

NEWS & LETTERS

THEORY / PRACTICE

"Human power is its own end"—Karl Marx

VOL. 53 No. 6

DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

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LEAD-EDITORIAL

WORKSHOPTALKS

Karl Marx on the shop floor

by Htun Lin

Recently, I was invited to participate in a discussion on "Capitalism, Justice, and Healthcare" at the Radical Philosophy Association (RPA) conference. Other speakers on the panel spoke about concepts of the "public good" and "fair trade." I talked about the protracted battle in the health care workplace against what Karl Marx called alienated labor.

In my daily activity on the shop floor, I see Marx's philosophy constantly come to life in a way that is different from the usual analyses of Marx's texts. I was looking forward to discussing Marx's writings with others. I left this particular panel feeling disappointed.

I thought, "Where was Marx"? There was little direct and explicit discussion of Marx's philosophy from others on this panel. This steered the general discussion toward reform and regulation.

In response, I said that I am not against regulation, but again, where was Marx? I brought the discussion back to the shop floor. I believe Marx would not have been against regulation, but, to him, that is only a small beginning, not an end in itself. Marx's life-long pursuit was going beyond politics to achieve concrete self-determination in the workplace, realizing "human power which is its own end."

Health care regulation emerged to referee battles in the health care workplace. Career legislators have codified a mountain of regulation. We are subjected to an army of regulators, overseers, watchdog agencies, governmental and non-governmental.

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BLACK/REDVIEW

Marxism and Freedom: a page in history

by John Alan

In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the publication of Raya Dunayevskaya's *Marxism and Freedom*, we print excerpts from John Alan's *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles that takes up Marxism and Freedom and the debate on the Black dimension*.

Even before Marxist-Humanism arose as a full philosophy of liberation beginning in the 1950s, Raya Dunayevskaya reconnected with Marx's position on the integrality of the African-American liberation movement to human emancipation. In the 1940s she carried on a battle in the American Trotskyist movement as she insisted on the independent nature of the Black struggle.

AN IMPORTANT OPPOSITION tendency had arisen within the American Trotskyist movement at the outbreak of World War II, known as the State-Capitalist Tendency. Its analysis was that Stalin's Russia, far from still being a workers' state, had been transformed into its opposite, a state-capitalist society. The tendency was called the Johnson-Forest Tendency (JFT) after the names of its co-leaders, C.L.R. James (Johnson) and Raya Dunayevskaya (Forest).

James and Dunayevskaya viewed state-capitalism as a new *global* stage of capitalism. Their economic analysis of this was never separated from the new forms of revolt arising against it. Specifically, they became known for their unique analysis of the independent nature of the Black struggles for freedom when, in the midst of World War II, Black uprisings erupted in Detroit and Harlem as well as a miners' strike which included large numbers of Black miners. James and Dunayevskaya wrote a series of pioneering studies on the "Negro Question" in America and its

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ONLINE: www.newsandletters.org

Outpouring for Obama points beyond election to quest for full freedom

by Olga Domanski and Franklin Dmitryev
National Co-Organizers, News and Letters Committees

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

No one, however, can dismiss the historic importance of a Black man winning the presidency of so racist a land as the U.S. has proved to be since its very birth. None could fail to be moved by the fully interracial and multiethnic millions rejoicing in Grant Park in Chicago, and dancing in the streets of both Harlem and Times Square in New York on election night. Far from simple euphoria, it seemed to manifest a totally new kind of experience. Throughout the whole campaign, the hundreds of thousands who had poured out to Obama's rallies had been seen by some pundits as portending nothing less than a "revolutionary political shift." What made it "revolutionary" was that the aspirations of those thousands who poured out to the rallies and stood in long lines on Nov. 4 were casting their ballots for a "change" that went deeper into freedom than just political freedom, to self-determination in everyday life. What distinguished the election of Obama was that it went beyond race as the determinant to the question of freedom.

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

WHAT FREEDOM MEANS

Although the theme of Obama's inauguration is said to be "A New Birth of Freedom," neither candidate spoke of "freedom" during the election campaign. President Bush has so corrupted the word in the militaristic way he used it as meaning invading another country and forcing his perversion of "freedom" on them, that it requires spelling

An invitation and an appeal

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

It is why News and Letters Committees are beginning the new year with a special series of classes in all of our locals across the country, which we are calling "CONFRONTING TODAY'S CRISES: The Marxist-Humanist return to Marx and the revolutionary abolition of Capitalism."

Our return to Marx will be through the writings of Raya Dunayevskaya, the founder of the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, which established a continuity with Marx for our age. The classes will explore what that means in philosophy, organization, and practice. It will be part of the process of working out a new book of Dunayevskaya's writings on Marx that projects Marxist-Humanism as a vital contribution for today's freedom struggles.

WE INVITE YOU TO PARTICIPATE. You can get a copy of the syllabus for the five classes, and a schedule for the places where they will be held, by calling, emailing, or writing to any of the addresses listed on page 9.

it out in your actions.

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

What is important now is "what happens after." Since winning the election, Barack Obama set two more records. One was the amazing speed with which he set up his cabinet and chose his "teams"—immediately after having asserted that there is only "one president at a time." It emphatically conveyed the need to act quickly because the crisis kept deepening. The other was the strong move to the center very nearly every one of his choices represented. Nothing better demonstrated that deliberate direction than the selection of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, given the fact that Obama's victory stemmed in large part from his vigorous opposition to the war on Iraq and his condemnation of her vote to approve the invasion. To the same "national security team" he also

named Robert Gates as the first Secretary of Defense ever held over from a different party, who for two years had been in charge of the war Obama opposed. Only the relentlessly increasing severity of the economic crisis briefly delayed the announcement of the "defense team" until after the selection of Timothy Geithner as Secretary of the Treasury and the rest of his "economic team," all of them also "experienced" players not dedicated to "change."

While a pull to the center is to be expected once the winner claims a mandate, so quickly did it raise new questions about the direction Obama was taking, that what that extraordinary election meant is in danger of being completely disregarded. Let us not miss the historic importance of Obama's win, or dismiss him as just another politician whose victory makes no difference. It is impossible to discount the percentages of youth, women, immigrants, and Black voters who participated in the election, some for the first time in their lives. But the dimension most crucial was the number of white workers who cast their vote for a Black candidate.

It is a moment that reaches back to one of the most significant chapters of American history, when the Abolitionist movement represented nothing less than a "new

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Republic Windows and Doors workers who occupied their factory demanding justice. See page 3.

At the same time as we invite you to participate, we APPEAL to you for your help to keep News & Letters going.

As we begin a new year, we have been confronted by the need to move to a new location in Chicago. **Our new address as of Jan. 1, 2009, is 228 South Wabash, Suite 230, Chicago, IL 60604, phone: (312) 431-8242.**

While we continue to function with an all-volunteer staff, the expenses for postage and the printing of the only Marxist-Humanist paper continue to grow. With the help of our readers we have published *N&L* in its print form, without a break, ever since 1955. We are not immune to the problems that have beset all print publications in the last few years, as readers have moved to the internet. Even the *Christian Science Monitor* will cease its daily print edition in 2009 after 100 years and move to internet publishing.

We publish *News & Letters* on our website, but we are committed to continuing our print edition: for prisoners who have no internet access, for taking to demonstrations like those opposed to Proposition 8 (see page 9), for handing out at factory gates so workers can find their words and ideas unseparated from theory and philosophy. Workers at Republic Windows and Doors (see article page 3) asked for all the copies of *N&L* we had when interviewing them, to take into the factory to share with their fellow sitters-in.

While our subscriptions are still only \$5 a year for six issues, our need for "sustaining subscribers" who send us additional help is crucial to keep us going.

We ask you to give as generously as you can, to help us find new subscribers, and to contribute to our donor fund for prisoners who cannot send us the price of a sub. **WE CANNOT CONTINUE WITHOUT YOUR HELP.**

Military murders and cover-ups

by Terry Moon

Abu Ghraib showed the world that those in the U.S. military torture, rape, and murder. It revealed the dehumanization of Muslim prisoners who were treated as things. Despite the huge outcry, what positively proves that nothing has changed is that the same kind of torture, rape, and murder continues to occur, the military continues to cover it up; only the victims are not alone those the military considers the enemy, but U.S. women soldiers.

Since the U.S. war on Iraq began, 97 women have died and 40%—39 of those deaths—are attributed to non-combat related injuries. Here are a few "injuries" that have become known:

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

- Army **Pfc. Tina Priest** was raped at Taji, Iraq, and found dead 10 days later of a gunshot wound. When tests revealed that she could not have pulled the trigger of her rifle with her finger, the army said she had used her toe.

- **Spc. Kamisha Block** was reported dead in Iraq of "non-combat related injury." This injury turned out to be gunshot wounds inflicted by a male soldier who had a record of three previous assaults against her. Block reported her harassment, but her harasser was only moved five minutes away from her, making it much too easy for him to murder her before killing himself.

The murder of U.S. women soldiers is not confined to Iraq. Just in the last six months at U.S. bases: **Spc. Megan Touma** was found slain in June in a Fayetteville motel room. She had been at Fort Bragg nine days. Sgt. Edgar Patino was charged. The burned remains of nurse **2nd Lt. Holley Wimunc's** body was discovered in Onslow County in July, three days after a suspicious fire was reported at her Fayetteville apartment. Her estranged husband, Marine Cpl. John Wimunc, and another Camp Lejeune Marine, have been charged. **Sgt. Christina Smith** was killed on Sept. 30 after her husband, Sgt. Richard Smith, paid another serviceman to carry out the attack.

HIDING AND STONEWALLING

What is the military brass doing? Hiding and stonewalling. That was made crystal clear when, despite being subpoenaed by Congress to testify at a hearing on sexual assault in the military called by the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Dr. Kaye Whitley, director of the Dept. of Defense's (DoD) Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), was ordered *not* to appear by DoD higher-ups. Only a letter to the Secretary of Defense threatening Whitley with contempt prompted her bosses to let her appear at a second hearing in September. After all that, Whitley was a shill for the DoD, gushing about the success of the SAPRO. Furthermore, the DoD has done everything possible to keep the statistics of rape, abuse, and outright mur-

der from being known, first by not tracking or recording them. Nevertheless, thanks to military women themselves we know that almost one in three military women is raped; that 80% of the rapes are never reported due to harassment of those who do report; and that 47% of sexual assaults reported in 2007 were dismissed and only 8% went to court-martial.

