

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end" —Karl Marx

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WORKSHOPTALKS

Dollars outshout healthcare workers

by Htun Lin

Obama recently singled out Kaiser HMO as a model for low-cost efficient healthcare, citing the care his grandmother got in Hawaii. Our CEO sent a memo congratulating us Kaiser employees. How did they show their appreciation? We were immediately hit with notices of impending layoffs to achieve more cost control.

This is supposedly due to the new economic environment and anticipated "revenue losses." Kaiser says companies it serves are closing and reducing our membership. New state mandates for cost controls are expected with plans to extend coverage. With the projected change coming from national healthcare reform, Kaiser is worried about the loss of windfall profits coming from years of gouging seniors through "Senior Advantage" plans. But Kaiser is now poised to expand by leaps and bounds. The real motivation behind the layoff scare is to extract further concessions from us.

The debates taking place in the media over healthcare reform need a reality check from workers who actually provide the care. The truth is that every ounce of quality care that Kaiser manages to deliver is a result of prolonged struggles by frontline healthcare providers. Care is delivered in spite of years of reducing frontline staff and elimination of hospital beds, even shutting down whole wards. Kaiser management at each stage was on the other side of battle lines drawn first by nurses in their struggle for quality care.

Kaiser managers were helped in maneuvering
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BLACK/REVIEW

'Academic lynchings' at Harvard

by John Alan

Editor's note: As John Alan is ill, we are reprinting his column from December 1974 which brings to mind the recent arrest of Harvard Professor Henry Louis Gates in his own home.

At the 59th Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of Afro-American Life and History, Dr. Ewart Guinier, chairman of Harvard University's Afro-American Studies Department, accused Harvard of "academic lynching of Black students."

Dr. Guinier's blast against this venerable institution stems from his experiences with President Derek Bok and Dean Henry Rosovsky. Dr. Guinier said: "President Bok and his underlings have not the slightest compunction about perverting truth and twisting reason and sequestering behavior, in order to maintain the oppression of Black people...[and] in fact, the treatment Blacks receive at Harvard today parallels their treatment in American life...[It] is no more elevated than that of the conservative majority of the U.S. Supreme Court, the current occupant of the White House, or the local police force."

CAMBRIDGE AND SOUTH BOSTON

Whether Dr. Guinier intended it or not, he has reduced the distance from South Boston and Cambridge to absolutely nothing. In South Boston, certain white people, given the moral sanction of President Gerald Ford, would prevent Black children from receiving
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Unemployment, suffering and revolt spawned by recession

by Russell Rockwell

As the Great Recession—already the longest downturn since World War II—soon enters its third

year, U.S. workers are facing rapidly changing circumstances, few of them for the good. With the hemorrhaging of jobs, unemployment has resulted in families losing homes due to vanishing income and increasing home foreclosures.

The recent budget deal struck in California has exposed millions of youth to an eroding educational system, and left the entire population on their own to survive.

This may represent a new stage of capitalist crisis and demand new ways to understand and overcome it. Equally important, some attention has also been di-



Some 80 activists gathered at the Elihu Harris State Building in downtown Oakland, Calif. July 30 to protest California budget cuts that will hurt all but the wealthy.

rected to the question of what will happen after—and not only after the Great Recession in terms of the new economic and social landscape that may emerge.

The current crisis has unfolded as the domination of things over people. Millions of Americans are living and perceiving it as a crisis of capitalism and capitalism as the essence of an increasingly dehumanized society that needs to be overcome.

While several economic reports had indicated that the worst of the Great Recession, begun in fall 2007, may have passed, the June 2009 U.S. Department of Labor unemployment report threw cold water in the faces of many pundits and policy-makers in the Obama Administration. Some had recently spoken optimistically of the appearance of economic "green shoots." Over the prior three months or so, in-

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Obama's Afghanistan surge

EDITORIAL

Having begun his run for president of the U.S. as an anti-war candidate, Obama now holds the reins of commander-in-chief. Far from pulling the imperialist U.S. behemoth away from war and militarism, he is the one who is being pulled into repeating Bush's Iraq "surge," this time in Afghanistan. U.S. combat troops will climb this year to 68,000, double the level at the time of Bush's departure—and now comes word that top brass are angling for 12,000 to 27,000 more. Troop deaths have climbed to the greatest death count by far since the war began: 43 U.S. troops and 33 other coalition troops in July 2009.

What has the war brought to Afghan people, besides the deaths of from 8,000 to 30,000 civilians? Not only do Afghans live at daily risk of attacks from coalition troops or the Taliban, but 62% are in debt and ten million in severe poverty. Of Afghan children between 7 and 14 years old, nearly one in four labor for scant pay, most of them for long hours under hazardous conditions. About 60% of girls are married off when only 9 to 15 years old.

AFGHAN WOMEN'S FREEDOM DISREGARDED

In July Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai signed a revised law governing Shi'a women, little changed from the law passed in March legalizing rape within marriage and forbidding women to leave their homes, seek work, get an education, or visit a doctor without their husband's permission (see "Afghan women as force and Reason," p. 2). Is this what U.S. "liberation" of Afghanistan means? Throwing aside Bush's pretense of concern for democracy, human rights or women's status, Obama has repeatedly declared that his "bottom line" is fighting al-Qaeda—period.

Obama has continued Bush's 2008 surge of killings by drone aircraft in Pakistan—with the aid of Pakistan's government—stirring outrage and protests in Lahore and Karachi. The two countries' rulers are allies in a war that has slaughtered an unknown number of civilians, including the June 23 drone attack on a funeral procession, which killed 50 to 80 people.

The conflict in Pakistan's Swat Valley, fought on the backs of working people, reveals the nature of the "global war on terrorism"—which remains the same even if the administration changes the war's name. Like much of Pakistan, Swat has long been controlled by a small elite of wealthy landlords, who exploited the labor of landless peasants. The Taliban appealed to peasants for support in driving the ruling families out, winning favor by taking a smaller share of the peasants' labor than the landlords took.

The support waned when it became clear that the Tal-

iban were another brutal set of oppressors, particularly after a video circulated showing a 17-year-old girl in the Swat Valley, held down by three masked men for a public flogging. At that very time the Pakistani government had inaugurated a deal to impose Islamic law and give the Taliban free rein in Swat. The deal fell apart after the Taliban used Swat as a base for expanding into neighboring regions.

The full force of Pakistan's army came down on the valley, and two million people were forced from their homes. Now victory has been declared, and they are being ordered to return whether they want to or not, with fighting still going on, and many homes and schools in ruins or occupied by the army. What the army aims to re-establish above all is the order of hard labor and squalid living conditions for the vast majority.

The same dynamic is at work in Obama's continuation of the Bush Administration's policies not only on war but on repression, including at home. Secret rendition of prisoners to torture centers in other countries continues. Detention without charge continues. The Obama administration has tried to keep Mohammed Jawad, captured in Afghanistan as a child, behind bars despite the torture-extracted "evidence" against him being thrown out by the judge. And the administration is defending in court the Bush policy of warrantless wiretapping of millions of U.S. citizens.

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

THE OPPOSITE OF WAR IS REVOLUTION

There is no sharp boundary between conflicts among states—including warlords and would-be state powers organized as terrorist groups—and the wars waged by rulers against their own people. The truly decisive division is that between the rulers and the ruled in each country. The only genuine opposition to war comes from the revolt and resistance of the people, whether that be the uprising in Iran sparked by the stolen election or the mass resistance against the coup in Honduras. As News and Letters Committees has asked since our founding, "Are you with the people struggling for a totally new way of life, or with capitalism fighting to perpetuate itself?"

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

Afghan women as force & Reason

WOMAN AS REASON

by Terry Moon

Never has the situation been worse for women in Afghanistan. Any woman who holds public office, who has a non-traditional job or who fights for women's rights may well be murdered—many already have been. Rape, trafficking, honor killings, and suicides are all at unprecedented levels. Girls going to school are poisoned, have acid thrown in their faces, and their schools are burned to the ground. At the same time as Afghan women's security, safety, freedom and very lives are being destroyed, their struggle for freedom is seen by those in power as a diversion that threatens Afghanistan's shaky ruling coalition and delays stability.

As the U.S. ratchets up the war there (see Editorial, p. 1) what we are for is the deepest solidarity that comprehends that Afghan women embody the revolutionary force and Reason necessary to transform their society into one that meets their needs, one that is based on new human relations.

SOME FEMINIST SQUABBLES

Given the need for this level of solidarity, it is disturbing that Sonali Kolhatkar, founder and host of "Up-rising Radio," a progressive program that takes up global issues often concentrating on women's struggles, and Mariam Rawi, a writer and member of the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, have launched on the website AlterNet an attack on the Feminist Majority Foundation (FMF), dedicated to women's equality, reproductive health, and non-violence.

Kolhatkar and Rawi attack the FMF for calling for the expansion of peacekeeping forces in Afghanistan. They use that information

to show that U.S. intervention in Afghanistan has not helped women, but the exact opposite. The FMF does not deny the charge, but protests that if the U.S. pulls out, things will only get worse for women and girls in Afghanistan, and they document their considerable history of helping Afghan women, including sounding the alarm about the deadly Taliban as far back as 1996.

Both sides claim their stances come from Afghan women—Eleanor Smeal and Helen Cho, writing for FMF, base themselves on the director of the Afghan Independent Commission on Human Rights, Dr. Sima Samar. Kolhatkar and Rawi quote one sentence from Malalai Joya, who first spoke out at the Loya Jirga in 2004 and has been bravely speaking out ever since.

While I certainly agree with Kolhatkar and Rawi, that the sooner the U.S. military leaves Afghanistan the better, their argument is troublesome in several ways. First, in a patronizing statement they make a



Over 300 Afghan women protested against a discriminating new law for Shiite Muslim women. The protest on April 15 was attacked by hundreds of stone throwing Afghan men. Among other outrages, the law bans women from seeking work, getting an education, or making a doctor's appointment without their husband's permission.

false dichotomy between sexist culture, what they call "patriarchy," and the war: "Sadly, as horrifying as the status of women in Afghanistan may sound to those of us who live in the West, the biggest problems faced by Afghan women are not related to patriarchy. Their biggest problem is war." Rather than counterpose these horrors—which means that first you must get rid of the U.S. and then you can fight male chauvinism—it is important to see that Afghan women fight both at once. That is because war always exacerbates the sexism inherent in all cultures, including in Afghan culture.

Second, they treat an entire women's liberation movement—one that exists in Afghanistan as well as the U.S.—as if it can be characterized by one, albeit one important, organization: "That is why it was so discouraging to learn that the Feminist Majority Foundation has lent its good name—and the good name of feminism in general—to advocate for further troop escalation and war." Yet there are many feminist organizations who disagree with the FMF keep-U.S.-troops-in-Afghanistan stance.

Third, their solution is not just a U.S. withdrawal, but a confusing, unexplained "negotiated settlement": "The first step toward improving people's lives is a negotiated settlement to end the war." Who is to negotiate with whom? The U.S. with the U.S.-puppet Northern Alliance warlords, whose previous reign was so brutal that the Afghan people first welcomed the Taliban as a better alternative? The inhuman Taliban with the equally horrible Northern Alliance? All three? Exactly how is that a solution? Or is it that what is most important to Kolhatkar and Rawi is that "the first step" is for the U.S. to get out?

While Afghan women fight and suffer, now is not the time for the old left cant that the "real enemy is U.S. imperialism," which gives homegrown thugs and dictators a free pass. While the withdrawal of U.S. troops is what most Afghan citizens are calling for—and we demand it as well—what is equally important is our continued deep solidarity with the aspirations of Afghan women for total freedom.

PASSIONATE SOLIDARITY REQUIRED

Afghan women have articulated for themselves in many speeches, acts of bravery, and forums what they are fighting for. One example is the Afghan Women's Bill of Rights, drafted by 45 ethnically diverse women from every region of Afghanistan. Each article was debated by all and unanimously agreed upon. Here are only a few of its 16 demands: mandatory education for women through secondary school and opportunities for all women for higher education; up-to-date health services with special attention to reproductive rights; security for women; the prevention and criminalization of sexual harassment publicly and in the home; freedom of speech; freedom to vote and run for office; full inclusion of women in the judiciary system; and minimum marriageable age set at 18 years.

Any movement forward for Afghanistan will come from women and others who are fighting the U.S. and their own internal sexist culture and rulers, with their hearts and minds determined to create freedom.

Home healthcare win

Seattle, Wash.—On July 30, home healthcare workers fighting Substitute House Bill 2361, which would force those of us caring for a disabled relative to become Individual Providers with the state and the Department of Developmental Disabilities, went back to court (see "SEIU shafts home healthcare workers," June-July N&L). The bill says if we want to keep our jobs taking care of a disabled relative, we have to quit Home Health Care agencies and join the union (SEIU), and take a large cut in pay and healthcare benefits.

We won a Temporary Restraining Order last month, keeping the state from implementing SHB 2361. This new court date was for a Temporary Injunction against the bill.

A call went out to SEIU to pack the courtroom to keep out the disabled people and their families! It didn't work. We all got there early and there were more of us in the courtroom than SEIU bureaucrats.

The lawyers provided solid arguments based on the Americans with Disabilities Act and the testimonies of many people in the courtroom. They presented the human side of the situation while the opposing lawyers ignored that issue.

The judge continued the Temporary Restraining Order until Aug. 12, saying he needed more time to make a decision. We consider it a temporary victory.

—Suzanne Rose

'The Purity Myth'

The Purity Myth – How America's Obsession with Virginity is Hurting Young Women, by Jessica Valenti (Seal Press, Berkeley, Cal., 2009).

Jessica Valenti writes about how the religious Right has resurrected the extremely sexist notion of female "purity" in its fight against the empowerment of women and a feminist society. The myth is that a woman can only be "pure" if she has never had sex and that this is the only meaning of morality for a woman. For a man, morality means developing qualities such as honesty, courage and dedication, which requires him to do things in the world. For a woman, it means to passively avoid something, as much as the religious Right tries to dress it up in feminist language of strength. "Purity" ends up being a club to which only a few white, heterosexual, middle to upper class, and conventionally attractive women can belong.

