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"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Data may deny care

by Htun Lin

Barack Obama's \$800 billion stimulus package includes \$20 billion, to be followed with another \$30 billion, for computerizing health information. Analysts tout the value of hi-tech to bring quality healthcare, and point to medical groups like Kaiser HMO and Sutter Health, which have already digitized recordkeeping.

As one of the workers in that world, I know this is not the answer to providing quality care. We're drowning in technology. What's in question is its relation to actual patient care.

In reality, cost cutting, not delivering better care, is what motivates computerization. Karl Marx said labor under capitalism is split between abstract and concrete labor. For healthcare workers, computerization has intensified that opposition between abstract labor—the drive to cut costs and labor time—and concrete labor, providing quality care.

For example, recently a conscientious nurse expressed exasperation that enormous resources are expended for co-pay collections while no budget is set aside for mining data for infectious agents like TB. This task is critical to prevent further spread of disease. As a result, many patients are wrongly placed in shared rooms, where they spread TB, MRSA, and other types of communicable infections.

The computer technology fetish is further alienating the whole healthcare workplace, transforming everyone, including RNs and MDs, into appendages to the machine, feeding information to a vast database. A

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BLACK/REDFIELD

by John Alan

Sudan and oil

Editor's note: As John Alan is ill we are reprinting his column on "Sudan and oil" from July 2001, which discusses the deep roots of the tragedy of Darfur still ongoing (see p. 6).

For over 18 years a brutal civil war has been fought in Sudan between the ruling Arabic-speaking Muslims of the north and the indigenous Black Sudanese living in the south. The most recent economic reason for this conflict was the unilateral decision, of the ruling northern Sudanese government in Khartoum to sell concessions to Western and Asian oil corporations to drill for oil in Sudan.

Nature had placed Sudan's rich crude petroleum areas in southern Sudan. To validate its agreement with multinational oil corporations, the Khartoum regime sent in troops to clear and protect those areas from any opposition by southern Sudanese. According to a recent Amnesty International report, the Arabic Khartoum regime has used ground attacks, helicopter gunships and indiscriminate high-altitude bombardment to clear the local population from oil-rich areas.

This massive displacement of the local population was followed in the last decade by the deployment of additional weaponry and forces, specifically drafted to protect the oil fields. The military tactics of the government's security force destroyed harvests and looted livestock as it occupied the area to prevent the return of the displaced population. This scorched-earth policy has caused the death of more than 2 million people and has uprooted another 4.4 million, many of whom may die from famine.

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Crisis compels return to Marx

I. World in Meltdown and Revolt

The forces stirred by the swarm of crises shaking capitalism's world order to the core were manifested both inside and outside the London Summit of the G20. Tens of thousands of marchers converged on the Bank of England on April 1, in four streams led by the new Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse: Red horse against war; Green horse against climate chaos; Silver horse against financial crimes; and Black horse against land enclosures and borders, hailing the 360th anniversary of the English Revolution's Diggers and their designation of the Earth as "a common treasury for all." Protest signs ranged from "Jobs not bombs" to the huge banner reading, "Capitalism isn't working / Another world is possible."

Not far off, thousands of mainly young people pitched tents to create a Climate Camp across from the European Climate Exchange, a center of the scam called carbon trading, raising the banner: "Stopping carbon markets, because nature doesn't do bailouts." Yet another protest opposed the U.S. wars against Iraq and Afghanistan.

But the true depth of revolt was shown in the latest factory occupations, as hundreds of workers sat in at three auto parts factories being closed by Visteon UK in Basildon, Enfield and Belfast. One worker, John McGowan, told a reporter, "We intend to carry this camp here for as long as we possibly can, right through to next week, next month, if it takes it. There are people willing to do it, and we have organized ourselves."¹ In Greece, a 24-hour nationwide general strike on April 2, the day of the summit, showed how the masses of workers can shut down a country. Stathis Anestis, a spokesman for the Greek General Confederation of Workers, called it "Greece's response to the G20 summit in London. Those who created the crisis are now trying to fix it, and the solutions they're handing down to governments like ours are not to be trusted."²

(A) U.S. challenged by Europe and China as fears of new Depression raise specters of fascism and war

Inside the G20 summit, intended to forge united action by the world's biggest economies, U.S. President Barack Obama and his counterparts sweated to paper over their quarrels about how to take on the meltdown. The urgency of the action they wished to take is underscored by the fact that this is only the second summit of G20 heads of state. But Obama, calling it a "turning point" and begging the world to "wait and see," could not hide European countries' rejection of his top goal, to pump up their stimulus spending, nor his rejection of their demand for international financial regulation.

The rift between the U.S. and most of Europe was expressed most starkly by European Union President Mirek Topolanek's declaration the week before, that President Obama's deficit-funded stimulus program is the "road to hell."

The rifts are also within the EU. The warning by Hungary's Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany of a "new iron curtain," if the richer nations of West Europe fail

1. BBC News television report by Mark Simpson, April 1.

2. "Greeks stage walkout tied to summit," by Anthea Carasave, *The New York Times*, 4/3/09.

In this special issue we are publishing our Draft Perspectives Thesis, part of our preparation for the national gathering of News and Letters Committees over Memorial Day weekend. We have published every one since 1975, breaking new ground for the Marxist movement. We do it because our age is in such total crisis, facing a choice between absolute terror or absolute freedom, that a revolutionary organization can no longer allow any separation between theory and practice, philosophy and revolution, workers and intellectuals, "inside" and "outside." We ask you to join in the discussion of these Perspectives. We are not presenting any "pat answers" to the question, "Where Do We Go from Here?" We are raising the questions that demand answers—and we ask you to help us in working them out.

to aid the East, threw cold water on the 20th anniversary of the fall of Communism in East Europe.³ Now what is falling is not a wall but the illusion that the crisis of state-capitalism was limited to the East bloc. Far from solving the East's problems, turning to mixed private and state-capitalism has left those countries and even the Eastern part of wealthy Germany stuck in a legacy of poverty, pollution, and unemployment. That is deepening in today's crisis, leading observers such

as Ron Asmus of the German Marshall Fund to ask: "Is the democratic transition in danger?"

Strikes and protests have swept the region, from Montenegro to Estonia. Governments have fallen in Latvia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The simmering discontent was expressed in January by participants in Bulgaria's "Nationwide People's Protest," who declared, "We are fed up with living in the poorest



Financial Fools Day/Fossil Fools Day—Demonstrators in London make April Fools Day their own as they march against the G20.

Girl Gone Mad, Democratic Underground

and most corrupt country."

CHINA'S CHALLENGES

In a separate challenge, China won more power in the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Having exploited its most available resource, labor power, to become the world's sweatshop, China has now become the creditor of last resort. The U.S. even had to smooth over its recent confrontation with ships from the Chinese Navy, which has strengthened enough to challenge the much more powerful U.S. Navy regionally. That does not mean that China can ignore the challenge from within, as it officially admits 20 million unemployed, with tens of thousands of labor revolts every year. (See "China workers' revolt," p. 12)

The rifts between rulers are not just policy differences but have raised fears of trade war, which the G20 believe they have averted for now with their meager stopgaps.⁴ But protectionist measures have increased, and narrow nationalist demagogues are trying to exploit them, along with anti-immigrant scapegoating.

No international agreement can ward off the specter of fascism and world war, just as it cannot erase the memory of the Great Depression of the 1930s, when massive state intervention into the economy could not renew value production until World War II sowed such vast destruction across the globe. A mainstream economist as rigorous as Simon Kuznets could not escape the conclusion:

"Thus, emergence of the violent Nazi regime in one of the most economically developed countries of the world raises grave questions about the institutional basis of modern economic growth—if it is susceptible to

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3. "Borderless' Europe faces test of unity," by Tom Hundley, *Chicago Tribune*, 3/18/09.

4. See "America is from Mars, Europe is from Venus," by Christian Reiermann, Michael Sauga and Thomas Schulz, *Der Spiegel*, 3/16/09.

After the election: where to now?

by Terry Moon

While there is no question that the election of Barack Obama is a good thing for women—reversing the heinous Global Gag Rule will save the lives of thousands of women, to give just one example—there is danger here too. When Bill Clinton was first elected, he too rescinded the Global Gag Rule and his reputation as a friend of women's reproductive rights led to the collapse of much of the movement for abortion rights. This left poor women still unable to access abortion, it left the Hyde Amendment denying federal funding for abortion intact—it is still intact—it left federal and state courts riddled with right-wing judges, and it left a fanatical right wing determined to stop women's access and right to abortion at any cost (see article below).

The disarming of the women's movement also left the door open for Clinton to savage welfare, thereby destroying a safety net for women—mostly single mothers—that had existed for decades and is now, in capitalism's deteriorating economy, sorely needed. While two years ago 15 million women in the U.S. lived in poverty and one in five older women were poor as were one in three single moms, now things are so much worse. Yet rather than growing, welfare rolls mostly remain flat and the number of those receiving assistance is at a four-year low.

WOMAN AS REASON

ALL EGGS IN OBAMA BASKET

Obama has been ominously quiet on this subject at precisely the time he needs to commit to bringing women out of poverty. In fact the official White House website, expectmore.gov, tells us "the following actions" they are taking to "improve the performance of the [welfare]

Abortion rights battles continue

When Democrats are in power, the religious right intensifies its efforts. Anti-abortion groups have focused on changing state laws to make abortion illegal in the event of an overturn of Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion. Several state legislatures have been voting on "Personhood Amendments," which would grant personhood to a cell or embryo at fertilization, conception, cloning, or a "functional equivalent."

"Born Alive Truth," led by Gianna Jessen, who claims to have survived a saline abortion when she was a fetus, launched television attack ads on Obama during his campaign saying he voted against a bill making it mandatory to give medical care to a fetus that had survived a late-term abortion. Obama voted against this bill because similar laws were already in place. Operation Rescue, headed by Troy Newman, led a campaign against the nomination of Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius for Attorney General because of her support of Dr. George Tiller, who runs one of only three clinics in the U.S. that perform late-term abortions. Newman demonstrated against Sebelius dressed as a cockroach, implying she was allowing clinics to operate under filthy conditions.

Operation Rescue (OR) focuses on harassing Dr. Tiller. They harass clinic staff as well as businesses involved with clinics, including those that provide medical services, cabs, hotels, and landscaping. Newman recruits Tiller's former employees and patients to give testimonies, usually consisting of their discomfort with late-term abortion. They are attempting to have Dr. Tiller's license revoked by influencing anti-abortion District Attorney Phill Kline to obtain patients' files to prove that Tiller was not reporting statutory rapes. However, the DA also tried to obtain files of adult patients. Though Kline lost an election to pro-choice DA Paul Morrison, Tiller was put on trial in March 2009. The charges had changed to 19 misdemeanor counts of illegally conducting a post-viability abortion. Tiller was pronounced not guilty of all counts.

Newman was disappointed by this verdict because he had said that "this trial is expected to have huge implications for the pro-life movement nationwide." The judge tolerated demonstrating OR members outside and even inside the courtroom. OR still has hope of destroying Tiller because he is now being tried again on 11 similar charges brought by the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts by Cheryl Sullenger, an OR member.

The religious right influences the public with its lies through the mainstream media as well as its own. The result is a youth anti-abortion movement as well as public tolerance of a war on reproductive rights that includes physical harassment. There needs to be more knowledge of the realities of abortion, including late-term abortion, such as the fact that it is usually performed for important medical reasons. It is critical to make known the deception of the religious right, which believes that it is moral to lie to achieve their goals. The causes of the religious right, including the war on reproductive rights, are tools in their attempt to create a theocratic state. —A.H.

program": "Reassessing the program's performance measures and related targets," and "Implementing the plan to determine the rate and amount of cash assistance payments that are paid improperly and developing a plan for reducing improper payments." How is this pathetic response, or rather non-response, to women's poverty any different than what a Republican would do? Not only that, be it welfare, food stamps, or the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act, one of the biggest crimes is that so many of those eligible for such programs don't know of them and suffer needlessly.

Given the history the women's movement had with Bill Clinton and that Obama has already proven himself wanting on such vitally important questions as health-care where those advocating single payer healthcare are banned from the discussion; given the anti-freedom Proposition 8 banning gay marriage in California which Obama has refused to repudiate; and given the newly emerging need for welfare—what is disturbing is how many women and women's groups are depending on him to solve our problems for us. From the National Organization for Women to the Feminist Majority, and from NARAL Pro-Choice America to Planned Parenthood, all have great expectations for Obama, and many have their guard down.

NEED FOR TOTAL CHANGE

While the election of Obama and the Democratic majority in Congress was a victory, it was not the deep, lasting, and total change needed for us to be free. It was that desire for a total change that made the election victory possible in the first place. The real question the election poses, then, is not our expectations of Obama, but rather, where do we—that is the women's movement for freedom—go from here?

What the election did give us was a breathing space as we move away from the stench that was Bush and his administration, and work out how to put forward what is actually necessary to transform our capitalist, racist, sexist, homophobic society into a truly new human one. Obama's admitted philosophy is pragmatism, he's going to do "what works." But the philosophy of pragmatism cannot be the movement's ground because pragmatism does not lead to the new, but to only surviving or minimally improving what is. In our age of total crisis, that is not enough. The times call for a total change. For that we need to be grounded in a philosophy of liberation.

One way to begin that work is to return to Marx. While the women's movement has, rightly, been suspicious of a post-Marx Marxism that told us our freedom always has to wait, our Draft for Perspectives poses the question, how to return to Marx's Marxism, rather than post-Marx Marxism that has betrayed women at every revolutionary turn. The women's movement has, rightly, already rejected those so-called Marxists that thunder "Social Revolution comes first." But with capitalism failing in a spectacular and horribly destructive manner, with those wanting a new world and believing that one is possible taking a second look at Marx, the women's movement can't afford to be left behind. Our pages are open for your discussion.

Review of Christian pop culture in 'Rapture Ready'

Christian pop culture is a recent phenomenon, most of the producers and consumers of which are white, conservative evangelicals. Daniel Radosh, author of *Rapture Ready! Adventures in the Parallel Universe of Christian Pop Culture*, is a Jewish Humanist. He partly wrote this book for its entertainment value because there is something inherently funny about Bibleman the fundamentalist superhero, Hell House the alternative to Halloween haunted houses, a breath mint called "Testamints," and the Christian versions of wrestling and hard rock.

The book and the companion website, www.getrapratureready.com, do have their disturbing moments since, even on Bibleman's TV show for children, right-wing politics and bigotry are sometimes mixed into the message; and Radosh thought the book was important because of the profound effect of every kind of pop culture on U.S. society. He includes topics such as creationism taught by museums that depict dinosaurs romping with humans, and the merchandise and books promoting abstinence, as well as the sex manuals letting married people know what kind of sex is acceptable which often contradict each other. He describes books of fiction such as the *Left Behind* series, which instruct Christians to accept the religious right's interpretation of the *Book of Revelation* as being a prophecy of an upcoming battle between "good" (the religious right) and "evil" (everyone else).