MILITARY SUSTAINS CAPITALISM

I remember when there was a national debate about women being drafted and being allowed more expanded roles in the military. Equality feminists took the ground of this society when they demanded that women serve equally with men. Other feminists, including those of us in News and Letters Committees, argued against that, saying that no one should be drafted, that the U.S. military was inherently defective because it wasn't a force that fought for freedom, but only to maintain capitalism.

But it isn't only a question that today's military props up capitalism. It is that these murders, rapes, and harassment of military women reveal that women are still viewed as things, as less than human. In fact the military operates not only by dehumanizing the other, as seen by Abu Ghraib, but by considering its own soldiers as property, the most ugly expression of which is the murder, rape and harassment of women soldiers. It is one more reason why fighting for a new society grounded in new human relations is a necessity.

WOMENWORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

The first prison sentence for public sexual harassment of a woman in Egypt was three years in jail for Sharif Gomaa for groping a woman in the streets of Cairo. Though he knocked her to the ground, police refused to file charges. They were only forced to do so because of the persistence of the victim, a well-known film director who insisted on bringing Gomaa to justice. Up to 83% of Egyptian and 98% of foreign women have experienced public sexual harassment in Egypt.

The University of Iowa has been charged with failing to adequately protect a female student who brought sexual assault charges against two football players in October 2007. She faced physical and verbal assaults by other athletes. The university also did not provide adequate counseling support for the woman when she was interviewed by university officials. The two men accused are scheduled for trial in the Spring.

—Information from *Inside Higher Ed*

Legislation that would have legalized abortion in the first trimester in Uruguay was vetoed by President Tabare Vazquez in November. The bill had been passed by the Senate to end a pregnancy in the first 12 weeks due to hardship on the basis of economics, family, age, health or risk to the mother's life. Current law criminalizes all abortion except in cases of rape or danger to the mother's life. More than half of all Uruguayans support the right to legalized abortion.

—Information from *Feminist Daily News Wire*

Feminists oppose Nicaragua's Ortega

Nicaraguan president Daniel Ortega has reacted to his critics on the Left in an increasingly bizarre and authoritarian manner. Recently his government tried to revive an old and dismissed court case against the distinguished poet and former Sandinista Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal. Cardenal's only "crime" was one he shares with many in Nicaragua, his criticism of Ortega's failure to address the needs of Nicaragua's poor and of his rapprochement with the most reactionary forces in Nicaraguan society.

Cardenal called Ortega "a thief" who runs "a monarchy made up of a few families in alliance with the old Somoza interests." He was attending the inauguration of Paraguay's new president, Fernando Lugo. Ortega did not attend, and was told by Paraguayan feminists that he is unwelcome in the country. Gloria Rubin, Paraguay's minister of women's affairs, cited Ortega's history of abusing his stepdaughter, Zoilamerica.

Women in Nicaragua also cite the imposition of the strictest abortion laws in Latin America, including the 2006 outlawing of therapeutic abortion. About 110 women are known to have died as a result. This affects

poor women most, as the wealthier can travel to Costa Rica or Cuba to receive abortions. The repeal of this law is a goal of Nicaraguan women's rights groups.

Ortega responded by attacking the women's movement in Nicaragua with all the resources of the state, including criminal charges as "accomplices" in abortion, harassment, and slandering them as "CIA agents." The offices of the Autonomous Women's Movement were raided by police and files and computers were seized.

Again bizarrely, Ortega's wife, Rosario Murillo, has attempted to found an alternative women's movement that denounces feminists as those who "dress in the clothing of women, but have never known the sensibility of a woman's heart." It hasn't been accepted by other women's groups.

Earlier this year, the revolutionary heroine Dora Maria Tellez, now a member of the Sandinista Renovation Movement along with Cardenal, Sergio Ramirez, Carlos Mejia Godoy and other well-known Sandinistas, pledged "a new stage of struggle" against her former comrade Ortega. That appears to be coming to pass now.

In the words of Nicaraguan feminist Sofia Montenegro, "The case of Nicaragua has become super emblematic in Latin America because there was a revolution here and it was supposed to bring social change. If this was Pinochet's Chile, no one would expect differently, but with Ortega, it's doubly hard." Or as Nobel Prize winner Jose Saramago wrote, "Once more a revolution has been betrayed from within."

—Gerry Emmett

Johnson silenced



Duanna Johnson, murdered since our last issue, participated in a forum in June called to protest her beating by Memphis police while in custody (see Oct.-Nov. 2008 N&L "Community rallies against brutal cops"). See article page 9 about the response to her brutal murder.

Stoning in Somalia

In the Southern Somalia port city of Kismayo on Oct. 27, a crowd of up to a thousand people witnessed the stoning death of a 13-year-old girl. Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow had been raped by three men, then charged with adultery and sentenced to death by the Islamic fundamentalist militia that controls Kismayo. Called al-Shabaab, the group took power there in August.

Aisha, who had only recently returned to Kismayo from a refugee camp in Kenya, was murdered in a stadium where she was buried in sand to her neck. Witnesses reported that young Aisha fought and pleaded for her life. A special truckload of rocks had been delivered with which about 50 men pelted her. At one point she was dug up and, being pronounced still alive, reburied so the stoning could continue.

Many in the crowd objected to this cruelty, but were kept at bay by armed fundamentalist gunmen who fired on the crowd at one point, killing a young boy. The al-Shabaab militia also made death threats against locals who reported the facts about Aisha's murder to Amnesty International.

Al-Shabaab split with the fundamentalist group that previously ruled parts of Somalia, the Union of Islamic Courts, which was willing to negotiate with the Ethiopia-aligned government in Mogadishu. It includes many non-Somali fighters. In recent months they have expanded their activities even into Mogadishu, including threatening and murdering rights activists, tribal elders, international aid workers and employees of nongovernmental organizations. In some instances angry Somalis have fought back against the heavily armed group using stones.

—G.E.

Nebraska haven law

Something unthinkable is happening in Nebraska. Older children are being abandoned by their parents under Nebraska's now notorious safe-haven law. Until recently, this law allowed parents to abandon children up to the age of 18.

Safe-haven laws allow mothers who might be driven to abandon their babies in unsafe places, to legally leave them at hospitals. Unlike other states, Nebraska did not set an age limit for abandoned children. Over 35 children, mostly between the ages of 11 and 17, were abandoned before Nebraska changed the law to apply to newborns only. It is hard for many people to understand how any child could be abandoned by their parents.

Several parents drove to Nebraska from as far away as Washington to leave their children in a safe place. Some of the stories behind these abandonments are shocking. The mother of a five-year-old attempted suicide because her child was so out of control that he tried to bash in a baby's head with a hammer and set fire to a shower curtain and her insurance company refused to pay for mental health treatments. A man, whose wife died, abandoned nine of his ten children because he could not care for them anymore.

One can only imagine the pain and desperation these parents must be going through. The trauma to the children is hard to comprehend. Nebraska now faces the challenge of integrating these children into a system overcrowded with children no one wants. Both parents and children face mental health problems that could have been avoided if we had a healthcare system that addressed their needs.

Women are encouraged and expected to give birth, then often denied the necessities needed to care for their children. I'm surprised more children weren't left in Nebraska, perhaps because of the stigma attached to parents who abandon their children. Tragically, there is a large increase in the number of children who are murdered by their parents each year. For that reason, I don't feel that the safe-haven law in Nebraska was a bad thing. It certainly exposed some of the many things wrong with our society.

A better answer is access for everyone to decent, affordable housing, childcare, food, clothing, healthcare, leisure time and a job that pays a living wage. These things would go a long way to solving some of the problems of parents and children

—Suzanne Rose



Be part of the unity of theory and practice.

Write for and read *News & Letters* just \$5/ year (see literature ad, page 7)

Republic sit-in stops bosses' wage theft

Editor's note: Workers sitting in at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago after the company tried to close its doors permanently on Dec. 5 told us what led up to the occupation. The six-day sit-in succeeded in reining in an outlaw company as each worker received pay for accumulated vacation and 60 days severance pay, though their jobs were gone.

CHICAGO—Jose: Maria assembles materials going into windows, and has worked here over 20 years. I have worked here in maintenance. For a long time I worked in production too—both of us have worked on the glass line.

What happened here is that every week the company was taking out the machines and the lines. The people saw this and said, Maybe this company is going.

The company was closing. The law in Illinois is that they have to warn us 60 days before shutting the plant down. The company did not pay vacation, did not pay our checks, did not pay nothing. The company gave only two days notice, and said no more.

Maria: They moved to Iowa, leaving us all without work. They didn't pay us our vacation pay or severance pay. We occupied the factory because if we had stayed outside, we would have lost everything. We got paid nothing. So we decided to stay inside.

WORKSHOPTALKS

Continued from page 1

On my way to the conference I heard a radio interview with Studs Terkel, rebroadcast as an in memoriam upon his passing. I told the RPA audience that he reminded me how events unfolded on my shop floor for the last several years. Terkel said he encountered many particulars in the thousands of interviews he did with everyday working folks. He listened carefully when his subjects spoke in order to "see the universal" in these stories. I said to myself: "That's it!" The important thing was to see the universal in the particular.

Terkel reminded me that we workers kept recounting to each other our daily struggles with HMOs over the last decade. We compiled countless horror stories from patients who related their individual sufferings at the hands of the HMO industry. The universal these stories collectively developed into was that health science and technology are nothing without the recognition that health care is fundamentally a human-to-human interaction.

