstrations and speaking out against racism, U.S. wars and other injustices.

We are further outraged that these raids are happening under the Obama administration, as his election as the first Black president grew out of a history of massive protests against racism and unjust wars.

We know that these attacks, while starting against anti-war activists, are aimed at all activists that organize against the many injustices caused by a system that places profits and domination over human needs. It is time for all struggles against injustice and for human rights, to close ranks against the

rapidly growing attack on all democratic rights, that is shaping the direction of U.S. society. They come for the anti-war activists today; and they will come for us tomorrow.

**Black Workers for Justice
Rocky Mount, N.C.**

CAPITALISM AND ENVIRONMENT

"BP's Gulf oil spill lays waste to workers, environment" by Franklin Dmitryev (July-Aug. 2010 *N&L*) puts to rest any questions concerning the relationship of workers and the environment vis-à-vis capitalist production. It clearly discloses the logic of how capital functions in an all-consuming way. At the root of capital's self-perpetuation is not only the inversion of dead over living labor but also the co-optation of words. No other word has been as greatly inverted as the word "development." In reality, there can be no development without its opposite aspect: destruction. Capitalist production entails destruction of both workers and the environment.

Marxist-Humanism is the re-appropriation of critical words that capital has co-opted for its misuse. This is part of how philosophy is integral to theorizing a way forward, where the development of society is founded upon humanism inseparable from a harmonious relationship with nature.

**Faruq
Del Norte County, Cal.**

The vast destruction caused by Pakistan's floods is no simple natural disaster. It concentrated several forces, from global warming amping up storms and increasing glacial melting, to Pakistani rulers focusing resources on militarization and repression rather than fortifying infrastructure to protect the people, to U.S. imperialism along with India and China using the country as a pawn in power games, to local and international Islamists making Pakistan a battleground in their drive for power. This nexus of forces shows how broken the global system is, and how the need to meet the challenge of global warming makes urgent the revolutionary establishment of society on totally new foundations.

**Franklin Dmitryev
Chicago**

GAY RIGHTS

It is no accident that New York Tea Party-blessed gubernatorial candidate Carl Paladino's anti-Gay speech came one day after news of the brutal attack on three people in the Bronx for being Gay. It shows the true violent, anti-human nature of the counter-revolutionary movement of which the Tea Party is a leading component.

**Alarmed
Illinois**

I am proud that a major focus of this year's nationwide commemorations of National Coming Out Day was remembrances of the young people who have committed suicide, feeling hopeless because of anti-Gay bullying. May the remembrances of Aiyisha Hasaan, the most recent victim, Seth Walsh, and so many other youth move this entire country to help all GLBT youth to be comfortable with themselves and move about unafraid. Thank goodness for the portion of the press that has reported the unbelievable number of recent youth suicides and for people and groups who are organizing, reaching out to LGBT youth to let them know they're not alone: writer Dan Savage's "It Gets Better" YouTube project, University of Wisconsin-Madison's "Stop the Silence" anti-bullying project, and Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) among them.

**Pansexual
Chicago**

READERS' VIEWS

EDUCATION REFORM?

As an early childhood development specialist, I thought "Waiting for Superman" was rightly criticized for being virulently anti-teacher-union. It is touted as a conversation starter, but it is the wrong conversation. It's great that the movie recognizes that good teachers are central to a child's learning. But to then infer that bad schools are caused by bad teachers is wrong. In the last frames of the movie we are told that too many people working on solutions to our bad schools (read: bad unions) are focused on taking care of adults. This sets up a false dichotomy. You can't have good education for children without taking care of the teachers. Adults and children in the school community must be thought of together or it will not work.

**Beth Sandner
San Francisco Bay Area**

"Reform will continue," proclaimed Michelle Rhee, Chancellor of Washington, D.C., Public Schools, in her resignation statement Oct. 13. Voters in D.C. had ousted Mayor Adrian Fenty, sending a strong message that school reforms, necessary as they are, will not be imposed on the community, nor blamed on teachers and staff.

Evaluation standards for D.C. teachers, IMPACT (www.dcps.dc.gov), reveal a contrary



Fenty-Rhee-Obama administration philosophy. Teachers are evaluated on several excellent criteria, but 50% of the rating is based on how much "value" is "added" to the class's test scores while students are in that teacher's classroom. Only 10% of a teacher's evaluation is based on his or her relations with the parents and school community. In fact, the "values" should be reversed. Schools that are alienated from their communities cannot hope to nurture strong, confident students who can benefit from what good teachers provide. Competent, caring teachers do make a difference in student learning. But making teachers accountable for test scores is only an excuse to destroy teaching as a profession and to break the teachers' unions.

**Retired Teacher
Detroit**

LABOR CLASH OVER QUALITY CARE

Amidst all the dirty tricks played by Kaiser and SEIU during the recent union election, the California Nurses' Association (CNA) also made a corrupt deal with SEIU. In the middle of the election campaign, CNA signed a "non-aggression pact" with SEIU, much in the same way that Stern's SEIU made a backroom deal with Kaiser, forming their "Labor-Management Partnership" right in the middle of our rank-and-file strikes for quality care. In this general climate of cynicism, it is no wonder that younger workers have resorted to the attitude of "it's better to have no union than this kind of unionism." But that attitude is also part of this overall retrogression.

**Kaiser worker
Oakland, Cal.**

I've been working as a National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW) field organizer. I see a disconnect between the ranks and the NUHW staff at staff meetings. I don't romanticize the leadership of NUHW. The real engines of this fight are the rank and file.

From my experience I grew to have a lot of critiques of the role of unions in the class struggle. But I still feel

passionately that rank-and-file workers are organizing for very good, concrete reasons. They are in a struggle with capital, and they understand that. Kaiser is always out to get the most out of their workers. The workers know that, even when their struggle is seized or contained by union leaders like NUHW's Sal Rosselli or SEIU's Andy Stern.

**Union Organizer
Oakland, Cal.**

This fight between two unions, SEIU and NUHW, over representing healthcare workers is not just about the unions but emblematic of what's going on in the country. Kaiser is the longest running and most successful HMO in the world. Henry J. Kaiser's projects were funded by Franklin D. Roosevelt. But what we have now is the result of what the unions won. It's the legacy of the last Great Depression, not of Kaiser.

**Htun Lin
California**

ISRAEL-PALESTINE

Judaism teaches that all human life is sacred. A Jew is allowed to break almost any religious law to save a human life. Why, then, does the Israeli government not seem to care about the lives of Palestinian men, women and children? I believe it is fear and lack of following their own religious beliefs. The Israeli government is very right-wing politically and religiously. In the desire to protect all Jews and fulfill religious dreams of dwelling in all of the land, zealots ignore or perhaps do not believe in the sacredness of Palestinian lives.

Gaza is a real tragedy. The Israeli government is practicing "collective punishment"—from using planes and tanks to not letting in adequate food, medicine and water. These actions are not moral, nor Jewish. As a Jewish Peace and Justice Activist of 50 years, I say step in and end the siege of Gaza!

**Mark
Chicago**

MLK'S DREAM TODAY

Aug. 28 there was a Peace, Jobs and Justice March for the anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" speech. There were 5,000 people there. It was sponsored by Jesse Jackson and Rainbow PUSH and Bob King, the new UAW President. It honored Dr. King in the right way, not like the Glenn Beck Tea Party rally in Washington.

I went to a march in 1993 down Woodward Avenue, honoring Dr. King's first visit to Detroit in 1963, before his "I Have a Dream" speech. In 1993 100,000 people marched down Woodward. I was sorry there were only 5,000 people at this year's march, but it honored the true meaning of Dr. King's speech. That there were only 5,000 shows how far the retrogression has taken over.