During Radosh's investigations, he discovers a growing progressive element, as there have always been some evangelicals who are sincere about the positive message within Christianity of loving and serving others. He also becomes friends with liberal evangelicals like Jay Bakker, the son of Jim and Tammy Faye, who is the minister of a progressive, gay-friendly church.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey



Nearly 600 people joined the One Law for All anti-racist rally in London, March 7, against Sharia and religious-based laws in Britain and elsewhere, and in defense of citizenship and universal rights. The marchers heard speakers denounce the policy of appeasement of the political Islamic movement. Hundreds then attended a public meeting to discuss and debate Sharia, sexual apartheid and women's Rights. For more information contact www.onelawforall.org.uk.

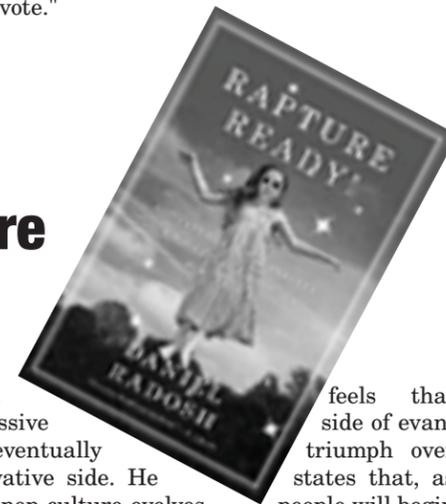
—Information from Maryam Namazie

Virginia's Democratic Governor Tim Kaine signed legislation March 30 enabling the sale of "Choose Life" license plates in the state, with \$15 of the \$25 fee funding so-called "crisis pregnancy centers" whose reason for being is to deny women their right to abortion. NARAL Pro-Choice America criticized the action saying: "the revenue would go to many centers that use deceptive, intimidating and emotionally manipulative tricks to block women from learning facts about, or choosing legal abortion."

—Information from Feminist Daily News Wire

A Spanish feminist coalition, the State Network of Feminist Organizations, challenged the Catholic Church by launching a campaign, March 27, to support the liberalization of abortion laws by Spain's Socialist government. Since assuming power in 2004, the government has removed religion from the public curriculum, reformed divorce laws and legalized gay marriage.

Placard-waving women from South Africa's three Cape provinces marched to Parliament in Cape Town, March 26, denouncing the country's "slow and unbalanced" land redistribution program. They said if they were not given greater access to land, they would not vote in the country's April general elections. "We want what belongs to us," said Maria Pietersen. "We are fighting for land for the sake of our children's future, so no land, no vote."



Radosh feels that the progressive side of evangelism will eventually triumph over the conservative side. He states that, as evangelical pop culture evolves, people will begin to demand higher quality products in the performing arts, and that creative people tend to be open-minded. He feels this open mindedness will be enhanced if evangelical pop culture escapes from its "alternate universe bubble" and becomes more influenced by mainstream culture and that then its fundamentalist component will "wither and die naturally." He believes that progressive evangelicals "are probably the only people who can bring about the demise of the religious right."

I think Radosh is correct. The progressive element within evangelical religion can redefine their religion and tell fundamentalists that they are morally wrong within a religious context. However, fundamentalism is such a strong tendency within every religion, philosophy, and political movement, that it can never be completely destroyed. Also, when Radosh says progressive evangelicals are the only ones who can defeat the religious right, he does not seem aware of the magnitude and influence of its ever-growing political machine. I think that it will take firmly committed players from all walks of life to destroy the religious right because it has become so firmly entrenched in all of our society.

People who are concerned about what's going on in the world of the religious right might enjoy this book due to Radosh's humorous, respectful approach, and his outsider's look into the fundamentalist mindset, as he celebrates the emergence of progressive evangelicals.

—Adele

Stella D'Oro strike against takebacks

New York—Stella D'Oro, an Italian biscuit company, was started as a family business in 1932. The workers were unionized in the 1950s by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco & Grain Millers' Union, Local 50. Stella D'Oro was sold three times. The present owners are Brynwood Partners, which provoked a strike when they called for a 25% wage cut and increased health premiums, and ended pay for holidays, vacations and sick days, no extra pay for Saturdays and reduced pensions. The owners claimed they were losing money, but refused to open their books.

Workers organized a picket last Aug. 13, expecting a short strike. As the economy worsened, the owners found it easy to hire scabs and the strike has dragged on for seven months. The strikers remained united and called for a boycott of Stella D'Oro products. The union has called on the NLRB to rule on Brynwood's refusal to negotiate in good faith. Meanwhile the strikers are surviving on unemployment compensation.

Community activists have organized a support committee which has weekly meetings to discuss leafletting in front of stores, press conferences, rallies and raising money. Unions such as the PSC, UFT, SEIU, and the TWU are supporting the strike.

Companies are using the economic crisis as an opportunity to break unions. The New York City Central Labor Council must increase their support of the strikers and mobilize its membership to participate in the picket, rallies and boycott. Any bailout that leaves labor out will only lengthen and worsen the economic crisis.

New York—Close to 200 people came to a benefit in support of striking Stella D'Oro workers—Una Fiesta en Apoyo de los Huelgistas del Stella D'Oro. After a



Stella D'Oro workers in NY march for rights

medley of labor songs, in English and Spanish, sung by the New York Labor Chorus, and a solidarity message from a French CGT union member, two strikers spoke:

Mike Filippo: We started with 135 families on strike, but thanks to our supporters we are now 300 or more. We have received support from all over the U.S., Latin America, and Europe. Brynwood Partners, the new bosses, wanted to slash 25% of our earnings, take \$1.00 per hour for five years for healthcare; they wanted to take our sick days, half our holidays, and more. We decided to fight to the end and become an example for workers everywhere—*¡Sí se puede!*

Sarah Rodriguez: Thanks to our Support Committee, which helps us every day. I have met so many people who encourage us to keep fighting for our rights. I am learning so much from this strike—the first I have been through—and I feel like you are part of my family.

Judy Gonzales, of the Support Committee, told us that not one worker has crossed the picket line. "It takes a city to support a strike. There is a lot more to be done—we need your ideas, money, and help." Visit www.stelladorostrike2008.com; or call: (917) 497-4231.

Fighting racism at Commercial Forged

Chicago—My name is Charles R. Gilyard, President of Local 2154, United Steelworkers—the last steelworker local in the city with full-time employees. Commercial Forged Products has approximately 60 union members. They filed approximately 150 grievances over the past three years, compared to 80 from the 11 other companies in the local.

Mr. Tobious, former Plant Manager, made a hangman's noose and held it up to Mr. Dortch, our shop grievor for over nine years, in the lunchroom, stating, "This is what I used to do when I lived in Mississippi." While the company gave Mr. Dortch a letter of apology and so did Mr. Tobious, Tobious was never to my knowledge disciplined for this despicable racist act.

Mr. Dortch was terminated in January 2008. While he was out on the first termination the company terminated him a second time. There is still no date set for his arbitration, yet he is still standing strong. Pedro Benavides, the union Unit Chairman, was unjustly terminated in February 2008. Dortch and Benavides held the members together through previous contract negotiations and the company didn't want that solidarity. Mr. Benavides' arbitration was stalled until April 16.

This Feb. 9, Apolinar Quiroz, who filled Benavides' vacant union position, was given a suspension pending termination. He was reinstated one week later but the intimidation factor was present. The one white union representative has never received one write-up.

DURING OUR CONTRACT negotiations in September 2008, Mr. Schriener, Vice President and General Manager, proposed removing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a holiday, stating Blacks were no longer the majority in the shop. He also proposed removing the civil rights committee. All of the employees were angry at this, our Latino and white brothers as well.

Negotiations came to an impasse with only two of the company's 48 proposals remaining on the table. One was to allow the arbitrator to decide the amount of back pay awarded to a reinstated employee, rather than being made whole for all lost time. The second company proposal was to limit the Local Union President's leave to one term in office, whether re-elected or not.

WE WENT ON STRIKE over this language. It lasted two weeks, given what the economy was like in November and that it takes four to six weeks before the strike fund would kick in. Since the strike ended, members have been harassed and intimidated.

Mr. Schriener told me that I am not an employee and that if I continue to be the President of the Local I will no longer work there. The opening question of the contract negotiation was, "Am I still an employee at Commercial Forged Products? The only reason you want me back is to terminate me as you have done previous union officials." Mr. Schriener had no response.

I wrote a letter to our President, Leo Gerard, United Steelworkers, and to the President of Change to Win, Anna Burger, asking that they come together under one federation. We have union members suffering, losing jobs, homes, healthcare, because we are fighting for workers' rights and civil rights. I suggest all unions come together at Commercial Forged to show the world that our solidarity transcends our differences.

An injustice to one is an injustice to all, it should not matter what union you are in. We need all of the unions to stand together with us at our Civil Rights and Workers Rights march at 5757 W. 65th Street on April 17 at 11:00 am. I am currently working with Jobs With Justice and News and Letters to put the march together.

Workers tossed aside in auto bailout

Detroit—While the Obama administration has given GM 60 days to come up with a corporate viability plan, and 30 days for Chrysler including a merger deal with Italian Fiat, it is clear that this is a sham dance to bankruptcy for both. GM is on life support even with a \$13.4 billion loan from the government and is requesting \$16.6 billion more for starters. While the sums for Chrysler are lower, it is in the same disastrous shape.

GM CEO Rick Wagoner was forced to resign, and was replaced by Fritz Henderson, who worked for GM for 20 years, most recently under Wagoner. The only difference between them is that Wagoner publicly resisted taking GM into bankruptcy, whereas Henderson is quite willing to do so. Otherwise, it is like replacing Tweedledum with Tweedledee. Actually, Henderson had no choice since Washington has decided that bankruptcy is the only way out for both GM and Chrysler.

THE QUESTION OF bankruptcy for GM and Chrysler has been floated for months, mostly by Republicans salivating over the prospect of dealing the UAW a lethal blow through bankruptcy that could terminate the union contract. This blow to the UAW would further cripple an already weakened union movement. Nor is the chorus for bankruptcy limited to the Republicans. A growing number of Democrats are joining in—including top economic advisers to the Obama administration. These are the most qualified prizefighters for capital.

UAW leaders have already negotiated huge concessions, despite growing opposition from rank-and-file workers. At last count, there were some 782,000 autoworkers, compared with 1,286,000 in 2000, a decline of 504,000—with 176,000 jobs lost last year alone. Just like the projections for the unemployed nationally, the layoffs in auto will continue into the next year.

Meanwhile, the crisis is spreading to the auto supplier industry, which is also requesting billions in loans from the government to keep afloat. Several Chrysler plants in Canada closed recently due to parts shortages—these shortages will also continue to escalate.

MANY AUTOWORKERS are angry at the administration for what they feel is preferential treatment toward the banking industry. Autoworkers in an assembly plant in Warren, a suburb of Detroit, used razor blades to scrape Obama stickers off their cars.

As for the criticism from many in Congress, one autoworker said, "Those people in Congress don't know what they're talking about when they say we're being paid too much. Just have them come here in the auto plant and do my job for just one day. They'd change their tune real quick."

—Andy Phillips

Correa betrays labor

Ecuador's Rafael Correa government employs phrases such as "citizens' revolution" and "socialism for the 21st century." However, contradictions are being exposed as it confronts organized labor. Ecuador's government budget depends to an unhealthy degree upon royalties from the exploitation of petroleum. Correa sees gold and copper mining as a future added source of government revenue. "We are a poor country," he has said, "we cannot afford not to exploit our natural resources."

The situation has come to a head with the passage of a new Mining Law that would permit Canadian multinational corporations to begin large-scale metal mining in environmentally sensitive areas. A week of demonstrations, marches and road blockages culminated in January with a day of nationwide protest organized by Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) that drew over 10,000 participants.

The government responded with police repression that is reminiscent of previous rightist governments. To add insult to injury, Correa has characterized the protests as infantile and irrational and has accused the leadership of joining with the Right to destabilize the government. These are the very movements that paved the way for his ascension to the presidency.

In January the United Labor Front (FUT), Ecuador's largest labor federation, announced mass protests for a higher minimum wage increase. They said that Correa's proposed increase of \$18 a month, to \$218, fails to meet provisions in the new constitution ensuring that all Ecuadorians are paid a living wage. Correa's response was to threaten to fire workers who participated in demonstrations during the work day.

Although the Correa government has achieved some important reforms in taxation and social services, its philosophy of depending upon selling the nation's natural resources for financing its "revolution" is no different than the neo-liberalism that has kept Latin American masses in poverty and misery.

In Ecuador, the Correa government will continue making concessions to the Right and to corporate capitalism. However, with a government that calls itself socialist but fails to directly confront capital, the forces from below are once again regrouping for a future confrontation for the eventual destruction of capitalist economic relations and the achievement of a new society based upon human values.

—Participant/observer, Ecuador

WORKSHOPTALKS

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retiring nurse told me that computerization had nothing to do with the company's claim of improving care delivery, but was meant to keep track of their bottom line.

The computers are there not only to track our daily performance but also to mete out punishment based on statistical data. Evaluation is no longer "personal," but automatic and faceless. Even shop stewards feel they cannot argue with data given an "objective" aura by the computer, even though statistical facts reflect priorities, like revenue enhancement, programmed into the computer by management. In a disciplinary hearing often the manager and the shop steward sit on the same side opposite the employee who is advised by both on how to improve their performance.

For over a decade, our HMO has been automated as possible. What they cannot escape is the fact that only living labor can provide the fundamental face-to-face human interaction that is the essence of healthcare.

As computers reached into all areas of the workplace, not only do we hear less from our union officials, but we workers have stopped communicating with each other in the ways we had before. Everyone is so worried about their own time-study ledgers, and concerned about "making the cut" and "career advancement," that our natural cooperation has been usurped towards enhancing the company's bottom line. The computer overlord isolates us from one another. Acting human has become time consuming and not cost-effective.

Many nurses are forced to neglect patients due to excessive focus on paperwork, and the obsession with their own time-study stats. The most significant, persistent neglect is institutionalized through efficiency methods such as floor managers practicing chronic short-staffing. Computers dictate to RNs and MDs alike what is the acceptable level of care to be offered to patients according to parameters of abstract labor, that is, labor time. A whole army of utilization reviewers, on and off site, is constantly looking, literally and virtually, over the shoulders of RNs and MDs to limit care so as to control cost. Concrete labor is thus confined within the limits dictated by abstract labor.

Obama's nationwide program to computerize the healthcare workplace will only intensify our conflicted work life. There is no other resolution to the current crisis except workers controlling their work free of the dictates of capital. The question of the hour that many are asking is "Can capitalism be saved?" But the real question many of us worker/thinkers, both employed and unemployed, want to ask is: Should capitalism be saved, and what is the alternative?