During our vibrant discussions on the shop floor, many new ideas developed. This energized a movement for quality care led by workers. One of our key victories was a landmark provision for quality care in our contract. Many other gains were won over the following years. We won legislation to mandate minimum nurse-to-patient ratios. We won mandatory use of safe needles. We won protection for whistle-blowers. We won more rigorous enforcements of patients' Bill of Rights, and many, many more.

DISCUSSIONS LED TO GAINS

Healthcare today, as we know it, would not be where it is without all those key reforms, written into contractual language, as well as into legislation. Easily forgotten, especially by our labor leaders now obsessed with winning legislation, is the source, the shop floor, where workers continue discussions as their conflict keeps emerging in new ways.

In the years following our legislative gains, the HMO industry has continued to restructure itself, finding many loopholes around legislation. The work is more alienating than ever. Shop floor conditions have gotten to the point where capitalist discipline has transformed us into unwilling accomplices in HMO abuse. The labor leaders don't know what we workers know concretely on the shop floor—legislative reforms mean nothing without a continuing workers' movement. They are merely dead letters. It is living labor which animates any shop-floor union rules or governmental regulations.

When Studs Terkel reminisced about the thousands of individual stories he elicited, I relived in my mind how collectively a myriad of individual worker stories, each armed with their own force of reason, eventually becomes universally recognized as a movement. It takes a rigorous philosophy, not just any theory, to recognize the reason of that movement.

Raya Dunayevskaya proved time and again that Marx never developed his theories without one ear very close to the ground, where average workers sweated and struggled. She called it the "movement from practice that is a form of theory." I call it the "shop floor."

While the RPA conference had many who spoke on Marx, what I was looking for was a discussion of how Marx's philosophy comes to life in our daily struggles. Dunayevskaya said it is the theoretician's obligation to meet that movement from practice with a movement from theory. Failure to do so would mean intellectuals have abdicated their share of responsibility towards revolution.

Without an ongoing engagement with working-class activity on the shop floor, we are merely spinning our wheels at one reform effort after another. What is capitalism if not a never-ending alternation between crisis and reform? The point is to work out an alternative to get out of this cycle.

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

I think the company will pay us. The company says, no, I can't pay, Bank of America won't pay us. The bank says, no, it is the company that won't pay. It's crazy. We saw them three days before they closed the plant down. This organizing is good for everybody.

Congress Hotel strikers' solidarity



Congress Hotel strikers standing up for workers occupying Republic Windows and Doors

CHICAGO—We are workers on strike at the Congress Hotel in Chicago. We're here at Republic Windows and Doors giving support to workers sitting in. We are their comrades in the same struggle and we are fighting for the well-being of our families.

I went on strike five years ago. We went on strike because the Congress Hotel cut our wages and benefits, and we're fighting for equality and respect. I am a single mother of three children. We have been on strike five and a half years. President-elect Obama has walked the picket line with us twice. He has promised to help us. We have hope that we will solve the problems with his help.

We walk the picket line at the hotel every day, seven days a week. We have hopes that in the next year we will be inside at work. We stand in mutual support with our brothers and sisters in the same struggle and together we are strong.

—Congress Hotel striker

'Change to Win' a loss for workers

Andy Stern and his "Change to Win" coalition are continuing their bid to take over United Healthcare West, the part of SEIU that organizes many of the lowest rung of the health care profession, LVNs, nursing home employees and home health workers. Andy Stern's union is agreeing to substandard contracts compared to the current situations or proposals fought for by UHW. Below are comments from a home health worker at a rally in San Mateo opposing Stern.

I'm disappointed in my union leaders. When we were in Los Angeles, we were all one. Now that we are a statewide union, it's like Communism used to be. They want to tell us how to live and what to do. I work with paraplegics as a home care worker. I've been taking care of disabled people all my life. My job is 24/7. Whatever my clients need, I have to be there for them. I just got a van and put a lift in it for one of my disabled clients.

But my union leadership is not there for us. I say if our union leadership won't give us the same respect we give our clients, then we don't need them. You go to Kaiser and man it's beautiful in there. They treat you like a human being. But as a home care worker, it's totally different. I have to be on call all the time.

Andy Stern in his Cadillac and with all his money does not know what we need. I'm mad about Stern leadership not giving us the help we need. There are some really deep issues he is not dealing with. To him they may be little things but it's about life. Stern leadership doesn't recognize that my work is life and death.

—Luis, home health care worker



"Spontaneous actions by Chrysler workers in the summer of 1973 made national headlines and frightened the company as well as the UAW bureaucracy as nothing that had happened before..."

To learn the rest of the story get your copy of *Indignant Heart: A Black Worker's Journal* by Charles Denby, editor of *News & Letters* 1955-1983.

To order see page 7.

One-sided class war in auto meltdown

DETROIT—As the Big 3 auto makers teeter on the brink of bankruptcy, their chief executive officers have been pleading for billions of dollars from Congress to sustain their operations. The squabbling in Senate and House hearings at their first request for loans to weather the credit crunch, centered on the CEOs taking private jets to Washington to plead poverty, seemed petty when the thunderbolt news hit that 533,000 workers had lost their jobs in November.

At their second trip to Congress GM CEO Rick Wagoner requested \$18 billion, Ford CEO Alan Mulally \$9 billion and Chrysler CEO Robert Nordelli \$7 billion—for starters. These amounts, as large as they were, were only a bridge till the Obama administration begins.

All indications were that a \$16 billion stopgap measure, to be taken from \$25 billion previously approved for auto technological improvements, would be passed. But lame duck Republican Senators blocked the loan package on Dec. 11, demanding that UAW members give up benefits that exceeded conditions in foreign-owned non-union plants before money could flow. Ironically, the only chance for financial relief to auto this year is Bush and the \$700 billion bank bailout that earlier he had refused to make available for manufacturing.

IF THIS SITUATION ONLY affected the corporations, it would be easy to say that they brought this on themselves and let them fail. But the number of people who would be affected is from four to 10 million, including 14,000 auto dealers who employ 740,000 people, the parts suppliers employing 600,000 more, extending to restaurants and stores in every state.

At least 35 parts suppliers have filed for bankruptcy already this year. Even if the Big 3 get their loans, they may face damaging delays because of parts shortages.

At Congressional hearings on the loan requests, there has been a loud chorus among Republicans for the Big 3 to go bankrupt. They know that corporations have used bankruptcy to destroy unions and benefits that workers have won over long years of battle, and see this as an opportunity to deal a crushing blow against what still remains as a strong, if weakened, United Auto Workers union.

The UAW has lost hundreds of thousands of workers in the past three decades, and continues to lose them almost daily. But instead of representing the workers, the union has long been working hand-in-glove with the auto companies.

It has made concessions in the last five years, including a two-tier wage system that creates divisions among young and older workers, lost healthcare and pension benefits, agreeing to take responsibility for the Voluntary Employee Benefit Association (VEBA) to relieve healthcare obligations from the companies, lost vacation days and a host of other work-place issues that workers face daily on the production line.

INSTEAD OF BLASTING the corporations for their failures and defending the gains made by the workers, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger called a special national conference of union leaders in Detroit the first week in December to modify the union contract by giving more concessions to the companies. This time, he is proposing to help the companies by eliminating the job bank, which paid laid-off union employees if they were not called back to work for two years, and affects 3,500 union workers. He is also proposing that the auto companies defer billions owed to the union in VEBA payments until 2010.

The auto companies have already had to lay out plans to Congress regarding their ability to compete. They emphasized production of hybrid vehicles (which they all bitterly fought in past years) and reducing costs. Restructuring would include elimination of thousands of dealerships and suppliers, closing many plants, laying off thousands more of their workers and negotiating new cost-reducing contracts with the UAW.

Ford said it would close four plants by 2011. GM's plan would close 11 North American plants and cut its work force from 96,000 to below 75,000 by 2012. All of these plans guarantee much more unemployment, even if the companies survive.

Workers themselves, especially those who have already lost their jobs, have bitterly denounced the bailouts that Congress has been handing out in the billions and now is talking about trillions to try to save this collapsing capitalist system. They say: "Where is my bailout? They bail out the millionaires and leave us to starve."

It is in this resentment and anger and the aspirations for a human society that the future lies and that the union leaders do not understand, or they would be in the forefront of those who are calling for a total change in the way that this economic system operates. The first requirement of any economic system is that it must provide a livelihood for all of its citizens. If it cannot do that it must be replaced.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, a topic of everyday conversation became: "Do you think we'll have a revolution today?" This may very well be the topic that will arise as the global crises of capitalism continue to increase and deepen.

—Andy Phillips

FROM THE WRITINGS OF RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA

Editor's note: To mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of *Marxism and Freedom* by Raya Dunayevskaya, we present her June 11, 1957, letter to Herbert Marcuse. He had asked while writing a preface to the book, "Could you send me a brief statement on what you consider to be the main thesis (or theses) and the basic trend of thought in your book?" The original is in the Raya Dunayevskaya Collection, #9911. Footnotes were added by the editors. Russell Rockwell is preparing an annotated edition of Dunayevskaya's correspondence with Marcuse and Erich Fromm for publication.

Dear Herbert Marcuse:

It was good to hear from you. I'm sure that you are well acquainted with the fact that it is much easier to write 100, if not 500, pages than it is to summarize the gist of a book on which one has worked for some 15 years, in a page or two. But I will try.

I. THE CENTRAL POINT, the pivot around which everything else in *Marxism and Freedom* revolves, is, of course, the philosophic foundation of Marxism. As I put it in my introductory note, "The aim of this book is to re-establish the original form of Marxism which Marx called 'thoroughgoing Naturalism or Humanism.'"