Valenti calls the religious Right's abstinence-only movement the "virginity movement" because it makes girls' virginity into a sexual fetish. This movement holds "purity balls" where girls receive silver rings from their fathers in exchange for little pink boxes. Sometimes fathers give daughters lockets and keep the keys to give to their future sons-in-law. The daughters swear an oath to their fathers that they won't have sex until they are married, which echoes the times when a woman was the property of her father and then her husband. The abstinence movement sells T-shirts for girls saying "No Trespassing on This Property—My Father is Watching" and "Virginity is Hot."

LIES ABOUT SEX AROUND

Valenti discusses abstinence-only classes, run by religious right organizations which still receive federal funding. They teach outrageous lies about sex, contraceptives and abortion and that non-marital sex is always devastatingly dangerous. Valenti's view is that it is important for teenagers to be equipped to make responsible decisions about sex and to be taught that non-procreative sex is positive. She emphasizes that not having sex is also a positive choice and that morality lies in making responsible decisions.

Abstinence-only classes also preach sexist gender roles including that all women are asexual and that all men are ravenously sexual. Girls are taught their role is to say no to sex, and prevent men from raping them. Valenti describes how this notion infects the larger society. Media commentators say that it is a woman's fault if a man rapes or harasses her if she is in a public place like a bar, a workplace, or the internet. They often blame feminism. Thus the purity myth suppresses women's lives along with our sexuality.

The purity myth has disturbingly seeped into legislation intended to "protect" women from making what the religious Right, or anyone else for that matter, considers a bad decision. Most obvious are laws against abortion, and Valenti quotes anti-abortion activists saying that women who have abortions are "victims." There is also a welfare "reform" program that spends tax money telling women to get married rather than helping them get education and jobs.

Valenti dedicates a chapter to how the purity myth's notion of masculinity is harmful to men. The religious Right and pop culture define men as dominant over and better than women, and if they don't hold to it they are in danger of symbolically becoming like a woman and a potential victim of male violence. Both forces claim that feminism has caused a "crisis in masculinity" because women are supposedly "trying to be like men." In reality, feminism is about women and men being equally human, and Valenti calls for that kind of world.

WOMEN AND MEN EQUALLY HUMAN

Readers are urged to fight the purity myth by educating ourselves and others about the myth and its movement, and by activism such as using the internet to fight religious right legislation, and participation in reading, writing, and commenting on blogs. She urges us to inform ourselves about all sides of controversial sexual issues. She states that community is important and that "the most radical and cutting-edge organizing happens on a local level." She tells us to "trust women" to make our own choices and to know that women's activism is an example of how our sexual status has nothing to do with our morality.

This book is important because it coherently discusses basic aspects of feminism. It asks readers to radically examine ideas such as "purity" and "virginity" (which doesn't even have a medical definition) that society takes for granted and explains how these notions are used by the religious Right to control women and society. Importantly, it tells readers how to get involved in activism with a sense of optimism that these horrifying and deeply rooted problems can be changed.

—Adele

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

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

At least 15 HIV-positive women in Namibia are suing their government because they were forcibly sterilized. They are part of a group of at least 40 Namibian women who had been sterilized against their will. They were coerced into signing consent documents when they were undergoing HIV treatment and did not have sterilization explained to them.

Three Irish women are challenging Ireland's abortion ban in the European Court of Human Rights, saying their health and well-being were threatened by the law. More than 7,000 women yearly travel from Ireland to obtain safe, legal abortions. The Irish Family Planning Association calls this direct discrimination based on sex and financial status.

—Feminist News

A Federal Appeals Court in Illinois ruled in July that a law requiring parental notification, though not consent, before abortions for teenage girls is constitutional. Originally passed in 1984, the law's enforcement was banned by a federal judge in 2007.

Year-long Stella D'Oro strike solidarity

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

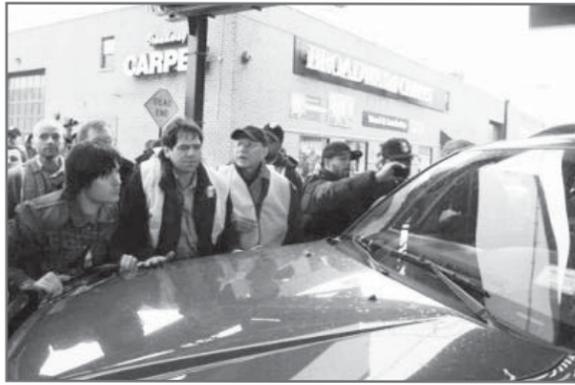
COMMUNITY SUPPORT

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

Other city unions contributed money to help the Stella D'Oro Support Committee. Militant strikers held rallies and got the struggle into the press. The strike dragged on for 11 months.

Despite the limited income the workers received, the company could not break their solidarity. On June 30, the NLRB ruled against the company and ordered that the workers be accepted back on the job under their old contract and that Brynwood negotiate in good faith. Brynwood announced it would shut the plant down but the union refused to accept an unfair contract. Instead it went to court for an injunction to prevent the plant shutdown. Brynwood then said it had a buyer, Lance, Inc., another bakery company based in North Carolina, which might move the plant out of state.

Worker solidarity remained solid. With the help of the support committee, workers contacted unions in other states to disinvest in Lance, Inc., if Lance bought



Stella D'Oro strikers and supporters forcibly prevent scabs from entering the plant.

Stella D'Oro and then moved it out of state. A rally was held on July 29 in front of Goldman-Sachs, which owns stock in Lance, Inc. Articles appeared in newspapers, and Lance announced it would not buy Stella D'Oro.

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

BEACON OF SOLIDARITY

As capitalism continues to implode, the Stella D'Oro struggle can be an important example to other workers of how worker solidarity can stand up to the unceasing greed of capitalists to maximize their profits at the expense of the working class.

Celebrate one year of struggle at Stella D'Oro. Rally with workers and supporters at the Stella D'Oro plant, Aug. 15, 12pm-2pm, 237th Street & Broadway.

—Tom Siracuse

Sitdown at SsangYong

Workers at SsangYong Motors in Pyeongtek, South Korea (just south of Seoul), have ended occupation of their factory, begun in May when the company announced that 2,646 workers, or 36% of the work force, were to be dismissed. They survived attacks by riot police, helicopters dropping tear gas, company-hired thugs, and shutoff of electricity and water. They stood firm in their demand that no workers be laid off, until on Aug. 6 they agreed to the company offer to retain half the laid-off workers.

SsangYong Motors, South Korea's fourth largest automaker, has been in receivership since January. China's Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation, owning 51% of SsangYong Motors, was not interested in resuming production but in technology transfer to China.

Sanup Bank, owned by the South Korean government, is the company's biggest creditor. It is state-capitalism in action. The bank wanted to re-open the factory with a smaller, more heavily exploited work force in order to make it attractive to newer investors.

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

—Gerry Emmett

(Thanks to Loren Goldner, libcom.org, for some info.)

What capitalism fears

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

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

As a worker—a displaced worker, a senior no longer able to work—it got me thinking. This capitalistic system, our way of life worldwide, fears workers thinking freely. It fears when we the workers become free thinkers and begin to think our way out of our struggles, by thinking about a new system set up by the workers themselves. The capitalists truly fear new thinking.

The capitalists' biggest fear is that labor, the workers themselves, might find out that we are the only true value and take back what is really ours—our lives. It fears when we take back our labor, the capitalists no longer rule over us. As we change our thinking, we truly change our lives.

Karl Marx wrote, "Human power is its own end." My whole life has been one struggle after another, just like yours. Our best thinking got us here. It will be the power of our own thoughts that will bring real change.

—Martin

Union dilemma after card check defeat

Detroit—The defeat of the "Card Check" provision in the Employee Free Choice Act reflects the weakened position of unions in the U.S. and the divisions in the union movement itself. Organized labor had trumpeted it as its number one priority to make it easier to organize unions. If the card check provision had passed, workers in an unorganized workplace would have forced management to recognize a union if 50% of the workers signed cards supporting unionization.

Labor leaders claimed partial victory in this defeat because some provisions of the bill remain, including: shortening the time that management could harass, threaten and fire union supporters; organizers being able to talk to workers on company property; monitors to oversee the election process; and constraints on a company's ability to delay recognition of a union once it has been approved by the workers. But card check, the heart of the legislation, was cut out, and reflected the success of the multi-million dollar national campaign waged by business and its lobbyists.

While lip service came from both President Obama and Labor Secretary Solis in support of card check, it was not a priority. The administration did not mobilize to pass it, despite the fact that labor was such a vital factor in Obama's election.

The coalition of unions that left the AFL-CIO four years ago, headed by SEIU President Andy Stern and calling itself Change to Win, vowed to provide visionary leadership to restore labor's militant reputation and organize the unorganized.

WHILE THE DISCONTENT of the member unions (SEIU, Teamsters, Farm Workers, Food and Commercial Workers, Carpenters, Laborers and Unite Here) with the faltering AFL-CIO was certainly justified under the lackluster leadership of President John Sweeney and Secretary-Treasurer Rich Trumka, the coalition achieved nothing besides division within its own ranks, most recently through the efforts of Stern to take over Unite Here and a hospital workers union in California.

Because union resources were devoted to internal squabbles, the union movement's leadership squandered an important opportunity to achieve card check. Some are even declaring that Stern is uniting the labor movement in the U.S. against him.

This fragmented and declining union movement is facing the most critical and crisis-ridden objective situation in its history. Unemployment is at record levels, higher than 10% in 15 states and still rising, with no end in sight. Millions of workers and their families are losing their homes, pensions and healthcare.

TENT CITIES LIKE those during the Great Depression of the 1930s are springing up everywhere, despite unemployment compensation being extended to 79 weeks in the hardest hit states. This will all get worse, despite Obama's economic lackeys who proclaim that the "bottom" of the recession has been reached.

Unemployment compensation, however, is a very thin lifeline for the unemployed, enabling some to live only at the poverty level. This will not long be tolerated, and despair and resentment can quickly lead to revolt. Congress fears that the working-class ferment can escalate to rebellion. This is what they hope to prevent.

Labor leaders decry this economic decline, but offer no solutions. They know that rank-and-file rebellion means the end of their misleading behavior. Their long history of betrayals of the working class, at no time more concessionary than in recent years, will never be forgotten.

While Rich Trumka is expected to succeed John Sweeney as president of the AFL-CIO at the union convention in Pittsburgh Sept. 14-17, and has selected Elizabeth Shuler to be his running mate as Secretary-Treasurer, the first woman to be nominated for that position, it means little in terms of the union's descent.

Trumka, who has been Sweeney's second-in-command for 14 years, is not the same fighter he was as president of the UMW. While he waged huge battles against the coal operators, he could not halt the decline and near extinction of the UMW. He will preside over the same fate for the AFL-CIO unless there is radical change. No one expects that from Trumka.

—Andy Phillips

WORKSHOPTALKS

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around the quality care struggle by traitorous union leaders like Andy Stern, whose brainchild was a Labor Management Partnership (LMP). The LMP was timed to defuse the quality care struggle. After having heard nothing in all these years from Stern since the partnership was implemented, he plastered the workplace with a clever leaflet recently with the slogans "Partnership Not Layoff!" and "Make the Partnership Work!" He is portraying himself as our advocate out to save our jobs.

This sounded good at first, as though Stern were trying to make up for his recent dictatorial takeover of the local union. The truth is that the national contract, including the partnership agreement, is coming up for review and negotiation in 2010. Kaiser management is thinking ahead. In order to prevent rank-and-file resistance to further concessionary demands from the partnership unions, what is better than to send out notices threatening layoffs? Stern is actively collaborating in this ruse by urging us union members to come up with our own ideas to help the company cut costs in order to "save our jobs."

PROFITS FROM LAYOFFS

He equates assisting management cost control with job security. Everyone knows that cost control means job insecurity—the ability of management to eliminate jobs at will. Kaiser is not unique in this. Many companies reported increased profits last quarter not through expanding production but rather through massive layoffs. Kaiser, which is expanding and supposedly non-profit, is playing the same game.

The current healthcare debate is obsessed over divvying up the healthcare dollar pie. That debate is in a totally different world from what is really going on in the clinics and wards. In this world there has been a struggle against the concrete effects of cost cutting for years. As for Obama's praise for his grandmother's care, a lot of us on the front lines of care at Kaiser say if our mothers were sick we would not want her in the hospital where we work.

EMPTY RIGHTS

For example, after an inspection from the state exposed many violations of patient care standards, Kaiser Oakland is obligated to find a bed within a half hour once a doctor orders a patient admitted. The nurse supervisor is now forced to arbitrarily assign a room number, even if that room has no bed ready, no nurse and no equipment for that patient. This new procedure may satisfy bureaucrats with their paperwork but in reality the patient doesn't get to a bed for several hours.

The only genuine healthcare reform is one that focuses on the relationship between patients and their caregivers. What Kaiser, the politicians, and union heads like Stern are peddling is not healthcare reform but restructuring healthcare according to capital's need in this era. For them there is no alternative to capitalism. There will be no resolving this ongoing crisis without overcoming the alienation experienced by workers in their daily activity.



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FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYADUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from "War and Revolution," the July 1971 Draft Perspectives Thesis for News and Letters Committees, Part III, "Praxis, Responsibility of Intellectuals and Our Tasks." The text of the full Draft, written while Dunayevskaya was completing the book *Philosophy and Revolution*, is included in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #4454.

"The chief defect of all materialism up to now (including Feuerbach's) is that objective reality, what we apprehend through our senses, is understood only in the form of the **object** of contemplation; but not as **sensuous human activity**, as practice; not subjectively. Hence, in opposition to materialism, the **active side** was developed abstractly by idealism....Feuerbach wants sensuous objects really distinguished from objects of thought but he does not understand human activity itself as **objective activity**."—Karl Marx

All serious struggles in a revolutionary movement have always taken place, not over "tactics," but over revolutionary perspectives. But the theoretic void in the Marxist movement since the death of Lenin—nearly a half-century ago—has been so great that one is tempted to believe that there has been a void in time itself. Those who claim the name of Marxism have let slip out of their minds, not only this half-century, but also the century and a half since Marx worked out his theory of proletarian revolution, his philosophy of liberation as a philosophy of human activity which is the **absolute, dialectic opposite of the alienated labor** to which capitalism consigned the working class.