**Dan
Detroit**

JUVENILE LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE

A 14-year-old boy, Dakotah Eliason, was sentenced to Juvenile Life Without Parole in Berrien County, Mich., for the murder of his step-grandfather. He called the police on himself and threw himself on the tender mercies of Berrien County prosecutors (see www.4efren.com). Eliason was thrown into adult court. In Berrien County, prosecutors get their way with juries and judges. Please make a statement against Juvenile Life Without Parole. This sentence on a 14-year-old is regressive and barbaric.

**January
Chicago**

NEW MUMIA ABU-JAMAL TRIAL?

Oral arguments to determine whether Mumia Abu-Jamal will be granted a new trial based on the question of the death penalty or be put to death will be heard by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. At 2:00 PM on Nov. 9 in the Ceremonial Courtroom, U.S. Courthouse in Philadelphia, Mumia's lawyers will finally and again be able to argue for a new trial. A new trial had once been granted but was later vacated by the U.S. Supreme Court, who ordered another review by the federal court. Mumia is a former member of MOVE and currently on death row for allegedly killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner in 1981.



**Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal
Oakland, Cal.**

TODAY'S CALL FOR A 'NEW HUMANISM'

John Alan's review of *Philosophy and Revolution* in the Sept.-Oct. 2010 *N&L* is important for our day because of the two aspects it brought out.

First is the African call for a new universal humanism based upon solidarity and cooperation "without any racial or cultural antagonism and without narrow egoism and privilege." Public acceptance of racism today is clearly exemplified in the opposition to Hispanic immigrants as well as to the building of an Islamic Center—and in the escalating violence being perpetrated on Muslims. The heightened racial tensions in the U.S. benefit ideologists of capital who seek to maintain the status-quo.

Second is the inability of world economies to produce the necessary capital for the development of Africa. At the heart of the present economic crisis is the falling rate of profit, which makes expansive job creation an impossibility.

It has been reported that 15 million people are unemployed in the U.S., and this will remain constant for at least a decade or more. The only way out of the misery of capital relations is to unite theory and practice in working out the development of a new society based upon uniquely humanist principles.

Incarcerated Revolutionary California

ON REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM

The clear distinction between bourgeois and leftist journalism, and Marxist-Humanism's revolutionary journalism can be summed up in one word: humanism. The commonality between the bourgeois press and most leftist publications is the mistrust of the masses, which both claim to represent.

The bourgeois press serves as the conveyor of capitalist interest that the masses should humbly adhere to. The leftist publications are primarily a means of disseminating their political

line which they want the masses to follow. In both, the masses are reduced to objects—as opposed to being subjects, the actual creators of history. The projection of Marxist-Humanism via revolutionary journalism has human beings at its center. It's a philosophy that sees a single dialectic that emerges from thought and reality.

Foremost, the paper's aim is to establish a new relationship between theory and practice, between an organization responsible for the ideas of Marxism and people struggling for freedom. This social practice evolved out of the necessity to break down capitalism's most monstrous division: the division between mental and manual labor. Creating a unique space for the reflections of various voices to be heard is the ground for establishing new relationships between theory and practice. The ideas of the masses are not devalued when juxtaposed with the ideas of revolutionary theorists.

Prison journalist California

A WORD ON UNEMPLOYMENT

My job in publishing was eliminated today. With technological change and outsourcing, the capitalists decided they could not make sufficient profit from my labor. I join more than 30 million of my fellow workers in this ongoing crisis. We need a socialist revolution and we need it now!!

Unemployed New York

VOTING VS. ACTION—A DIALOG

Most people think capitalism is the only sustainable system. *N&L's* ideas are not gaining popularity. We had eight years of Republican right-wing rule, then saw the largest "bailout" ever for the capitalists, and the highest unemployment since the

Great Depression. Yet the Republicans are making a comeback. Isn't that mind-boggling?

Boggled Los Angeles

Those who voted for Obama and for "change" are discouraged. It is shown by not bothering to vote. But not voting doesn't mean people are accepting capitalism. Voting never changed anything. Only action by masses of people is effective. We need to look lower and deeper. Workers know what a mess this society is. Whether factory or McDonald's workers, they know capitalism better than those who consider themselves in a different and special category.

Retired union organizer Los Angeles

VOICES FROM WITHIN THE WALLS

There is nothing like *N&L* covering items pertinent to all, covered nowhere else. Marx was the quintessential Humanist, which is critical because we live in a time and place where dehumanizing is the order of the day. Raya Dunayevskaya was right on the money: "if you have a different principle for life and for science, you will be living a lie."



There is but one ethical/moral/practical standard for life and science which is an integral part of life. It is necessary for the Left to put the hard fact of life and reality squarely in the face of Glenn Beck and associated right-wing nuts: the original apostles/Christians were not socialists nor Marxists, but hard-core communists of a religious nature. (See St. Peter, Paul, John, Matthew, Luke, Mark and all the rest.) Should the far right-wing fanatics want to destroy communism, they are going to have to burn all the Bibles. That should do the trick.

Prisoner Tennessee Colony, Texas

I will be eternally grateful to *N&L* for the insightful perspective it gives me of events unpolluted with the bias associated with other so-called news outlets. Being one of the underclass, I know first hand the struggles of my class and the daily head wind that confronts us. The prison experience highlights the harshness of the struggles, on which *N&L* shines a bright light. It is invaluable to those of us behind the lines.

Prisoner Crescent City, Cal.

In Milwaukee, the area I'm from, unions show almost total regression. One union has folded at Allen-Bradley (Rockwell International). And the other, at Harley-Davidson, made several concessions from which they will never recover. I have been a prisoner for almost 14 years, so there isn't much I can do but wince. Hopefully, more people will get to know Marxist-Humanism before it is too late.

Prisoner Wisconsin

I love to study about the struggles in this world. What was especially important in the July-August issue was the material calling for support of Oscar Grant and his family. In most California prisons, African Americans are treated as second and third class citizens. It is hard for us to reach out to people who can help us bring true problems to light.

Prisoner Susanville, Cal

I came to prison at a very young age, did not know how to read or write, came across a copy of *N&L* and started to learn how to read. What really opened my eyes was seeing things in a totally different way. Your paper not only expresses very important issues that people need to know about, but gives us the bare truth. Because I learned how to read and write with you, I consider myself part family with *N&L*. All of us in here thank you.

Prisoner Crescent City, Cal.

Editor's note: Can you contribute the cost of a subscription (\$5 for one year) for prisoners who cannot pay for one themselves?

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End Afghan war!

The invasion of Afghanistan, which George W. Bush began under the pretext of defeating the enemy that destroyed the World Trade Center and other targets on Sept. 11, 2001, has entered its tenth year. Obama, by expanding the war, has adopted it as his own.

When it is U.S. and NATO actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan that strengthen warlords, Taliban forces and al Qaeda alike, delaying withdrawal worsens the outcome for the Afghan people. But Obama's fear that right-wingers would castigate withdrawal as a "cut-and-run" strategy has extended the bloodshed, with no end in sight, the July 2011 date for "beginning" to withdraw troops notwithstanding.

News and Letters Committees hosted a meeting for Tahmeena Faryal from RAWA (the Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan) in October 2001. Despite the oppressiveness by which the Taliban ruled the Afghan people, especially women, she warned that U.S. bombing, and later outright invasion, would worsen conditions. U.S. intervention would rely on the corrupt warlords who had paved the way for the Taliban in the first place.

WAR AN ELECTION NON-ISSUE

Obama rolled to victory in 2008 in part from voters disenchanted with permanent war. He was an early opponent of the invasion of Iraq and a critic of Bush's Afghanistan policy. Yet two years later, Obama is continuing Bush's foreign wars.