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This is one of a series of Political-Philosophic Letters written by Raya Dunayevskaya during and after the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Translated into Farsi and distributed by Iranian revolutionaries, Part I appears here and Part II will appear in the June-July News & Letters. Both parts are on newsandletters.org. The series was published in a pamphlet, *Iran: Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, and is available in the *Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, #7219, along with the Farsi edition, #7266.

What has happened to the Iranian revolution? Has it already run its course into its opposite, counter-revolution? Or can it be saved and deepened?

June 25, 1981

Dear Friends:

The removal of President Bani-Sadr, first from his post as Commander-in-Chief, and, within 12 short days, on June 22, from his post as President, accompanied in both cases by armed gangs shouting: "Death to Bani-Sadr! Death to the Second Shah!" has brought the counter-revolutionary elements to such dominance that one must ask: Have the contradictions in the Iranian Revolution that were present from the start reached a counter-revolutionary climax? What, indeed, has happened to the Iranian Revolution that was so massive, so courageous, so persistent in the long preparatory strikes that became a General Mass Political Strike and drove the Shah from power? Could the revolution have lasted no more than one and a half years? Is its bent to devour its own children—and in so insensitive a manner also its poets as to have arrested Saeed Soltanpour as he was being wed and shortly thereafter to have executed him—to go unimpeded? Even Stalin didn't act that rapidly and that deadly against the Russian poets. Has the revolution already run its whole course, straight into its opposite, counter-revolution?

Let's not rush to final judgment. The decisive question has not yet been answered: **What about the masses who achieved that great dual revolution against their own ruler and his foreign backer, U.S. imperialism which had put him in power and kept him there for a whole quarter of a century?** Had the 1917 revolutionaries written off the Russian Revolution in August, the counter-revolutionary Month of Great Slander, there would have been no November Revolution.¹ Let us first examine the objective and subjective situation more closely, not for any scholastic purposes, but to see whether there is a way to stave off the full thrust of the ongoing counter-revolution, and thus return to the 1979 revolution and its goals as well as its mass participation.

I. The Fall of Bani-Sadr under the whip of Khomeini and his Counter-Revolutionary Islamic Republic Party

It is, of course, no small matter that, 17 short months after Bani-Sadr was elected as the first president ever of Iran by no less than 75% of the population, he has been driven from office by Khomeini, whom Bani-Sadr had given shelter in Paris when the Ayatollah had been expelled from Iraq. After a very brief playing with the democratic nationalist intellectuals, by naming Bani-Sadr to be Commander-in-Chief, Khomeini raced to the most narrow theocratic, monopolistic, one-party state, with One Man Rule—his own, as he had always planned. The goons who call themselves Hezbollah (Partisans of God), vigilante-like carrying out all orders of the IRP (Islamic Republic Party), immediately surrounded the offices of the President, shouting for his death, while chanting (as they indiscriminately wielded their weapons of terror): "The only leader is Ruhollah! The only party is the Party of God!" Having rhymed the Ayatollah Khomeini's name with no less than God himself, they believe they can, unburdened by any responsibilities, proceed to create havoc in an already chaotic state of the economy—40% fall in production, 40% rise in unemployment, runaway inflation, the Kurdish insurgency, and labor and peasant unrest.

NOR IS IT ONLY A SMALL TRUTH that the demonstration for Bani-Sadr, the opposition to his ouster, the Left's wish to deepen the revolution, was attacked by an IRP-ordered demonstration, headed

On the 30th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution

Revolution and counter-revolution

by the so-called "Revolutionary Guards" who did not limit themselves to wielding knives but proceeded to shoot indiscriminately. Forty lay dead; hundreds were wounded; and just over the weekend alone 40 others were executed for supporting Bani-Sadr. Without any shame whatever, the hanging judge, Khalkhali, was shouting: "We will show them we are men of war and will dig their graves in the streets." The true martyrs, however, were the Mujahadeen, who were certainly more active and for a longer period of time in the revolutionary preparation against the Shah than was the late-comer, Beheshti, the Chief Justice, and many of his cohorts who were accusing Bani-Sadr of being "a second Shah."

Bani-Sadr isn't any "second Shah"; Khomeini is. And so is the IRP, waiting for the 81-year-old Ayatollah to die so that its leadership can take his place and complete the counter-revolution.

From the very day that Bani-Sadr had been democratically, overwhelmingly elected, the IRP began plotting to make the post of President powerless by turning to their clandestine mosque activity as well as their open work now that they already had plenty of power, to make sure that the next election—for the parliament—was

one they would win. This was followed up by many other usurpations of power to which we'll turn directly after we examine what it is that Bani-Sadr did after he received that overwhelming vote of mass confidence. Did he follow through with the mass activities, be it for democ-

racy, for workers' control of production, for extending the shoras [revolutionary councils]? Did he elicit from them how they wished to concretize, that is, to maintain power in their own hands? Did he pay attention to the innumerable publications and Left groups—all sorts of independent Marxists, Marxist-Humanists, the Tudeh, the Trotskyists? What, exactly, did he do for the Women's Liberation Movement that he supposedly favored?² What about the intense discussions and activity of deepening the revolution—not merely against the 52 second-level hostages in the American Embassy, but the genuine anti-imperialists and anti-capitalists?

THEREIN—AND NOT IN WHAT both the bourgeois, Communist and Trotskyist press now talk about: failure to build "a party structure"—lies the beginning of the end of the petty bourgeois, revolutionary intellectual, who does want more democracy, more freedom, but who has no total philosophy of liberation. Bani-Sadr couldn't have taken **organizational responsibility** for a philosophy of liberation he did not have. He, himself, was both bourgeois and totally committed to Ayatollah Khomeini. Thus, though Bani-Sadr didn't think the taking of U.S. hostages (which after all was engineered by the "followers of the Imam" advised by the IRP) was the way to fight U.S. imperialism, he bowed to what had been done behind his back, and most deliberately with a view to **appear** more militant, more Left, more anti-U.S.A. than he. Thus, while he did nothing to encourage the new decentralized forms of self-rule of the masses, the IRP did everything to build up its single-party rule. Thus he even followed Khomeini and the IRP as they moved full blast against the revolutionary elements in the University, especially its bookstalls of Marxist literature.

The IRP, on the other hand, never stopped moving in a most reactionary way to what they called "pure" Islam, as witness the most barbaric, strait-jacket type of law, the "Vengeance Act."³ Allegedly it is rooted in the *Koran*. It most assuredly is not accepted by any Arab nation or Sunni believers or, for that matter, strictly Persian Shi'ites. The act metes out punishment for all "crimes," sexual as well as political, with but two **male** witnesses needed to testify. Executions follow immediately. No wonder that the hanging judge Khalkhali was so highly rated by "the Party" that he was even permitted to indulge in the goriest of all spectacles—bringing the corpses of the U.S. soldiers from the desert where President Carter had sent them to die, for a public display.

What never stopped was the plotting about the institutionalization of what Khomeini and the IRP called the Islamic Republic, supposedly modeled on the 1906

Constitution that had emerged during the Iranian Revolution which had driven out their first Shah, established a Parliament, and written a Constitution. The present Constitution, however, not only bore no resemblance to the original Constitution, but established the so-called Office of the Religious Guide; more accurately it should have been called office of the Emperor, who not only, like Louis XIV in feudal times, had defined "L'état, c'est moi," but also claims a direct line to God. Thus, witness how Khomeini vetoes everything and anything he disagrees with, even those measures his own mullahs may have voted for, or didn't want, as they didn't want Bani-Sadr named Commander-in-Chief.

Those mullahs weren't innocents—**there are no innocents among rulers, with or without Khomeini**. They never gave up the intrigue to usurp all new institutions, beginning with the "Revolutionary Council" and control over the militant students who had been carefully educated in Iran with great hostility to the revolutionary students who had been educated abroad, and were "tainted by the West." What they actually meant was not "the West" but Marxism, which is not taught in any U.S. university and which the students learned independently.

The fifth institutionalization was the street gangs, as a vigilante order unto themselves. With the parliamentary majority in place, with the closing of all the newspapers from Bani-Sadr's to the Tudeh's *Mardom* and the Mujahadeen's *Mujahid*, the neo-fascistic party was ready to move against Bani-Sadr.

The 40 or more who were executed in a single weekend were but the beginning of the blood-letting. But can we say that there it will end? The Left against whom all the blood-letting is perpetrated will not limit its revolutionary energy to showing its critical support for Bani-Sadr. Not only is illegal work every bit as critical as open opposition, but what is needed most of all, what is imperative to work out now, what has heretofore been disregarded though it is absolutely irreplaceable, is a philosophy of revolution, a philosophy of total liberation.

As I pointed out at the start of this Letter, had the Russian revolutionaries given up in August 1917; had they turned away not only from the counter-revolution but had an attitude of "a plague on both your houses" to the reformists as well; had they not used the period for working out fully *State and Revolution* as the ground for a new revolution, there would have been no November 1917. It is true that no Lenin is visible on the Iranian horizon. But the **ideas** of revolution and liberation, as well as the masses who fought for them, are there. Let us see what can be done to transform the present reality.

(To be concluded next issue.)

Notes

¹ See my Political Philosophic Letter, Dec. 17, 1979, "What is Philosophy? What is Revolution?" which had concentrated on the *April Theses*, pointing to the fact that it was the concept of *State and Revolution* which was the ground on which Lenin reorganized the party, preparing for social revolution. What is important here, however, is the timing, between the first draft as "Marxism and the State" which was written before April, and the final draft which was written after the Month of Slander, which forced Lenin to flee to Finland. It was that final version, *State and Revolution*, which was circulated to an actual revolutionary group, and hewed out the path to November. See especially N.N. Sukhanov, *The Russian Revolution, 1917*.

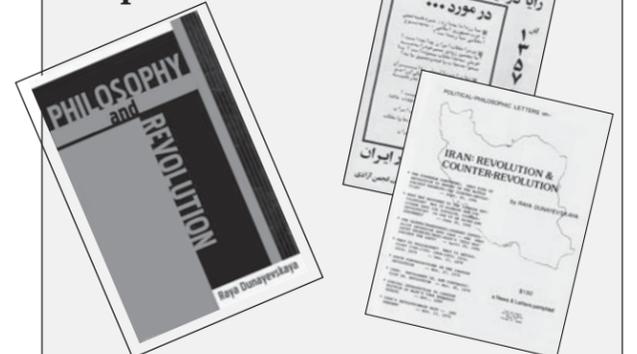
² See the Spring 1980 pamphlet, *Iranian Women, The Struggle Since the Revolution*, published by the Iranian Women's Liberation Group in London, which quotes a TV-radio interview with Bani-Sadr from which it is clear that he not only didn't disagree with a Muslim reactionary, mythical view on women now passing for "science"—"Men's level of sexual urges and needs are much higher than women's and this is because of certain sex hormones in man's body, whereas there are no sex hormones in woman's body"—but saw that his alternative group should set up its own paper, *The Muslim Woman*, that was edited and run mainly by men.

³ See "Iran's Gluttonous Revolution," by Flora Lewis, *The New York Times*, June 15, 1981.



Iranian women's revolt has been ongoing, as shown in this anti-government demonstration of thousands in Tehran in 2005 chanting, "Freedom! Freedom!" and, "Freedom, Equality, down with dictatorship!"

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Depth of crisis compels return to the Marxism of Marx

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such a barbaric deformation as a result of transient difficulties."

(B) Disarray in thought reflects capitalism's structural crisis

The disarray in bourgeois thought reflects the rulers' desperation. Ever the pragmatist, Obama is determined to try something, despite the gulf between the size of the problem and the proposed solutions. Hence the sigh of relief that the summit reached an agreement, though it did not include his desired Keynesian super-spending. Even a prizefighter for capitalism like bourgeois economist Paul Samuelson found himself quoting Joseph Schumpeter's statement during the depths of world war in 1942: "Can capitalism survive? No. I do not think it can."

What the clashes on how to address the economic meltdown reflect above all is that there is no fix: capitalism's contradictions cannot be solved as long as we live under capitalism, but capitalism is precisely what the world powers are trying to save.

Even stepping up capitalist globalization through the "Doha Round" of trade talks was included in the summit's communiqué—but the same globalization was instrumental in the unprecedented speed of the collapse's global spread, and its steep descent. Each forecast is worse than the last, with the 30-nation Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) now warning that world trade is in "free fall," expected to decline by 13.2% in 2009, and reporting, "This contraction of world trade is broad-based, and affects all regions and is the worst since comparable data exist." It projected its member economies would contract 4.3% this year, predicting the first negative global economic growth since World War II, and a sharp rise in unemployment.

Neither trade liberalization, nor fiscal stimulus, nor financial regulation, nor funding the IMF can change the fact that the rate of profit has declined below what capitalists consider necessary to keep investing in expanded production. In fact, much of the trillions being poured out of the central banks and treasuries ended up paying for marketing, underwriting of mergers, patches for balance sheets, lobbyist fees, bonuses and luxury parties and golden parachutes for executives—everywhere **but** investment in production.

STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN CAPITALISM

What capitalism has never fully recovered from is the deep structural change manifested in the global economic crisis of the mid-1970s. At the time, few Marxists were ready to agree with Raya Dunayevskaya's analysis of this structural change based on the rate of profit's decline. In retrospect, even bourgeois economists admit that the "booms" since then look more like bubbles now, combined with a restructuring which they prefer not to name plainly: the additional profits squeezed out of the world's working classes through a class war attacking wages, benefits, working and living conditions and unions—a class war of which globalization is an integral part that pits workers of all countries against each other in a race to the bottom.

Some radical economists who rejected Dunayevskaya's analysis then, are now stating that the rate of profit has never recovered, as if they had come up with it all by themselves. But at the time she had to confront Marxist epigones like Ernest Mandel who, dazzled by capitalism's ability so far to avoid another Great Depression, were awed by its "stabilizers" and saw only a recession that was already ending in 1975.⁵

Despite the widespread recognition that the totalitarian Communism—that is, state-capitalism—of Stalin's Russia or Mao's China is neither a solution to crises nor a model for the new society, and despite the calls for a humanist and not statist socialism for the 21st century, the illusion still abounds that capital can be controlled by nationalization and other forms of state planning and intervention, and that statification is the road to "socialism."

WORKERS' REVOLT VS. ALIENATED LABOR

This disarray in thought on the Left as well as among the rulers and their intellectual representatives proves the need for a total uprooting of this society in order to make new beginnings—and, to do so, the need to be rooted in Dunayevskaya's analysis of the crises of state-capitalism. We cannot chart a path to freedom based on state vs. private property. But we must break with the perversity of capitalist relations spelled out as "dead labor dominating living labor," the machine as master of the human being, "which gives rise to the fetishistic appearance of commodities and presents the relations between men as if they were mere exchange of things." It is that basic alienation of labor that must be overthrown, and that cannot be done by the state or

from the top down, but must be accomplished *through* the self-activity of masses in motion.