Time does not, of course, stand still. Just as Nature does not like a vacuum, so the human mind rebels against a void, against a "forgetting" of **theory**, against a retrogression in history, both as "past" and present, and a stifling of what is first to **be**. Because of this elemental and compelling need from the **movement** from practice itself, we must expose the current reduction of Marx's concept of **praxis** to the "practice," i.e., the carrying out, by the rank and file, of the "theory," i.e., the Party line that the leadership, the intellectuals, have elaborated **for** them. This is not a "translation" of the word, praxis, it is a perversion. The fatal character of this **mis-interpretation** of "praxis" is more relevant for our day than for that of Marx, when he was alive to work out a revolutionary alternative and thereby discover a whole new continent of theory—Historical Materialism. We must consider anew the historic period in which Marx lived **as he saw it**.

PRAXIS AND DIALECTIC

To this day, Marxists are shamefaced about Marx's alleged "glorification" of the proletariat, and do not accept his analysis of the revolt of the Silesian weavers of 1844 as having had a "conscious and theoretical character." Nevertheless, it was this, **just this type of vision**, that led Marx to break, not only with exploitative bourgeois society, but also with "socialists," "communists," and academic materialists who could not do what "idealism" had done—develop "the **active side**" (Marx's emphasis) of subjectivity.

Though the class nature of capitalist society is decisive, Marx did not limit his analysis of subjectivity to the difference between petty-bourgeois, egotistic subjectivity and proletarian, social subjectivity. Indeed, he insisted that "human activity itself" was "**objective**" (Marx's emphasis). Marx defined **praxis** as "revolutionary, critical-practical activity." Put concisely, Marx's great discovery—Historical Materialism—illuminated the whole of society as well as its transformation.

As shapers of history, as "Subject," the workers were becoming whole men and women, achieving a synthesis of mental and manual labor, of theory and practice, of philosophy and revolution. Of course, it is what men **do** that is decisive in history, but theory remains an active force because ideas are not abstractions. They have a dialectic of their own and are integral to praxis itself. Praxis has many forms and each and every one is dialectical—develops through contradiction. Thus, even when it is seen as no more than "material activity," i.e., alienated labor, it is this very alienation that produces the "quest for universality" so that class struggles at the point of production lead to political struggles and finally burst out as social revolution.

That these basics of the Marxism of Marx could be reduced to "the small coin of concrete questions," as Trotsky phrased it, speaks volumes about the administrative mentality of our state-capitalist age. Thus today's Trotskyists, along with the "New Left," follow Stalinism (be it Russian or Chinese or the "Structural" Althusser variety in France) with their endless discussion of "tactics." Their turning away from the Humanism of Marx, labeling it "pre-Marxist," speaks volumes about our age, but says nothing at all about its absolute dialectic opposite—the movement from practice to theory. It is as if revolutionary power does indeed come "out of the barrel of a gun" instead of the self-activity of the masses in elemental outburst. They likewise disre-

Praxis and responsibility of intellectuals

gard the very nearly continuous movement that began in the 1950s in East Europe and has since covered the globe. Yet this movement, not only as practice but as elements of theory, is far richer than its political expression in **any existing** party "to lead," including those who are **not** tied to a state power and do throw around the word revolution with great abandon. Nowhere have theoreticians—I naturally do not mean petty-bourgeois intellectuals but those who claim the name of Marxism—met their **historic** responsibilities.

Everywhere, no matter where we look—the challenge from practice has not been met: Look at France in the near-revolution of May 1968, or the U.S. of 1970-71 where a million poured out in anti-war demonstrations, but [were] quiescent in the face of the "My Lais" committed against Blacks right here. Look at the "New Left" in Great Britain who are tied, not to an actual party, but only to a concept; or look at Japan, where back in 1960, far in advance of the mass outbursts in any of the technologically advanced countries, the youth proclaimed their opposition to the U.S. and to their own government, and did so in the face of opposition from Communism, which wished to restrict the snake-dancing mass revolt to protests only against the U.S. Or look at Africa, where a new Third World was born, or to Italy, where no less than two million workers joined the Communist Party in opposition to private capitalism. But Italy is now face to face with the rise of neo-fascism because neither private capitalism nor state capitalism could stop the economic crises and total decadence. Again, everywhere, the challenge from practice has not been met.

Indeed, most have even failed to recognize the impotence of ceaseless activism sans philosophy. This failure is certainly not limited to this pragmatic land. Our task, however, will be illuminated by taking a look at Italy. The *Il Manifesto* group, which was expelled from the Communist Party, posed some of the most cogent questions. No one else in the Left has even attempted to face the "why" of the defeat of France 1968, when 10 million workers were out on general strike, when the students, the catalyst for this near-revolution, were the most politically advanced in the world, and revolutionary enough both to recognize the pivotal role of labor and to establish a new form of organization—the worker-student action committee. This was the highest stage reached—and reached in a technologically advanced land—in the turbulent 1960s when only the Third World seemed to make history. The *Il Manifesto* group, both in its own statement and in the interview with [Jean-Paul] Sartre, raised the burning questions of the day on class, on spontaneity, on the masses and the party.

ROLE OF INTELLECTUALS

And yet even though they were all intellectuals—and I don't mean petty-bourgeois but revolutionary theoreticians who accepted the key role of the proletariat in any social revolution—there was no tackling of new economic categories, such as state-capitalism, much less philosophic concepts. Instead, by holding on to loose old terms, like "advanced stage of capitalism," grappling with no philosophic concepts despite the fact that they were moved by a desire for a "revolutionary alternative" to the existing Communist Party which was practicing class collaborationism, they actually were talking on the same level as "the Party." They were concerned with proving that the need for individual freedom "is not simply a residue of 'humanism' which antedates capitalism." No wonder that not only were no "answers" forthcoming, but even correct questions seemed to lose their relevance.

Thus, although they caught the revolutionary spirit of the age—the subjective maturity of the working class—they could not spell out any "new form of organization" since this was linked, not with needs emerging from **mass practice**, subjectively, from below (a **live** "Subject"), but only to "conditions of struggle in the societies of advanced capitalism."

Thus, though they¹ rightly criticized [Herbert] Marcuse's glorification of "the Great Refusal" as well as [Daniel] Cohn-Bendit's "spontaneity"—as if a "counter-

¹ I'm referring to Rossana Rossanda and Lucio Magri of *Il Manifesto* as both articles and interview with Jean-Paul Sartre are in *Socialist Register*, 1970.

culture" and "negation" of the old, were sufficient unto the day, that is, **the** revolutionary alternative—they too "elaborate" no new alternatives. It is as if a Maoist tinge to the concept of the Party were the answer to "a new form of organization."

Thus, even where they touch the implication of the need of "the transcendence of the Leninist or Bolshevik model of the party"...their end result is in the working with old categories as if there is a continuity instead of a **discontinuity** in capitalism itself. The **transformation into absolute opposite** of the first workers' state into a state-capitalist society, they attribute to paralysis in thought. To use Sartre's phrase, "the mode of existence of the Parties (which) paralyzes their (the intellectuals') collective effort of thought." How could it be otherwise when suddenly intellectuals, who joined to fight the status quo, must now express, not the mass struggle for freedom, but a state ideology, a State Plan, a State Economy?

Intellectuals (and not only where state power and outright exploitation of labor is practiced as in Russia and China, in East Europe and Cuba, but intellectuals of our state-capitalist age who do want to uproot capitalism as they see it and work for emancipation of labor) have completely and totally forgotten (because it is not **organic** to them as it is to labor) **what** Marx meant by a classless order. It is not just a dialectical "principle" which is at stake; it is a life and death struggle. It is what

Hegel called "individualism that lets nothing interfere with its universalism," i.e., freedom, and Marx called labor's "quest for universality" which underlines alienated labor's struggle to abolish the old exploitative society, and creates a new, class-less one where "the freedom of the individual is the basis of the freedom for all."

It is for this and for no other reason that Marx felt compelled to break with the bourgeoisie also on the very concept of what theory is. He saw theory coming from labor and only labor because labor is not only muscle but Reason. It is this which "disciplined" Marx. **Historic** responsibilities of Marxist intellectuals **begin**

with listening to the masses, and not being caught in the delusion that it is the intellectual brain wave which produces theory. Once you **can hear and do listen** to the voices from below as if your life depended on those voices—because it does—then, and only then, can you elaborate theory, **not** because you become a mere recording machine, **but because, having recorded these voices, your task far from ending has just begun. That defines not only intellectual responsibility but our tasks, and the key work remains projection**—projection of Marxist-Humanist ideas.

PREPARATION FOR REVOLUTION

First and foremost, of course, is the concretization of the Perspective on *War and Revolution* in a manner which will determine not only our activities in the anti-Vietnam war movement, but in all class struggles, Black struggle, Women's Liberation, Chicano, Indian. The determinant for all activities as well as writings, talks as well as relations—**all without exception**—is the concept of social revolution. We must free our minds from thinking that this is exhausted in the anti-Vietnam war activity as if that is the equivalent of a social revolution. There is no equivalent when there is no uprooting of class relations in one's own country, no ending of racism, no making inseparable the forces of revolution from their Reason.

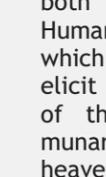
And there can be no social revolution when one, like the Trotskyists, hangs on to one or another group of state-capitalist societies calling themselves Communist. Nor can there be a spontaneous, elemental mass uprising when one is concentrating on "shortcuts." No matter how great the martyrs like Che [Guevara] who "lead" it, there can be no social revolution when one substitutes himself for the masses, or when the **method** used in the projection of ideas repeats the capitalistic division between mental and manual labor, with intellectual "prerogatives" blotting out workers' thoughts. One must practice theory by uniting the two **daily** in every struggle, in every human relation, be it Black and white, youth and adult, men and women, actual class struggle or merely the manner of writing them up so that the story itself projects philosophy and revolution. In a word every single act is a theoretic preparation for revolution the day **before**, the day **of**, and the day **after** revolution.

Explore the fully dialectical, humanist meaning of Praxis in *Philosophy and Revolution* by Raya Dunayevskaya.



"[Historical Materialism's] new dimension...could only have emerged from human beings, masses, classes, themselves reshaping history.

That, *that precisely*, marks the uniqueness of Marxian materialist dialectic, which is



both class-rooted and Humanist. It is this which enabled Marx to elicit from the *praxis* of the Parisian Communards 'storming the heavens,' the stripping off of the fetishism of commodities and the establishment of the totally new social relations as 'freely associated labor.'"

Philosophy and Revolution, a classic of Marxism, a key work of Marxist-Humanism. Only \$24.95. To order, see ad, p. 7.



ESSAY

Ecosocialism and Marx's Humanism

by Franklin Dmitryev

The tendency calling itself ecosocialism is a response not only to the massive environmental destruction in our capitalist world, but to the feeling that Green movements have not adequately challenged capitalism while socialist movements have treated ecology as an "afterthought," and neither has achieved its goals. It implies a recognition of the need to abolish capitalism if human society is to avoid catastrophe. Doing that requires grasping what is the core of capitalist relations that must be transformed.

Let's begin with a concept that is key to Marx's explanation of capitalism's social relations, its alienated labor, its fetishism, and the nature of the mysterious entity he called value: the dialectical inversion of subject and object, so that the object dominates the subject. In the factory the machine dominates the worker, but in Marx's concept of alienated labor, the same subject-object relationship also shapes the human relationship to nature, which implies that the alienation of humanity from nature cannot be overcome without overcoming the subject-object inversion inherent in alienated labor.

Crucially, Marx saw that the transcendence of alienation was more than simply eliminating private property. That was only the first negation, which itself would need to be transcended. As the founder of Marxist-Humanism Raya Dunayevskaya argued, our age has experienced counter-revolution coming from within revolution, as in the Russian Revolution.

That transformation into opposite showed the urgent need for new beginnings in philosophy, and the concreteness of Marx's point that social revolution goes beyond negating private property to the negation of that negation, that is, the transcendence of communism, or humanity reappropriating what it has made. That involves the reintegration of the human being's activity in all its moments, including relationship to nature.

The fact that revolutions as great as the Russian ended up being transformed into opposite, into bureaucratic state-capitalism, and that these totalitarian regimes called themselves Marxist, only served to disorient genuine revolutionaries. The "productivism" of these societies, their drive to industrialize no matter the cost to environment or to workers, did not stem from some alleged roots in Marx's theory but from the law of motion of capitalism, which they had no choice but to follow because the production relations were capitalistic.

How could ecosocialism avoid such an outcome? It is not so simple as setting a goal—such as "participating in ecosystems"¹—since emancipating labor was a principal goal of the Russian Revolution, yet it turned into its opposite, with no freedom for workers. What is crucial to grasp is what post-Marx Marxism lost that was in Marx's philosophy. All the Green attempts to reject Marxism are on the ground of post-Marx Marxism's truncated concepts of what socialism is, what revolution is, what liberation means. Nothing short of a philosophy of revolution that recaptures Marx's Humanism can provide the foundation for enabling revolution to continue in permanence. To reject Humanism as "anthropocentric" is to mistake humanity in its current alienated condition for what liberated humanity could potentially be, as well as to cut oneself off from subjects of revolution.

MARX'S SOCIALISM AS 'HUMAN POWER'

Marx's concept is of a revolution so total as to uproot all conditions in which "the human being objectifies herself/himself inhumanly in opposition to self."² That includes emancipation of labor, it includes the transformation of the alienated man/woman relationship, and it includes the reappropriation of the human relationship with nature. We are alienated from our own activity, and therefore from the interchange with nature, which is unsustainable in its present form because it is alienated and irrational.

Since Marx is often accused of "productivism," or of glorifying human transformative and productive powers, particularly in the form of industry, it is important to make the distinction between human powers in their alienated form and as liberatory forces. The current alienated form of the relationship between humanity and nature is determined by humanity's alienation from itself. It would be a tremendous mistake to assume that this relationship is a fixed essence of humanity, that is to say, that the development of human power is transhistorically inimical to nature. But that mistake is central to such theories as Ted Benton's "ecological reconstruction of Marx" (*The Greening of Marxism*, ed. Ted Benton, Guilford, 1996).

Contemporary radical theory is dominated by an overwhelming consciousness of defeat, and loss of confidence in human power as the power to transform society. It is grounded in actual history of revolutions that have failed or transformed into opposite, as in Russia, China and Iran.