In the 2010 elections, it is astounding that wars abroad are not a factor. With an eye to the election, war-hawk Republican Senators filibustered the 2011 Defense Authorization Bill on Sept. 19, but not to stop the war or cut off funds to the military—\$548.9 billion plus the \$159.3 billion for "overseas contingency operations."

Those war funds are all borrowed, as both Bush and Obama have pursued—like Johnson and Nixon in Vietnam—a "guns and butter" strategy.

The filibuster's point was to give Obama another legislative defeat, and to stop for the moment the repeal of "Don't Ask Don't Tell" contained in the "Defense" bill. So one party delayed debate on the rights of Gays and Lesbians to serve openly in the military, but neither party chose to debate the wars themselves and bring the troops home.

In Iraq, Obama missed the point of the Vietnam-era advice to just declare victory and go home—he declared victory and stayed.

DECLARING VICTORY AND STAYING

Obama has tried for cover from right-wing attacks by continuing the "good war" in Afghanistan and massively expanding it. The escalation of U.S. troops into Afghanistan has been for the public purpose of responding to the declining control of territory by the U.S.-supported Karzai government and resurgence of the Taliban, mostly by recruits created by the U.S. and NATO occupation.

Gen. Petraeus pointed with pride in August to the near tripling of the number of troops in Afghanistan, and tripling of civilians too—private contractors, many connected to Bush and Cheney, like Blackwater.

The ocean of U.S. money that flows yearly into Afghanistan dwarfs its GNP of \$14 billion and is irresistible to the powerful and the powerfully connected across the political spectrum. Local strongmen, including Taliban leaders, have grabbed great chunks of it in service to private security contractors, and extorted much of what the U.S. has paid to local tradesmen.

The continued presence of the U.S. military in Afghanistan and the flow of both dollars and blood of the innocent on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border have emboldened the Taliban and al Qaeda.

The military campaign in Kandahar has a stated purpose of dislodging Taliban forces from their southern stronghold. But fighting against the Taliban has gone on simultaneously with negotiations between the Karzai government and high-level Taliban leaders, with U.S. approval and assistance.

AFGHANS BETWEEN TWO EVILS

That U.S. forces had given safe conduct to Taliban leaders empowered to make agreements indicates that the U.S. end strategy in Afghanistan will be some shared power arrangement between two great enemies of the Afghan people, and of Afghan women in particular: the Taliban and the Northern Alliance. But it would hasten the departure of U.S. and NATO forces, regarded by Afghan people, according to a survey, as just as dangerous to their well-being as the Taliban.

Prominent opposition feminist activist Malalai Joya said, "We are in between two evils: the warlords and Taliban on one side, and the occupation on the other. The first step is to fight against occupation—those who can liberate themselves will be free, even if it costs our lives." International solidarity with Afghan people, and Afghan women in particular, is required of us in the U.S., and demands that all troops come home now.

Labor for Oscar Grant



Oakland, Cal.—On Oct. 23 the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) closed all the ports in the Bay Area, leading labor and community in support of Oscar Grant, shot to death by BART police on Jan. 1, 2009 (see Feb.-Mar. 2009 N&L). His killer, found guilty of manslaughter, will be sentenced Nov. 5. The community is calling for a maximum sentence to hold police accountable for their killing of Black youth, especially. Rally participants watch the ILWU drill team perform in solidarity.

South African activists slam Communist Party

Editor's note: The self-organized communities in the Western Cape shackdwellers' movement in South Africa have protested lack of services and housing through direct action, to be followed by a march on Parliament. The South African Communist Party (SACP), a part of the government along with the African National Congress and trade union federation COSATU, denounced blockading of roads as "totally reactionary and anarchist." Abahlali baseMjondolo answered the SACP:

As Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape, we have noted the statement by the SACP that declares that blockading public roads is "anarchistic and reactionary." If road blockades are anarchistic and reactionary, then it is clear that anarchy and reaction are very popular in South Africa. Communities, organizations and movements across Cape Town and across South Africa have been blockading roads for years....Many of the road blockades in Cape Town in recent days are not organized by us. But our campaign does endorse the road blockade as a legitimate tactic....

'THAT PHILOSOPHER KARL MARX'

When the SACP condemn us, they condemn the struggles of the people across the country. That philosopher called Karl Marx once wrote that communism is the real movement that abolishes the state of things. He didn't write that communism is the vanguard that disciplines and condemns the real struggles of the people. We also note that: When we have been evicted, the SACP has been silent. When we have been arrested, the SACP has been silent. When we have suffered in fires and floods, the SACP has been silent. Yet when we take to the streets, the SACP condemns us! What kind of communism is this? What kind of solidarity is this?...

Clearly for the SACP, the real problem with Abahlali baseMjondolo of the Western Cape is not our tactics, but the fact that we are organizing outside of the ANC, and that we refuse to vote for the ANC or for any political party. Local government elections are coming, and the ANC is panicking about the fact that, while there is tremendous popular anger and protest in Cape Town, they have lost control of it....

Everybody knows that around the world Stalinist Communist parties always function to defend states against popular struggles. This was true in Budapest in 1956, in Paris in 1968, and it's true right now in Calcutta. We are not anti-communist. We are for a living communism. We are for a communism that emerges from the struggles of ordinary people and which is shaped and owned by ordinary people....

NO VANGUARD FROM ABOVE

Any party or groupuscule or NGO that declares from above that it is the vanguard of the people's struggles, and that the people must therefore accept their authority, is the enemy of the people's struggles. Leadership is earned and is never permanent....Often there are many legitimate and democratic structures involved in the same broad movement of struggle at the same time. This is why we always insist that the autonomy of all democratic poor people's organizations must be respected and welcomed.

We know that many ordinary members of the SACP live the same challenges as we and that we have a common interest in the same struggles. Like everyone in their right mind, we support some of the positions that the SACP has taken in the battles within the ANC—like their position against the tenderpreneurs and before that their position against AIDS denialism....

We note that while they condemn our endorsement of the road blockade as a tactic, they also say that they will support our march on parliament. We welcome their support of our march but they will need to understand that we do not allow political parties to take over our protests....

BLACK/REVIEW

continued from p. 1

The New York Times (May 5, 1993): "We're talking levels of a problem. One level is at school. The other level is community and society."

Ms. Bennett speaks from experience: she knows that it's very difficult to get Black students in an inner city slum school to take seriously science and math, or any other subject, when they bring into the classroom a myriad of raw realities created by poverty and racism.

The very existence of de facto segregated schools in inner city slums is in itself the consequence of the prevalence of Black poverty and the hostile nature of racial divisions in this country. The Urban League predicted in its annual report on *The State of Black America 1992* that between 1994 and 1995 the majority of African-American children will attend schools that are predominantly minority. In Illinois, 82.2% of Black students go to de facto segregated schools.

We know that these segregated schools are poor schools; less money is spent on students per capita. For example, in California, where the state is bound by both its constitution and law to provide equity in spending per pupil, regardless of the race or the wealth of a community, in Baldwin Park, a Black community near Los Angeles, \$595 is spent per pupil, while Beverly Hills spends \$1,244 per pupil. Jonathan Kozol called this a system of "Savage Inequality." Black Americans are getting an "education" which opens up no vision in the human spirit or an objective pathway out of poverty.

AFROCENTRIC ALTERNATIVE?

The question is: Can Afrocentric schools, with their emphasis on cultural identity as the motivation to encourage Black youth to concentrate on mathematics and science, offer a valid alternative to the crisis in Black education? Put another way, can these schools, as many claim, provide the pathway out of poverty and economically regenerate the decaying inner cities by turning a new generation of Black youth on to mathematics and science?