This runs like a red thread throughout the book. Thus Part I begins with the French Revolution and Hegel and ends with Marx's Early Economic-Philosophic Essays: A New Humanism. It constitutes his answer to classical political economy as well as to the utopian socialists and vulgar Communists of his day and establishes a new world outlook, Marxian philosophy, which is distinguished from the Hegelian dialectic and closely knit with it. What is established as the thesis of the young Marx then reappears in Part III, Marxism: The Unity of Theory and Practice, where, in The Dialectical Humanism of Volume I [of *Capital*], I show that not only are Marx's economic categories social categories but they are thoroughly permeated with the humanism that came out of the working-class struggles for the shortening of the working day. As Marx put it, the mere question, when does my day begin and when does it end, was on a higher philosophic level than "the pompous catalogue of the Declaration of the Rights of Man." What is true of Volume I of *Capital* is true of the Logic and Scope of Volumes II and III, including *Theories of Surplus Value*, where I show that all of history to Marx was the struggle for freedom, which, as its basis, is the shortening of the working day, and only from there do we go from the realm of necessity to that of freedom.

Lenin learned the critical importance of the philosophic foundations the hard way—when the Second International actually collapsed and, to reconstitute his own reason, [he] had to return to Hegel's *Science of Logic*. The chapter, A Mind in Action, then traces what the philosophic foundations meant to Lenin and the Russian Revolution and ends with the thought that just as Marxism without its philosophic foundation is meaningless, so is Leninism. Neither is an "economist." Finally, when we come to our own age, which I call Automation and the New Humanism, I show the **methodology** of Marxism and the compulsion of our own age for a total outlook.

II. SUBORDINATE TO THIS MAIN THEME of the book, and running parallel with it, is the division between the radical intellectual like Proudhon and the Marxist intellectual. I contend that Marxism is not only the theoretical expression of the working-class striving to establish a new society on socialist beginnings, but it is that which gave intellectuals a new dimension. That new dimension arose precisely because he did not divide theory from history, including the current class struggles. The relationship of theory to history is seen as a live element that changes the very structure of Marx's greatest theoretical work. In 1863 and 1866 when he fundamentally revised that structure and 1872-75 when he wrote the French edition of *Capital*—the period from the Civil War in the United States through the Paris Commune—is proof of this relationship of theory to history and at the same time shows that what the young Marx established in the Early Essays, when he held that never again must society be counterposed to the individual and which in 1848 he emblazoned on his *Communist Manifesto* as the thesis that the development of the individual is the condition for the development of all, reappears in his "most economic" work which is preferred by the academic economists—Volume III of *Capital*.

Again, when I move from Marx's time to that of Lenin's time, I show that the contribution of the Second International—Organization—was taken over by Lenin in his concept of the so-called Vanguard Theory in 1902-03, but as the actual Russian Revolutions occurred, he threw it overboard—or at least radically revised his theory no less than six times, so that in 1917 he says the workers on the outside are more revolutionary than the vanguard party and by 1923 says that, unless the party work is checked by the **non-party** masses, the bureaucracy will yet bring the workers state down and they will regress to capitalism. In any case, our problem is certainly not will there be a revolution, but **what will happen after**: are we always to be confronted with a Napoleon or a Stalin? In a word, without relating the spontaneous self-organi-

zation of the proletariat and its quest for universality in the manner in which Marx did it for his time, we can expect nothing but totalitarianist results.

III. IN MY INTRODUCTORY NOTE I state that the three main strands of thought in the book are: 1) Classical Political Economy, Hegelian Philosophy, and the French Revolutionary doctrines in relationship to the actual social and economic conditions of its time, the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution and up to the first capitalist crisis. 2) Marxism in relationship to the class struggles of his day, the period of his maturity, 1843-1883, as well as Marxism in the period from 1889-1923; and 3) The **methodology** of Marxism to our era which I call the period of state capitalism and workers' revolt, the analysis of the Five Year Plans of Russia and the revolts in East Germany, and Vorkuta following Stalin's death; finally the analysis of Automation, but this is a comparatively free and easy essay. I think this too in a way can be summed up in the introductory note, where I explain the method in which this book is written—that research began in 1939 when I broke with Trotsky over the "Russian Question"¹ but that it did not assume the form of *Marxism and Freedom* until 1950-53, when the miners' strike on automation² and the revolts in Eastern Europe from their separate vantage points led me to present all my ideas to groups of workers who checked and discussed the material. "No theoretician, today more than ever before, can write out of his own head. Theory requires constant shaping and reshaping of ideas on the basis of what the workers themselves are doing and thinking" [*Marxism and Freedom*, p. 23]. I return to Hegel (page 73 footnote in the *Science of Logic*) where he shows that those who took Kant's results without the process did so as a "pillow for intellectual sloth" and that, if the intellectual sloth which has accumulated in the Marxist movement concerned only Marxists, then we wouldn't be confronting the H-bomb threat without ideological backwardness showing. The need is for a new unity of theory and practice which must begin with the new impulses coming from the working class; that this, far from being intel-

lectual abdication, would mark the actual fructification of theory. Once the theoretician gets that, his work does not end, but first **begins**.

In a word, I have no prescriptions or rhetorical conclusions. I show a method at work and appeal to the intellectuals to use that dialectic method as a basis to view the contemporary scene, to get out from under domination of either the Russian totalitarian or the American "democratic" bomb threats in their thinking. The workers by themselves can do a lot but they too have not achieved a new social order, but if the movement from practice to theory met the movement from theory to practice, then a **serious** start could be made.

THERE ARE NATURALLY OTHER points in the work—from the American roots of Marxism to the Communist perversions both of Marx's Early Works and *Capital*—since it tries to deal with our machine age since the Industrial Revolution to Automation, but I do not believe anything germane to the book is lost once one grasps the central point, the philosophic foundation.

I know the effect that your *Reason and Revolution* had in 1941. They could neither treat Hegel as an "old dog" nor Marx's Early Writings as mere humanitarian adjuncts to "the great scientific economic theories." But

then it was a philosopher speaking and not "a solid economist" like me. When the two were combined, glory, hallelujah—there was havoc. But the academicians need not think themselves any smarter—they all fell into the "Popular Front"; it is not possible to fight Russian totalitarianism or any other kind without some solid theoretic foundation and social vision.

I naturally cannot say whether I succeeded in doing what I aimed at, but if intentions were indeed achievement then I could say that what was **new** in *Marxism and Freedom* was 1) the re-establishment of the philosophic foundation of Marxism in Hegel in so concrete a way that the origins of our machine age as well as the latest period of automation came alive; 2) the summation of all three volumes of Marx's *Capital* in a manner that the reader knows Marxism both as theory and as methodology; and 3) the new dimension Marxism endows the intellectual with became so real to him that he could indeed discern the movement from practice to theory and as eagerly long for the unity of the two as does the worker...

Raya

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

² See *A 1980s View: The Coal Miners' General Strike of 1949-50 and the Birth of Marxist-Humanism in the U.S.* by Andy Phillips and Raya Dunayevskaya, as well as Chapter XVI of *Marxism and Freedom*, "Automation and the New Humanism."

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On 50th anniversary of *Marxism and Freedom*

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

Such earth-shaking movements may not be as obvious today. Covering a whole historic era, *Marxism and Freedom* lets us view the time with eyes that see beneath and beyond just today.

The philosophic category developed in the book is precisely that, "the movement from practice that is itself a form of theory." Five more decades of revolutionary and organizational experience make it possible to begin to see how much is contained in this category. It really is nothing less than a philosophy of history. For the creation of the philosophic category is inseparable from the concept of a body of ideas, what Hegel called "a copious body of objective truth," and from the responsibility for those ideas.

Perhaps this can be thought of in terms of what Hegel wrote in the *Science of Logic*, that "the greater extension is equally a higher intensity." After all that's happened since in the world, the movements, and our own organization, *Marxism and Freedom* seems more relevant than ever to me.

Here is a passage that jumps out today: "He who glorifies theory and genius but fails to recognize the **limits** of a theoretical work, fails likewise to recognize the **indis-**

pensability of the theoretician. All of history is the history of the struggle for freedom. If, as a theoretician, one's ears are attuned to the new impulses from the workers, new 'categories' will be created, a new way of thinking, a step forward in philosophic cognition" (p. 89).

Now it is easier to see, I think, that this passage is not only a precis of what *Marxism and Freedom* is about but also what the book itself is. In very clear, vivid chapters, Dunayevskaya demonstrates how Hegel, Marx and Lenin related philosophy to freedom struggles. The clarity and the profundity of presentation is her own contribution to the movement, a demystification of history as well as a new philosophic vantage point to be grasped.

It also seems to me that in creating the category, "the movement from practice," the question of the dialectics of organization and philosophy was already present in 1958. The more one grasps how inseparable the category is from the body of ideas, the philosophy, the more obvious I believe it will become that the "indispensability of the theoretician" can be seen as the responsibility for Marxist-Humanism.

In *Marxism and Freedom* Dunayevskaya, like Marx before, turned historical narrative into historic reason. This isn't just an interesting story, but a history and a body of ideas to be claimed, as a necessary new dimension "to enable each to become as tall as the proletariat straightened up to its full height in the creation of a new society" (p. 66). What an honor and privilege to claim it.

—Tim Finnigan

ESSAY

The moment Lenin missed: what kind of labor?

by Tom More

And for Lenin there was no philosophic moment insofar as organization was concerned.

—Raya Dunayevskaya

As Marx and Dunayevskaya experienced their "philosophic moments" respectively in 1844 and 1953, so too did Lenin experience something akin in 1914-15, when he turned to his study of Hegel's *Science of Logic* in order to resolve the crisis in Marxism brought on by World War I and the collapse of the Second International. In each of the volumes of her "trilogy of revolution," Dunayevskaya reconstructs the crucial differences it made to Lenin's subsequent itinerary once he became "the first Hegelian Marxist of the twentieth century."¹ To discover these differences, one need only compare *What Is to Be Done?* (1902) and *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* (1908) with *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1917), *The State and Revolution* (1917), and the other writings that come after what Dunayevskaya called his "philosophic reorganization."