However, those failures are too often theorized as the universal essence of human nature, so that—in

anarcho-primitivism, deep ecology, most Green theory, and many radical theories influenced by postmodernism—liberation becomes defined less by the need for human development than by the need to limit human activity. This retreat from revolution is developed in theory as the impossibility of any transformation that results in true liberation.

Ted Benton counterposes human powers to transform things, on the one hand, to natural limits on the other. His theory recognizes these powers only in an alienated shape, that is, as powers embodied in capital. The aspects of human power that then stand out are its technological forms, the sheer scale of social production, and the great destruction wrought by them. His theory skips over the contradiction within human power itself: human beings themselves struggling against their domination by their own products. Such a theory sees only the negative side of subjectivity trying to make itself objective by exercising "human transforma-



tive powers." Therefore, the domination of object over subject is accepted as natural and eternal, rather than a social form of a specific historical stage, capitalism. So we end up with a theory that rejects the transcendence of exactly what we need to transcend to break capitalism's destructive law of motion.

In claiming that basic concepts of Marx's economic theory fall short of his philosophy's materialist premises, Benton repeats a fallacy common in Green critiques: acting as if Marx's description of how capitalism actually functions is a prescription for theory. That is, Marx shows how value, capital, and abstract labor, as driving forces of capitalism, abstract from nature and from all dimensions other than quantity of socially necessary labor time. The critics wrongly read this as a gap in Marx's theory. They then revise his theory, and end up pushing the human subject out of the center, and losing sight of the dialectical inversion of object over subject.

MARX'S CONCEPT OF VALUE

Marx did not use the word "value" in the psychological or moral sense of what is judged good or evil, useful or useless. When we say that only labor, not nature, determines value, it is not a denial of nature's worth or of the part it plays in production and life but a recognition of how capitalism functions.

The key is to grasp value as the form of appearance of objectified labor under the capitalist mode of production. Value, which is really the objective form taken by alienated labor, takes on a life of its own as the driving force of society and stands in opposition to workers, the subjects of labor. In other words, the dialectical inversion of object and subject is the expression of value as dead labor dominating living labor. It is seen strikingly in production where the machine is the material bearer of value, subjugating the worker.

Since labor, which is the universal condition for humanity's metabolism with nature, takes definite historical forms, the ahistorical concept of "domination of nature" is inadequate. To arrive at a historical notion, we must confront the specific character of domination inherent in society based on value production.

Labor in commodity production has a dual character: while concrete labor is the activity of making a definite kind of useful thing, it is abstract labor that produces value. The discipline of the factory clock reduces concrete individual labor with specific skills to value, an abstract mass of "socially necessary labor time." The process of production becomes value's act of self-production through the instrumentality of the machine's domination of the workers. The machine embodies value, dead labor, which acts as the subject and dominates the living laborer, who is turned into an object, an appendage to the machine. The appearance of domination in the contemporary society's irrational, destructive relationship to nature is actually the reflection of the subordination of both nature and humanity to capital.

At the same time, because it abstracts from nature,

mechanized value-driven production vastly increases the use of raw materials, draws in new materials such as petroleum, exhausts the fertility of the soil, and produces unprecedented amounts of waste. The scale of production is not limited by human needs but is driven by value's limitless drive to augment itself.

FOR USE-VALUE, OR A NEW KIND OF LABOR?

Ecosocialists have called for "a valorization of use-values over exchange-values" ("An Ecosocialist Manifesto," by Joel Kovel and Michael Lowy) and declared that "ecosocialism [is] a struggle for use-value" (*The Enemy of Nature* by Joel Kovel). Marx's socialism was never about use-value over exchange-value. He dove deeper to the forms of labor that produce use-value and value: concrete labor and abstract labor. This two-fold nature of labor in capitalist society is what Marx called, "the pivot on which a clear comprehension of political economy turns," yet it has played no part in ecosocialist theory. Without it, a theory cannot center on human activity, as alienated labor, as struggle against alienation, as the goal of a new society based on free self-activity.

This is compounded by the adoption by Kovel and others of the mystified concept of "intrinsic value" from Green theory. Passed off as an objective, trans-historical attribute of nature, "intrinsic value" is really a subjective attribute of human morality and psychology.

Posing value outside of its determination by alienated labor, and introducing "intrinsic value" as a spiritual essence floating outside humanity and beyond history, culminates in the old Green mystification of Nature as Subject. It goes back to an old idea, that human society's environmental destructiveness is due to an "anthropocentric" attitude, which must be fixed by putting nature at the center. That leads to displacing subjects of revolution, who can only be humans.

Other natural beings are seen in their capacity to suffer. Since social change cannot be left up to the action of non-human Nature, posing Nature as subject (or, as in "An Ecosocialist Manifesto," posing "the freeing of all beings as [a new society's] ground and goal") leads to human representatives acting on their behalf. This is no way to help spontaneous revolts of workers develop into the self-organization of a new society. One result is that the abolition of the division between mental and manual labor is missing from sketches of the new ecosocialist society, whether that be in Kovel's *The Enemy of Nature* or in any ecosocialist manifestos. Yet the need to begin breaking down that division even before the revolution, and certainly during and after it, is one of the foremost lessons of 20th Century revolutions.

WHO IS THE SUBJECT OF REVOLUTION?

The question of Subjects of revolution sheds light also on the critique of Marx's supposed "productivism," because he singled out the contradiction between productive forces and production relations. According to Michael Lowy in *Ecosocialism or Barbarism*, this is a "mechanistic scheme" that "should be replaced—or at least be completed—by the idea that productive forces in the capitalist system become destructive ones." Since Marx addresses the destructiveness of productive forces frequently in his writings, including in relation to the environment, Lowy should have asked why Marx did not elevate it as the primary contradiction. Lowy is harking back to the "second contradiction of capitalism" proposed by James O'Connor (*Natural Causes: Essays in Ecological Marxism*, Guilford, 1997): a contradiction between the forces and relations of production on the one hand and the conditions of production on the other.

In both cases, the proposed substitute lacks a human subject at its heart, so it lacks an active force internal to the contradiction that can transcend it. This throws out what is central to the creation of a new society: the self-developing Subject. Revising post-Marx Marxism without recapturing what Marx's philosophy of revolution had achieved ends up undermining the ability to help revolution continue to a new society.

Value dominates, but can never totally submerge, the human being. The revolt of the workers is the quest by human beings to reclaim their own subjectivity from the machine and posit their subjectivity as objective, in the form of revolutionary activity. Marx's argument— theorized by Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism as the projection of "new forces and new passions," including but not limited to labor, for reconstructing society on new beginnings—provides ground for comprehending today's multiple forces of revolution and mass opposition to environmental destruction as also challenging capitalism's perverse relationship of object over subject. The environmental movement has the potential to relate to other freedom movements on a deep, organic basis, rather than simply as tactical allies.

Ecosocialism's challenge to the capitalist concept of development needs to directly oppose the dialectical inversion of subject and object, and root itself in the potential of the self-developing Subject. Marx's dialectical approach, as reinterpreted for our day by Marxist-Humanism, is indispensable for arriving at that goal.

¹ *The Enemy of Nature*, by Joel Kovel (Zed Books, 2002), p. 209.

² From Marx's "Critique of the Hegelian Dialectic."

iran 17 DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

At the demonstration of several thousands in the Bay Area on July 25, as part of the day of international solidarity with the movement in Iran, there was a whole gamut of people—from liberals in the government like Jerry Brown, to royalists—but there were mostly ordinary Iranian Americans expressing solidarity. There were very few leftists. We sold a large number of copies of *N&L* and got into some interesting discussions. The Left here, if not outright pro-Ahmadinejad and pro-Chavez, mostly seem leery they would otherwise be supporting U.S. imperialism.

At our meeting on "The Specter of Revolution in Iran," the highlight of the presentation was a contrast between the meaning of the struggle for open space for public discourse in Iran in the process of challenging the regime, and what public discourse means here—intellectuals debating each other. The speaker emphasized the need to give the movement space for development as opposed to trying to schoolmaster it.

Ron Bay Area

Recent events in Iran can, indeed, be called "Seventeen days that shook the world" which is the title of the eyewitness report one of the speakers brought to our meeting on Iran. Nazanin also distributed a list, "The quandary of the American Left about the protests in Iran," challenging theoretical presuppositions on the Left that led it to hedge their support in the name of opposing U.S. imperialism. She brought out very profoundly the objectivity of the drive to be free as reflected in the unfolding total opposition among all segments of the population to Iran's theocratic rulers.

Marxist-Humanist Bay Area

As someone who followed events online as they were unfolding in Iran, I witnessed not only the beautiful solidarity in which the world was participating but also the desperate need for philosophy. The first day of the revolt had barely ended when the virtually universal solidarity turned into everyone going their own way. Some were stuck on U.S. imperialism as the cause of everything, others argued that Israel/Palestine should be the main issue. To me, it spoke to the increased need for philosophy to be a guiding and foundational force for all solidarity action. That is especially true today when technology enables us to be closer than ever to events that happen on the other side of the world. The Lead article in the June-July *N&L* was a wonderful expression of how I believe revolutionaries in the U.S. should respond to just such a situation.

Brown Douglas Urbana, Ill.

I would like to tell you about Mourning Mothers of Iran and invite you to support them. See their pictures and appeal at mothersofiran.blogspot.com.

Said Ashkan saidashkan@yahoo.com

OPEN LETTER TO HUGO CHAVEZ

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

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

Retract your support from Ahmadinejad, do not betray the people of both countries.

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

Souzan Behjadai

NOTHING SETTLED?

It has been eight years since 11-year-old Timia Williams was beaten by three white Chicago police officers. The cops were given token suspensions, mostly paid vacations. Larry Marshall, her grandfather, returns every month to the Police Review Board meetings seeking justice. In July, the Board spokesman dared to say that the case was settled, too bad but "you have no recourse" here now. Mr. Marshall replied, "Nothing has been settled. Too many young kids are still being beaten, still getting shot, every day. This isn't just about one case, it's about all the cases of brutality. And I can keep coming down here until the end of time if I have to do that!"

Appreciative observer Chicago

PROFESSOR GATES: 'NAME, RANK AND SERIAL NUMBER'

If, after having had trouble getting into my house, I had to prove my identity in my own home, I would probably have been highly indignant, and might have made comments that could have been better stated. Not having a "name, rank and serial number" such as Professor Gates has, I can only imagine the degree of disrespect he felt to his social/professional standing. But as a man, a Black man, I can fully understand the degree of denigration that an officer ("the man") can put you through.

It was good that he could call upon the office of the President of the USA, who arranged to "settle it over a beer." But what about all the rest of us? Until our Creator brings about a change, we have to attempt working it out in ways

the reactionary opponents of U.S. imperialism, from Al Qaeda to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to the Chinese Communist Party. There is no sharp boundary between conflicts between states and the wars waged by rulers against their own people....We extend our strong solidarity with your call to 'unite across borders and rise in struggles against war and impoverishment, on the basis of proletarian internationalism.'

The Resident Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees

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

Akira Kato for the Executive Committee

READERS' VIEWS

such as Marxist-Humanists would.

Ray Robeson Detroit

The whole incident of Gates reminded me of when I was in a white neighborhood in Los Angeles, working as a nurse on a home visit. I was sitting in my car, writing up a just completed visit when suddenly two police cars appeared. One pulled in front of me and the other directly behind me. They wanted to know what I was doing. I explained and they responded by saying my back brake lights were on (I had my foot on the brake pedal) and that a driver working with a robber keeps the car ready for a fast take-off. After the incident, I spoke to the nursing office that sent me out and they called the police to tell them to stop bothering their nurses. I tell this story to say that the police do not harass only Black men, but Black women as well. I think the problem is not only the officers but the "higher-ups" who give permission for these actions.

Georgiana Stewart Southern California

MAIN CURRENTS IN MARXISM

When Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski died, there was a lot of comment on his *Main Currents of Marxism*. It is a very significant work. But I've often wondered about its silence on Raya Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism, which was well known to him, as they were personal acquaintances. Sometimes it seems that he was trying to refute her views, as in his section on Gramsci. Other times I think he's leaving an opening for the possibility of a different view of Marxism, which could also mean that his entire thesis is wrong. In any case, his philosophic attitude in *Main Currents of Marxism* is basically the opposite of what she was to develop as the category of "post-Marx Marxism as a pejorative, beginning with Engels." He leaves us a monument and a silence, and she leaves a living body of ideas and a great historic responsibility.

Tim Finnigan Illinois

ANTI-WAR STRUGGLE CONTINUES

I received the following Call for protests, from the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space (PO Box 652, Brunswick, ME 04011):

"The U.S. arsenal of hypocrisy is poised for another launch from Vandenberg AFB in Southern California in the early morning hours of Aug. 23. Our government lectures and threatens Iran and North Korea about the evils of nuclear weapons and then arrogantly continues to fire nuclear missiles from California into the Pacific Ocean.

"The U.S. will launch high speed hair trigger Minuteman III nuclear weapon delivery systems from Vandenberg Space Command to Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. The launch will be an operational test to verify the weapon system's reliability and accuracy. There will be protests at Vandenberg AFB as well as in El Segundo at the time of the launch. We urge people around the world to hold solidarity protests on either Aug. 22 or 23 to expose the hypocrisy of this U.S. nuclear test."

I am passing this Call on for your readers to join in on them. **January Northern California**

The unique event held in Illinois on Aug. 6, organized by the North Suburban Peace Initiative and The Fellowship of Reconciliation, was important as a determination not to let humanity ever

forget the tragic atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan. Activities were geared towards families with children. There was a potluck picnic, a film about a radiation-exposed girl who believed that making 1,000 origami cranes (which in Japanese lore brings good luck) would cure her. Along with showing *Sadako and the Thousand Cranes*, lessons were given for children to learn to make origami cranes. We must never forget, so that we will never repeat this history again.

Born in Japan Illinois

WOMEN'S 'RIGHT TO BECOME'

The article, "Women's 'Right to Become'" in the June-July *N&L* conceptualizes how to combat society's condemnation of women: "I believe our time as a movement would be better spent talking about how to conceive ourselves as human, human beings who are



in the process of becoming whole and free..." Bergonzi takes the arguments of anti-choicers and replaces them with visions of a positive ground for human development: "Let's stop talking about 'prevention' in terms of 'reducing abortions.' Let's talk about women's liberation and the power to determine our sexuality."