Nor can we allow thought to be separated from workers' revolt. Proletarian revolution is needed to put an end to capitalism's ongoing destruction of the bases of human civilization, and at the same time, "the totality of the contradictions compels a total philosophic outlook. Today's dialectics is not just philosophy, but dialectics of liberation, of self-emancipation by all forces of revolution—proletariat, Black, women, youth. The beginning and end of all revolves around labor."

Whether or not they acknowledge it, too many "Marxists" today have no confidence in the ability of masses of workers to remake society, whether that is expressed as the need to limit the movement to pragmatic piecemeal goals, to provide a blueprint to the masses, or to form a vanguard party to lead them. But where some on the Left lack confidence, the rulers are worried about what will surge up from below. The worldwide revolt of labor—as well as rulers' often-expressed fear of the revolt—is another index of the crisis.

(C) Two worlds in every country

(1) The challenge from labor in 'developing' and 'developed' lands

From the UN Secretary-General to the head of the IMF to the Prime Minister of Qatar speaking at the Arab League summit, warnings of unrest to come have been pouring out. In Obama's White House, the economic crisis is the subject of a daily secret briefing since global instability (that is, revolt) from the meltdown is considered a bigger strategic threat than al Qaeda. The really fundamental rift is not one between heads of state, but the rift within each country, the struggle between two worlds of the rulers and the ruled.

Revolt, especially by labor, has been heating up worldwide. France and its overseas colonies showed what could be in store. A general strike brought the



Collective Against Super-Exploitation demonstration in Point-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, on Jan. 30, 2009, as part of the island's General Strike.

Caribbean island of Guadeloupe to a standstill from Jan. 20 to March 5, lasting over six weeks. Workers by the thousands held demonstrations, built roadblocks, clashed with police, and surrounded a police station to secure the release of 50 arrested strikers. By March the French government, which rules the island, had granted the top 20 demands of the labor-community coalition LKP (Collective Against Super-Exploitation), including a substantial wage hike for the lowest-paid. Unemployment there was 22.7% as of 2007, with poverty 12.5%, yet prices are higher than in France.

Unrest spread to other islands ruled by France: neighboring Martinique, which also went on general strike; and Réunion, an island east of Africa, where 30,000 protested, listing 62 demands. Ivan Hoareau, a union leader there, said, "We will lean on the victory in the Antilles to satisfy the biggest number of our grievances. If we continue here, it is to help our buddies in the Antilles."⁶

Shortly after Guadeloupe's workers walked, mainland France saw a general strike, with well over one million protesters in the streets of 200 towns on Jan. 29, opposing President Sarkozy's economic policies. A larger number marched March 19 in another general strike. French workers have also pioneered the technique of "bossnapping," penning bosses into their offices until workers' demands are met. Bosses at Sony, 3M, Michelin, Caterpillar and RBS have experienced it, usually finding the demands not so unreasonable after all.⁷

(2) Back to the U.S.: Racism, homelessness, prison, homophobia on the one hand, strikes and discontent on the other

Suffering, and revolt, will certainly continue to

build. Far from the world food crisis being a thing of the past, the world's chronically hungry people now exceed one billion, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. And let us not think for one minute that hunger only stalks overseas, as hunger, homelessness, and poverty are making a big comeback in the U.S. Real unemployment (including "discouraged" workers and involuntary part-timers) is almost up to 16%, while another 2.3 million people are behind bars; some of them work, but for only pennies an hour.

Despite the draconian conditions in which prisoners are confined, there is a ferment of discontent and ideas behind the walls and bars. Many are denouncing the nature and function of the prison-industrial complex, which they recognize as an integral part of the mechanism keeping the working class down as well as supplying an ever-growing source of cheap labor to pit against "free" workers on the outside.

While the situation of Black America has worsened with the crisis, depression conditions have existed in the inner cities for many years. As reported in the March 16 *Christian Science Monitor*, the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University indicates that:

- While the number of men (all races and ethnicities) looking for full-time work has nearly doubled in the last year, employment fell much faster for Black men than for Asians, Latinos, and whites;

- "The employment rate among African-American men aged 20-24 is now just 51%, as opposed to 68% during the late 1990s. For African-American teens, it's just 14%."

- From November 2007 to February 2009, "there was no net job loss among professionals or managers.... All the job loss has been among blue-collar jobs—construction, manufacturing, and retail," where Black men have traditionally found employment.

As well as suffering higher imprisonment, unemployment and poverty, Blacks lost homes through foreclosures at a higher rate than other groups—partly due to being targeted for subprime loans, even when eligible for more affordable loans.

The sharp increase in homelessness visible everywhere has sparked new initiatives of homeless people squatting in some of the many homes made vacant by the irrationality of a system in which people exist to serve the production process rather than the other way around. It has also meant new tent cities, such as Seattle's Nickelsville, named after the mayor who is trying to drive the homeless out of Seattle. Formerly homeless activist Anitra Freeman said:

"People have been dying on the street for twenty years. The homeless women's group that I work with stands a vigil, women in black, whenever somebody homeless dies outside or by violence in King County. We started in 2000, and we've stood vigil

for 330 people since then. Eleven just this year. This has been going on for a long time, and it is getting worse."⁸

WORKERS, IMMIGRANTS, GAYS STRUGGLE FOR NEW HUMAN RELATIONS

Voices like this express a Reason not likely to heed for long Obama's calls for "patience" for his "recovery and reinvestment" plan to bring relief and even "a secure and lasting prosperity." Nor has labor been quiescent, from a 14-week strike against Vought Aircraft Industries in Nashville, Tenn., to a seven-week strike at Dover Chemical in Ohio, and from a protest by temps against pay cuts at Microsoft to vocal discontent from autoworkers facing Obama's drive to bankrupt GM to force union concessions (see "Workers tossed aside in auto bailout," p. 3). In all this, the successful factory occupation by workers at Republic Windows and Doors has not been forgotten, and shows not only a method of struggle but a link to revolts in Latin America and a challenge to the sanctity of private property.

The upcoming May Day demonstrations, reclaiming U.S. labor's revolutionary history and highlighting the struggles of immigrants, will be a test for labor. Let us not forget that Obama could not have won office without the votes of white workers, and though virulent racism is still widespread, it does mean that unity of white, Black and Latino workers is on the agenda, not just to elect someone to manage capitalism but to abolish it and to begin the reconstruction of society on new, human foundations.

At the same time, Obama's election coincided with California's Proposition 8, which aimed at relegating Gays to second-class citizenship by outlawing same-sex marriage. This anti-human drive has continued in many states, and the protests that broke out immediately after the election, by Gay and straight alike, continue, revealing how serious the masses are about "change" being not just political, but a change in human

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5. See *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crises* (News and Letters, 1978). Its essay "Today's Epigones Who Try to Truncate Marx's Capital" is to be included in a forthcoming collection of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx—see Part III of this draft thesis, pp. 6-8.

6. "Paris fails to end island protests, seen spreading," by Estelle Shirbon, Reuters, 2/13/09.

7. "Angry French workers turn to 'Bossnapping' to solve their problems," timesonline.co.uk, 4/3/09.

8. "A 21st Century Hooverville," *Democracy Now*, 3/30/09.

Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2009-2010

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relations. (See "No half-way opposition to DOMA!" p. 8.) Even a legal victory as sweeping as the Iowa Supreme Court's legalization of same-sex marriage will not still these voices.

Among these multiple profound contradictions, it is not only Marx's analysis of capitalist crisis that needs to be recovered. What he developed was a philosophy of revolution that encompassed all the dimensions of human liberation. And today the world faces many crises—economic, political, ecological—that were not even on the G20 agenda, from the war in Afghanistan to the continued threat from nuclear weapons, from genocide in Darfur to ongoing social battles in Latin America.



Workers at Republic Windows and Doors celebrate factory sit-in.

II. Political-military crises from Afghanistan to Sudan

What refuses to be put on the back burner behind the economic crisis is war—or, rather, war grows out of the same soil of a decaying capitalist system that has long since outlived its usefulness to humanity. Obama, formerly the anti-war candidate but today holding the reins of commander-in-chief, now projects keeping troops in Iraq until the end of 2011. Even then their withdrawal is no certainty.

(A) Obama's Afghanistan-Pakistan surge, with a possible Taliban deal in the wings

In Afghanistan Obama is adding 21,000 troops, comparable to the size of Bush's "surge" in Iraq. Although these wars were off the G20 agenda, Obama's trip to Europe also took him to NATO's 60th anniversary meetings and a summit with the EU, at both of which he twisted arms just to get 5,000 more non-combat European troops sent to Afghanistan. Near the NATO summit in Strasbourg, France, a peace camp was the base for vigorous protests against the Afghan war and against NATO's imperialist role.

Obama has also stepped up bombings in Pakistan, despite fears it will destabilize the country and strengthen the Islamist insurgency within. One result of the U.S. escalation in Pakistan and Afghanistan is the decision of competing Taliban factions in the two countries to unite to fight the U.S.

That will not stop either the U.S., Afghan or Pakistani government from cutting a deal with the Taliban. To the contrary, the Pakistani government already has discussions under way with the Taliban leadership, and plans to develop them into more formal talks with U.S. support. While the language used is that talks will proceed with the "moderate" Taliban, the reality is they want to negotiate with Muhammad Omar and the murderous Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Hezbi-Islami, which was directly involved in some of the most horrendous crimes against women. That includes throwing acid in unveiled women's faces, as well as, according to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), the murder of their founder, Meena. He is also notorious for slaughtering those who are not of his Pashtun ethnic group.

The latest retrograde deal is in Pakistan's Swat Valley, where the Taliban have been murdering intellectuals, secular politicians and women leaders, burning schools and terrorizing the population of 1.3 million, who just a year ago voted overwhelmingly for the secular Awami National Party. Now, the Pakistani government has allowed the imposition of Islamic law in the Swat Valley, suspending the army's drive to crush the Taliban, thereby turning it into a Taliban sanctuary. The nature of that "compromise" can now be seen on the internet in a horrifying video of a 17-year-old girl there, held down by three masked men and flogged

brutally in public, reportedly for the "crime" of refusing to marry a Taliban commander.

(B) All sides sell out women

That the U.S. is seriously considering negotiating with such creatures shows that, to the rulers, it's all about fighting al Qaeda. It's not about building democracy and certainly not about women's liberation—in fact all sides from the Pakistani government to the U.S. are willing to sell out women. If any more proof were needed, there is the new law passed in Afghanistan with President Hamid Karzai's support—until international outcry supposedly forced him to reconsider. The law legalizes rape within marriage and forbids women to leave their homes, seek work, get an education, or visit a doctor without their husband's permission.

It isn't only that women's struggle for freedom is a human rights and justice issue. Rather, women's fight for liberation is a crucial dimension of the dialectics of revolution. That was seen most clearly during the Iranian Revolution on International Women's Day, March 8, 1979, when thousands of women took to the streets in protest of Khomeini's order for women to wear the veil. While that was the impetus that brought them into the streets to chant, "At the dawn of freedom, we have no freedom," their marches, which continued for five straight days, criticized the unfinished nature of the revolution and pointed to the counter-revolution within the revolution. It pointed to how the revolution could continue and reveals even today how deep and total revolution must become if it is to uproot the present system.⁹

(C) Extremes of capitalist barbarism: nuclear weapons and genocide

But U.S. actions in the region are not determined by freedom, except insofar as it is seen as a threat to strategic interests. The same is true of other powers trying to intervene, from Iran to Russia. Both are challenging the U.S., which has been weakened by imperial misadventures and economic collapse. Having effectively partitioned Georgia, Russia has used its muscle in Central Asia to pressure tiny Kyrgyzstan into shutting down the U.S. military base there that has been vital to supplying U.S. forces in Afghanistan. At the same time, the CSTO—a military grouping of seven former USSR republics, led by Russia and including all but one of the Central Asian countries north of Afghanistan—announced the activation of its own "rapid reaction force."

Perhaps more crucial is the fact that Pakistan is a nuclear-armed country that borders another nuclear-armed country, India, with which it has had three wars. Nothing better shows that the threat of nuclear war did not disappear with the USSR. In addition to the eight nuclear-armed countries, neither Iran nor North Korea shows signs of shifting direction from the nuclear-weapons road—with the possibility of their actually using them or serving as magnets for U.S. or Israeli attacks.

The most telling measure of what is left off the agenda of all Obama's meetings on his European trip is Darfur. The U.S. angles for a direct military presence in Africa via its new military command called Africom aimed at maintaining access to crucial resources like oil and providing a base for geopolitical maneuvers. (See Black/Red View, "Sudan and oil," p. 1.)

III. The needed return to Marx is through the re-creation of his Humanism as Marxist-Humanism

The tragedy of Darfur demonstrates the fatal trap of Obama's mantra of "patience," which allows a million human lives to remain at risk while his new administration "debates" what to do. Another chapter of the crisis began March 4, when the International Criminal Court in the Hague charged Sudan's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, with seven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity stemming from the slaughter of 300,000 people in Darfur. It was the first time a sitting head of state has been indicted by the tribunal. When Bashir then expelled 13 NGOs (including Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam and CARE) for "spying for the Court," it left over a million people without adequate food, clean water and healthcare as a meningitis outbreak threatened. Obama's feeble response to the ongoing horrors, offered in a meeting with the United Nations secretary general, Ban Ki-moon, was that it was important to send a strong message "that it is not acceptable to put that many people's lives at risk." At the same time came the shocking report that none less

9. See "Iran: Unfoldment of, and Contradictions in, Revolution," by Raya Dunayevskaya, in *Marxist-Humanist Writings on the Middle East* (News and Letters, 2003).

than Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, along with a number of Arab League state leaders, dared to defend Bashir at the Arab League summit in Doha, and call for the indictment instead of President Bush and Israeli leaders, in light of U.S.-Israeli actions in Gaza. As if we have to choose one war criminal or another to support! Meanwhile, the horrors of Darfur continue unabated.

What is clearly needed to respond to such deadly and myriad global crises as those we are facing at this moment is far

from a "debate," that is, a war of words, but a battle of ideas to grasp the deep uprooting demanded to get rid of capitalism and all the crises it gives birth to. That battle of ideas involves realizing—that is, making real—that it is not a question only of destroying the old, but also of creating the new.

This is what distinguishes the struggles and discussions ongoing in Latin America. In countries like El Salvador, Ecuador, Venezuela and Bolivia (see "Latin American Notes," p. 12, and "Correa betrays labor," p. 3), that has meant a move to the left and actual battles over how to reorganize society, while across Latin America it has meant a serious battle and ferment of ideas. In Mexico the Spanish translation of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution* has just been reprinted, and her *Marxism and Freedom* is being used in high school classes and activist study groups.