The State and Revolution is not only among Lenin's most important theoretical writings, but, centering on "the tasks of the proletariat in the revolution" (as its subtitle indicates), it comes as close as anything he wrote to what Dunayevskaya called the dialectics of organization and philosophy. "Those who recognize only the class struggle are not yet Marxists," he writes; "Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat."² Yet in the last analysis, Lenin's heroic attempt, by way of restoring dialectics, to overcome the distortions of Marxism that had come to prevail in the period of the Second International, falls tragically short of repairing the "duality in [his] philosophical heritage," the "philosophic ambivalence" he experiences between the pull of Plekhanov and his own independent discovery that "'understanding the dialectic' had become the *pons asinorum*." "Too short were the years between 1914 and 1917, between 1917 and 1923" for Lenin to bring his own philosophic moment home to the dialectics of organization.³

For Dunayevskaya, "the full organizational expression" of Marx's philosophic moment of 1844 did not come about until "the last decade, especially the 1875 *Critique of the Gotha Program*," a text Lenin likewise interprets in *State and Revolution*. Yet despite Lenin's recognition of the signal importance of the *Critique of the Gotha Program* to the revolutionary "tasks of the proletariat," Dunayevskaya writes that "for Lenin there was no philosophic moment insofar as organization was concerned."⁴ By the time she writes *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution* (1982), Dunayevskaya explains the "tragedy" of Lenin's failure to reorganize himself more profoundly—that is, all the way through to the dialectics of organization and philosophy—by putting it this way: "Unfortunately, Lenin's philosophic reorganization dealt with the concept of the revolutionary **smashing** of the bourgeois state, not with the other crucial factor in Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program*: the inseparable relationship of philosophy to organization itself. That means that Lenin's philosophic reorganization remained in a separate compartment from the concept of the party and the practice of vanguardism."⁵

PHILOSOPHY AND ORGANIZATION

By 1987 she was even more sharply critical: "Lenin did return to Marx's roots in Hegel, and did see that the *Critique of the Gotha Program* had never really been concretized as the smashing of the bourgeois state, without which you could not have a revolution. In a word, he certainly worked out the dialectics of revolution, and made it be in Russia. But, but, but—he too didn't touch the question of the party. On the contrary, it didn't even go as far as his own varied critiques of *What Is to Be Done?*, once the Bolsheviks gained power."⁶

For Dunayevskaya, then, the dialectics of organization and philosophy is an "untrodden path."⁷ In *Philosophy and Revolution*, she names the stakes: "With the death of Lenin, there waited in the wings that terrible twin trap: at one end a theoretic void, which Leaders stood ready to fill with Alternatives, and at the other end a new statist lifeline of capitalism."⁸ Even within her own News and Letters Committees, as late as 1987, the "terrible twin trap" had not been surmounted and the "untrodden path" was still the road not taken. In recent years (in annual "Perspectives" and other writings), News and Letters Committees, searching for a philosophically grounded alternative to capitalism as an integral element of the dialectics of organization and philosophy, have taken steps to project such an alternative on the ground of the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, especially Marx's presentation in it of the lower and higher phases of communism. The superiority of the News and Letters account of these phases over Lenin's in *State and Revolution* is that Marx's theory of value as he works it out in *Capital* makes no appearance whatsoever in Lenin's exegesis and commentary. It could be argued that Lenin's interest in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* is circumscribed by the subject-matter of his work as a whole, i.e., the theory of the state, its revolutionary "smashing," its post-revolutionary "withering away," and the transitional "non-state" of the dictatorship of the proletariat modeled after the Paris Commune of 1871. It is therefore a work of politics rather than economics. But, if nothing else in *State and Revolution*, Lenin aims for

a standard of textual fidelity to the works of Marx and Engels in order to correct the distortions of various opportunists, anarchists, revisionists, and so forth, in the spirit of which it is crucial to recognize that Marx's "new continent of thought and revolution" transforms the meaning of both politics and economics. Accordingly, the *Critique of the Gotha Program* is best read as a "concretization," neither of politics nor of economics, and neither of theory alone nor of practice alone, but of "the philosophic moment" that is the "determinant" for every subsequent development in Marx's thought.



Women workers initiated the Russian Revolution, International Women's Day, 1917.

In other words, neither *Capital* nor the *Critique of the Gotha Program* can be taken as Marx wrote them except as they are determined by the moment that unifies and integrates Marx's thought as a whole, the "philosophic moment" of 1844 in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* to which Lenin never had access. Holding in *State and Revolution* that *The Poverty of Philosophy* and the *Communist Manifesto* were the "first works of mature Marxism," he could not have known better.⁹ Yet the perceptual illusion of Marx's development that follows from missing the philosophic moment is no minor detail.

RELATIONS AT POINT OF PRODUCTION

For example, with respect to *Capital*, Dunayevskaya writes in *Marxism and Freedom* that it is "wrongly considered to be 'a new political economy.' In truth, it is a critique of the very foundations of political economy which is nothing else than the bourgeois mode of **thought** of the bourgeois mode of **production**." Dunayevskaya explains the revolutionary difference between, for example, Ricardo's *Principles* and Marx's *Capital* by this preeminent characteristic: "By introducing the laborer into political economy, Marx transformed it from a science which deals with **things**...into one which analyzes **relations of men** at the point of production....To separate the essence—the social relations—from the appearance—the exchange of things—required a **new science that was at the same time a philosophy of history. That new phenomenon is Marxism.**"¹⁰ Moreover, Marx's projection of lower and higher phases of communism in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* is based on the proximate and remote consequences and implications of the revolutionary uprooting of the law of value as it determines the basic social relation at the point of production. But if Marx's value theory itself is imbued in every aspect with the subjectivity of working people, then so too is his 1875 *Critique*. As to Dunayevskaya's own project, in her June 1, 1987, "Presentation," while summarizing her philosophic moment (achieved in two "Letters" of May 1953), she writes, "In a word, I was looking for the objectivity of subjectivity."¹¹

What difference does it make to *State and Revolution*, which aims so ardently to be true to the word and vision of Marx and Engels, especially after 1871 and the Paris Commune, that **Marx's** philosophic moment is missing from Lenin's work? The full-dress account that would be required cannot be given here, but an index lies close at hand. In Lenin's case, reading *State and Revolution*, one has the sense that almost his most prominent concern for the day after the revolutionary seizure of state power, even with respect to his reading of the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, is that working people will have to acquire the "factory discipline" and "habits" necessary for "Accounting and control—that is **mainly** what is needed for the 'smooth working,' for the proper functioning, of the **first phase** of communist society. **All** citizens are transformed into hired employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers." The state is a "parasitic excrescence" (quoting Marx from *The Civil War in France*), but once it is "amputated," "we want the socialist revolution with people as they are, with people who cannot dispense with subordination, control, foremen and accounts."¹² By contrast, in *Marxism and Freedom*, Dunayevskaya writes that in 1844, "when Marx wrote his *Economic-Philosophic Manuscripts* [, he] posed dialectically the fundamental problem—what **kind** of labor—which is today being battled out the world over....In 1844 Marx made this ... question pivotal, **the** new theoretical response to the workers' revolt against the tyranny of factory labor."¹³

This question—"what **kind** of labor" should a human being do—is nowhere to be found in *State and Revolution*. The "parasitic excrescence" is excised, but otherwise it begins to appear that alienated labor would persevere and even thrive under Lenin's account

of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its immediate measures (for how long a period he cannot speculate). Here, the point is that it was precisely because Lenin, though he turned to Hegel, had failed to recover (let alone re-create) Marx's philosophic moment, that not only is that moment missing from *State and Revolution*, but so too is "the fundamental problem" with which Marx grappled across four decades. "In Hegelian dialectics, the philosophic moment is a determinant," and it "remain[s] the element that govern[s] the concretization that follows." Moreover, "To this day 1844 was **the** philosophic moment of Marx's discovery of that whole new continent of thought and of revolution that 'Marxism' certainly lacked, and instead singled out **one** of the developments—economics—so that we didn't know 'new humanism' until the Depression. But in fact it is that which was the **ground for organization** throughout his life, from the moment he did 'experience' the philosophic moment [to the *Critique of the Gotha Program*]."¹⁴ Whether the singled out moment is "economics" (as in the misreading of *Capital*), "politics" (as in *State and Revolution*), or some other fixed particular, what is missing is the integrating principle of Marx's thought as a whole and of Marxism in its totality. First, that principle is **philosophical**. Second, the philosophical first principle—in any case, of the Marxism of Marx—is **humanism**, especially at the point where what is human—subjectivity, personality, and the active potency for freedom—is most profoundly alienated and dehumanized, mechanized and automated, the social relation at the point of production. This is the import of the question, what **kind** of labor, about which, when Lenin (almost) comes to it, he is not only disappointing but chilling.

In *State and Revolution*, Lenin writes, "A witty German Social-Democrat of the seventies of the last century called the **postal service** an example of the socialist economic system. This is very true....To organize the **whole** economy on the lines of the postal service...is our immediate aim." More chillingly, he writes, "The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labor and equal pay." As if an apology were owed, however, he immediately launches into one: "But this 'factory' discipline, which the proletariat, after defeating the capitalists ... will extend to the whole of society, is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is only a necessary **step** for thoroughly cleaning society of all the infamies and abominations of capitalist exploitation, **and for further** progress."¹⁵ Lenin has the higher phase in view, but how it is to materialize from the organization of society as a gigantic factory where factory discipline prevails (with the difference being "armed workers" in place of capitalists) is anyone's guess, neither plausible nor persuasive.

This one aspect of the dialectics of organization and philosophy may shed some light on some part of Dunayevskaya's contention that "for Lenin there was no philosophic moment insofar as **organization** was concerned." In lacking the philosophic moment, Lenin's Marxist encounter with Hegel was finally unfulfilled. Concerning Marx himself, by contrast with Lenin, in 1875, after the French edition of *Capital* is finished and the year he writes the *Critique of the Gotha Program*, not only is "philosophy spelled out in the most concrete terms from fetishism of commodities to the new passions and new forces that go against the accumulation of capital," but Marx also "has the experience now of both political parties and forms of organization emerging spontaneously from the masses, **plus philosophy**."¹⁶ In other words, this "plus" in Marx is the "minus" in Lenin. The difference it makes is the question one asks. Meanwhile, the "terrible twin trap" still waits in the wings and the challenge remains. The philosophy is the humanism of Marx's 1844 *Manuscripts*, which is in turn the standard bearer of the new society and the **telos** of the dialectics of organization, raising a question that could not be more acutely posed: what **kind** of labor?