The mainstream Women's Liberation Movement has not done enough to make the abortion rights fight inseparable from other freedoms. It has allowed the Right to narrow "prevention" to mean "abortion reduction," rather than family planning. Black and Latina women led the fight for abortion in a context of women's freedom. Their experiences of substandard clinics and high costs, and of sterilization without consent led them to articulate the demand for "reproductive rights." In this context, "prevention" is not just for the purpose of reducing abortions, but a common-sense approach to a woman's control over her body.

Susan Van Gelder New York

The focus of the WLM should not be on "prevention," should not be on talking *ad nauseum* about reducing abortions, because abortion is not the problem. The problem is women not having control over our bodies and lives and people who believe we don't have a right to that! When you look at it this way every kind of freedom comes into play: the ability to say "no"; choose to love another woman; raise a child in a safe, non-violent, non-toxic, healthy environment, in a world without poverty, war, sexism, racism. Freedom is what is at issue, not abortion, not prevention. Give us safe free birth control, give us sex education. Those are important in and of themselves, not just because they "reduce abortion."

Sonia Bergonzi Chicago

There is not a single mainstream so-called "pro-life" group in the U.S. that supports contraception; most oppose it. They are so rabid that they purged anti-choice Congressman Tim Ryan because his idea of preventing abortion was to promote comprehensive sex education and make contraception widely available. For that he was thrown off the Board of Directors of "Democrats for life of America." He should thank the WLM, which has agitated around birth control and sex education throughout its 35+ year history, including exposing the danger of the pill and fighting against the forced sterilization of Puerto Rican, Chicana, Black and poor women. Too many forget this important history.

Terry Moon Illinois

EXCHANGE WITH INTERNATIONAL ANTI-WAR ASSEMBLY IN JAPAN

Every August, on the anniversary of the U.S. atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, an International Anti-war Assembly meets in Japan. It was with pride that our message to the 47th Assembly called attention to our long-established solidarity in the international anti-war struggle (see Editorial, p. 1):

"Like the worldwide economic crisis, the wars raging today grow out of the soil of a decaying capitalist system that has long since outlived its usefulness to humanity. Barack Obama, who began his run for president of the U.S. as an anti-war candidate but today holds the reins of commander-in-chief, is now repeating Bush's Iraq 'surge,' this time in Afghanistan...Nor can a truly anti-war alternative be found in

LABOR DOING SOME SERIOUS THINKING

I agree with your criticisms of unions but what is missing is any sort of game plan for how to get from here to there. What is a union member to do when faced with concessions or closure?

In the 1930s we had Joe Hill, the Wobblies, the One Big Union—and then we were "saved" by the war. At least there was some thinking going on, and some hope for a more just society. It seems much more bleak this time around where the official measure of health is the amount of (generally useless) consumption. Do we need to be reduced to the dust-bowl days before we try something else?

I would like to challenge union members to take back their unions. Attend meetings, start study classes, come up with a democratic platform that would NOT include raiding. What is the union brass paid? How about no more than the top rank-and-filer? How about strike pay being for all—those negotiating and those walking the line? Maybe then some serious thinking will happen—like what sort of society do we want?

**Canadian Correspondent
Vancouver**

I heard Armando Robles, the head of the Republic Windows and Doors local union, speak recently. Those workers went on a solidarity tour. They inspired others all over the world. Workers in several countries are talking about them. The labor specialist for *In These Times* has written that the Republic workers had failed to inspire other workers to a new wave of militancy. He wrote off the occupation. Armando had the opposite feeling. He asked how long it had been between the first sit-down in the 1930s and when it turned into the CIO. There is a debate between those giving up and those saying this could be just the beginning. It can't be just written off. There's a lot of thinking going on about what to do.

**Student of History
Chicago**

GAZA AND ISRAEL

I appreciate Raha's thoughts on Israel in the June-July Essay on "Gaza drowned in silence, despair and anguish," which took the perspective about the conflict in a universal and humanist direction. The bit about an "Arab Martin Luther King" was inspired. The perception of the spirit of movements as well as their mechanism, is the sign of a deeply humanist perspective. The crucial period in European history he has studied is important in understanding the historical ties between the Arab and Jewish world and the colonial legacy.

It reminded me of Manes Sperber, a Jewish Communist anti-Stalinist who survived Hitler and Stalin and lived to write about the experience of the 1930s and '40s, explaining what it meant for communists in Germany and East Europe. His novel *Teardrop in an Ocean* had a big impact on me while I was growing up in the 1980s in Iran. It was irreverent and it detailed Stalin, the war, and the devastation Communists endured when Stalin solidified his grip over the movement. At the end of the novel he points to exactly what Raha pointed to, the turning away, forgetting and blaming everything on National Socialism and its dangers.

**Iranian Revolutionary
California**

The highpoint of the essay on Gaza was the return to Israel's point of origin, tracing the tendency that took its cue for the idea of a socialist transformation from Marx's perspective on communal agrarian forms (kibbutzim) within civil society. It is no small issue that they skipped over social revolution, leaving the door open to statist Lassalleans, but they did come "oh so close," as it was put in the essay.

**Ron Kelch
Bay Area, California**

Two aspects of the essay on Gaza



and Israel require comment. First, the category of "historical Jews" is problematic, and is not my understanding of what the Marxist-Humanist analysis is. Second, it is an exaggeration to say that Israel in the 1940s came "oh so close to social revolution."

**Close reader
Chicago**

HATE CRIMES

The hate crime laws passed by the State of New York and the federal bill which has just passed both houses are a very bad idea. They create a category of "thought crime," and once that genie is out of the bottle it can go anywhere. We can't legislate people's thoughts and feelings. Punish the act, not the thought. Ideas, thoughts and emotions can't be regulated by the state, but are tested by the experience of real life. Hatred and bigotry are not "things" which one can beat up on, they are an expression of alienated social relations which need to be understood as such in order to be uprooted and transcended.

These laws will give new repressive weapons to our rulers which can and most certainly will be used against the very people who have called for their passage.

**D. Cheneville
SF-Oakland Bay Area**

I have read in the press that the Matthew Shepard Act is closer than ever to becoming reality. As part of the Senate's Department of Defense legislation, it awaits President Obama's signature. May the President sign this legislation which will add LGBT and disabled individuals as protected from physical acts of harm and death, without taking away people's rights of free thought and speech. Deep thanks for your regular "Queer Notes" column by Elise, which keeps us abreast of important developments in the LGBT rights movement.

**Pritpal Kaur
Chicago**

VOICES FROM WITHIN

Thanks for your commitment to the critical and practical perspective you initiate in the minds of those like myself without which we would



solely depend on choreographed reactions to the mainstream propaganda-based media. N&L presents an opportunity to read news generated not for the sole purpose of furthering corporate-owned ideas through corporate-owned media. Thanks!

**Prisoner
Texas**

Your paper was passed on to me by an elder here in South Carolina who thinks highly of me and stressed that I make use of it. Many of us suffer the "Ostrich Syndrome." We continuously bury our heads in the sand, choosing to ignore certain realities in hopes they will go away.

Justice doesn't always prevail, and when it doesn't, situations and circumstances are unjust. That alone is oppression. Proper education corrects errors. We have to take the slave chains off our minds. I see myself beyond prison. I'll continue to strive for peace, patience, and perseverance. It is why I want to continue reading N&L. I am hungry for ripe fruits.

**Prisoner
South Carolina**

While it's true that N&L gives prisoners accurate information on freedom struggles around the world, prisoners who write to N&L give hope as they reveal their freedom struggles in the system of injustice, share N&L with other prisoners, and start discussions in their prisons. The "reader's view" from Robert Taliaferro in the June-July issue reinforces the way N&L is a needed part of the struggle for human liberation—and does its part in terms understandable to the "everyday" human being, who is the freedom struggler.

**Yumi
Chicago**

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Van der Linden's *Western Marxism and the USSR*

Western Marxism and the Soviet Union: A Survey of Critical Theories and Debates Since 1917, by Marcel van der Linden (Haymarket Books, 2009).

The "Russian Question"—shorthand for the analysis of the class nature of the USSR—was a dividing line in the international Marxist movement no less important than that of attitudes toward the outbreak of World War I in August 1914. The question was at the root of a major split in U.S. Trotskyism in 1940, played an important role in attempts to give the Chinese side of the Sino-Soviet split a theoretical content, and continues to have relevance more than a decade after the collapse of "actually existing socialism" in debates over the possibility of organizing society on a non-capitalist basis.

Marcel van der Linden of the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam, has made a major contribution to the study of Marxist analyses of the USSR in his book *Western Marxism and the Soviet Union: A Survey of Critical Theories and Debates Since 1917*, revised and enlarged from a 1992 German edition.

Van der Linden's book is an exhaustive review of critical analyses of the social and economic structure of the USSR, stretching from the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution of 1917 to the final dissolution of the system in 1991. One of the great merits of the work is the presentation of a large number of non-English language arguments to an English-speaking audience, although the author excludes Asian and African theorists from his scope.

NEW PERSPECTIVE GAINED

Readers of the book will gain a new perspective on such major figures of international Marxism as Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Kautsky, as well as an introduction to arguments of obscure but important theorists such as Ryan Worrall, an Australian Trotskyist who published an analysis of the USSR as a capitalist state in V.F. Calverton's *Modern Quarterly* in 1939. Van der Linden also includes at least one important thinker not usually associated with the debate, the philosopher Simone Weil.

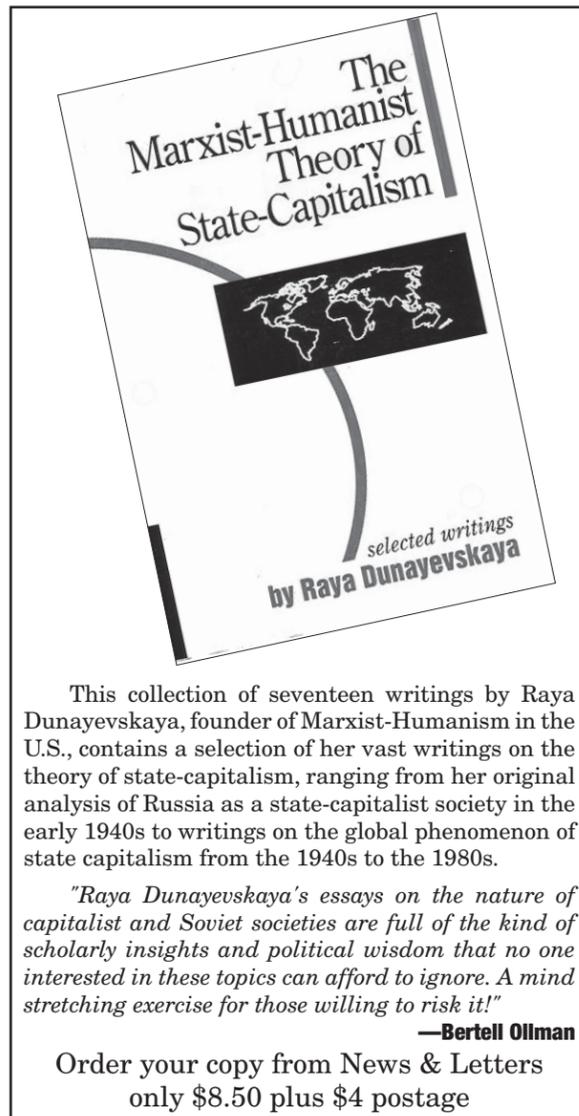
Van der Linden groups the arguments into four rough categories: theories of the USSR as a new type of society, theories of state capitalism, the degenerated workers' state theory, and other theories not as readily classifiable.

The theory of the USSR as a product of a new mode of production originated with a book published in French in 1939 by the Italian theorist Bruno Rizzi called *The Bureaucratization of the World*. The basic thrust of Rizzi's argument was that the USSR had become a society not foreseen by Marx, one that was neither capitalist nor socialist, but instead characterized by class domination despite the absence of private ownership of the means of production—a development he called bureaucratic collectivism. Trotsky, the chief proponent of the degenerated workers' state position, was harshly critical of Rizzi's theory, but it took on a life of its own among a section of U.S. Trotskyists and contributed to a 1940 split that gave birth to the Workers Party.

STATE-CAPITALIST THEORY IN CONTENTION

The American version (or versions, to be more precise) of the bureaucratic collectivism theory, championed by Max Shachtman and Joe Carter, were in turn

fiercely criticized within the Workers Party by Raya Dunayevskaya and C.L.R. James, who had independently reached an analysis of the USSR as a society dominated by all the economic laws present in the private-property form of capitalism. Dunayevskaya pointed out that the adherents of bureaucratic collectivism were, like Trotsky, disoriented by their focus on the absence of private ownership of the means of production, rather



This collection of seventeen writings by Raya Dunayevskaya, founder of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S., contains a selection of her vast writings on the theory of state-capitalism, ranging from her original analysis of Russia as a state-capitalist society in the early 1940s to writings on the global phenomenon of state capitalism from the 1940s to the 1980s.

"Raya Dunayevskaya's essays on the nature of capitalist and Soviet societies are full of the kind of scholarly insights and political wisdom that no one interested in these topics can afford to ignore. A mind stretching exercise for those willing to risk it!"

—Bertell Ollman

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than the relations prevailing at the point of production.

Unfortunately, Van der Linden devotes to neither Dunayevskaya nor James the space each deserves in his account of the theory of state capitalism. He instead defaults to the version of the theory put forth later by Tony Cliff and his followers. Van der Linden does however give Dunayevskaya credit for rooting her theory directly in Marx's critique of capitalism, most profoundly in her recognition that despite what Rizzi and other critics thought, Marx had indeed allowed for the theoretical possibility of what had taken place in the USSR. She noted that Marx wrote explicitly in volume I of *Capital* of the ultimate limit of the centralization of capital: "In a given society, this limit would be reached if all social capital were concentrated in the

same hands whether those of an individual capitalist or those of a single capitalist society." Furthermore, what is most important for Marx in Dunayevskaya's view is that "this extreme development would in no way change the law of motion of that society."

DOES LAW OF VALUE OPERATE IN THE USSR?