In Venezuela and Bolivia the talk by leaders of a "socialism for the 21st century" reflects the pressure from below. It reflects mass rejection of capitalism and the desire for a humanist socialism that doesn't settle for varieties of state-capitalism trying to pass itself off as socialism, whether social democracy of the welfare state or totalitarian Communism. Yet the actual events raise crucial questions: Can workers' self-management be legislated or imposed from above? Can socialism co-exist with a President who declares war on workers who strike against state-owned enterprises?¹⁰ What constitutes socialism? These battles of ideas are not about abstractions but about real **revolution** and how to get a direction to a new society.

THE NEEDED RETURN TO MARX, BUT WHAT KIND OF RETURN?

If it has not been clear, ever since Obama was elected on a groundswell for "change," his trip to Europe and the Middle East removed any doubt that his "new" ideas and efforts are all about saving capitalism. At the same time, there have been significant calls to return to Marx not only from the Left but from bourgeois economists as well. There are reports of substantial

10. See "The words of President Chavez are a declaration of war against the workers, says Orlando Chirino," <http://www.laclase.info/nacionales/las-palabras-del-presidente-chavez-son-una-declaracion-de-guerra-contra-los-trabajadores>

continued on p. 7

War is reality

In January, Israeli Air Force missiles destroyed a convoy of Iranian arms in Sudan. The arms were bound for Hamas in Gaza. This incident (which destroyed 17 trucks, and killed 39 people, according to reports) shows just how close to the brink of a larger war the region is.

It was a disturbing coda to the Israeli war on Gaza, which was in progress at the time, and a measure as well of just how seriously the war of words between the Iranian and Israeli governments should be taken. With the ascent of the right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel the possibility of an explosion becomes even more serious.

It should be noted that in return for its cooperation with Iran, the Sudanese regime receives international support in regard to its genocide of the people of Darfur, which has killed hundreds of thousands of Black Sudanese Muslims. A delegation representing the Iranian government and its regional clients in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza recently travelled to Khartoum to express their support for leader Omar al-Bashir after an arrest warrant was issued for him by the International Criminal Court.

There is a parallel situation in Pakistan, where the U.S. has only increased its attacks upon Taliban personnel with Predator missiles. These strikes are carried out on Pakistani soil, and at the same time, the Taliban has stepped up its attacks against convoys carrying supplies bound for U.S. troops in Afghanistan. With the ceding of vast areas of the Northwest Frontier Provinces to the Taliban by Pakistan and the U.S. troop surge in Afghanistan, elements are in place for a larger war.

But in both these situations, it would be difficult to argue that war hasn't already begun.

—Gerry Emmett

Depth of crisis compels return to the Marxism of Marx

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new sales of *Capital* in Germany. And bourgeois and academic economists are re-discussing constant and variable capital, value and surplus value, and declining rate of profit. Yet it all ends with a narrowing of Marx to no more than a radical economist. The call for a "revolutionary change" is reduced to an abstraction, when what is needed to confront the questions of pathways to revolution and what happens after revolution, is a return to the fullness of **Marx's** Marxism, the philosophy he identified as a "new Humanism" to distinguish it from "vulgar communism," in his 1844 Economic Philosophic Manuscripts. Those Manuscripts were, at one and the same time, a profound critique of the Hegelian dialectic and a recovery of the Hegelian "negation of the negation" as the turning point for all forward movement.

These 1844 Manuscripts constituted what the founder of Marxist-Humanism, Raya Dunayevskaya, identified as "**the philosophic moment**" in the development of Marx's Marxism. In her presentation dated June 1, 1987,¹¹ Dunayevskaya clarifies it as the specific point when Marx "articulates the great merit of Hegel in discovering the 'negation of the negation' and the great demerit of this same Hegel in enveloping it in such mysticism by dealing with it as various stages of consciousness, rather than as men and women thinking." It is where, she continued, Marx "declares himself not only against capitalism and 'vulgar communism,' but proclaims his philosophy to be 'a new Humanism.'"

In our age of absolutes—of state-capitalist totalitarianism and humanity's quest for full freedom against it—Dunayevskaya, in attempting to follow through on Marx's roots in Hegel, picked up on where the 1844 Manuscripts were going, in two letters written on May 12 and May 20, 1953, that became the philosophic moment for all that followed in the development of Marxist-Humanism. It was in those 1953 Letters that her own breakthrough on Hegel's "Absolute" succeeded in "demystifying it as either God or the closed ontology," to see it as "the unity of both the movement from practice that is a form of theory and the movement from theory that is itself a form of philosophy and revolution." **This** philosophic moment is what governed all the concretizations that followed for Marxist-Humanism.

Those concretizations included the founding of a **new kind of organization**, News and Letters Committees, determined to take responsibility for the idea of Marxism for our age, with a **Constitution** that was grounded in Marx's concept of the unity of theory and practice; and a journal, **News & Letters**, established directly in that Constitution, that would make sure the

11. Though her death prevented this presentation from being delivered, it stands as the crucial final writing of her full body of Marxist-Humanist ideas. See *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism*, pp. 3-12.

voices from below would be heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of revolution. The philosophic moment governed, as well, the continued development of that philosophy through the three books that constituted a "**trilogy of revolution**," each incorporated directly into the Constitution as they reached publication: *Marxism and Freedom* in 1958, *Philosophy and Revolution* in 1973, and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* in 1983.

The objective moment we are living today—when the continued existence of capitalism is being questioned by theoreticians and workers alike—underscores the urgency of our work on publishing a book collecting some of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx that have not previously achieved a wide circulation. As part of the process of working that out, News and Letters Committees organized a series of classes in all our Locals this year on "Confronting Today's Crises: The Marxist-Humanist Return to Marx and the Revolutionary Abolition of Capitalism." In this series of discussions, we aimed to catch the methodology of Dunayevskaya's return to Marx and to discover how to uproot the old society by creating the new. We projected Marxist-Humanism as a vital contribution for today's freedom struggles, one that is not only a return to Marx's Humanism but its re-creation for a new age of state-capitalism, an age of counter-revolution coming from within revolution and of its opposite, the reach for total freedom. As a way of working out the book, the classes focused on moments of development of Marxist-Humanism, from the original philosophic moment, through each of the trilogy of revolution, to the work on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy—including how each moment meant also a new view of Marx that was only possible due to the re-creation of his philosophy.

CONFRONTING TODAY'S CRISES THROUGH THE TRILOGY OF REVOLUTION

How Dunayevskaya's 1953 philosophic moment proved to be the determinant for establishing continuity with Marx's 1844 Humanism can be seen in how it was concretized in each of the trilogy, beginning with *Marxism and Freedom*. In the context of the world stage of state-capitalism ushering in a new stage of production with Automation, and a new stage of cognition, *Marxism and Freedom* restored the philosophic foundation of Marxism in Humanism and the Hegelian dialectic, and spoke to the way our age with its total crises compels a total outlook. Our classes highlighted the original contribution Dunayevskaya made in making explicit how Marx responded to the dialectic in the movement from practice—including the workers' struggle for the eight-hour day—and in thought, by restructuring *Capital* and in the process breaking with the old concept of theory. In the context of today's situation, this was also seen in the way *Marxism and Freedom* takes up *Capital*, Volume III as it analyzed economic

crisis, which Marx refused to separate from the perverse relations of dead labor dominating living labor, or from its opposite: "human power which is its own end."

Responding to the failure of the 1960s movements, and especially of the attempt to "pick up theory *en route*," *Philosophy and Revolution* showed the dialectic of the movement from theory and its relationship to the movement from practice. Our classes focused on its central category of Absolute Negativity as New Beginning. Not just a point of departure for studying Marx and Hegel, it is an original contribution to Marxism that is needed for this age to reach freedom.

As Marx's last writings became available, the Women's Liberation Movement arose and crises wracked the globe from the mid-1970s structural economic crisis to the counter-revolution coming from within the Iranian Revolution. *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* developed the category of post-Marx Marxism as pejorative and, with it, Marx's "new moments," proving why a successful revolution required the **whole** of Marx, every moment of which spells out the need for revolution in permanence. Our classes asked what is a viable basis for socialism for the 21st century that would not repeat the historical failures of post-Marx Marxism.

TOWARD THE DIALECTICS OF ORGANIZATION AND PHILOSOPHY

In the last years of her life, confronting how the changed world of the 1980s had polluted the thought of the Left, the founder of Marxist-Humanism began an intensive study to work out the question of "Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy" that all of her developments had led her to confront as the "burning question" that remained an "untrodden path" by all except Marx.

The very last presentation she wrote on June 1, 1987, drew urgent attention to one of the last writings of Marx, his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, wherein, for the first time, "no matter how Marx kept from trying to give any blueprints for the future," he developed "a general view of where we are headed for...the day **after** we have rid ourselves of the birthmarks of capitalism, **when** a new generation can finally see all its potentiality put an end once and for all to the division between mental and manual labor."

As Marx had written it in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*: "...after labor, from a mere means of life, has itself become the prime necessity of life; after the productive forces have also increased with the all-round development of the individual...only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banner, from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs." Yet post-Marx Marxists had failed to make that the ground for organization.

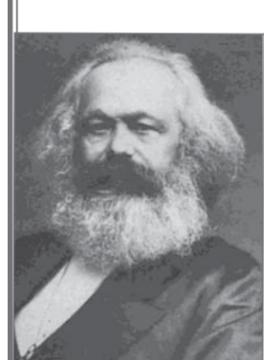
Our classes took up some of the many aspects of the work Dunayevskaya did toward Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy, beginning with how the June 1, 1987, presentation made a category of the philosophic moment as determinant, and thus gave a new vantage point for grasping the whole body of ideas of Marxist-Humanism. Inherent in the 1953 philosophic moment was the need for revolutionary organization to be animated by Marx's philosophy of revolution in permanence, to prepare for what happens after revolution in an age when even successful ones got pushed back or turned into opposite.

THE PATH TO THE POSITIVE IN THE NEGATIVE

The collection of writings which we have begun to organize has revealed the complex pathway that it took to reach the leap in cognition that the philosophic moment of 1953 represents. The first significant point on that pathway was the creation of the **theory** of state-capitalism, without which Dunayevskaya said the **philosophy** of Marxist-Humanism could not have been developed. It underlines the difference between theory and philosophy, in the way theory can be seen as what addresses the needed uprooting of the old, but philosophy is demanded for the creation of the new. Indeed, finding the positive in the negative—the negation of the negation—was the key task of philosophy to Hegel, to Marx, and to Dunayevskaya, as the turning point to all forward movement.

Another crucial part of the complex pathway to the full development of Marxist-Humanism was what could be called "living the revolution"¹² with the movement from below: the miners' strikes and Black struggles right in the midst of World War II; women as revolutionary Reason throughout history; and, after World War II, her crucial participation in the 1949-50 Coal Miners' General Strike against Automation—all at the same time that she was digging into Marx and his roots in Hegel. Most crucial of all in that activity was the question she heard the miners posing about "what kind of labor" humanity should do? Why should there be a division between mental and manual labor? The significance of that experience was incorporated

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"To understand today we must begin at the beginning, that is to say, as always, with Marx. Specifically the two periods are: the first and the last, the first being *the* philosophic moment, 1844. That laid the ground for all future development. The last being the long hard *trek and process* of development—all the Revolutions, as well as philosophic-political-economic concretizations, culminating in *Capital*. Yet the full organizational expression of all came only then, i.e., the last decade, especially Marx's 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*. Why only then?"

—Raya Dunayevskaya from
The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism

Read Dunayevskaya's exploration of Karl Marx's "philosophic moment"—his 1844 Humanist Essays, which she saw as "a determinant, even if the person who was driven to articulate the Idea of that 'moment' was very nearly unconscious as to its depth

and its ramifications...." Experience the philosophic moment of Marxist-Humanism, Dunayevskaya's breakthrough on Hegel's Absolutes: "The Idea is in demystifying the Absolute as either God or the closed ontology, as the unity I singled out, a dual movement, from theory to practice, from practice as well as from theory."

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- Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy
- Letters on Hegel's Absolutes

Special Offer - Hardcover copy of *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* plus one year's subscription to *News & Letters*, only \$12.00 (a \$15 value). See lit ad on page 12 for order information



12. Adrienne Rich's designation for Dunayevskaya's body of work. Rich, "Living the Revolution," *Women's Review of Books* (3:12), September 1986.

Depth of crisis compels return to Marx

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directly into our Constitution.¹³ Because the May 1953 philosophic moment caught what was in the air after Stalin's death, it anticipated the revolts in Eastern Europe, which did not begin until the following month, and which answered affirmatively the question: "Can humanity be free in this age of totalitarianism?"

Grasping the methodology by which Marxist-Humanism was developed as the needed philosophy of revolution for our age, in order to pursue it all the way to the new society, is what has put the development of the book we are undertaking as one of our primary tasks for the year ahead.

IV. Marxist-Humanist tasks for 2009-2010

1. Foremost among our tasks this year is our aim to complete a collection of *Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on Marx*, from the 1940s to the 1980s. It will demonstrate the totality of Marx's Marxism through the lens of Marxist-Humanism's continuity with it, and make explicit a methodology for today's revolutionaries to confront new objective-subjective developments.

2. We also plan to again make available in print the collection of *Selected Writings by Raya Dunayevskaya on the Middle East*, from the 1960s to the 1980s, first published in a pamphlet by News and Letters Committees in 2003. As we pointed out there, they introduced readers to "the limitations of the Nasser model of Arab national revolutions, the origins of Ba'athism, the transformation of Israel into a right-wing imperialist state, the carnage of the Lebanese Civil War, the contradictions of the Iranian revolution, chief among them the repression of a vibrant women's liberation movement by Khomeini and his leftist allies."

"While these texts contain some of Dunayevskaya's best political writings," we added, "their content is by no means limited to the political sphere only. Her 1979 essay 'What is Philosophy? What is Revolution?' emphasizes the need to transcend the merely political analysis into a philosophic encounter with the dialectics of revolution." This issue of *News & Letters* carries part of one of the essays from this pamphlet on page 4.

We published them, we wrote, "not to supply answers" about the Iraq war Bush had launched, or the motivations behind it, but to contribute to a re-creation of the idea of social revolution on the part of the activist-theoreticians of a new generation. As we enter the

13. See *A 1980s View: The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya (*News and Letters*, 1984).

Praising young voices

Chowchilla, Cal.—It's been a while since young Black Americans had the opportunity to speak out in regards to real issues. I applaud you for the article, "Youth speak on crisis in Oakland" in the Dec. 2008-Jan. 2009 *News & Letters*! I've found over the years that we as African-Americans and as a society as a whole no longer teach, guide, or encourage our children. We don't instill in them that they are beautiful, and that they are worthy.