¹ See Kevin Anderson, *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism: A Critical Study* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 65; and in Dunayevskaya, see *Marxism and Freedom*, Chapter X, "The Collapse of the Second International and the Break in Lenin's Thought," *Philosophy and Revolution*, Chapter 3, "The Shock of Recognition and the Philosophic Ambivalence of Lenin," and *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, 58-65 and 156-58.

² Lenin, *The State and Revolution: The Marxist Theory of the State and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution*, unabridged in Robert C. Tucker, ed., *The Lenin Anthology* (New York: Norton, 1975), 334.

³ Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, 119, 117; for her explanation of what she calls "the tragedy," see 117-120.

⁴ Dunayevskaya, "Presentation on Dialectics of Organization and Philosophy of June 1, 1987," in *The Philosophic Moment of Marxist-Humanism* (Chicago: News and Letters, 1989), 3-4, 16.

⁵ Dunayevskaya, *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*, 157.

⁶ Dunayevskaya, "Presentation of June 1, 1987," 17.

⁷ *Ibid.*, see 17-20.

⁸ Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, 120.

⁹ See Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 325.

¹⁰ Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, 106.

¹¹ Dunayevskaya, "Presentation of June 1, 1987," 10; and for her summary, see 7-12.

¹² Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 383, 346, 344.

¹³ Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, 54-55.

¹⁴ Dunayevskaya, "Presentation of June 1, 1987," 7, 4-5.

¹⁵ Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 345-46, 383.

¹⁶ Dunayevskaya, "Presentation of June 1, 1987," 16, 6.

ECONOMICS, HUMAN LIFE, AND CAPITALISM IN CRISIS

In Raya Dunayevskaya's "From the Archives" column (Oct.-Nov. *N&L*) she exposed the rationalization for the type of economy that was developing in the 1980s through Reaganomics and that continued until recently. She sharply criticized Peter Drucker for claiming that employment could be uncoupled from production, capital from capital investment, and industrial production from the entire economy. What he ignored was the sweated labor behind robotized, uniminated production. She referenced a NBC special about how technologically advanced Japan was grounded in low-paying, non-union, piecework labor. Today, China and Viet Nam are even grosser examples and there has been an ever greater lowering of barriers to moving trade and credit around the world. The sweatshops of the world do not need to be the most technologically advanced.

Once capital is no longer tied to investments in production, and trade has been uncoupled from products to exchange of services, all that is left is exchange of money and investment for more money. Her insight saw a new era of Reaganism that continues today.

**Radical lawyer
Flint, Michigan**

You cannot talk about economics separate from life. When we talk about economic theory, it is a discussion about human life. Knowing that cuts through all the propaganda and outright lies the powers-that-be put out. It is a leap of the imagination to know that we can live in a different way. I think that's what Marx's philosophy is all about—how individuals reproduce themselves as human beings. It's the only alternative there is to the ongoing capitalist crises today. It isn't easy. It can't be reduced to a slogan on a bumper sticker.

**Tom Parsons
San Francisco**

It was no big surprise when the economic crisis demanded a response from both presidential candidates and neither one addressed it in terms of a vision transcending the subsumption of capital. McCain made the most serious blunder in stating that the fundamentals of the economy are strong and, when criticized by Obama for being completely out of touch with reality, saying he was actually referring to the American workers who are the best in the world. What seems clear is that the future for American workers is continued subjugation to the despotic plan of capital.

**Faruq
Crescent City, Cal.**

The Lead article on "Bailout can't save capitalism from its own gravediggers" (Oct.-Nov. *N&L*) was cogent, readable and clear in dealing with a technical-philosophic issue. It was revealing

that in the 1986 article by Dunayevskaya in the same issue, she was talking about debt. Nobody was thinking about that then. And it was important to print a substantial ad for *The Marxist-Humanist Theory of State-Capitalism* on the same page.

**Marxist-Humanist
New York**

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

**Healthcare Worker
California**

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

**Pro-environment worker
California**

RACISM IN AMERICAN DISCOURSE

The racist discourse in America is alarming and people often don't notice it takes place. When a lady at the town hall meeting during the presidential campaign asked John McCain if Barack Obama was an Arab, he replied, "No, he is a decent family man." Does Arab mean he is not a decent family man? I am Jewish and easily offended by these things. The appropriate answer to the claim that Obama is an Arab should be "So what?" America was poised for a tremendous opportunity in November, that you don't have to be called Jim or George or Bob. But this is a formidable task. The last eight years have brought this country to an unprecedented low. This year we need to determine what the next eight years will do.

**Concerned
Cyberspace**

Marcelo Lucero, an immigrant from Ecuador, was attacked by seven teen-age boys and stabbed to death Nov. 8 in Suffolk County on Long Island, a short commute from New York City. The attackers confessed that they had driven around the town of Patchogue looking for Latinos to beat up. Suffolk employs a County Executive who uses the term "anchor babies" to describe children born to immigrants, supposedly as a device to obtain a legal foothold in the U.S.

Before Lucero's murder, community activists had invited County Board members to their meetings with the aim of cooling their rhetoric and offering some human contact with the communities they had been exploiting, to no avail. In the period of outrage after the murder, the county hired a Hispanic policeman. Soon after the announcement it became clear the new hire didn't speak Spanish.

Now we learn that another guy from Ecuador was attacked in Brooklyn by three men with a baseball bat. Jose Sucuzhañay has just died with extensive brain damage. There is no sign yet of the attackers who fled in a red-orange SUV.

**Reader
New York**

A FORGOTTEN INJUSTICE

"Forgotten Injustice" is a film by Vicente Serrano that tells the story of

READERS' VIEWS

the unconstitutional deportation of more than two million U.S. citizens and legal residents during the Great Depression. They were deported for one reason: They were of Mexican descent. It won a great response when we showed it on six Saturdays from Oct. 25 through Nov. 20. Those interested in taking it to their communities can get information about it at www.AForgottenInjustice.com

**Instituto Cervantes
Chicago**

THE 'CAGE'

I felt something was missing in the article "Critical Resistance 10" on page 9 of the Oct.-Nov. *N&L*. I am the author of the article discussed at the workshop on "Caged Mental Health." What was missing was the reality of "the cage." No



one can picture it or realize it exists in these United States of America, home of the free! This is real and happening in the heartland of California. The picture appeared in *The Fire Inside* and used to be on the Internet, but no longer, I feel, because no one wants to admit this is how the prison system treats women. I've lived here for eight years and am hoping you will show the reality in *N&L* now that you have the full information.

Information is power—I'm a firm believer,

**Chowchilla Woman Prisoner
California**

BUSH'S POISON PEN

With a stroke of his executive pen, President Bush once again demonstrated his opposition to labor by removing some 8,600 federal employees from union membership. The employees work in the Energy Department, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Federal Air Marshal Service, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Coast Guard, and Federal Aviation Administration. Bush said union membership of these employees, who have had bargaining rights for 30 years, was not consistent with "national security requirements."

He is also not leaving office without rewarding the coal mine owners again with a gift they have long desired—the removal of all obstacles to mountain-top mining. In this process, coal operators had to obtain judicial approval before they could blow or bulldoze off mountain tops into the streams and valleys below to reach seams of coal. Bush has now removed that restraint, and the coal operators have a completely free hand to pollute and environmentally degrade coal regions in the U.S.

**Ex-coal miner
Detroit**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

In her lecture on Hegel given in Japan, "Grasp revolutionary spirit of the age" (Aug.-Sept. *N&L*), Raya Dunayevskaya made it clear she was not interested in how Hegel "applied" his ideas, but only in the "actual logic and movement of those ideas." The spirit Hegel challenged philosophers to grasp was a certain kind of consciousness he

described in his book *Phenomenology of Spirit*. It was important to Dunayevskaya that her audience be motivated to work out a philosophy of freedom and take action to make freedom an objective reality. What Hegel, Marx and she caught was that the dialectic is a ceaseless movement of spirit in the process of becoming itself. Yet I worry that spirit and Subject can lose its forward movement and become overpowered by Objectivity. That may be happening right now as the world slips into economic recession. If we are to recover, it will take everything that Hegel, Marx and Dunayevskaya tried to tell us about grasping the spirit of the times and working out the new philosophic categories implicit in the mass movement from below.

**David Mizuno'Oto
California**

POLITICAL ISLAM

The Council of Ex-Muslims of Britain's first international conference on Political Islam, Sharia Law and Civil Society was held at Conway Hall on Oct. 10. Nearly 300 people came together to discuss issues ranging from apostasy, the freedom to criticize and renounce religion, Sharia law and civil society, creationism, faith schools and religious education. Held on the International Day against the Death Penalty, the conference was a stark reminder of the many killed or facing execution for apostasy in countries ruled by Islamic laws.

The report, film footage and photographs of the conference can be seen on <http://www.ex-muslim.org.uk/indexPressreleases.html>.

The conference closed by calling on participants to mobilize around March 8, International Women's Day, to step up opposition against Sharia law and political Islam. Only a movement that puts people first can mobilize the force needed to stop political Islam. And it must be stopped.

**Maryam Namazie
Britain**

GREEK HUNGER STRIKERS

On Nov. 20, more than 7,000 Greek prisoners ended their 18-day hunger strike after the Ministry of Justice conceded to a series of demands. The prisoners had won the support of a widening solidarity movement, which had held mass protest marches in several cities. They were promised that by next April the number of prisoners in Greek jails will be reduced to 6,815 from the present 12,315. This means that half of the country's prison population will be released.

In a press release the Prisoners' Committee detailed what the Ministry had failed to answer in their demands, thanked the solidarity movement, and declared that "our struggle against these human refuse dumps and for the victory of all our demands continues."

**Solidarity supporter
California**

FREE MUMIA !