Dunayevskaya's analysis differs sharply from that of Cliff, who held both that the law of value was not in effect in the USSR and that economic competition took place between the USSR and the rest of the capitalist world solely in the form of the arms race. Dunayevskaya maintained that the USSR was capitalist precisely because the law of value prevailed in the economy. Because this was so, the socially necessary labor time required to produce commodities was the same inside Russian factories as it was in U.S. ones. As she wrote in an analysis published in 1946, "The value of capital in the surrounding world is constantly depreciating which means that the value of capital inside the capitalist society [Russia] is constantly depreciating." This reality made the statified economy of the USSR every bit as unstable as the economies of the private capitalist world.

The treatment of the state capitalist theory in the book would have been greatly improved had the author taken up Dunayevskaya's criticism of a major statement of Stalinist economics, "Teaching of Economics in the Soviet Union," which was translated by her and published in the *American Economic Review* in 1944. The Russian piece explicitly details the identity of capitalism with socialism in Stalinist practice and attempts to obfuscate the relationship with a thoroughgoing distortion of Marx's concepts.

Van der Linden revisits Cliff and his co-thinkers throughout his book as the sole developers of the theory of state capitalism throughout the post-war years, ignoring Dunayevskaya's many contributions after her analyses of the 1940s. In this period, after what she considered to be her groundbreaking studies of the philosophical Absolutes of Hegel in 1953, Dunayevskaya came to believe that reaching a correct analysis of the Russian economy was inadequate without an accompanying development of the philosophic content of Marxism itself, rooted in the humanism of Marx and the mass revolts of the post-war period. Many of these relevant texts can be read in the 1991 collection *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*.

The importance of the Russian question persists because a serious discussion of it brings one to a direct confrontation with the categories of Marx's critique of political economy. Although the particular forms of appearance of capitalism in the USSR have long since dissipated, studying them can bring us to a better understanding of the essential reality behind them. Despite its drawbacks, Van der Linden's book is a welcome contribution to that effort.

BLACK/REDVIEW

continued from p. 1

"quality education" by threats of physical annihilation. Just outside of Boston, Harvard University seeks, by intellectual absolutism, to deny any intellectual understanding of the role of Black people in U.S. history and culture.

Harvard is not the only university engaged in the retrogressive act of curtailing and disciplining their Black Studies departments, in the name of academic efficiency and scholarship.

If an analogy could be drawn of this situation, it would be akin to what happened during the Reconstruction period. At that time, the Black Revolution was left incomplete and the reactionary planter class was able to reassert its powers.

BLACK REVOLT OF THE 1960s

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

Once again we face a period of reaction. This time it is the Nixon-Ford "reconstruction" that would roll back the gains which the mass Black revolts achieved. The extensiveness of this racism caused elements of the "new Left" to consider that the near lynching of a Black man in South Boston during a school integration protest, was "really a protest against big government!"

Our only hope is for the emergence of a new Black mass movement, not from where it began in the 1960s, but from a new beginning, one that will forge a unity of Blacks, workers, women, oppressed minorities, intellectuals, students and all others who are necessary to end capitalism in the U.S. and build toward a society that recognizes no one is free, until all are free!

Torture in Chicago under Jon Burge

Chicago—A panel discussion on "Torture in Chicago: The Burge Case" was held at Roosevelt University. It drew necessary connections between the racist police brutality that has existed in Chicago and the direct relation it has to imperialist wars abroad.

John Conroy, a *Chicago Reader* reporter who has covered the Burge case, described Burge's background in high school ROTC, how he became involved in torture in the army and his record of torture while in the Chicago Police Department. The number of his torture victims stands at 108. Twenty five men remain in prison on the basis of questionable confessions.

The city admitted torture had occurred by 1994, but a special prosecutor wasn't appointed until 2002. In 2006, the prosecutor concluded that although torture had occurred the statute of limitations had passed. In 2008 a Federal indictment was issued by U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald. Burge continues to receive full pension benefits.

Darrell Cannon described his experiences as a victim of torture: "I was tortured 24 years ago, 1983. A group of Detectives kicked in my front door. They said, 'We have scientific way of interrogating N—s.' They took me to an isolated area near the Wisconsin Steel Mill, drove the police car into a big pipe while another car blocked the entrance. First they tried to hang me from my arms while my hands were cuffed behind my back. They couldn't do it. Then they took a shotgun—we were in a rural area, he said, 'No one can see or hear you.' He put the shotgun in my mouth and said, 'Go ahead, blow that N—'s head off.'

"They took me to the side of the car, put the gun

to the side of my head. Then put me in the car, pulled my pants and shorts down, made me lay down and put the cattle prod to my genitals. They kept doing this. To me it was like eternity. So barbaric. They tried to step on my feet to keep me from kicking. All three enjoyed everything they did. Not one of them looked like they should maybe slow down. My name was not Darrell Cannon, it was N—, N—, N—, N—. They enjoyed it so much they lost track of time, kept at it past their quitting time.

"You would say anything to stop the torture. Even if you weren't guilty, you became guilty. Today I feel just as bitter as I did in 1983. People ask if I hate the detectives that tortured me? Yes, I do! I was locked up for 24 years, I lost my Mother, Father—all my family members, I was never allowed to see them one more time. The system tried to drive me crazy. The last nine years I was in Tamms Supermax. Everything you do, you do by yourself. Having lost all my family to the Death Angels, and not seeing them one last time, I live with that every day and that fuels my hatred of these detectives. I have a reason to have nothing but hatred.

"But I wouldn't allow that torture to turn into anything violent. You can't say you 'serve and protect,' when you torture. I channel my hatred by asking you to get involved. I refuse not to speak up.

"They didn't release me even after all the charges were dropped as the parole board stepped in and it took an additional three years of struggle. It happened April 30th. Today is my anniversary of being home. If you don't stay the course you won't get no justice."

—Gerry Emmett

Honduras: coup and resistance

The military-Liberal Party-business elite coup that deposed President Manuel Zelaya in the middle of the night on June 28 has yet to run its course. What is key at the present moment is the ongoing resistance within Honduras that has taken a number of creative forms. As well, there is the looming presence of the U.S. (See accompanying article, below.)

The coup leaders immediately imposed martial law, closed broadcast stations, arrested journalists and hundreds of demonstrators and shot protesters, murdering two. Coup leader Roberto Micheletti proclaimed himself President, but is in effect the new dictator. Negotiations in Costa Rica broke down quickly as Micheletti refused to consider Zelaya's return as President.

The Honduras military and the Right had proclaimed for months that Zelaya wanted to impose a "Hugo Chavez" solution. Using the excuse that Zelaya "violated the Constitution" by asking for a consultative vote on possible changes to the constitution, the coup was carried out. It is not Chavez's influence that the business elite, the established Party and Church hierarchies fear; it is their own Honduran masses, living in deep poverty and social instability for decades. In Zelaya they saw someone who at least was willing to listen to their concerns and begin to push for some incremental changes in their lives.

The crucial turning point that the coup birthed is not the imposition of the right-wing dictatorial rule enforced by the military and the police. Rather, it is the mobilization of the masses in opposition to the coup. One saw it in the thousands upon thousands who streamed to the airport to await the arrival of Zelaya. The military blocked the runway, and fired into the demonstrators. Two were killed, including 19-year-old Isis Obed Murillo, shot in the back of the head. As a *Miami Herald* headline proclaimed: "Honduran teen's slaying propels youth movement."

The July 13 article noted: "The teenager's name and the images of his bloody body being carried away from the scene have now become a rallying point for those against the post-Zelaya government. Graffiti bearing Isis's name has been spray-painted on city walls with words calling for Zelaya's return. 'He was just a kid standing up for his rights,' said José Miguel Otero, 23, at a recent pro-Zelaya march down one of Tegucigalpa's main streets. 'His sacrifice has now given others like me the courage to continue standing up for what we believe in.'...Just a day after Zelaya's removal, [Isis] started making the roughly 30-mile journey to

central Tegucigalpa to join the Zelaya rallies."

The struggle has involved workers, particularly teachers, women, and many different citizens' groups. All have come together in blockading streets and highways throughout Honduras. Thousands have participated in these unarmed protests, often met by the armed state. Many teachers' unions have suspended classes and are striking. One leader, Lina Pineda noted, "Besides suspending classes, we are going to block roads, because the resistance will continue. We are completely united, and we are not going to stop until the coup-mongers leave."

Juan Barahona, a founder and leader of the National Front Against the Coup, said: "The other thing we can't give up is our right to hold a constitutional assembly. That's a right we have been fighting for over these past days of actions that we won't give up." A call for a constitutional assembly lies at the heart of the differences between the wealthy oligarchy, backed by the Armed Forces, and the farmer, worker and Indigenous organizations that look to change the constitution to guarantee a more just distribution of wealth in the sharply unequal nation.

Women have been very active in the protests. In the capital, Tegucigalpa, thousands

of demonstrators protested in front of the Honduran Women's Institute, which coup officials had taken over. A report from Rights Action, a solidarity group working inside Honduras, reported on the actions to protect President Zelaya's home: "On July 17, when townspeople [of Catacamas] learned that the military had surrounded the president's family house, more than 4,000 protesters marched to the house to take it back. When confronted by the crowd, the 50 or so soldiers quietly retreated. Since then, the pro-democracy movement in Catacamas has maintained a constant vigil at the president's residence. The home has become a symbol of popular resistance. Hundreds of people from communities around the state of Olancho gather here daily to guard the property and wait anxiously for the return of President Zelaya. Military planes and police helicopters circle in the skies above the crowd—an ominous reminder of the powers they're confronting."

Certainly support for the return of Zelaya is a central demand of the protests. But the social movements inside Honduras today are reaching for more than a restoration of his presidency. They are looking for and acting to bring forth a new beginning in Honduran society.

—Eugene Walker



100,000 marched to the airport in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, July 5 to protest the coup and welcome President Zelaya's attempted return.

James Rodriguez / mmmundo.org

Honduras and the U.S.: long, tragic history

The military coup currently being played out in Honduras brings to the fore the history of U.S. military occupations and the political-economic domination of Central America in general, and Honduras in particular. Though the Obama administration critiqued the coup—which did mark a change from the century-plus U.S. role in Central America—its response has been tepid. One segment of U.S. aid, \$16.5 million in military aid, has been suspended.

But security aid, \$42 million in development aid, and training for Honduran military officers in the U.S.'s infamous School of the Americas (renamed Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation), continue. It remains to be seen how serious the U.S. is in mobilizing its dominant influence to roll back this coup. While the new administration may not have played any direct role in allowing the coup to go forward and may even have opposed its implementation, the greater truth is that a century-plus of U.S. imperialist actions in Honduras laid the ground.

- The Spanish-American War of 1898 opened nearly 25 years of active military presence in Honduras. It coincided with the economic invasion by the Standard Fruit Company followed by the United Fruit Company. The U.S. Marines were sent in more than half a dozen times from 1903 to 1925 to protect U.S. business interests, prop up or manipulate corrupt governments, oppress any opposition. Complete control of banana exports, arranging huge land holdings, domination of the railroad, and the Marines, all characterized Honduran-U.S. relations.

- A new assault began after World War II. In Guatemala, a U.S.-CIA coup was carried out against a moderately progressive government in 1954. The U.S. saw Central America and the Caribbean only through its myopic anti-Communist lens. This could not halt the revolution in Cuba, nor Central American revolts. When Reagan took office, he was determined to destroy the Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua as well as back

the Rightist military and its death squads in El Salvador's civil war. Honduras was key to Reagan's Central American militarism. In 1982, U.S.-backed Nicaraguan counter-revolutionaries, or "Contras," launched operations to bring down Nicaragua's Sandinista government from Honduran territory. U.S.-run training camps against Salvadoran revolutionaries were also put in place. Between 1981 and 1985, U.S. military aid to Honduras escalated from \$4 million to over \$77 million. A number of Honduran military officers involved in the coup were trained in the School of the Americas attended by hundreds upon hundreds of Latin American military over the years. It would take most of the 1990s to even partially de-militarize Honduras.

- A new "invasion" of Honduras began by the mid-1980s in the form of neoliberal economic policies. The export economy, with its maquiladoras (assembly plants in free-trade zones), particularly manufacturing knit and woven apparel with dirt-cheap labor costs was the new future. The basic economic framework of the original banana plantation was repeated with new products, but with the same reliance on the sweated, exploited, underpaid labor of women and men. A 2008 UN report said seven of ten Hondurans were living in poverty. Unable to make a living in their own country, an estimated 800,000 now reside in the U.S.

It is in the context of this history and present reality that the Honduran workers, peasants, Afro-Hondurans, youth, and women have been struggling to change their conditions of life and labor. They tried to do so by electing Manuel Zelaya with his call for "citizen power." Yet even so mild a democratic movement for change threatened the old oligarchy, feeding from the neoliberal economic trough, and their military enforcers. Where lies the historical responsibility of the U.S. for shaping such a poverty-ridden, unequal and unfree reality? And what will the U.S. do at this moment of coup and popular outrage against it?

—E.W.

Constant toxic danger

Williston, S.C.—A toxic fog of ammonia leaked from the Tanner Industries plant near Swansea, S.C., on July 15, killing Jacqueline Patrice Ginyard, 38, sending seven people to hospitals and prompting evacuation of nearby homes.

It brought back memories of Jan. 6, 2005, in Graniteville, S.C., when two trains derailed, releasing 90 tons of chlorine gas. Nine people died, at least 250 were made sick, and 5,400 residents within a mile of the crash site were forced to evacuate for nearly two weeks.

These dangers are all across South Carolina. Toxic waste sites are most harmful to our children and our elderly. Out of sight, out of mind. The people of Williston, 20 to 30 miles from both Swansea and Graniteville, live their lives in constant danger. The contaminated Savannah River nuclear site, Vogtle nuclear power plant and many others are close to Williston. Until the Department of Health and Environmental Control or Region IV Environmental Protection Agency steps up to educate these people on the dangers of these chemicals and radiation, most people in Williston, as well as many in South Carolina, live in darkness. Many do not understand that 20 to 30 miles is next door. We live in a Third World country environment.

—African-American correspondent

QUEERNOTES

by Elise

Israeli Gays and their supporters rallied in Tel Aviv, Israel, Aug. 2 against the worst homophobic attack ever in that country. The day before, a masked gunman murdered two and wounded ten people at a GLBT youth center. The gunman remains at large.

* * *

A colorful and festive Pride Parade in New Delhi, India, in late June was attended by more than 1,500 Gays, Lesbians and their supporters. They were anticipating the July 2 ruling by the Delhi High Court decriminalizing gay sex, which applies only in New Delhi, but could impact all India. This ruling overturns the law banning homosexual sex established 150 years ago during Great Britain's oppressive colonial rule.