We no longer take pride in our neighborhoods, churches, or schools. Our struggle, in overcoming any and every obstacle placed before us since the Atlantic Slave Trade began in 1493, has been almost silenced. We have lost some things that once were dear to us. We are no longer waiting to overcome, as in "we shall overcome."

Instead, we glamorized drug dealers, selling drugs and using our own children as mules. We have created a genocide in our communities giving our children low self-esteem, dysfunction, and no education.

So I would like to reiterate that we are majestic, strong, worthy, we have fought a good fight up to this point. We should really understand that "we have overcome" a lot. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream is now becoming a reality. And all those before us who spoke out and marched did make a difference.

However, the new realities have negative connotations. "Hood" and anything associated with the term is nothing to be proud of anymore. Where respect soared you used the term "neighbor."

Our thinking has enslaved us on a daily basis. We offer each other nothing. Our babies are making babies, not understanding that the revision of the welfare system cuts off all aid after five years. Our young fathers are multiplying their seeds. They are unemployed from a lack of education, intimidated by the thought of higher education and no longer consider morals and values.

So as we hear the young voices committed to a cause, I want to include them in this historic fight. I am certain that the Barbara Jordans, Alice Walkers, John Johnsons and the daughters of our new commander-in-chief remember that part of our History remains in Oakland. Thank you.

—Black woman prisoner who fought for a long time and is still fighting

seventh year of Bush's—now Obama's—war, the meaning of Dunayevskaya's writings on the Middle East has grown enormously.

3. Never was a Marxist-Humanist journal like *News & Letters* more needed, in which the voices from below of workers, women, youth, LGBT people and minorities are heard unseparated from the articulation of a philosophy of liberation. Our determination to continue this unique paper came to the fore this year in confronting two very different challenges. One was an attempt to stop our publication, which was defeated with the help of our readers and supporters. The other is the continuing impact of the internet, which has led to the demise of a number of print publications. We are determined to maintain *News & Letters* both as a website and as a print publication, the importance of which is attested to by workers like those at Republic Windows and Doors, who took it inside their occupied factory to share with fellow strikers; and by the discussion it arouses at anti-war protests and open forums alike. It is most of all attested to by the many prisoners who, thanks to the generosity of others, are subscribers who share each issue with their fellow inmates. While that alone increases the number of revolutionaries who are "subscribers" in that sense, there is a great need for us to focus special attention this year on increasing our paid subscriptions.

4. From our beginnings we have been sustained by the support we have received from our friends and subscribers as well as by the commitment of our members, who together give life to our Sustaining Fund every year. It is why we see Revolutionary Finances as not about "money"—important as it is to pay the rent, the postage, and the printing bills—but about human relationships.

5. We plan to mark the 2010 centenary of the birth of Raya Dunayevskaya with forums and publications drawing attention to her Marxist-Humanist body of ideas as indispensable for forging the missing link between philosophy and revolution.

6. The most urgent of our tasks this year is the culmination of all our work, in theory and practice, in projection and development of new relationships, as **membership growth** to help in carrying out our tasks on the pathway to revolution and the establishment of a new, truly human world.

At the forefront of our minds is that:

*"Only live human beings can re-create the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question only of meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and of deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of 'revolution in permanence.'"*¹⁴

—The Resident Editorial Board

14. Rosa Luxemburg, *Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, p. 195.

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

There is a long list of multinational oil corporations now holding oil drilling concessions in Sudan. Among the major ones we find the Great Nile Petroleum and Oil Corporation (GNPOC) with a concession to drill for oil in two areas. GNPOC's main partner is the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), owned by the People's Republic of China. The CNPC owns a 40% share in this project. Other major shareholders are the Malaysian state-owned Petronas, which has a 30% stake in Canada's Talisman Energy, and Sudapet, the national petroleum company of Sudan, which has a 5% stake.

The above is only a small list of corporations now benefiting from drilling for oil in Sudan. More information about their interlocking shareholdings and the selling of their stock on Wall Street can be found in Amnesty International On-Line Report (June 23, 2001).

It is also public knowledge that Khartoum's take from oil concessions is \$500 million annually. This will climb steeply, once the oil corporations have recovered their risk. This will undoubtedly tip the war in the favor of the Khartoum government. It has given that government the ability to garrison the main roads and the oil fields armed to the teeth with tanks and helicopters to fight the People's Liberation Army in Southern Sudan.

Another appalling thing about Sudan's war, is its racist dimension. This can't be ignored. On one side is Arab authoritarian power and on the other side are sub-Saharan African masses fighting for freedom.

Eric Reeves, in an article for the June issue of *The Nation*, put this race division on the table when he wrote: "The National Islamic Front looks to the Islamic and Arabic world for culture and racial identity. Moreover its view of the Nilotic and Equatorian

Death of John Karnie

At 2 p.m., Jan. 9 of this year, in the central hallway at the Wallace Pack State Prison near Navasota, Texas, John Karnei, CPO USN (Ret), TDCJ number 787551, ACLU member number 67586255, collapsed and died of apparent heart failure.

Karnei, approximate age 65, had been incarcerated at the Pack prison for about 12 years on a plea-bargained 25-year sentence. He was a minimum-custody, state-approved trusty with an unremarkable disciplinary record. His medical records showed no history of cardiovascular problems.

Healthcare for most Texas state prisoners is provided by the employees of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), whose workers operate a rudimentary clinic and infirmary at the Pack prison. The main entrance to this clinic is on the central hallway about 100 feet from where Karnei collapsed and died. Following the Jan. 5 incident, many questions have arisen concerning Karnei's death. Most of these questions remain unanswered.

Karnei collapsed and died in view of dozens of prisoners and guards, yet no one asked the clinic to send a crash cart. Karnei collapsed at a point directly across the central hallway from the office of the Building Lieutenant where Lt. Steven Martinez was on duty. The clinic, only 100 feet away, failed to send aid until after Karnei had succumbed.

The usual and customary first aid procedures were not administered. No one did anything to restore regular cardiac rhythm or respiration. No ambu bag. No CPR. No oxygen. No lidocaine. No defibrillation. No attempt to restore regular heartbeat. No attempt to restore regular respiration. Guards gathered near his lifeless body and shouted, "Get up! Get up!" Such is the warm and compassionate demeanor of guards in Texas state prisons.

Karnei was left on the floor of the central hallway until he was beyond help. Clinic staff finally arrived with a gurney, loaded on Karnei's body, and carried him away.

—Texas prisoner



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Sudan, oil and racism

peoples of the south is animated by a vicious racism. The most common term of designation in Arabic is ABID, which translates almost exactly as 'n—r.' Such attitudes do much to explain why Khartoum has actively abetted a modern slave trade, directed against racially 'African' people of the South."

The above depiction of Arabs in Sudan as racist in no way means that Arabs are inherently racist, but, like the racist European, they become racist in the process of exploitation of African labor and natural resources. What Sudan tells us today is that the inherent drive of capitalism to accumulate an infinite amount of capital, if left unchecked, can lead to genocide. In other words, racism is a manifestation of the utter subordination and the alienation of labor in the process of capital accumulation.

Sudan also tells us, as Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1973, "that political independence does not mean economic dependence has ended, but on the contrary, the ugly head of neo-imperialism then first appears. Yet equally crucial were the new divisions that arose between the leaders and the led once national independence was achieved. At the same time new divisions also arose between Arab leadership and the 'uneducated masses.' Whether we look at Zanzibar, which did succeed in overthrowing its Arab rulers, or to the southern Sudan, which had not, the need remained the same: a second revolution."

Today, oil and more oil is the "ugly head" of neo-imperialism. To get new sources of oil animates a large part of the planning and the politics of the George W. Bush administration. Overcoming that retrogression is the task for revolutionaries in this country as we confront our own unfinished revolution and new forms of exploitation and racism.

WHY A RETURN TO MARX?



It was good to read on the front page of the December-January issue of *N&L* about the classes you were inviting readers to participate in on

"Confronting Today's Crises: The Marxist-Humanist Return to Marx and the Revolutionary Abolition of Capitalism." I've been rereading some of the material from earlier classes and am looking forward to participating in the study of Raya Dunayevskaya's ideas regarding the inseparability of philosophy and revolution.

I have to take this class on—i.e., move to deepen my comprehension of the totality of Marxist-Humanism—not only for my own conscious development, but also to contend with my hardcore Afrikacentric Brethren, who steadfastly argue that Marx is no longer relevant. I've never agreed with that position, but my disagreement was only at a visceral level. Now, having come to a position of being able to examine Marx for myself, I've learned that Marx is quite relevant.

It's a tragic mistake to summarily reject Marx because he has been deemed supposedly a "racist" and think you can build socialism without having studied Marxism in totality. Surely that path would merely continue the previous failed revolutions.

Prisoner
Pelican Bay, California

OBAMA AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The interview of John Alan by Mel Vapour reflected my own thoughts on our new president. If there is going to be a change in how government works, it is up to the voters who put him in office to hold their legislators accountable.

It makes no sense to cut \$40 million from a school package and yet throw millions out to states who run meaningless and fund-draining programs in prisons that can be attended for much less by men and women in the communities. It makes no sense to "bail out the banks" when men and women are being kicked out of their homes by the same banks that are taking their tax dollars in bailout plans that do not take the average person into account except with lip service. As John Alan noted, it isn't and can't be about one man, it has to be about a movement that is sustained regardless of that one man.

Robert Taliaferro
Wisconsin

At the March 19 anti-AIG demonstration in San Francisco, one woman, dressed in neat business attire and laughing, was carrying a sandwich-board sign saying "I am shocked, SHOCKED to learn that three decades of corporate malfeasance and poor oversight has fo-

IN MEMORIAM FOR ERIC LEDELL SMITH

It was with great sorrow that we learned of the sudden death last year of Eric Ledell Smith in Harrisburg, where he had served as an associate historian at the State Museum of Pennsylvania. An expert in Black History, and the author of numerous books on African Americans in the Arts, he was working at the time of his death on a biography of Countee Cullen, a Black poet associated with the Harlem Renaissance.

Those in News and Letters Committees will remember him best as the young student at Michigan State University who found a copy of *N&L* at a campus "Black student house," sought us out in Detroit, and in 1971 became the Youth Representative to the National Editorial Board. It was the point when Raya Dunayevskaya's *Philosophy and Revolution* was being completed, and he participated in the vigorous discussions with her on it, within and without the Committees.

When, in 1970, a consciousness of language had led many Women's Liberationist activists to ask us to change our motto "The root of mankind is man," we

READERS' VIEWS

mented an angry mob."

I thought she caught some of the spirit of the march. There were about 200 participants, blue and white collar together, very noisy, very angry, full of ridicule and contempt for the corporate confidence game.

Observer
San Francisco

The Black/Red interview with John Alan was the best realistic look at Obama and the American political process in any publication in the U.S. "The prime duty of a U.S. president is to protect and preserve U.S. capitalism."

That is the name of the game. Obama's unpublished script calls for him to be a Lula II. But borrowing trillions more dollars with no intention of paying it back is not an act of capitalism; it is a political act of survival and self-preservation, which ultimately puts the creditors in the driver's seat. Obama is simply following, more or less, the George W. Bush economic/political road map, and everyone knows how and where that ended up.

R. Zani
Texas

It was just disclosed that the Office of Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) did not follow proper procedures in 97% of a sample of cases in the Enhanced Enforcement Program. This simply means that rules are ignored and death or injury can result. We know of cases in the NLRB dating back to the early 1990s that were never processed. What we seldom hear about is what happens after such negligent, if not criminal, actions. We hear nothing about the suffering of the workers and their families or the restitution they are entitled to. This is certainly part of the legacy of the Bush administration. The question is: will the Obama administration correct such flagrant violations?

Former Coal Miner
Detroit

I read that when Obama met in March in the White House with the CEOs of the most powerful financial institutions in the world, they kept offering explanations for paying high salaries to their employees, and by extension, to themselves. It was reported that Obama warned them the public wasn't buying their explanations. Then he stopped the discussion by reminding them bluntly, "My administration is the only thing between you and the pitchforks."

Activist-thinker
Chicago

There is plenty to critique Obama on, but what shouldn't get lost is what *N&L* wrote about his election in the October-

began to substitute other mottos as they were suggested and ask members and readers alike to help us choose another. Eric wrote especially passionately on "A Person is a Person Because of Others," which we described as a "Bantu proverb," in the November 1970 issue when we ran it. He wrote:

"It is amazing to see how this African proverb unites and concretizes Marxist-Humanist principles of social relationships, history and universalism in the simplest terms possible, and long before the dialectical principles were established by Hegel, humanized by Marx, and related to the revolutions of today. Every time we travel down a different road of human thought or experience, we find the same spontaneous growth and urge to reach out, a growth blossoming in our time and signaling the approach of a new world."

This brief writing speaks volumes about who and what Eric Smith was. We mourn his death and honor his memory.

Olga Domanski
Chicago

November issue—that his election pointed beyond him. That's still important. There was a lot of thinking that the goal was to elect somebody better than Bush. I'm thinking about that because many who were uncritical of him when he was running for President are now super-critical. There are newer challenges to look at now, including how workers are going to respond when the state that is running the factory takes away their benefits.

Fred
Chicago

MUMIA ABU-JAMAL UPDATE



After accepting the Writ of Certiorari submitted by Mumia Abu-Jamal's lead counsel Robert R. Ryan in early February—asserting that

African Americans were kept from sitting on the jury of Mumia's original trial solely for their race—the U.S. Supreme Court rejected it on April 6.

On Feb. 13, Mr. Ryan turned in to the Court a Brief of Opposition to the prosecution's attempt to overturn U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Yohn's order for a new jury trial to decide whether Mr. Abu-Jamal will spend the rest of his life in prison or be executed. He remains wrongfully imprisoned for the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner.

Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal
Oakland, Cal.

ISRAEL'S WAR ON GAZA

The February-March front page article, "Israel's War on Gaza Shows Need for Total Uprooting," was very true and has been the truth for a long time. If Obama does not understand Israel is *de facto* the tail that wags the American dog, he is in for a rude awakening. I have heard the "peace process" malarkey and "road to peace" con job for decades. *N&L* is exactly right: only a total uprooting of the entire situation has a chance. Just barely.

Observer
Tennessee Colony, Texas

I learned that the article in the February-March issue by Raha, "Revolution needed in Israel," was circulated to others in a group that has regular meetings here, to continue the discussion. There are many leftists who say Zionism is racism and the only position is to be for a one-state solution *vs.* a two-state solution. Anything less would mean you are a Zionist and for U.S. imperialism. It is a perspective that lets itself be defined by whatever is against U.S. imperialism, not by, as Gerry Emmett cites Raya Dunayevskaya in the Lead of that issue, "self-determination ... on truly Humanist foundations."

RK
Oakland, Cal.

GROWING STUDENT MILITANCY?