It is inspiring to hear of Mumia supporters gathering around the world on Dec. 6 and again Dec. 9 to demand a new and fair trial for him and for his freedom. What made the Dec. 9 gatherings so special was that it is the 27th anniversary of the attempted murder of Mumia and the killing of Officer Daniel Faulkner with which he is charged.

**Mumia Supporter
Chicago**

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to put *News & Letters*
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COME VISIT US

WHAT COMES AFTER OBAMA'S VICTORY?

When Obama's victory was announced on Nov. 4, there was an explosion of joy all over Oakland. We were in Jack London Square, where at least 2,000 had gathered, cheering and dancing with each other, often total strangers. A large group dance started and we were amazed to recognize it as a centuries-old French-Canadian dance, Le Continental. When we asked people what they called the dance they said, "It's the Electric Slide, it's from the '80s!" Wow, culture sure gets around. Maybe it got to Oakland from New Orleans. As we left, hundreds of cars were driving by, and people were spilling into the streets all the way to Berkeley.

If nothing else comes out of this election, it's the new sense of optimism, and a friendlier atmosphere between Black and white and all ethnicities.

**Two Oaklanders
California**

We earnestly hope the Obama presidency signals the dawning of long-needed progressive change in the U.S. We intend to maintain a 20-day presence, from Jan. 1 to Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 19, 2009, in Hyde Park, Chicago, calling it "Camp Hope: Countdown to Change." A number of groups committed to nonviolence and working for just social change have joined with us.

We are urging Obama to take action, immediately on being sworn into office, on eight specific actions: withdraw from Iraq gradually; take all nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert; close Guantanamo; suspend deportations and stop raids; submit the Kyoto Protocols to Congress for ratification; establish a commission to create full employment; issue a 90-day moratorium on housing foreclosures; start a commission for Universal Health Care.

To get more information, email us at contact@camphope2009.org or phone 773-878-3815.

**Camp Hope Organizers
Chicago**

Women are beginning to overtake men in the ranks of organized labor. Although only a fifth of women workers currently belong to unions, they make up 45% of all unionized workers.

Yet despite their growing presence—and the 45-year-old federal Equal Pay

Act—women still average only 77 cents for every dollar men earn. The only thing that will see that change is pressure on the government to finally guarantee women the pay equity the law has promised them for 45 years. That's the kind of "change" people were voting for on Nov. 4.

**Woman voter
Chicago**

LGBTQI ON PROP 8

It is with defeats like the passage of anti-gay rights measures in Arkansas (where it was anti-foster parenting and adoption) and in Arizona, Florida and California (where it was anti-marriage), that I appreciate more deeply being in community with many womyn and men who are truly for human rights. Why are so many people so afraid of us LGBTQI folks? We're just folks like everyone else. But in the future, we must and will overcome, somehow.

**Bi Activist
Chicago**

NO EASY SLEDDING WITH PUTIN

The front page article in the August-September issue on "War in Georgia" was poignant and excellent. The new U.S. president will find no easy sledding with the likes of Mr. Putin as well as Mr. Hu—hard core pros on the world stage who know the game and how to play it. The first time President Obama sits down to eat with the likes of Putin and Hu, they will eat off his plate. Superficially, the attack on a neighbor and ally of Russia by tiny Georgia makes no more sense than for Mexican soldiers to attack Texas. *N&L* was exactly right: there is far more to Georgia's aggressive attack than meets the eye. Keep on keeping on, *N&L*.

**R. Zani
Texas**

INTERPRETING MARX

While I found interesting Ron Kelch's *N&L* essay on themes in Bruno Gulli's *Labor of Fire*, I believe Kelch misunder-

stood Moishe Postone's interpretation of Marx's concept of labor.

Kelch writes of "those like Postone who claim Marx had no concept of labor outside of capitalism...that led Postone to see the potential for liberation...in 'dead labor' or capital." He also writes, "In Vol. 3 of *Capital*, Marx distinguishes between post-capitalist freedom achieved in the realm of necessary material production and 'development of human energy, which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom.'"

In similar fashion Postone writes, "As a result of its dual character...commodity-determined labor, in Marx's analysis, is bound to two different forms of necessity, one transhistorical, and one specific to capitalism." In respect to the *Capital*, Vol. 3, passage Kelch refers to, Postone writes that it refers to, "two different sorts of freedom—that from transhistorical social necessity and that from historically determinate social necessity. The 'true realm of freedom' refers to the first form of freedom. Freedom from any form of necessity must necessarily begin outside of the sphere of production. There can, however, be a form of freedom within this sphere as well, according to Marx: the associated producers can control their labor rather than being controlled by it" (Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination*, p. 381).

**Russell Rockwell
New York**

IRAQ VIOLENCE

Readers of *N&L* would want to know that Samir Adil, president of the Iraq Freedom Congress, was wounded Dec. 11 when a suicide bomber attacked a reconciliation meeting in Kirkuk, Iraq. Fortunately he will be OK, but the bomb killed over 50 people, wounding over 100, and killing popular Turkoman singer Kanaan Mohammed Saleh along with his children. Saleh hosted a show on Kurdish TV. The Iraq Freedom Congress is opposed to all sectarian violence, is democratic, and works with the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq and many other progressive workers and democratic groups.

**Anti-war activist
Chicago**

LEARNING A LESSON

Ron Gettelfinger, president of the UAW, is now demanding a position on the board of directors of GM in return for the concessions the union has made to help GM during this auto crisis. He apparently doesn't know UAW history. In 1980, when then UAW President Doug Fraser gave concessions to Chrysler to "keep it from going under," he demanded and got a board position in return. He learned after a year that it had effectively excluded him from important financial and union-related decisions, and he resigned in disgust. After all of the betrayals and vicious opposition that the auto companies have demonstrated, one would think union leaders would have learned that the companies can't be trusted.

**Auto Watcher
Detroit**



Many years ago, I exhausted all the legal options available to help reverse my conviction and sentence. Throughout my years of incarceration I have undergone tremendous introspection about the choices I made while living as a so-called free man in American society. For several years I've been receiving *N&L* through the generosity of unnamed donors. Though I'm not a Marxist-Humanist, I've taken notice of the many groups and individuals in *N&L* articles who seek to stop all kinds of corruption and injustice. I want to thank *N&L* and all of the worldwide donors who take precious time and resources from their own lives to help people like me to better see the issues that impact our lives beyond the walls of the criminal justice system. Please never give up on the good of humanity

**Black Cheyenne
Texas**

Readers: Can you contribute \$5 for a donor sub for those who cannot pay for themselves?

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ICE's inhumanity to immigrants

DETROIT—Last month a woman contacted me about her husband getting picked up by ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). They came in the middle of the night and rammed the door with a battering ram. The family was asleep upstairs and the police screamed and cursed and turned the house upside down. An eight-year-old and a four-month-old were held at gunpoint, the baby in his mother's arms. They took the men away and left the women, as one was nursing her child and the other was a U.S. citizen. They tried to take their car, too, but the women stopped them.

The people were at home, sleeping when all this went down. No criminal activity, no warrants. The woman is still here and the husband has been deported to the wasteland of Mexico, where he is unable to earn enough money to live, much less send support for his two children here.

I took them to say goodbye to him in the Monroe Detention Center and it was a sad scene. Earlier, I had been with them in court while the children came in with me to witness their father on a video feed. The mother could not come inside due to her status. So these two little girls, four and six, and I watched as he wept, alone in a cell and unable to face his children in person to say goodbye.

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

I remember when we did not know any of the recent Mexican immigrants. Now, it seems like we all know each other and are all connected. Other friends in the community are touching base in a more organized way. Now we are connecting, and the web is being woven to encircle our vulnerable community and keep us from becoming isolated and bitter.

The friend who called me last month brought a young man to my house to discuss what could be done about his brothers being detained on false charges in the Detroit jail. We all go to the city council to raise hell about the profiling. Another of our classmates from Chicano Boricua Studies relentlessly requested the meeting with the new mayor until we got it, and without her insistence, we would not be heard. It takes all of us, with our myriad contacts and connections, to bring some level of justice for the most vulnerable undocumented people who are being hated and despised by the most powerful.



Nature of America

by Robert Taliaferro

Okay, so the man of the decade, if not the century, has been elected to the presidency of the U.S. and all seems right with the universe. Balance is restored, the planets are all lined up and overnight America became the land of equality and purist magnanimity due to "Obama, the melioration of the culture."

The Nation reports that in Europe, Obama is the kind of American that is loved... "His is the America of jazz and Fitzgerald and Faulkner; the quintessential "cool cat" who can garner the cause of multiethnicity, the perfect culturally blended man for the ages. But amid the shouts of jubilation that herald the arrival of an Obama presidency, we must remember that he is only one man and still an elected favorite of only half of the U.S. electorate.

An Obama presidency will not erase the concept of racism in this country overnight, even if his presidency gains two terms. Such things will not be possible until a national agenda is defined that does not look at race, creed, color, or gender as a caveat of electoral tangents. One of the ironies of history in this country is a question of whether any person of color other than an African American would receive the same Democratic Party support as Obama, or was a Black man the safer bet of all racial minorities because, as a country, we understand Black people better?

Racism in this country is an omnipresent part of its national heritage, and one must take care to not allow the election of such a historic figure to cause us to let our guard down and say, "everything's going to be all right!" If anything, we must be even more watchful, reminding ourselves that the very tools that made Obama's presidency possible (the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts) must still be periodically renewed to have the force of law in this country.

We must remember that the very same amendment that ended slavery for some in this country, reclassified that very same condition for others in the same sentence.

We must remember that the concept of states' rights versus federal authority, the very same condition that helped to spark a civil war in this country, still exists with a passion and we must take care that we insure that the forward strides that allowed for the election of Obama in the so-called blue states, continues and grows.

It's about the grassroots precepts that propelled Obama, the unlikely multicultural phenom, to Obama, President-elect of the United States of America.