First of all, the advocates of Afrocentric education fail to catch the central contradiction in their concept of Black public education, when the object of Afrocentrism becomes science. In their concept "science," and not the subjectivity of African "cultural identity," becomes the force of transformation.

There is nothing wrong in encouraging Black youth to study math and science, but to project it as the magic language that will open new economic doors for African Americans in a capitalist high-tech society creates an illusion. It fails to understand that the growth of technology in the production of commodities reduces the amount of human labor power needed and, at the same time, the rate of capital accumulation. This creates permanent unemployment and a constant hunger for capital. Marx called this the general law of capitalist accumulation.

The general law of capitalist accumulation is the true source of African-American poverty and inner city social dislocation, which is a permanent reality of life for many Black youth. The Los Angeles revolt last year had its deepest origins in that reality. It was a revolt against that reality. Every Black mass revolt contains within it an element of the "absolute," i.e., it wants an absolute change in class and race relationships in this country, including education. At this moment, we have arrived at a new crossroads in the meaning of Black education. It is no longer an issue of integration, which didn't happen, or even curriculum. The question is: How is education to be fundamentally related to Black freedom?

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Forum: Stop the culture of torture

Chicago—At the end of September the Illinois Coalition Against Torture gave venue to torture victims and their primary lawyer at "Jon Burge GUILTY—beyond the trial." The event featured Mary L. Johnson, mother of a still-imprisoned torture victim; Flint Taylor, battling lawyer for the wrongfully convicted, and a showing of the movie "The End of the Nightstick."

Johnson continues seeking justice against corrupt law-enforcement. She thinks her son's extended incarceration is directly related to her refusal to stop speaking out. But, as she put it, "God is not picking on me. He picked me," so she continues her work for justice.

IS THE U.S. A CULTURE OF TORTURE?

Mr. Taylor of the People's Law Office spoke on the culture of torture that permeates the international scene, our national "justice" system, political high achievers in Chicago, and reaches to individuals operating behind closed doors in Chicago police stations.

Whether the U.S. will be a "torture culture" is still being debated. Dick Cheney, John Yoo, Jay Bybee, and Paul Wolfowitz won the first round. The internationally celebrated conviction of former police detective and commander Jon Burge for lying to the FBI, which required a jury be convinced that torture had taken place, might be the first salvo towards a change.

The retirement of Mayor Richard M. Daley, State's Attorney or Mayor through much of the torture period, is a good sign. In the face of aggressive prosecutorial misconduct and reports from Amnesty International, the police Office of Professional Standards, the Police Foundation, and other groups, Daley made "no comment whatsoever."

Daley didn't respond in 1999 when forensic pathologist Dr. Robert Kirschner, an international activist on torture, testified that Chicago "was part of a pattern and practice similar to that found in other countries where official torture is practiced by the military and by police."

And the UN Committee Against Torture issued a report linking Chicago, Abu Ghraib, and Guantanamo. Daley turned away his eyes. He spent millions in taxpayer money to defend Burge against tenacious victim Andrew Wilson.

However, the Peoples Law Office and organizations like the Illinois Coalition Against Torture are gaining ground, educating and enlisting the public.

ABU GHRAIB, SUPERMAX ALL CONNECTED

Taylor focused his talk on what Chicagoans need to do to rectify almost 40 years of turning a blind eye to torture in our midst:

1. At least 20 more torture victims are still in jail. They must have new trials.
2. All the men who tortured with Burge are collecting pensions. (Taylor named names, scratching the surface with six or seven people.) These men must be indicted and tried.
3. In the coming Mayoral election, the remaining torture cases must be on the agenda and questions answered during the campaign.
4. After spending \$11-\$12 million of taxpayer money to defend actual torturers, what are we going to do to compensate the victims?
5. Anti-torture legislation making torture a crime with no statute of limitations is needed at both the federal and local levels.
6. We must continue to educate, making the link between Chicago, Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib and Supermax prisons. Cheney, Yoo, and Bybee link to Burge along with the cops in New Orleans who murdered on the Danziger Bridge. It's all part of the same culture.

—January

Chilean miners' rescue evokes many views

It is Oct. 13 and I am visually and sonically inundated with blow-by-blow descriptions of the Chilean miner rescue operation. TV, radio and newspapers have whipped themselves into a frenzy reporting the rescue of 33 miners from a collapsed mine in Chile. With a couple of months lead time, courtesy of the drilling process, this event has received more build-up than a Super Bowl. Naturally, everyone is glad the miners are coming out, but it seems to me this is an extreme case of media overkill that is designed to serve as a distraction from Mass-Murder Incorporated's (M-M Inc.—the U.S. government) worldwide killing spree, if not from the mine operator's greedy rush for profits that caused the accident in the first place.

All of America waits with bated breath as one miner at a time rises to the surface with a digital clock ticking off the time of his ascent to the second and, of course, a count of miners rescued, replete with video footage of tearful reunions with family and friends. Would it were so for those unsuspecting people blown up in their homes by the Predator drones the U.S. operates with impunity worldwide, but it is not.

As I watch the miners coming out of the ground one at a time, I can't help but think about how many people the U.S. government is simultaneously putting in the ground. I wonder how many people were murdered in Afghanistan and Pakistan by the drones over the course of the rescue operation? How many Palestinians, Iraqis, Somalis and Yemenis? Do they not deserve a ticking clock and body count? Certainly, but there is little feel-good factor in being confronted with a second-by-second ticking body count of the murders we are responsible for as the good citizens and shareholders of M-M Inc. No, no, we can't have that.

But why not? Why does the mainstream media ignore the big stories, the real stories? Why isn't there a body count of every human on this planet murdered by U.S.-made weapons systems? Why not show the video

footage of every single drone attack, replete with men, women and children dying in agony? This would be a stellar moment for U.S. television corporations. Real reality TV! Maybe, when fed enough reality, Americans will then treat themselves to the reality of the U.S. version of the Nuremberg Trials and the Spandau Ballet. Now that is a reality most of the world would love to see and exactly why Americans will never see it!

—Rand W. Gould,
C-187131, Oct. 13
Mound Correctional Facility,
17601 Mound Rd., Detroit,
MI 48212



Since men first went down into coal mines, they have died in unconscionable numbers. This woodcut is of workers going down into the Blantyre mine in Scotland, where on Oct. 22, 1877, 207 miners died, including a boy of 11. At the same time they were pulling miners out of the mine in Chile, 37 Chinese miners died in an explosion in Yuzhou.

The world was transfixed by the news of the rescue of the 33 miners in Chile. The amazing ordeal that they endured for 69 days, and the rescue process itself, reflect both the tremendous capacity for human survival and the

ability of human creativity when worldwide collective energies are focused on a truly human endeavor. And as rewarding and appreciated as the rescue was, in my mind was always the fact that all of this was unnecessary, and that the concern, suffering and grief that the miners and their families endured could all have been avoided if the mine had been safer. Chilean government officials said they would take steps to make sure it did not happen again. If those officials are like those here in the U.S., there is little to hope for, as we have seen time and time again here in this country, despite the countless mine tragedies we have experienced.

—Andy Phillips, Detroit

What must not be lost in the magnificent rescue of the 33 trapped miners, an act which deserves to be celebrated, is the sober, reflective voice of several of the miners who spoke of the mining company ignoring the safety of the miners for many, many years. It was the mine owners' insistence on production and more production, on putting the miners' safety on the back burner, that led to the tragedy, and to the possible serious psychological effects we may see in the future. The miners want to sue the company for what they were subjected to.