The occupation of the third floor of the Kimmel Center at New York University in February was organized by students of the Take Back NYU! Campaign. While short-lived and broken up by excessive police force, it was a breath of fresh air. The students' demands were the result of years of organizing and participating in the structures that are supposed to exist to facilitate some sort of limited control of University governance by the students. TBNYU! demanded collective bargaining for all student workers and T.A.s, full transparency of University finances, as well as international social justice programs such as giving money to the University of Gaza which was recently destroyed by the Israeli invasion.

The occupation by TBNYU! hopefully marks the beginning of a growing student militancy, which I think is even more important in a time when the ruling class will be demanding concessions from all of us in order to keep capitalist relations afloat in the face of recession and revolt.

Brown Douglas
Champaign-Urbana, Ill.

IOWA'S MESSAGE

The news that Iowa now recognizes same-sex marriage vindicates my telling people for years that it is a relatively progressive state, a really nice place in many ways, and that the red-state/blue-state thing is largely nonsense. It is a good lesson for snooty and out-of-touch West Coast and East Coast ("bi-coastal") liberals to learn. I always felt there is a reason News and Letters Committees is centered in the Midwest and why you pay attention to every part of the country. This is a fine moment for many reasons.

D. Cheneville
Northern California

URGENT APPEAL FROM IRAQI LGBT

Urgent action is needed to halt the execution of 128 prisoners on death row in Iraq. Many awaiting execution were convicted for the "crime" of homosexuality, according to Iraqi Lgbt, a UK-based organization of Iraqis supporting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in Iraq. It is reported that Iraqi authorities plan to start executing them in batches of 20, beginning in April.

Ali Hili, of Iraqi Lgbt, has requested that the UK government, human rights groups and the UN Human Rights Commission intervene quickly to prevent this tragedy from going ahead. The death penalty has been increasing at an alarming rate in Iraq since the new Iraqi regime reintroduced it in August 2004. Amnesty International has called on the Iraqi authorities to make public all information pertaining to the 128 now on death row.

For more information on how you can help, contact Iraqi Lgbt, 22 Notting Hill Gate, #111, London, W11 3JE, United Kingdom or at <http://iraqilgbtuk.blogspot.com/>

Iraqi Lgbt
London, UK

MIGRATING TO THE ECOLOGY STRUGGLE

People who want to escape from the frustrations of the class struggle often migrate to the struggle for a cleaner world. They haven't necessarily forgotten that a cleaner world is frustrated by the drive to produce and sell. They might see the recession as a good thing for the environment because we are making and selling less. All the factories on the South Side of Chicago have gone away, making it easier to breathe there. That kind of consumerist perspective is not reflected in the pages of *N&L*. Perhaps it should be. I read *N&L* fairly faithfully and I just don't see new things taken up. The paper updates me and keeps me current, but there are gaps. The editors could have an eye open wider for filling in the gaps.

Longtime supporter
Chicago

VOICES FROM WITHIN THE WALLS

Every time I receive *N&L* it brightens my day, week, the ninth year! I share it with all the others I can reach. The bad news is that it only comes six times a year. We all wish we could help make it more.

Prisoner
Susanville, Cal.

§
READERS: HAVE YOU SENT YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO HELP US KEEP NEWS & LETTERS GOING?

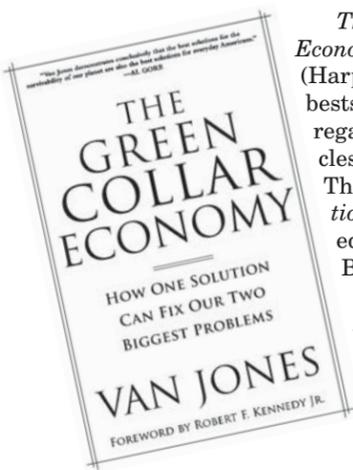


No halfway opposition to DOMA!

On March 2, some married, same-sex couples in Massachusetts filed suit against the federal government to overturn DOMA, the notorious "Defense of Marriage Act" passed by the Clinton Administration. Unfortunately, this is yet another example of the failure of the Queer movement to challenge injustice at its root.

If it is successful, the pending suit will not overturn DOMA in its entirety, a measure that even President Obama (who is against same-sex marriage, but is in favor of civil unions) supports. Rather, the suit narrowly challenges one provision of DOMA: the fact

Are capitalism and ecology compatible?



The Green Collar Economy by Van Jones (Harper-Collins, 2008) is a bestseller on ecology, well-regarded in corporate circles and by some liberals. The editors of *The Nation* have all but anointed it as being The Next Big Thing.

The Green Collar Economy begins with a description of many of today's social and environmental ills. Then, at the section on "Investment

Agenda: The Third Time's the Charm,"

the book changes course. After what seems to be the beginnings of a social critique, it reverses itself and becomes an avid defense of the present social order and its presumed ability to solve today's problems, as if all that is required is a change in technology, not in social relations. As such, it is internally inconsistent.

For all of the talk about democracy, the underlying message is one of advocating only the very wealthy and powerful as agents of change. Whatever democracy it contains could be described more as "trickle-down" participation for the rest of the people, following the orders from the elite: the right to serve as muscle-power or as force, but not as Reason.

The environmental crisis is presented as such a great emergency that it requires that the economy and government be placed on a war footing, comparable to World War II; that we no longer have time for such things as democracy and social equality—as if these were luxuries and not the heart of our social ideals. Van Jones calls for the extensive use of presidential decree to make changes. What is puzzling is that he quotes with approval Niccolo Machiavelli in support of his thesis, and in the same paragraph also describes the environmental movement as a "crusade."

In the section on "The Amistad Meets the Titanic," Van Jones insists that the slave and the slave-owner have common interests. This metaphor doesn't work, however, since on this "ship," planet Earth, it is the slave-owners who have pulled the plug. Here, Van Jones denies the reality of social class and racism.

The Green Collar Economy promotes the notion that capitalism, which created this mess, could be the instrument for cleaning it up. And then, the technical solutions proposed are speculation and not well researched. The very idea of "green" capitalism is absurd, a contradiction in terms. *The Green Collar Economy* is an example of what has been called "green-tops" thinking.

Capitalism is redefining its own interests as Necessity, using ecology as leverage, and Van Jones, perhaps unintentionally, is one of those at the forefront of that process. There is a divide in the ecological movement today between those who carry the illusion that saving the environment can be done through technological solutions determined by a wealthy elite, and on the other hand those who understand that saving our planet requires deep social change, a world free of social class and inequality. This latter is where we find hope for the future.

—D. Cheneville

that the federal government does not have to recognize same-sex marriages deemed legal by various states. What this means is that if the lawsuit is successful, same-sex couples in Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont and Connecticut (the only states where same-sex marriage is legal) will have access to the federal rights of marriage under the equal protection clause. Couples in states like New York—which recognizes same-sex marriages from other states, but doesn't allow them to be performed in-state—would presumably get the same benefits as those in Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont and Connecticut. However, same-sex couples in states where same-sex marriage is not legal will continue to face discrimination at the local, state, and federal levels. Simply put, this challenge does nothing for those of us who are the worst off in the struggle for marriage equality.

I understand that there are tactical reasons to prefer dismantling DOMA one step at a time. Same-sex couples in Massachusetts, Iowa, Vermont, Connecticut, and possibly New York stand to benefit tremendously from the current suit, assuming it's successful, and there are good reasons to think that it will be successful. But when the marriage equality movement addresses inequity at the federal level, as this suit proposes to do, there is a moral and political imperative to be sure that the benefits will accrue to all couples, not just those who are privileged enough to live in places where they're already doing a little bit better than the rest of us.

If we really believe that there's nothing our love cannot face—as many of us do—and we believe that injustice must always be faced, must always be challenged, and can never be allowed to stand unopposed, then we should **stop sacrificing principles** for tactics whenever the opportunity arises. DOMA should be opposed **in toto**.

—Amy

Political persecution



Shelly Resnick with her partner Acire Roche at the steps of the San Francisco courthouse on Feb. 23 challenging her persecution.

San Francisco—I am an activist for both Trans causes and sex workers causes. I have no trouble standing up in front of cameras saying what the police are doing is wrong. They will not come out and say they are going after me for my political activity, but it is awfully suspicious that on Nov. 5, 2008, the day after the election, after I did a lot of work on Proposition K, which would have decriminalized prostitution, SFPD claims that they received an anonymous complaint that I was sending out text messages to random numbers asking for sex. I flatly deny ever doing that. There is no evidence of any such message. It is political retaliation.

Then on Nov. 12 I got a call from someone who claimed to be from out of town, asking that I show them around. There is a tape recording of that conversation. At one point they asked if I am protected. I said I am always protected. They interpret that to mean condoms. They arrived at my apartment, I did not like the person I saw and I turned away. The person then identified himself as a police officer. They made a stink in my lobby, so I took them to my apartment where they seized my phone. The officer erased the log of my calls, specifically erasing the telephone number he called me from. He issued me a citation for solicitation.

On Jan. 7 the DA took it a step further. They claim that I took the officer to my apartment where prostitution was to occur and that I actually engaged in prostitution with him. Even the officer doesn't claim that. The DA filed charges against me for having sex with a cop, which is a waste of city resources. San Francisco has among the highest number of cops per 100,000 citizens, yet they are not prosecuting violent crimes. Just recently I was at a demonstration at the 24th and Mission BART station where a sister was kidnapped, brutally raped and murdered, her body thrown out on the street and they are not even investigating it! The message we get is that they don't care. It is easier for them to chase after girls who are trying to make some money than go after dangerous criminals who might fight back. Chasing girls is an easy beat.

—Shelly Resnick

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Vermont's legislature made same-sex marriage legal on April 7, overriding the governor's veto. Vermont was the first state to create civil unions for Gay and Lesbian couples. The House of New Hampshire passed a bill legalizing same-sex marriage in late March. It remains to be seen if it will pass the Senate.

* * *

"Harsh Realities: The Experiences of Transgender Youth in Our Nation's Schools" finds that Transgender students experience more abuse than their Bisexual, Lesbian and Gay peers. Ninety percent of Transgender students are victims of verbal abuse and more than 50% of physical abuse because of gender expression. This first comprehensive study on Transgender students also found that teachers and school administration frequently contribute to the harassment or don't intervene when Transgender students are being harassed. While harassment and abuse explain why Transgender students have lower grade point averages and school attendance, hope and courage explain why they are also more likely than Gay and Lesbian students to speak out about their harassment and GLBT issues.

* * *

Charity group ActionAid's "Hate Crimes" reports that Lesbians are increasingly being raped. Because South Africa's criminal justice system does not acknowledge hate crimes based on sexual orientation, it is believed that the number of rapes to "cure" Lesbians is higher than the number reported.

* * *

Prominent Lambda Istanbul Transgender activist Ebru Soykau was murdered in March. The man, from whom Ms. Soykau had asked for police protection after he beat and threatened to kill her, is being held. Only a few weeks before her murder, police detained the accused man for only two hours, which is **better** protection than most Transgender people get from Turkish authorities. In 2007 Lambda was told by Istanbul's then deputy governor that there were no records of several reports of violence against Transgender people.

* * *

Nigerian Lesbians and Gays courageously testified publicly against pending legislation that will imprison same-sex couples married anywhere and returning to Nigeria or anyone married to a same-sex partner traveling to Nigeria. In a country notorious for oppressing LGBT people, Rashidi Williams, 23, of Queer Alliance of Nigeria, testified at the National Assembly public hearings that, "This bill is not necessary, we see no reason why people should be criminalized." If passed, those convicted could spend as much as three years in prison.

—Information from 365Gay.com

* * *

Public universities and LGBT rights activists can keep anti-bias policies regarding sexual orientation, according to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. The University of California's Hastings College of Law's refusal to recognize a branch of the Christian Legal Society, which bans membership to Gays and Lesbians, was upheld.

* * *

Debra Taylor resigned her teaching job at Grandfield High School in Oklahoma after being told to stop her students' project to film their own clips about the film *The Laramie Project*, based on the play of the same name that tells of the aftermath of Matthew Shepard's brutal murder. Her students rallied in her defense, held a funeral for the cancelled project, enclosed notes of their reflections into helium balloons which they released into the air.

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Nationwide protests against endless wars



Thousands marched through San Francisco calling for an end to the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Gaza on the sixth anniversary of the Iraq war.

Los Angeles—On the sixth anniversary of George W. Bush's U.S. war on Iraq, up to 4,000 demonstrated in Hollywood against that war as well as the war in Afghanistan and Israel's war on Gaza (see Feb.-Mar. *News & Letters*). The protesters were of diverse race and age and in high spirits. Protesters included Veterans for Peace, Bus Riders Union, News and Letters Committees, Socialist Workers, Screen Actors Guild members, Latino Immigrants, and many other groups and individuals.

A few of the many signs read: "Bring the Troops Home Now," "Close the School of the Americas," "Occupation Is a Crime," "We Demand Jobs," "Bail Out

Black Women: 'Save Public Education!'

New York—Black women spoke out on every aspect of public education from kindergarten through graduate school, addressing battles for community control, the history of public education, the need for better quality, and what education in a socialist society might look like. Over 60 people packed the hall, drawn to "The Fight to Save Public Education: Black Women Speak Out," sponsored by Radical Women.

Dr. Norma Abdulah, who was a founder of New York City's United Federation of Teachers in 1967, told us, "At first teachers opposed the union; they saw themselves as 'professionals.' But they realized that the National Education Association (NEA) was doing nothing, and they were being treated as blue collar workers. We had 40 children in a class and no prep periods."

Panelists and participants alike called for deep rethinking—one young woman student said we need something like the French revolution today. A man from Africa and Haiti commented that social services in this country are so fragmented that people are worn down before they get what they need. "We need to restructure the container," he concluded. Dr. Abdulah affirmed, "Public schools are so important: women, free slaves and socialists fought for public education; today we fight to keep it alive ... Socialism means the world is run to meet working-class needs and those of all excluded people, and arrives at its decisions democratically. We demand free pre-K-post-graduate education for all!"

Dr. Andrea Nicola McLaughlin, whose talk had described education as the primary battleground in African-American freedom struggles, related the founding of Medgar Evers College and Hostos College in New York's City University system to the 1960s Civil Rights Movement.

Sherrie M, a college student and mother of three more, said that now that the president of CUNY received a raise, he is cutting back and raising tuition. "The cuts will ricochet to our children and grandchildren. How do we organize students? There are no politicians on our side." Dr. Abdulah called for us to "Organize—labor can and must play an important role. Today's economic crisis presents greater challenges... We need to stop the cutbacks and we need full education programs, not just enough to pass tests. We need a united front: what would it take to bring together teachers and paraprofessionals, school staff and parents, and students and teachers? We need to demand no layoffs and no tuition hikes and demand that our union be more radical. Don't let students and teachers pay for the crisis created by bankers and bosses; bring all of humanity one step closer to socialism."