* * *

Transgender people should have equal benefits from the government, Pakistan's Supreme Court recently ruled. Income support programs and social welfare departments for those in need and protection by police from violence were among the kinds of benefits specifically mentioned in the Supreme Court's opinion.

* * *

In the U.S., hate crimes legislation inclusive of sexual orientation, gender identity and disability looks like it will be signed into law. The legislation was attached as an amendment to a Senate Department of Defense bill, but President Obama threatened to veto it if funding for F-22 fighter jets wasn't deleted. The Senate deleted the funding.

* * *

An Equality March on Washington, D.C., demanding full equality will take place on Oct. 11 to coincide with National Coming Out Day. The March was announced by Cleve Jones, a protégé of Harvey Milk and founder of the NAMES Project/AIDS memorial quilt, and is being organized by Equality Across America.

* * *

In Eastern Europe, a region notorious for homophobia, newly elected President Dalia Grybauskaitė of Lithuania condemned the Law on Protection of Minors, which bans materials about homosexuality. Former President Valdas Adamkus vetoed the bill, calling it "a clear breach of the EU's (European Union's) fundamental rights and principles." But Lithuania's legislature overrode Adamkus's veto.

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Recession spawns unemployment, suffering and revolt

continued from p. 1

vestors had driven the stock market up 30% from the end of 2008 lows. Many of the business reports that had stoked the misplaced optimism came from major banks—which had recently taken huge cash infusions from TARP, the Troubled Assets Relief Program, to head off a possible complete collapse of the capitalist economy. Increased profits at non-financial companies are the result of cost-cutting measures, such as layoffs, rather than expansion or increased output.

Recently, several large banks, Goldman Sachs, J.P. Morgan, American Express, and Morgan Stanley—eager to escape federal limits on compensation for top executives—declared themselves healthy enough to exit TARP and were granted permission by the Obama administration. Yet, as Eric Dash noted June 10 in *The New York Times*:

"...after banks return the TARP money, the administration will forfeit much of its leverage over them. With that loss goes a rare opportunity to overhaul the industry."

While May had marked the fourth consecutive decline in the rate of monthly job losses, in June such losses rebounded to 467,000 from May's 345,000. The U.S. unemployment rate hit 9.5%, a 26-year high. More telling, the average work week fell to 33 hours per week, the lowest since records began in 1964.

Other bad news includes an increase in the number of long-term unemployed, to 4.4 million, also an all-time high. If laid-off workers not counted as looking for employment or those who have settled for part-time work are counted, the unemployment rate for June was 16.5%. In the July report nearly 250,000 more jobs disappeared; the unemployment rate dipped slightly to 9.4%, only because 422,000 more people were no longer counted in the workforce. Since late 2007, 6.7 million jobs have been lost, 5% of the total, the worst decline since the Great Depression.

The full impact of the Great Recession on Black and Latino workers has yet to be acknowledged. In the last year, official unemployment among Blacks increased from 8.9% to 13.6% compared to the increase for whites from 4.8% to 8.2%.

HOUSING MARKET COLLAPSE

If job losses are the core of the current economic crisis, more visible has been the housing market collapse. Only the logic of the capital/labor relation can

explain the apparently irrational actions of capital and the state in the housing markets. The Obama administration's major program, "Making Home Affordable," aimed at stemming foreclosures. Beginning in April, home mortgage servicers signed on to the program, wherein they received a \$1,000 fee for each loan they modified. But figures for April, May and June showed a decline in modifications. Analysis of 3.5 million subprime loans, written in 2005-2007 by the biggest banks, showed that 2009 modifications peaked in February and then declined in all but one month since.

In June \$45 million was lost in write-downs of principal, interest, or fees; \$4.5 billion was lost in foreclosures. Alan M. White, who analyzed this data, said: "There is 100 times as much money lost in foreclosure sales as there was in writing down balances in modifications—this is not rational economic behavior" (Gretchen Morgenson, "So Many Foreclosures, So Little Logic," 7/5/09 *The New York Times*). **The conclusion is that large banks have no confidence in the ability of U.S. workers to make their house payments, and have more confidence that the same workers will—as taxpayers—bail the banks out for the losses that continue to fester and accumulate on their books.**

Capitalists remain confident that the socially produced wealth will continue to be transferred at an accelerating rate to those Marx called "the trustees of bourgeois society."

This transfer of wealth will continue to involve even the unemployed workers, through house foreclosures and loss of equity.

MARX'S THEORY: LABOR TURNS INTO OBJECT

Marx worked out his theory of capitalist society, not only the exploitation of workers for the material and intellectual advantages of the non-workers, but the actual transformation of labor into an object, which served as the foundation for the predominance of things over people.

Under the logic of capitalism people exist to serve things, not things to serve human interests. In this sense, with capitalist social relations, the logic has been impeccable—"real estate," as a commodity, is a mere form of appearance of capital, the bankers and state functionaries its "personifications."

Given these conditions, the achievements of the workers and supporters at Stella D'Oro factory in the Bronx reveal workers' determination to fight back, us-



Workers, most from West Africa, protested Scoop NYC, the trendy retail store in SoHo, in July against racial discrimination and labor violations including refusal to pay overtime.

Diane Krauthamer / NLN

Nuclear reactors threaten civilization

Los Angeles—After the 2000 Presidential election, the Bush administration campaigned to restart building nuclear power plants in the U.S. and abroad. Since the 1979 near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island reactor in Pennsylvania and the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl, Ukraine, the nuclear power industry has built few reactors. The Chernobyl meltdown devastated 100,000 square miles of land and water in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus with highly toxic radiation, causing massive deaths, diseases and abnormalities. The breadbaskets in those areas have been contaminated with radiation forever.

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

OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FAVORS NUKES

Maurine Doerken's *One Bomb Away* listed 34 nuclear plant accidents from 1952 to 2000. Helen Caldicott, in *Nuclear Power Is Not the Answer*, shows how uranium mining, milling, transporting, enriching, construction of reactors, storage of wastes, etc., uses massive amounts of energy, mostly fossil fuel which emits greenhouse gas. In addition, uranium enrichment emits huge amounts of chlorofluorocarbon, a gas which destroys the ozone layer in the stratosphere. The ozone layer filters out the sun's deadly UV rays.

During Secretary of State Clinton's July trip to India, it was reported that India bought two nuclear power plants to be built by GE or Westinghouse Corporation. And recently Energy Secretary Steven Chu announced that his Department would hurry the approval for \$18.5 billion in federal loan guarantees for utilities building nuclear plants. The Obama administration is favoring nuclear power over solar and wind power.

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has received 17 applications to build 26 new power plants and many applications for uranium mining permits.

There are large amounts of uranium beneath the thousands of acres on and around the lands of the Na-

vajo Nation (Diné) and other Indian pueblos in northwestern New Mexico. The Navajo Nation, other American Indian tribes and the Multicultural Alliance for a Safe Environment (MASE) are fighting to block uranium mining. MASE is composed of Hispanics, American Indians and Anglos, from five grassroots organizations.

Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., stated, "I don't believe there is any safe technology that can be used to mine uranium. Many of my people died because of mining of uranium.... It is devastating, it has wrecked the lives of our families....The tribe will continue to fight the state and federal agencies that grant permits to uranium companies despite the opposition of the American Indian Countries."

Linda Evers, a former miner, miller and ore hauler, is a member of MASE who contracted degenerative bone disease. She said, "My daughter was born with no hips at all..." Edith Hood, who lives in the area and contracted lymphoma in 2006, implored Congress to halt the NRC's approval of new mines. She spoke of pulmonary fibrosis and other illnesses in the area.

Long-term exposure to uranium (uranium tailings are left in huge piles after milling) or its by-product, radium, may cause anemia, cataracts, bone cancer, etc. The Dinés and MASE also oppose uranium mining because it contaminates springs, rivers and aquifers, their source of drinking water and crop irrigation.

NUCLEAR POWER IS NEVER SAFE

Nuclear power plants fuel global warming. The process of building and running them is not safe, nor has the problem of how to safely dispose of tons of deadly nuclear waste with hundreds of thousands of years of half-life been solved. A 1,000-megawatt nuclear reactor produces 500 pounds of plutonium yearly. Ten pounds is enough fuel for an atomic bomb.

Iran's nuclear program raises the tension between Israel and Iran. North Korea's nuclear program raises tensions in the North Korea/Japan relationship and endangers the world even more. As Raya Dunayevskaya stated in the July 1961 *N&L*, "The new weapons system is not just a new form of 'blitzkrieg.' Rather, it threatens the extinction of civilization altogether." —Basho

ing whatever resources they have (see p. 3). Mike Filippo, who spent 11 months on the picket lines while participating in myriad community forums and protests, said:

"It was tough—for many going from \$700-\$800 a week in wages to the \$400 in unemployment benefits. Even the unemployment benefits were the result of a fight. We were the first group of workers to claim benefits on the grounds that the company had hired temporary replacement workers. A lot of us would have lost our homes—there are married couples that have been working here for as long as 30 or so years. We made sure everyone knew how to use every protection—including programs for mortgage payment reductions to avoid foreclosure—but even these don't work forever."

HEALTHCARE WORKERS ATTACKED

While the Obama Administration, and many activists, prepare for the "final battle" over health insurance reform, healthcare workers may be preparing to pay a high price in deteriorating working conditions, unemployment, and cuts in pay and benefits. For instance, a July 20 "settlement" between 1199 East, affiliated with Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the League of Voluntary Hospitals and Homes of New York nullifies a 3% raise due this year and part of another raise in 2010.

Even though healthcare is one sector that is expected to expand, so are the attacks on healthcare workers. After more than a decade of protracted struggles for quality care in organized campaigns and in persistent everyday fights over staffing levels, healthcare workers at Kaiser HMO on the West Coast are being hit with rumors of forced reductions in the face of the new economic climate and projected cuts due to healthcare "reform." In the healthcare workplace the dominance of capital over living labor is reflected in the shift in the healthcare debate from one of providing universal care to starving that sector of resources in order to meet the needs of capital. (See "Workshop Talks," page 1.)

On July 24 the federal minimum hourly wage was increased to \$7.25—about \$15,000 a year. A recent report from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Tomorrow's Jobs," indicates that half of the ten occupations expected to add the most jobs through 2016, e.g., retail sales positions and home health aides, will be "very low paying," a maximum of \$22,000 a year. Three more of the highest growth occupations are to be "low-paying," up to only \$31,000 a year.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RECESSION?

Everything points to a "jobless recovery" like no other. Workers are experiencing soaring unemployment, reduced hours, and forced part-time jobs. These represent involuntary "free time," the result of what Marx called "value production"—in which the self-development of people and material well-being are nothing but its by-product. These kinds of increases in free time are all about restoring, preserving, and perpetuating the capitalist mode of production. The worst thing we can do, however, is to stop there, and fail to follow the logic of capital to its conclusion, to Marx's look ahead to post-capitalist society:

*"It is one of the civilizing aspects of capital that it extorts...surplus labor in a manner [as surplus value] and in conditions that are more advantageous to social relations and to the creation of elements for a new and higher formation than was the case under the earlier forms of slavery, serfdom, etc. Thus on the one hand it leads towards a stage at which compulsion and the monopolization of social development (with its material and intellectual advantages) by one section of society at the expense of another disappears; on the other hand it creates the material means and the nucleus for relations that permit this surplus labor to be combined, in a higher form of society, with a greater reduction of the overall time devoted to material labor... The true realm of freedom, the development of human powers as an end in itself, begins beyond it [labor in material production, realm of necessity], though it can only flourish with this realm of necessity as its basis. The reduction of the working day is the basic prerequisite" (Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, pp. 958-959).*

The post-capitalist dialectic of the "realm of necessity" as the basis for the realm of freedom that Marx describes is intrinsic to the social revolution in which, "the individual [becomes] a **social** individual with a new mass-power-form in cooperative labor so that [the workers' plan], as contrasted to the despotic plan of capitalism, meant the accomplishment of a task 'with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most adequate to their human nature and most worthy of it'" (Dunayevskaya, *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism*, p. 96). Clearly this dialectic of time for human self-development and free time is the total opposite of the reduction of time in production we see in capitalism's direction now in the miseries of deteriorating working conditions and ever-increasing unemployment.

The continuing struggle in Iran

On the 40th day marking the murder of Neda Agha Soltan and others who were slain, tens of thousands of Iranians came out in Tehran to mourn and protest in a bold and creative display of people's power. Despite scorching 100 degree heat and the ban on public gatherings and road closures set up by the police leading to Beheshteh Zahra mega cemetery, people were determined to get there. They came early, by metro, taxi, on foot, and even in wheelchairs for a 4:00 PM event. Many were turned away. The security forces, too, were present in full gear and ready to battle, prompting the gathering crowd to chant, "We are children of war, fight and we'll fight back."

While Neda's mother was barred from attending, the mother of another slain youth had this to say: "Our children died in the name of freedom. Those who killed them were cowards." People were chanting, "Neda is not dead, the government is dead," and "Referendum, Referendum, this is our demand." Then they started chanting against the "supreme leader" and for his overthrow. Basiji forces, using tear gas, batons and

even live ammunition, attacked the demonstrators, wounding and arresting many. All this is captured on video. You can see it on: (<http://www.youtube.com/user/onlymehdi#play/uploads/70/Spft7nJhT94>).

This event was to be followed by a rally at Tehran's Grand Mosalla Center. The government denied a permit for it but people came regardless. The area resembled an occupied military zone. Streets were closed, helicopters hovered overhead, and tear gas was in the air. And yet this turned out to be the most successful display of public opposition lasting late into the night, and even then, only moved to the rooftops. As one eyewitness said: "I saw a look in many people's faces that I had not seen since the week after the election; a look that said 'we can win this.'" Amidst the beatings, people were holding



In San Francisco on the international day of solidarity with the movement in Iran on July 25 up to 6,000 people, many young and deeply moved, came out in support of those who are struggling for freedom and democracy. The rally had dozens of co-sponsors including Shirin Ebadi and Delores Huerta as well as many organizations. Openly gay State Assemblyman Tom Ammiano drew the biggest reaction with his simple speech: AAZAADI! AAZAADI! (FREEDOM! FREEDOM!).