Right-wing newly elected Chilean President Sebastián Piñera may think that he can use "solidarity" with the miners to up his popularity, but real solidarity would mean a sharp disciplining of the mine owners and managers, and a rigorous future enforcement of mineworker safety.

—Eugene Walker, Mexico City

I am thinking about the Chilean miners' situation as a metaphor for the new humanism. The importance of faith in human interdependence and capacity to protect and sustain each other as an expression of the new human relations runs counter to human relations under capitalism.

—Allan Lummus, Bastrop, Texas

Far out though it may seem, I could not help thinking that the way the trapped miners had organized themselves, so freely and so cooperatively, might be a tiny glimpse into the way a new society might actually be created some day.

—Olga Domanski, Chicago

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Marco Melgoza, seventh-grade student, protested anti-Gay bullies. With his dad Jerry Watson at his side, Melgoza carried the sign "Bullying Is a Weapon" outside his Middle School, Desmond, in Madera, California. He has been called names and been physically attacked. Melgoza joins people from San Francisco, to Utah, to New York City, from atheists to the Society of Friends, who will agitate or recently have agitated against anti-Gay violence.

* * *

Honduran Lesbian rights organization Red Les-bica Cattrachas and Human Rights Watch witnessed the victorious sentencing of officer Amado Rodriguez Borjas for the stabbing of Transgender woman Nohe-lia. The historic sentence of 10-13 years occurred despite anonymous threats and obvious disdain from all but three court personnel. Honduran police commonly abuse Transgender people, and hate crimes against LGBT people are often ignored. It is a shame that hate-crime charges were not allowed to be brought.

* * *

Banning Gays and Lesbians from adopting children is not constitutional, ruled Florida's Third District Court of Appeals, backing up an earlier Miami court ruling. Judge Gerald Cope wrote, agreeing with the earlier court, "that gay people and heterosexuals make equally good parents."

* * *

The 11th observance of International Bisexual-ity Day (IBD) on Sept. 23 was marked with presentations, discussions, workshops, art and story sharing in, among other places, the United Kingdom's Cardiff County, Wales, and Edinburgh, Scotland, and Chicago, Illinois. Significantly, members of the Transgender community also presented in Chicago, because of the marginalization they encounter because they often don't closely "fit" into "traditional" gender and/or sexual orientation roles.

* * *

Participants in what turned out to be a brief Pride march in Belgrade, Serbia, were attacked by anti-Gay forces who chanted "death to homosexuals." This was the first parade in almost ten years, and the attackers were actively defended by police. It remains to be seen whether Serbia will be allowed to join the European Union; it claims to be an open society.

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The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.

by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya

Special! For only \$8 get the *Miners' Strike* pamphlet and a year's subscription to *News & Letters*—a savings of \$2. To order see form on p. 7.

Campaigns intensify counter-revolutionary onslaught

continued from p. 1

been a shocking return of the conspiracy theorists of the John Birch Society, given a kind of validation by the rantings of TV host Glenn Beck. He has brought back conspiracy theories as old as the clerical attacks upon the French Revolution, which form the basis for much anti-Semitic literature. He has echoed the Birchers' paranoia about Communist infiltration of everything from the White House to the Civil Rights Movement to fluoride in the water supply.

Neo-Confederates, racists, and nativists have also been heavily involved in promoting anti-immigrant sentiment as seen in Arizona's unconstitutional racial profiling laws. These were followed, by no accident at all, by laws against "ethnic studies" programs in schools—for example, Black History.

Despite the ridiculous façade of Sarah Palin and her "mama grizzlies," attacks upon women's rights are integral to this reactionary upsurge. The overwhelming number of Tea Party candidates hold views that would oppose a woman's right to choose abortion even in cases of rape or incest. Needless to say, their ranks are heavily salted with the kind of theocrats who would like to introduce the teaching of "Creationism" in schools as equally valid with the scientific theory of evolution.

Five of the six major national Tea Party organizations have serious ties with these right-wing extremist groups. The only one that ostensibly doesn't is Dick Arme's FreedomWorks, which is most closely corporate America.

If these Tea Partiers actually attained power, in fact, the current situation in Arizona shows the pos-

Stop the FBI raids!

News and Letters Committees statement:

The FBI raids on anti-war activists' homes in Minneapolis, Chicago and North Carolina on Sept. 24 recall some of the most reactionary moments in this country's political history, from the 1919 Palmer Raids to 1950s McCarthyism to the deadly COINTELPRO attacks of the 1960s and 1970s. We in News and Letters Committees join in the immediate resistance to this round of ruling class attacks, which herald a new offensive against the broad movement for freedom and justice.

We condemn the use of all the repressive tools of the ruling class, including the newer ones invented under the guise of "anti-terrorism" legislation, and call for a broad mobilization in opposition to these present raids and all future moves against movement activists. Already by Sept. 28, protests have taken place in over two dozen cities and towns across the U.S. As history has shown in the fundamental matter of the right to dissent, an attack upon one is an attack upon us all.

—Resident Editorial Board, Sept. 28, 2010

Protesting repression

Los Angeles—On Sept. 28, over 100 activists from diverse organizations met at the downtown Federal Building to protest the FBI's Sept. 24 raids on selected activists in Chicago and Minneapolis. The FBI handed out subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury, ransacked homes, and took away boxes of documents, computers and cell phones.

A few of the many organizations protesting were the Labor Community Strategy Center, Catholic Workers, Bus Riders Union, News and Letters Committees, Peace and Freedom Party, SEP, FRSO, Topanga Canyon Resource Center, The Brown Berets, an animal rights group, independent activists and many non-violent organizations.

Speakers denounced the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, police brutality, environmental destruction, economic injustice and spoke for workers' rights in peaceful protests. The raids were called an attempt to "criminalize peaceful political opposition."

On Oct. 5, the day of the federal grand jury, another protest took place to support those subpoenaed, who would "politely" refuse to testify. —Protester

Chicago—On Sept. 27 we rallied in front of FBI headquarters here to protest the Sept. 24 raids. Signs included "One Nation Under Surveillance" and "Freedom to Dissent." For over 300 people to show up at a last-minute rally reflects how seriously we take this as an attack on the whole anti-war movement and the Left. —Anti-war activist

sible face of the future. As Ken Silverstein wrote in *Harper's Magazine* (July 2010):

"...today's Arizona legislature...is composed almost entirely of dimwits, racists, and cranks. Collectively they have bankrupted the state through a combination of ideological fanaticism on the Republican right and acquiescence and timidity on the part of G.O.P. moderates and Democrats. Although dozens of states are facing budget crises, the situation in Arizona is arguably the nation's worst."

Arizona threatens to model the national future: endless cuts in public services and public workers' jobs, in education and healthcare; openly racist legislation designed to wipe away history itself. Most sinister, perhaps, are punitive measures for any who might be inclined to resist, as demonstrated by the abuses of Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, and the open reliance upon neo-Nazi armed militias as "border patrols," which has been accepted to a frightening degree by some of the public.

It is argued by some that the Tea Party represents an irreconcilable union of opposites which will inevitably fall apart. That is probably wishful thinking. The economic "libertarianism" that allegedly sparked the movement has always coexisted with such Religious Right views as anti-choice and homophobia in people like Texas Congressman Ron Paul and his son Rand Paul. Their ties to

racist groups are also well-known.

In truth, all these elements are not separate but are rooted in a common nostalgia for the primitive accumulation of capital as it actually happened in the Americas, through the displacement and genocide of the Native Americans and enslavement and exploitation of Blacks. The Tea Party, wrapped in its red, white and blue lie of U.S. history, is telling a specific story. It says, if only these rebellious Blacks, these workers with their union struggles, these women demanding equality could be stricken from history, then all would once again be well with capitalism. The springs of wealth would be free to flow once again.