I agree that we need to bring together parents, teachers, paraprofessionals and students, but I think we also need to clarify the principles underlying this kind of unity, or we will not be able to achieve it. Ultimately, what would education itself, in a truly human society, look like? How can we identify quality teaching and learning? What working and learning conditions make that possible?

—Susan Van Gelder

People, Not the Banks," and "Big Oil, Record Profits. Iraq, Afghanistan, Record Deaths."

A flyer by the "L.A. Nuclear Disarmament Coalition" stated that "one bomb can destroy Los Angeles, Mexico City, or Washington, D.C.," and that "ten nuclear bombs is enough to wipe out all of civilization as we know it." Some listed web sites include global-assembly.net, International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (ippnw.org), and nuclearweaponsfree.org.

One demonstrator expressed grave concern about President Barack Obama's reliance on the Pentagon to formulate policies on Afghanistan/Pakistan. The initial request for 17,000 additional troops was followed by a request weeks later for 4,000 "advisors," and during the G20 Summit in London, an additional request by the military for 10,000 more troops. The War Resisters League stated that U.S. military expenditure for 2009 will be 54% of federal expenditure, or \$1.449 trillion.

It will take a mass movement of workers, women, youth, Blacks and minorities globally to alter war production, as well as the practice of bailing out banks and the super-rich while more and more workers become unemployed and homeless. Capitalism must be abolished and replaced with a non-value-producing society, eliminating the drive to constantly expand production of ever more high-tech weapons and its resulting massive deaths, suffering and destruction with the threat of nuclear annihilation of all life.

—Basho

Memphis—On March 21, the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center (MSPJ) sponsored its annual anti-war rally and march in front of the Civil Rights Museum. About 80 people marched, which is fewer than in previous years, but the low turnout seemed to be due to the rain earlier in the day. This year, the protest was titled "Keeping the Promise: March to End the War on the Poor," to remember the march planned by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., which aimed to make the connection between the violence of war and that of social oppression. At the rally, speakers from several local organizations spoke on these issues.

Veterans for Peace and Iraq Veterans Against the War spoke on ending the war. The Executive Director of WIN spoke on economic justice, and its Workers Center Organizer spoke on immigration. A speaker from the Tennessee Health Care Campaign spoke on healthcare

Brecht Forum panel: Herbert Marcuse for today

New York—About 75 people attended an "Author Meets Critic" book party to celebrate the publication of Arnold Farr's *Critical Theory and Democratic Vision, Herbert Marcuse and Recent Liberation Philosophies*. The event was held March 4 at Brecht Forum in New York. Speakers included Farr, Peter Marcuse, Steven Eric Bronner, and Russell Rockwell.

Farr emphasized that his work was an attempt to develop the liberating potential of philosophy and, as such, was a method to reach liberation. Theology, for example, when read from a place of privilege, is different than when read by poor and oppressed people. There are two strands in the same text: One is that of control and domination of others, the other provides emancipatory tools. Farr held that movements in philosophy (such as in Marcuse's work) originate from the cry of the oppressed, and that his book attempts to put Marcuse in dialogue with today's liberation movements. In doing so, his work situates Marcuse historically. It takes up *Eros and Civilization* and how, for example, Marcuse's theories speak to recent feminist theories of the body and consciousness.

Bronner emphasized that, contrary to some interpretations, Marcuse's work, such as *One-Dimensional Man*, actually brought class back into focus as a key to understanding contemporary society. Marcuse viewed the activity of marginalized groups in U.S. society, such as Blacks, the unemployed, and others as potentially providing the spark for radical social transformations traditionally associated with class struggles. Important for understanding Marcuse was the distinction he drew between "utopia" and "utopian." Marcuse always retained a vision of the realization of a liberated society, but he consistently eschewed "utopianism" as a form of thought.

Peter Marcuse, Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning at Columbia University, discussed urban activists around city-planning, as trying to make things better; but they are unable to do it. He noted that the Marxism that underlay his father's work consistently held that

reform, and a speaker from the MSPJ spoke on progressive criminal justice reform. Marchers carried signs through downtown Memphis reminding President Obama to keep his campaign promises of ending the war and supporting social justice. During the march, demonstrators chanted, "Bail out the people, not the rich" and chanted demands for jobs and healthcare.

—Another marcher for peace

Chicago—Demonstrators marched two miles through the Pilsen neighborhood of Chicago on March 14, protesting the continuation of the six-year-long war in Iraq, even more endless military campaigns in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and U.S. support for Israel's bloodletting in Gaza.

The 600 or more marchers included not just veterans of past anti-war marches, but youth and a significant number of Latinos. Still, the number of protesters this year was but a fraction of those who took to the streets when Bush first invaded Iraq in 2003, even as popular support for pursuing the war has continued to evaporate. Obama may be getting credit simply for not being Bush, but his promise to pull out of Iraq eventually recalls Nixon's secret plan to end the war in Viet-



Chicago marchers in Pilsen against the war and for immigrant rights.

nam.

The Obama administration will no longer prohibit coverage of funerals of military personnel returning home in coffins from Iraq and Afghanistan. Bush's blackout rule was rooted in the fear that supporters of the war could become opponents of war policy as casualties mounted—after all, heavy Soviet losses in Afghanistan contributed to the fall of Communist Party rule. Bush's fears might become Obama's as he aggressively extends the military reach of the U.S.

—Protester

it's a question of changing the system. Housing should be de-commodified—people should not be allowed to buy and sell houses for profit—housing should only be a use-value. People ask "what kind of utopia?" It is the wrong question; in negation of the negation, the second negation is the idea of what should exist, a positive theory and practice link.

Rockwell said he became acquainted with Marcuse's work, especially on Hegel's *Science of Logic*, through the Marxist-Humanist philosopher, Raya Dunayevskaya. His interest developed through work on the volume of the complete correspondence between Dunayevskaya and Marcuse and Dunayevskaya and Fromm during the years 1954-1978, which he said will be published in the not too distant future.

Rockwell stressed Marcuse's uniqueness—the continuity he represented with the Russian Revolution through his participation (along with Rosa Luxemburg, who hoped to spread the revolution throughout Europe) in the 1919 German Spartacist Uprising, during which he joined the revolutionary soldiers' councils. Marcuse also represented a continuity with Marx—in the sense that as early as 1932 he was among the first to analyze Marx's 1844 *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts*, the humanist essays, which had been buried in the archives since Marx's death one half-century earlier. Rockwell also engaged an important theme in Farr's book—Marcuse's interpretations of Hegel in his two Hegel books—*Hegel's Ontology and the Theory of Historicity*, and *Reason and Revolution*, both written in the decade from 1932-1941. Rockwell argued that as special as the two works were in analyzing Hegel's Theoretical and Practical Ideas from the *Science of Logic*, neither brought to the fore Hegel's crucial "conclusion": the Practical Idea makes the transition (to a unity of theory and practice) **through itself**. Rockwell tied this to important themes in Farr's book, especially their concern with Marcuse's (and Farr's) commitment to the self-development of various subjects of social change.

—Russell Rockwell

WORLD VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Thirty years after the fall of the genocidal Khmer Rouge regime, joint UN/Cambodian trials of a few Khmer Rouge leaders have finally begun in Phnom Penh. The scope is limited, with chief torturer Duch (Kaing Guek Eav) currently facing charges. He was in

Congo and militias

The Congolese and Rwandan army offensive against Eastern Congo-based Rwandan Hutu militias has had a degree of success. The UN estimates that up to 300,000 Congo refugees have been able to return to their village homes. However, it is also reported that when the army forces have withdrawn, the militias have returned to take revenge upon some villages.

The UN "peacekeepers," the largest such force in the world, have done little to stop the looting, murders and rapes committed in Eastern Congo's war. Rape is so common that the UN Development Program has rated Congo as the world's worst country to be a woman.

It is made worse by the stigma that is carried by a rape victim. She is considered "dirtied," shamed, and her husband or father is expected to disown her in order to regain his "respect" in the traditional community. The hundreds of thousands of women who have suffered all this receive little attention or aid from outside.

Local women's groups have been more serious about responding. For example, at great personal risk, activists from the Women's Media Association in Bukavu (AFEM) have travelled to villages where women have been subjected to rape and other atrocities. They have recorded interviews with survivors and got them aired on local radio to help expose the problem and change attitudes.

As AFEM's Franchou Namegabe said recently, "In African traditions, it is difficult to talk about sex on the radio. It was a shock. A scandal. But for them, it was a first step to heal their wounds" (*Women's eNews*).

China workers' revolt



The global meltdown has curbed China's explosive economic growth, plummeting from 11.7% for 2007 to 6.8% for the last quarter of 2008 and projected to fall nearer 5% for the first quarter of 2009. Sounds healthier than the actual "negative growth" worldwide, but for the world's workshop this has meant shuttered factories and ballooning unemployment, over 2.7 million newly unemployed just in the export-oriented new industrial cities near Hong Kong alone.

Workers' resistance to these job losses has heated up confrontations with government forces. Police stopped a planned march of textile workers from their closed factory in Baoding to Beijing, and have repeatedly intervened against other demonstrations by workers cut loose from export industry.

China is counting on millions of the newly unemployed migrant work force, with no legal right to remain in the cities they had worked in, returning to rural poverty in the interior rather than joining in protests. But even in the boom years many of the nearly 100,000 strikes and demonstrations annually have taken place in rural areas whose exploitation has helped feed the economic engine.

With the clout that two trillion dollars in foreign currency reserves gives it, China has pressed for a more dominant voice in currency policy, but it is still running scared: its economic stimulus package is an attempt to quickly return to at least 8% growth, below which unemployment will continue to rise, as would unrest.

Timing could not have been worse for the Hu Jintao regime, as rising unemployment coincides with the 20th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre. Important anniversaries in 1989 of the founding of the Communist Party of China and of the May Fourth Movement helped extend marches and occupations from April 15 until the bloody suppression June 4, 1989. Now anyone publicly raising the massacre, professor or ex-soldier or mother of one killed on Tiananmen Square, is detained or under police scrutiny.

—Bob McGuire

Khmer Rouge trials after 30 years

charge of S-21 prison, where more than 14,000 alleged "enemies of the revolution" were murdered. Others facing trial are the regime's ex-president Khieu Samphan; Ieng Sary, its foreign minister, and his wife; and "Brother Number Two" Nuon Chea.

"Brother Number One" Pol Pot, the Khmer Rouge leader, died in captivity in 1998 after factional fighting within the group. They had become isolated after the U.S. and China withdrew support for their guerrilla war, and the royalists they had allied with deserted them to make a deal with the current government.

Cambodia's premier, Hun Sen, has warned that any wider trials could reignite civil war in the country. Hun Sen himself was a Khmer Rouge commander who defected to Vietnam in 1977, two years before Vietnamese forces overthrew Pol Pot's regime. They then installed a new government made up largely of mid-level Khmer Rouge cadres. Hun Sen became premier in 1985.

Anlong Veng in northern Cambodia was the last area the Khmer Rouge retained control of in 1998, and they are still in charge of the government there today. Some run profitable businesses and own large proper-

ties. Historian David Chandler described the deal they made with the government: "They have to behave to a certain extent but Hun Sen is not going to mess with them too much. I don't think these are dedicated left-wing thinkers or performers. I think they abandoned that and got into the money and the patronage situation and are perfectly happy."

Hun Sen stated recently, "If as many as 20 Khmer Rouge are indicted to stand trial and war returns to Cambodia, who will be responsible for that?" Many Cambodian human rights activists disagree, holding that the estimated 1.7 million victims of Khmer Rouge brutality are deserving of justice. Until recently, the Cambodian government has not even treated them as deserving of memory—the history of the Khmer Rouge genocide is not taught in the state schools.

The population of Cambodia today includes a majority of young people who did not experience the Khmer Rouge brutalities, but have grown up hearing about them at home, like a dark folklore. Hun Sen may not want to take any responsibility for the deaths of 1.7 million victims, but neither should he be able to bury them a second time for his own "good cause."

Latin American Notes

Mexico—Since the beginning of Felipe Calderon's presidency, there has been a sharp escalation of the war on drug cartels centering on Calderon's unprecedented decision to involve tens of thousands of Mexican army troops in the fight. A military occupation of the border states and border cities like Ciudad Juarez has taken place. In response the narco-gangs have unleashed a reign of violence. Wars between narco-gangs involving execution-style murders, beheadings, kidnappings have erupted, with a dozen and more deaths every night. Attacks using sophisticated high-power weapons on police stations and police patrols as well as army troops are daily occurrences.

However, it is not simply a vicious shoot-out between rival drug gangs, and a war with the police and the military. Over many years the drug cartels have been smuggling drugs and bribing policemen, police chiefs, politicians and many others. The U.S. is strongly involved as well, not alone as the consumer of illegal drugs, but as the principal supplier of the high-powered, sophisticated weapons that the cartels use to out-gun the police and military. An estimated 90% of captured weapons have their origin in the gun shops and weapon suppliers in the U.S.

Furthermore, a new report from a number of human rights organizations accuse the Mexican military of illegal searches, arrests without cause, rape, sexual abuse and torture. Mexico's National Human Rights Commission reported 1,230 complaints last year versus 182 in 2006.

The question of militarization is not alone a question of one side of the border. The governor of Texas is calling for 1,000 National Guard troops to be sent to the border areas of his state. This, in addition to the huge increase in border patrol agents that were deployed under the Bush administration.

One of the most alarming results of the Bush

years was a policy that conflated the smuggling of illegal drugs across the border with the movement of undocumented workers north from Mexico and the countries of Central America. Thousands of border agents as well as immigrant agents inside the U.S. have spent their time pursuing non-citizens whose only crime is wanting to work. Meanwhile the drug wars spin out of control. Whether the Obama administration will separate drugs and undocumented workers, and push for a comprehensive immigration reform remains to be seen.

* * *

El Salvador—In a remarkable victory, the candidate backed by the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), Mauricio Funes, won the presidency of El Salvador. The defeat of the extreme right Nationalist Republican Alliance party (ARENA), after more than two decades of rule, marks a turning point. The FMLN had participated in a civil war in the 1980s and 1990s—a period marked by tens of thousands of murders and disappearances of Salvadoran citizens, including massacres of dozens at a time. The Salvadoran military and its paramilitary support groups were primarily responsible. After the peace accords were finally signed, ARENA-backed candidates continued in power. But their decades of rule proved a dead-end. Spiraling food prices and a runaway murder rate characterize El Salvador at the present moment.

While the election of an FMLN-backed candidate does mark a new beginning, it represents a difficult challenge. El Salvador's impoverishment is daunting, and fully 25% of its population is in exile, the majority in the U.S. Reestablishing local food production and creating a nationalized healthcare system are two priorities that Funes hopes to implement. El Salvador has now joined the movement to the left of many Latin American countries.

—Eugene Walker

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