—Nazanin Afarini

their ground and chanting, "Down with this hypocritical government!"

The movement is constantly evolving and adapting, both to find an open venue to protest and to thwart the security apparatus. Thus, instead of a single location, demonstrations were widespread throughout the city. They stretched the security forces thin from the cemetery, an hour's drive south to the center of the city. In a slogan, reminiscent of the 1979 Revolution, but adapted for today, people were calling for "Independence, Freedom, Iranian Republic." Moreover, protests were nationwide and held simultaneously in Shiraz, Isfahan, Mashad, Rasht, Ahwaz, Arak and other cities.

—Raha

Free Iran protest

Los Angeles—On July 25, 700 to 1,000 supporters of the two-month-long massive green wave movement in Iran gathered at UCLA in a "Global Day of Action" to "stop the disappearance, stop the torture, stop the killing" by the government. There were poets, artists, singers and speakers who urged freeing all political prisoners in the struggle for human rights. Among the supporters were women, men, youth and elderly and contingents of Amnesty International and Code Pink.

Other events in the past two months here included a July 12 demonstration at the Westwood Federal Building. Two different tendencies against Ahmadinejad and Ayatollah Khamenei were present. One was Iranians for the Green Movement, with signs that read, "Free all political detainees," and a long green scroll that read, "Ahmadinejad is not Iran's president," with hundreds of signatures. Supporters came and added their names.

The competing group flew an Iranian monarchic flag (red, white and green with a symbol of a lion with a sword). Their spokesperson stated that they were for the abolition of the Islamic Republic in Iran.

—Supporter

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

"Marx no sooner relegated the history of theory to the end of Capital, and began to look at the history of production relations, than he of necessity created a new dialectic instead of applying one... A new dialectic flowed out of the labor process."

See literature ad, page 7.

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Imprisoned for protesting

Editor's note: Hugh Farrell and Gina Tiga Wertz were arrested and indicted for racketeering—a charge originally intended to target the mob which carries a maximum 12-year sentence—for allegedly "conspiring" to engage in tree sits, talk to farmers, participate in non-violent civil disobedience, and for making an inflammatory blog post. They were protesting the expansion of the I-69 NAFTA superhighway. Below we print an edited article from Hugh.

Bloomington, Ind.—In the months since our arrest here on April 24, I've felt more overwhelmed by your solidarity than by the State's persecution. During some moments of isolation, times when repression is so palpable I can barely breathe, the actions of many have kept me strong and grounded. Despite the efforts of the authorities, I've remained a part of my communities.

It's these relationships and connections that are really under attack, and in an ever more coordinated way. The State has created a red herring when it claims that theatrical demonstrations or civil disobedience are the biggest obstacles to the construction of I-69. What the State really fears are many people sitting down together to begin, however awkwardly or painfully, making sense of a highway project that no lay person was ever meant to grasp.

The State fears those moments when marginalized young people like me, seemingly disillusioned with everything, break out of our isolation and begin talking with people very different from ourselves, with farmers and others, about the ways I-69 will impact our lives. It's this potential for communication that is under attack, that the police call a "racket." When they say "conspiracy," they mean our capacity to breathe together.

Being legally ensnared has cut off many of my relationships, especially those with people most socially distant from me already, primarily because so much of my time is spent dealing with legal issues. This is, of course, one of the goals of repression. Others have been subject to persecution alongside myself—Tiga, the 16 others charged with actual blockades, Chad Frazier who was sentenced to two months for I-69 resistance, and many others who are caught up in similar government harassment.

I've retained the services of lawyers and Tiga has done the same. This means that the vast bulk of money raised since we were bailed out has gone to legal expenses, a situation which will unfortunately remain for the next months or years. My bail conditions haven't been too onerous; that I require permission from the court to leave Indiana is the most challenging restriction, since it makes it that much more difficult to see people I love.

There has been nearly a complete news blackout on our case. It's important to counter this deliberate silence by calling attention to the case, especially its most embarrassing elements. This could be accomplished with more creativity than just sending out press releases. It's often forgotten that communication is itself a project. The extremes of silence and meaningless chatter are the preconditions for repression against Tiga and me and the basis for repression against entire social strata targeted for imprisonment.

There are many ways you can contribute to our defense. Raising funds will continue to be important (go to www.mostlyeverything.net). A more important dimension of solidarity is to continue deepening and extending relationships and discussions. The charges brought against Tiga and me are an attempt to spread silence and isolation. Let's avoid these at all costs.

—Hugh Farrell

Disabled fight discrimination

Washington, D.C.—Several of us from ADAPT were in the nation's capital on July 24 at a rally where President Obama was speaking. A few were within 40 feet of the podium. Because we were wearing ADAPT shirts, we were threatened with arrest if we did not leave. On the very day of the signing of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the President was threatening ADAPT members for speaking out for freedom and the principles of the CRPD.

Where is the freedom for people with disabilities and seniors yearning to breathe free of nursing homes and/or other institutions? Where is the freedom of speech for those people with disabilities who want liberty? If disability is not a crime, why are thousands of our people locked away, with no parole, no end to their sentences? Where are our rights?

Are we simply a crop for the nursing home and institutional providers so that they can get their dollars? Where is the justice in this picture? Obama makes it clear: dissenting voices, GO AWAY!

—ADAPT community

Kolakowski's legacy

The philosopher Leszek Kolakowski has passed away at the age of 81. Kolakowski came to the attention of the world for his prominent role in challenging the official Communists of his native Poland in the decade following the mass unrest of 1956 and the curtailment of the reforms known as the "Polish October." A collection of many of his devastating philosophic attacks, steeped in a rigorous understanding of the revolutionary humanist content of Marxism, was published in the U.S. in 1968 as *Toward a Marxist Humanism*.

Kolakowski's criticisms resulted in increasingly harsh responses from Poland's rulers. His writings were banned and he was forbidden from teaching. The repression resulted in his emigration to the West in 1968, where he was held in high regard by that part of the Left not beholden to "actually existing socialism." Raya Dunayevskaya praised in particular his book *The Alienation of Reason*, a trenchant critique of positivist trends in philosophy. Beneath its focus on the thinkers of positivism, she discerned a penetrating attack on the theory and practice of Stalinism.

Immediately upon moving to the West, however, Kolakowski began to change his interpretation of Marxism. He began a long process of adopting a conservative critical position towards Marx, even to the point of holding him responsible for aspects of what became Stalinism. Kolakowski's sympathizers were intensely disappointed and the English socialist E.P. Thompson engaged in a long polemic with Kolakowski in 1974 in the pages of *The Socialist Register*. Dunayevskaya included a sharply critical footnote on Kolakowski's development in *Philosophy and Revolution*.

Despite the trajectory of Kolakowski's intellectual career, his post-emigration work is worth reading. His 1973 essay "The Myth of Human Self-Identity" is an important discussion of what he believes to be the limitations of Marx's view of post-revolutionary society as a re-unification of the social and political spheres, or civil society and the state, divided under capitalism. The first volume of his enormous work *Main Currents of Marxism* is also a challenging and valuable contribution, particularly its first chapter, "The Origins of Dialectic." In short, one can learn more about Marxism from reading the anti-Marxist Kolakowski than one can from reading nine out of ten self-professed Marxists.

Kolakowski won great acclaim in the west, including a 1983 MacArthur Fellowship and a prestigious 2003 award for lifetime achievement from the Library of Congress. The three-volume *Main Currents of Marxism* was just republished by Norton last year. One senses that even though the prevailing liberal intellectual opinion regards Marx as a figure safely consigned to the past, there is some feeling that it is necessary to keep Kolakowski's sophisticated critiques of Marxism in circulation in the eventuality that dissatisfaction with the system results in a return not to the Marx of the Stalinists, but to the revolutionary humanist so profoundly recognized by Kolakowski in the 1950s.

—Kevin Michaels

WORLD IN VIEW

by Gerry Emmett

Workers occupied the Vestas St. Cross wind turbine factory on the Isle of Wight July 20 to Aug. 7. They are calling for the plant to be nationalized under the workers' control. Vestas is the only wind turbine factory in the UK, which has thousands of such turbines in use, and plans for increasing their number.

Some speculate that the company just wants to mothball the plant until the current economic crisis picks up and a new group of workers could be found to fill the jobs of those who are fired now.

Although it's a "green" business, Vestas has hardly been friendly to its work force. One worker described it this way: "Vestas bought out NEG Micon in 2003, and since that time things just got worse as it tried to squeeze the last drop of work out of everyone, sapping them dry. Long hours in a highly stressful environment and fear of repetitive strain injuries amongst other conditions have given it a very high staff turnover. It is extremely anti-union and some workers who have joined unions have been singled out and fired on various grounds. The nearest thing to a union was a consultation network imposed by European law, where supposedly elected representatives (but in reality hand-picked by management) attended meetings where they had no input whatsoever, and were forced to relay management *diktat* to the rest of the workers."

When management announced that the factory was stopping production at the end of July, workers began to organize among themselves. Although there was no union, there were activists present from Workers' Climate Action, the Alliance for Workers Liberty, and other left groups, and workers held a public meeting and formed a committee to plan the occupation.

There has been good community support. The closure of Vestas would be a blow to the Isle of Wight economy which otherwise might have to return to tourism. Local people and fellow Vestas workers challenged police lines to bring in food to the occupiers. The Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers and the Fire Brigades Union, among others, lent support as the struggle came

Chechnya murders

Prominent Russian human rights activist Natalya Estemirova was found dead of gunshot wounds to the head and chest hours after being kidnapped by four men in a car in the Chechen capital of Grozny on July 15. She had been investigating human rights abuses, torture and disappearances by Russian government forces.

Oleg Orlov, the head of Memorial Human Rights Center, the organization Estemirova worked for, said, "A terror campaign is being conducted in Russia—terror against people who dare say things that are uncomfortable and unpleasant for the authorities, who talk about the crimes of those in power. The highest officials of Russia in recent years and today—including Putin and Medvedev—are to blame for the creation in Chechnya of a climate of permissiveness, impunity and the carrying out of massive, grave crimes by representatives of the state."

Many victims were deeply involved in exposing and opposing Russian human rights abuses in Chechnya. In the last decade Russia has become a very dangerous place for journalists, with a list of slain that may run into the dozens. The Committee for the Protection of Journalists ranks it the third most dangerous place to be a reporter, behind only Iraq and Algeria.

UK plant occupied

to national attention.

Matt, the worker quoted above, brought out the range of issues involved here: "None of us involved in this occupation ever thought we would take part in anything like this. We quickly realized that we were at the center of a perfect storm; we had a golden opportunity to seize the factory and force the issues of green energy, massive job losses and corporate responsibility into the international spotlight. We knew we had to step up and take action, as this was bigger than all of us put together."

Although bailiffs forced an end to the occupation, the struggle continues.

Uighurs' protest

A deadly race riot in a factory in Southeast China spurred uprisings by ethnic Uighurs in their home province of Xinjiang thousands of miles away and spotlighted the long-suppressed movement for Uighur self-determination. Rumors claiming Uighur workers had raped two Chinese girls incited a mob of over a thousand ethnic Han Chinese on the night of June 25 to brutally attack Uighur workers, and beat two of them



to death, in Shaoguan at the world's largest toy factory.

When news of this atrocity reached Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, thousands of Uighurs, the Turkic people until recent times overwhelmingly dominant in the region though controlled by China's central government, began peaceful demonstrations on July 5 which targeted government facilities and shops, and cars of the ethnic Han Chinese who had poured into Urumqi and the province as a whole. In reaction, security forces and armed Han Chinese killed over 150 Uighurs, and thousands were locked up.

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

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

—Bob McGuire

Abandoning Darfur?

It was surprising to hear recently that Amnesty International was going to cease to regard their work around Darfur, in Sudan, as one of their major campaigns. But Darfur, and violence in Sudan can't be allowed to slip from the world's consciousness.

Over 2,700 villages have been destroyed in Darfur and 250,000 people have died from attacks by government troops and *janjaweed* militias. Another two million people have become refugees. The vast majority of these people are Black African Muslims. The Sudanese government is dominated by Arab Muslims. President Omar al-Bashir has been indicted for genocide by the International Criminal Court. The violence in Darfur came after years of war against the Black Africans of southern Sudan in which over a million people died.

Recent statements of support for the Sudanese regime of Omar al-Bashir by Egyptian ruling party officials illustrate some of the dynamics of the region. The U.S.-allied Egyptian government is courting Sudan as an ally in its diplomatic battles with other countries of the Nile basin, which want to modify agreements granting Egypt use of most of the Nile's water. Because of agreements made when Britain was the colonial ruler, countries like Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda have not been able to use the Nile waters.

There is of course opposition to the regime within Sudan itself. Sudanese Arab journalist and regime critic Lubna Hussein was arrested last month by the notorious Public Order Police for wearing trousers in a restaurant. She was taken into custody along with 14 other women, many of whom were flogged with ten lashes after admitting their "offense."

She has defied the religious judges and demanded her day in court. Hussein said: "Flogging is a terrible thing—very painful and a humiliation for the victim. But I am not afraid of being flogged. I will not back down. Now the eyes of the world are on this case I have a chance to draw attention to the plight of women in Sudan."

Zimbabwe evictions

Thousands of people in Harare, Zimbabwe, are facing mass evictions from their homes and market stalls, according to a report from Amnesty International. Many of the same people were already once evicted this way in President Mugabe's infamous "urban cleansing" campaign of 2005, which left over 700,000 without homes or means to live.

This comes at the same time as the first of two scheduled All-Stakeholders Conferences was held in Harare. These are part of the proposed process of drafting a new Constitution following power sharing agreements between Mugabe's ZANU-PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change whose candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, probably defeated Mugabe in the last presidential election.

The final draft Constitution is to be done by parliamentary committee. The eviction threat is a demonstration of how little has changed in some ways. The process of drafting the new Constitution is taking place over the heads of the people. This is why a number of important organizations like the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the National Union of Students are not taking part in them.

Other organizations formed the Democratic United Front for a People-Driven Constitution, including women's groups and HIV/AIDS groups as well as 16 trade unions. Their plan is to participate critically in the process and, afterward, organize to pressure the government to respect the rights to affordable food, education, healthcare and economic justice.

NEWS AND LETTERS COMMITTEES

Who We Are And What We Stand For

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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