NOSTALGIA FOR CAPITALISM'S BLOODY PAST

They stare into the smoking cauldron of the past and see the ghostly forms of Confederate generals, of the bloody 7th Cavalry, and of robber barons with their militias exercising the "Second Amendment rights" that Sharron Angle, the Nevada Senatorial candidate, has threatened to use if the Tea Party doesn't get elected. Anti-Muslim hate blogger Pamela Geller sees more recent figures—Karadzic's Balkan "ethnic cleansers" and the neofascist thugs of the English Defense League who march through the streets of English cities attacking Muslim families in restaurants.

The demand for a return to such an imaginary reactionary utopia will do nothing to solve capitalism's problems. But it has its echo in the nature of capitalism itself, which gives it a power that shouldn't be underestimated. Capitalism in its moments of crisis will return to what Marx called (for this reason) the "so-called 'primitive accumulation'" of capital. That is, it will use all forms of piracy, wars that destroy not only the existing machines that embody capital, but people and entire cities, as has happened again and again even on the scale of genocidal World Wars.

Even if some—or all—Tea Party candidates were to lose, the fact of their existence needs to be taken with deadly seriousness. This kind of openly racist rhetoric and thuggish behavior is unprecedented in recent U.S. politics and bodes ill for the future. Even if some sectors of the bourgeoisie recoil from the rise of U.S. fascism, they can't be depended upon to fight it.

The looming threat of environmental devastation through climate change—also a problem that is denied by all current Tea Party (and almost all Republican) candidates only underlines the urgency of fighting this rise of the Right with a total revolutionary philosophy.



Protests against the FBI raids took place in dozens of cities. Above, San Francisco; below, Milwaukee.



photo by The/Waz, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/thewaz/>

Humanity doesn't want a future of endless war, of deprivation, alienation and crisis, as anyone knows who talks to the myriads of dissatisfied and disgusted workers, women, Blacks, GLBT people and others who are under the guns of the Right and are left to fend for ourselves by a Democratic Party that has shown its first loyalty is to capitalism and its survival. We have already felt the consequences of the wrong turn American "civilization" has taken in opting for the prison-industrial complex as a way of dealing with an economy that now has no use for a large portion of the working class—not even as a reserve army of labor. Rather, millions have been condemned to a slow genocide of warehousing in prisons and dispossession of the rights of citizenship comparable to the era of Jim Crow.

The situation makes utterly concrete Marx's original idea of tying together the independent revolutionary organization of the workers with a total philosophy of liberation from capitalism, as set out in his lifelong writings on organization from the *Communist Manifesto* to the 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*. Or, as Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1964:

"What therefore becomes of paramount importance to Marxist-Humanists is to see that continuity is not the continuity of the unfinished revolution which forces of reaction are determined to keep unfinished. Continuity is, rather, the continuity of the Humanist and American roots of Marxism in the full Abolitionist tradition that will, once and for all, act on the truth that time has indeed run out on all compromises, come they from the Far Right or only 'near' Right. The road to embark on, the task to dedicate oneself to, is the movement that will tear up racism at its root in the capitalist exploitative system. For only the reconstruction of society on totally new, on truly human beginnings can make Freedom Now a reality." ("Goldwater Primary Victory in California: or Under the Backlash of Counter-Revolution," Archives #3139.)

Whatever the outcome of the November 2010 elections, the need for revolutionaries to grasp the absolute opposite to this corrupt mess can hardly be more clear.

Hero's welcome for dictator Ahmadinejad

Anyone still holding illusions about Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, as a genuine freedom fighter should have had them shattered by the hero's welcome his organization offered Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad last month. Ahmadinejad is executing revolutionaries and fighters for freedom while attempting to crush any vestiges of democracy in Iran.

In the words of women's rights activist Mahboubeh Abbasgholizadeh, "From the very first night after the election coup, the suppressors have implemented a far-reaching project to destroy civil society which they believe to be the real organizers of the Green Movement."

It is also the regime's fear—as a capitalist theocracy—that protests of women, youth, and workers will develop to challenge religion and capitalism themselves. This has led Ahmadinejad's regime to the arrests, beating and killing of countless oppositionists, and the general understanding of the nature of Iran's regime should hinder his influence in the region.

However, Ahmadinejad did speak to large crowds in the Lebanese village of Bint Jbail, rebuilt with Iranian money after being devastated by Israeli bombs in the 2006 war in which 1,100 people were killed—mostly Lebanese civilians. As Nasrallah declared via video that Israel should be "wiped out of existence," the Israeli Right may have felt well pleased with the spectacle.

Lebanese events help the government of Prime Minister Netanyahu increase its fostered atmosphere of neo-McCarthyist style attacks on the Israeli Left, along with the brutal crackdown on the latest nonviolent Palestinian resistance in the West Bank and the continuing murderous blockade of Gaza.

The leader of the rabidly pro-settler Yisrael Beitenu party, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman, may be more reactionary than Netanyahu. He places peace with Palestinians so far in the future as to mean "never." He proposed the hideous loyalty oath requiring Arab Israeli citizens and non-Jews who immigrate to Israel to declare loyalty to it as a Jewish and democratic state—as if to declare a state "democratic" makes it so; as if a theocracy could actually be "democratic."

The regimes of Israel and Iran, through rhetorical threats and influence-buying, are trying to keep the politics of the region warped within the influence of their little Cold War. It is an insane gamble. But the masses who rose against Ahmadinejad's election fraud remain as restive as ever; and Netanyahu's threats and brutality will only succeed in arousing firmer opposition both within Israel and outside. This is seen in the growing movement to break the Gaza blockade, the refusal of many Israeli artists to perform in the occupied territories, and the newest movements of resistance in the West Bank which have brought Palestinians together with Israeli and other activists. —G.E. and T.M.

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Stop education cuts!



On Oct. 7, as part of a National Day of Action for Higher Education, hundreds rallied at University of California, Berkeley, against massive fee hikes, course cutbacks and layoffs.

Save schools, libraries

Los Angeles—On Oct. 7, over 100 activists from many Leftist groups assembled at the Los Angeles Board of Education Building to protest continuing austerity measures against the working class. Organized by the March 4th Committee to Defend Public Education and Social Services, they demanded reinstatement of all terminated teachers, library workers and other workers. Some of the signs read, "Stop the Cuts—Tax The Rich," "Tax the Corporations," "Close the Jails, Open Libraries."

All Los Angeles Public Library hours were recently cut and libraries are now closed on Sundays and Mondays. The libraries serve not only the general public but also the poor and homeless people who use the library to read, access computers and self-educate.

On March 4 on the National Day of Protests to Preserve Public Education, thousands of students, teachers, workers and activists protested against the firing of teachers, cutting university classes 13% and raising tuitions throughout California.

A retired teacher stated that the Los Angeles Teachers' Union Leadership declined an invitation to participate because of fear that a large demonstration would jeopardize the Democratic Party's chances in the coming elections.

Many independent media representing diverse communities as well as some mainstream media covered the event. The Aztec Dancers/Drummers led a march to a rally at the downtown library.

—Basho

Sheriff Dart on notice

Chicago—In Illinois, a five-day notice is supposed to be given before you are evicted. (It doesn't always happen.) On Oct. 14, we gave Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart his own five-day notice demanding a moratorium on all economically based evictions. This is the latest in a series of actions taken by the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign in response to the shocking rate of evictions of renters in public housing and private apartments and of homeowners put out by banks. For example, on the day of the protest the Sheriff's website listed 32 scheduled evictions, and on some days the number is over 50. Nationwide, 102,000 homes were repossessed by banks in September.

While about two dozen people showed up in Daley Plaza for the action, guards only allowed three into the Sheriff's office. Both English and Spanish language TV stations came, as did the local Labor Beat show, but all the media were soon told to leave the office.

We targeted the Sheriff because his staff carries out evictions. In 2008 he declared a moratorium on evictions of renters in foreclosed buildings, which he allowed to lapse after a few months. Now he is using the popularity of that moratorium to run for Chicago mayor. Even though the rate of foreclosures has only gone up, he has not committed to a new, full moratorium. Instead his staff at the meeting hid behind legalities, at the very time that Attorneys General of all 50 states have launched an investigation into foreclosure and several banks have announced their own moratoriums precisely because of the snowballing reports of illegal practices by lenders and their contractors.

Those of us who did not go into the office held signs, including our five-foot high five-day notice. Many passersby read the sign, and some took pictures of it or stopped to talk. One couple told us their landlord had tried to evict them but only gave the five-day notice to the Sheriff's office. Many of us feel that the system, capitalism, is the heart of the problem.

Five days later, on Oct. 19, the Sheriff declared a moratorium, but only for evictions due to foreclosures pursued by the three banks that have admitted filing false affidavits. But he left an opening for himself to restart evictions once these banks file new affidavits.

The situation is urgent! People are being thrown out of their homes! We won't let politicians stall us on this.

—Anti-eviction campaigner

Mayor Bloomberg's schools get an F

New York—In June 2009, Mayor Bloomberg and Schools Chancellor Joel Klein, together with the president of the Council of School Administrators and United Federation of Teachers President Mike Mulgrew, announced an increase in the four-year high school graduation rate for New York City public schools to 60.7% in 2008. Overall performance on achievement tests had increased, and Black and Hispanic students continued to narrow the gap with their white and Asian peers. And on an "A" to "F" scale, 84% of elementary and middle schools were rated "A."

However, once New York State mandated new tests in 2010, the "achievement rates" plummeted. Math and English proficiency dropped for all ethnic groups from 2006 to 2010. Despite the Bloomberg-Klein claim of a narrowed racial gap, only 40% of Black and 46% of Hispanic students met math standards compared to 75% of white students. Only 33% of Blacks and 34% of Hispanics met English standards compared with 64% of whites. **Since Mayor Bloomberg has controlled the NYC public schools, even the Board's own statistics reveal a drop in graduation rates from 67.7% in 2001 to 57.8% in 2005. And the 84% of schools rated "A" in 2009? Only 25% were rated "A" in 2010!** Overall charter school achievement also dropped and charter school math scores were similar to those of public schools.

Parents and teachers had already suspected that Bloomberg's statistics did not gibe with their own experiences. At a forum in August, an angry audience forced the Chancellor and the Panel of Educational Policy to leave early after participants learned that the new tests yielded a precipitous decline in the passing rates. More and more students are now told that they will not be ready for high school; of those who do graduate, 50% need remedial courses when they enter college.

According to the 2010 Schott Foundation Report, NYC has the highest number of black students in the nation but only 28% graduated with a Regents diploma (earned by passing statewide exams in addition to high school credits.) Over 100,000 Black students did

Hungary's red sludge

Red sludge flooded several villages in Hungary on Oct. 4, killing nine people, sending 80-90 to the hospital, destroying animals, houses and cars, and making farmland unusable. It killed all life in the Marcal River, a tributary of the Danube. The sludge, a by-product of industrial production of aluminum from ore, is as caustic as lye and contains toxic metals. The flood burst out when a reservoir wall failed at the Ajkai Timföldgyár alumina plant. Red sludge reservoirs exist in many countries, including at least three more sites in Hungary. Each one poses the threat of another sludge flood, toxic dust in the air, and contamination of the water table.

This disaster is emblematic of the fate of Eastern Europe after its incomplete 1989 revolutions against Communism and Russian domination. While mass opposition to environmental destruction was one of the forces leading up to the revolutions, and had elements reaching for a new society, what prevailed was the push by large sections of those countries' ruling classes for a "Western"-style mix of private and state-capitalism. In the ensuing two decades, governments have alternated between more "free market" and more "socialist," and the toxic waste has only piled higher.

Like Hungary's red sludge ponds, toxic waste reservoirs worldwide are shaky at best and need continuing maintenance to keep the poisons contained, from Alberta's tar sands to coal ash slurry lakes like the one at the Kingston Fossil Plant in Tennessee, which poured out a billion gallons when a dike broke two years ago. But corporations and governments are cutting ever more corners. So it is with all the fundamental problems of society. Neither Communist state-capitalism nor Western "free market" capitalism can solve any of them—they just fester. Capitalism has declared environmental and moral bankruptcy and is only waiting to be replaced by a society on truly human foundations.

—Franklin Dmitryev

not graduate from high school in four years. Also, researchers from Harvard University discovered that **past achievement test scores had been inflated:** over 109,000 elementary students achieving 3-4 (at or above grade level) were really at the 1-2 level.

Diane Ravitch, Assistant Secretary of Education under President George H.W. Bush, observed:

1) Consolidating the school system into 10 districts has not reduced bureaucracy, which includes too many administrators with no background in education; 2) Bloomberg has had no independent research to affirm the value of his reforms; 3) in giving Mayor Bloomberg control, the New York State Legislature has reduced the role of parents and teachers. The new districts' Community Education Councils can only advise the Chancellor.

In addition, not enough attention is given to successful educational programs; class size has increased; charter schools in the same buildings as public schools take space and resources; music and art have been reduced or eliminated.

The Bloomberg-Klein policy of undemocratic centralized control, closing 91 "underperforming" schools, diverting funds to charter schools (now at 250), spending more time and energy on testing, and making students, teachers and principals "accountable" to these tests, has resulted in no significant progress in achievement levels. **The damage that these policies have visited on students and teachers cannot be measured. It is time for the community and the teachers' union to hold Bloomberg accountable.** His policies have been a resounding failure. The State Legislature must end excessive, invalid testing, increased funds for charter schools and, most of all, mayoral control.

—Tom Siracuse

Midwest against war



Chicago—Over 1,000 people marched in the Midwest Regional March for Peace and Justice on Oct. 16. It was truly regional, with people from Michigan to Missouri, Ohio to Minnesota, joining Chicagoans to demand an end to wars and occupations from Afghanistan to Palestine.

Some of the speakers included anti-war veterans; activists from Chile and Honduras, lands torn by U.S.-supported coups; and on "the war at home," activists from the Chicago Teachers Union, Southside Together Organizing for Power, Chicago ADAPT, and Mick Kelly, one of the Minnesota anti-war organizers targeted by the FBI's Sept. 24 raids. Funds raised at the rally will go to the defense funds of the 14 anti-war activists raided by the FBI.

Signs and slogans revealed the breadth of issues in this rally and march. "How's the war economy working for you?" and "Peace Jobs Equality" joined signs protesting the FBI raids, torture, war, genocide, and army recruitment at schools. I marched with the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign contingent, chanting against displacement from evictions here to dispossession in Palestine.

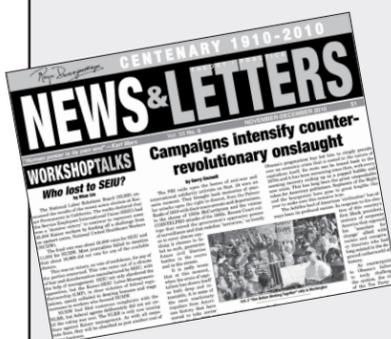
The spirit was lively, but the march was marred by an undercurrent of anti-Semitism. It was openly expressed from the platform when a speaker called for support for the strikers at the Congress Hotel across the street, but she referred to the hotel's "corrupt Zionist owner." Some other marchers I spoke to felt, like me, that this was outrageous, but this speaker was applauded.

Who doesn't know that "Zionist" is a code word? Why do so many leftists accept as allies just about every other "anti-imperialist," from Hamas to the Taliban?

The march told a contradictory tale of, on the one hand, a widespread anger at the continuation of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the pointless sacrifice of lives in the service of imperialism, the draining of resources that should have been used to improve people's living conditions; and, on the other hand, the dangerous lack of a vision of full freedom.

—Participant

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WORLD IN VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Something new is happening in Kashmir. In August, thousands of Kashmiris took to the streets shouting "Azadi"—freedom! Previously, Pakistan was behind the unrest in this disputed territory between India and Pakistan, but these demonstrations—continuous for three months—are indigenous, a human outcry against over 60 years of oppression.

At this point it does not appear to be a battle over religion—Muslim-majority Kashmir ruled by Hindu-majority India. Rather, Kashmiris are rejecting the occupation of their country by 600,000 Indian police and paramilitary troops who have tried to control Kashmir's eight million people by overwhelming force.

Now the youth who have taken to the streets are demanding an independent and free Kashmir. They are not stand-ins for Pakistan, but are fighting for genuine freedom and self-determination.

Youth protests, essentially leaderless, escalated during the summer, as did Indian repression. Some 900 clashes occurred with more than 60 civilians killed but minimal harm to soldiers. Operating under an "Armed Forces Special Powers Act," the Indian military gave itself great latitude to use force and seems to do so at every opportunity. For example, in June a student, Tufail Ahmad Mattoo, was hit by a tear-gas canister and killed, setting off new protests and more deaths.

The origins of India's frantic, heavy-handed treatment of Kashmir lie within the original bloody partition of British colonial India into India and Pakistan when independence was finally won in 1947. Kashmir's then-stated desire for independence has been a victim of the new states' rivalry ever since. Since independence the India-Pakistan dispute has resulted in three wars on the subcontinent—two focused on Kashmir—and the two nuclear-armed powers face each other with

Afro-Cubans' new role

Last month, the Cuban government announced that it would lay off 500,000 state employees by early next year. This comes as part of a long-term plan to promote private enterprise alongside state-run enterprises in developing an economic model similar in intent to China's variant of state-capitalism.

President Raúl Castro had earlier suggested that as many as one million workers could be laid off—out of a work force of 5.1 million. The specter of layoffs has raised concerns about the effect upon the government's already meager social safety net, which subsidizes food, housing and transport along with providing free education and healthcare. It would be a profound change that could take many directions.

It remains to be seen how this will impact one of the biggest issues facing Cuban society, the continuing legacy of racism that has left the Afro-Cuban majority under-represented in the Communist Party state leadership and over-represented in Cuba's prisons. Concerns have been raised previous to the announcement that most money to start new businesses will come from white Cuban Americans, exacerbating the existing inequalities. Afro-Cubans' vibrant movement for civil and cultural rights and space will have an important role in the coming period of change.

Kashmiri youths 'go for freedom'

intermittent saber-rattling. Relations have only deteriorated with the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, by Pakistani militants in 2008, and now India's plans to build a hydroelectric dam in Kashmir, which would give

India the potential to threaten Pakistan's water supply.

But the Kashmiris' actions show they will no longer tolerate being pawns in India and Pakistan's fight for power.

Their bid for freedom and self-determination has created a sane possibility against nuclear madness: a demand for independence from India, not to join Pakistan, but for an independent state.

The Kashmiris' demand for self-determination is the key for any viable solution. In the words of Malik Shahid, a 17-year-old



Kashmiri women shopping during a break in the protests.

South Africa's 'Class Apartheid'

Two decades after Nelson Mandela was freed from prison, South Africa has actually increased the apartheid-era race and class inequality. Neoliberal capitalist economic policies have resulted in massive unemployment and poverty that has been termed "class apartheid." So extreme is the situation that the unemployment rate for Black youth has reached almost 50%, the worst in the industrial and even much of the non-industrial world.

The tragedy was seen in Newcastle when police arrived to close down a garment factory for paying far below the already low minimum wage. The women working on the floor, who were meant to be helped by the crackdown on sweatshops, climbed atop tables and raised an anguished protest against it. Though receiving only \$36 a week, \$21 below minimum wage, the women feared being out of work more than being trapped in low-wage jobs.

The number of garment workers has decreased from 150,000 in 1996 to just 50,000 today. Without these jobs there are no jobs. The fault lies with decisions by the African National Congress-led government to join the capitalist rat race to the bottom for the South African masses—not only in textiles, but for all the workers and unemployed.

It need not have been so. The long struggle against apartheid wasn't only against the racist regime, but for a non-racist socialist alternative. But once "power" was gained by the ANC, together with the powerful trade union alliance COSATU and the South African Communist Party, all vision of an alternative to the real power, capital, was thrown aside in a rush to be part of the "commanding heights" of bourgeois society.

The question is whether and how a new beginning can be made. The public sector workers' strike during the World Cup was one measure of the continuing dissatisfaction and desire for change in South Africa.

—Eugene Walker

who took part in a protest in Pulwama, a small town 20 miles from Kashmir's capital: "If India took steps against those who kill us, maybe the people of Kashmir would be willing [to be part of India]," he said. "But when there is no justice, how can we remain with India? They are not doing anything but killing. So we will just go for freedom."

The Pope and religious intolerance

Thousands turned out in London to protest the state visit of Pope Benedict in September. Turnout was increased by the disgust so many feel over revelations of child abuse and other scandals that have been covered up by the Catholic Church hierarchy. Many Catholics who oppose Benedict's views on birth control, homosexuality and women's rights also participated.

The gathering heard speeches from campaigners against religious oppression including atheist Richard Dawkins, Gay liberationist Peter Tatchell, and Iranian Marxist feminist Maryam Namazie.

Tatchell pointed out, "Unlike the Pope, we practice tolerance. We did not witch-hunt Liberation Theologians in Latin America; the Vatican did!"

Namazie's speech was especially significant in that it drew the parallel between the Papal state authority and the fundamentalist Islamic regime in Iran.

"Look around! Everywhere you see the murder and mayhem supplied by religion. Every second of every minute of every hour of every day we see religion's 'corrective' supplied to the world, from sexual research to family planning to parallel legal systems whether of shariah law or the Vatican.

"The Pope speaks of 'secular intolerance.' There is nothing more intolerant than religion. It doesn't tolerate Gays, women, sex, music, or wearing what you want to wear. It is a crime to be a human being in Iran, and in many cultures under Islamism. We choose humanity, while the Pope and the Islamists choose religious dogma at the expense of humanity."

European worker revolt

In Europe, capitalism's deep economic crisis continues to unfold in ways that threaten the social benefits and social safety net that working people have fought for over decades.

First came the rescue of the banks and bankers—paid for through the public treasury. Privatize the profits; socialize the debt! Now all government talk and action is in terms of "austerity," that is, finding new ways to make the masses pay for the crisis and guarantee new wealth distribution for the capitalists. Among the proposals being implemented are: cutting back pensions; raising the retirement age; eliminating hard-won benefits like childcare subsidies; imposing new labor "flexibility" rules (read: make it easier to fire workers); and yet more privatization.

What is encouraging is the unfolding of a massive workers' resistance. From Greece to Spain, Ireland to France workers have taken to the streets in massive protest demonstrations. (See in-person report of French resistance, page 1.) The question remains whether the union leadership in various countries will only allow "show" protests of one-day short strikes, or whether the European working class can force a more militant and deeply rooted protest to emerge.

—Eugene Walker

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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