It is such a strange time; to describe it as late capitalism does not quite capture it. The police state is intensifying. There is a theory that when a thing is about to die, it becomes the most powerful. The greatest repression comes before freedom, as we have witnessed in so many struggles. Lots of people are harmed in this process, but there is hope. Hope for relief for the legions of people having to leave their beloved homelands to become fugitives and criminals when they have no malice and have done nothing wrong. And the most predatory and worst among us are in places of power.

I find hope in the fact that this is simply not sustainable. And in the meantime, we stand in the breach. What else is to be done? Pray, fight, do whatever, but we must do something. Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

—Elena M. Herrada

BLACK/REVIEW

Continued from page 1

relation to socialist revolution....

[In] the debate the JFT assigned to her at the Workers Party Convention in 1946 against Ernest Rice McKinney (aka Coolidge), the leading Black trade unionist and spokesman for the party, McKinney argued against an independent African-American movement on the grounds that race consciousness was not revolutionary, and could lead only to the "cult of Negro nationalism." This was in contrast to Leon Trotsky, who had criticized the American Trotskyists for their failure to understand the Black masses... By developing Trotsky's view and revisiting Lenin's thesis on the national question, Dunayevskaya argued not only that the independent Black struggle was in itself revolutionary but that Black self-activity could be the "bacillus" and catalyst of the American labor movement as a whole.

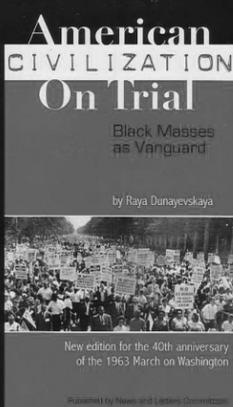
In effect, the battle between McKinney and Dunayevskaya over the Black dimension showed a serious disagreement over the fundamentals of Marxism. Whereas McKinney had argued that Americans like himself knew the Black situation better than either Lenin or Trotsky, Dunayevskaya insisted that "the Negro question is a problem that has a political history. Marxism has to deal with it in a Marxist manner..."

Dunayevskaya's writings of the 1940s anticipated the civil rights revolution that made the 1960s a transforming decade for the whole of the U.S. society. For her "the Negro Question" was a crucial dimension of the American revolution. However, she looked not to leaders or bourgeois spokesmen, but to the African-American masses, even their "race consciousness" as it gave direction to their struggle for freedom.

This became especially clear when the Montgomery Bus Boycott erupted in 1955. Dunayevskaya put the Montgomery Bus Boycott onto the world stage by linking it to the East German workers' revolt in 1953 and the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. In *Marxism and Freedom* (1958) she argued that the boycott "is truly historic and contains our future." The greatest thing about it, she argued, echoing Marx's description of the Paris Commune, was "its own working existence."

IN MARXISM AND FREEDOM Dunayevskaya also did groundbreaking work to show that the Black struggle, far from being external to Marx's philosophy, was intrinsic to it, pointing especially to how Marx's attentiveness to Black struggles inside the U.S. led him to reorganize his greatest theoretic work, *Capital*. Her view was a leap in American Marxism. As we've seen, post-Marx Marxists tended to view the U.S. struggle as less militant than the European—primarily because they relegated the Black dimension to a subordinate position and often saw it as a diversion from the class struggle altogether. Marx, Dunayevskaya argued, saw it in the opposite way.

No ready-made theory, whether from the Communist Party, Trotskyist parties or existentialists was adequate for the new spontaneous movements as they arose in the 1950s and 1960s. Completely new theoretical departures had to be made to express the ideas of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. as well as the anti-colonial revolutions in Africa and meet them with a philosophy of liberation.



At this historic time, read about the decisive role played by African Americans in the shaping of American civilization.

Order on page 7.

'Coup d'etat' in Canada

Canada has been in political turmoil since the beginning of December, precipitated by a cynical move by Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, a strong Bush ally, to hold onto power at any cost. In the last week of November, Harper presented his financial policy to parliament and basically asked them to take it or leave it.

The bill is atrocious. While it had no provisions to address the economic crisis facing Canada, it does contain two riders which are ideological sucker punches directed at the Liberal, New Democratic, and Bloc Quebecois parties: the abolition of electoral reform, long fought for in Canada, and the abolition of the right to strike for all government employees.

Despite their vast differences, these three opposition parties met and announced their formation as a coalition. They called for a vote of no confidence in Harper, who was just recently re-elected as a minority Prime Minister. The vote was to be held on Dec. 8, the same day as the Quebec provincial election. On Dec. 3, Harper went to Michaele Jean, the Governor-General who is Queen Elizabeth's Viceroy, and asked her to adjourn the parliament until Jan. 27, 2009. She did, vastly overstepping her authority.

Since then, the crisis has had a cascading effect and has thrown the government into disarray. At a time of severe economic emergency, the governing body is not allowed to meet. It is widely being called a "coup d'etat in reverse."

The deep divisions in Canadian society have now surfaced full-blown, a deeply divided society with no principled leadership. The cascading effect of this crisis continues and anything could happen.

Two unintended consequences of Harper's attempt to destroy Canadian democracy are: the Crown, though it has the authority to do so "on paper," does not actually have the right to intervene in Canada's political affairs, as Michaele Jean did, and this may be the beginning of the end of Canada's status as a "Constitutional Monarchy"; the unambiguous re-appearance of deep racism, including Stephen Harper's, against French-speaking Canadians in vast areas of English-speaking Canada, has led to significant gains for the pro-independence Parti Quebecois in the Quebec provincial election in December. Whatever the old Canada was, it is no longer adequate to meet the urgency of the times.

—Former Montrealer

'No new prisons'

LOS ANGELES—A wide coalition of anti-prison activists, organizations and concerned individuals met in East Los Angeles in November to discuss how to stop the growing prison industry. The town hall meeting titled "No New Prisons—Educate, Rehabilitate—Don't Incarcerate" was sponsored by Californians United For a Responsible Budget (CURB), Critical Resistance (CRLA) and the *L.A. Prison Times* and gave presentations to a small audience that included women from the League of Women Voters.

A woman from Labor Community Strategy Center (LCSC) stated that the school to prison pipeline must be severed. Students late to school are given truancy tickets (with fines of \$250) and youths are put into a gang database for very minor infractions.

A spokeswoman from Families Against The Three Strike Law (FACTS) stated that the public has become tolerant of repressive laws against youths. We need a coalition to come up with a solution.

A Black woman ex-prisoner from A New Way of Life-Reentry Project (NWOL) described her organization's program to provide education, drug treatment, housing and jobs as a way to avoid recidivism.

All of Us or None (AON) is a national, civil rights movement founded by formerly incarcerated people to challenge discrimination faced after release, and work to restore human rights of formerly incarcerated and the still incarcerated.

There are hardly any funds for people leaving prison to reenter society, and widespread discrimination against parolees in job opportunities, funding for education, subsidized housing, health care, and other social benefits. Barriers to expungement of records after they have served their time are another issue ex-prisoners face.

Gang violence has given the police an excuse to impose a gang injunction (putting mostly nonviolent Black and Brown youths into a gang database). The police also use heavy-handed suppression tactics, which too often lead to police brutality and killing of innocent, unarmed youths. Those police are rarely punished.

Project Cry No More, an organization of Black women whose family members were victims of gang violence, and Cease-Fire Committee (a grassroots community intervention coalition of many anti-gang violence organizations), confront gang members nonviolently to stop killing each other. They advise youth to resist the pull in their neighborhoods of gang warfare and violence.

At the same time, they oppose gang injunctions and the heavy-handed suppression-only policy of the police. They hold educational meetings, peace breakfasts and summer Cool Down picnics to bring rival youths together and are on call to intervene to stop a potential killing. Black on Black killing is their primary concern, and they work in concert with the Brown and immigrant communities, and anyone else who opposes the enslaving prison industry and gang warfare, in a humane and nonviolent way.

—Basho

LEAD-EDITORIAL

Continued from page 1

dimension of American character.¹ It was the first integrated movement in American history, and it is no small matter that in his speeches Obama cited such a movement that was not "racial"—which is to say that the Abolitionist movement made itself the expression of the Black masses' struggle for freedom and in that way spoke in a language that was demanding action on a question of human freedom for all. It encompassed not only anti-slavery and interracial equality, but internationalism and women's struggles for freedom—150 years ago.

Obama roots himself not in that radical movement, but in the compromiser Lincoln who was attacked by them for putting off the Emancipation Proclamation until he was forced into it. Nevertheless, his nod toward that glorious page of U.S. history reflects the revolutionary forces simmering beneath the surface of our society.

Are we seeing the beginnings of Black and labor coalescing, as is needed to make a decisive turning point—and will it encompass all the forces from Latino labor to women to Queer? What gave the Abolitionists the extra dimension as intellectuals and as human beings was their alignment with these kinds of struggles from below. Most crucial for our day is the unifying philosophy needed to avoid one more unfinished revolution.

GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS DECISIVE

What proved to be the real determinant in the 2008 election was the devastating global economic crisis. The opposition to war in Iraq and Afghanistan, which had been the number one reason for supporting the Democratic ticket, was pushed to a secondary position. It is why the first posts decided were the "economic recovery program" team.

So many people have been losing jobs, losing homes, going without doctor visits, putting off purchases from clothing to cars, that it was hardly a surprise when the U.S. economy was declared to be in a recession that began in December 2007. Economists and politicians are starting to acknowledge that conditions will continue to worsen well into 2009 at least—with others forecasting "several years of high unemployment...and widespread income losses."²

By November the unemployment rate was reported at 6.7%, with 11.2% for African Americans and one in three

Author's rejoinder to review of 'Labor of Fire'

Ron Kelch misrepresents important aspects of my book's basic themes in his essay on my work printed in the Oct.-Nov. 2008 *N&L*. First, *Labor of Fire* was not conceived as a study of Marx's dialectics but as an ontological critique of productive labor. An adequate understanding of the book hinges on whether one sees or does not see the necessity of such a critique, of the disambiguation of the category of productive labor (and consequently of unproductive labor). In any case, the ontological critique does not deny the dialectics, and there are points in the book in which I make this explicit. Instead, the critique highlights the difference between living labor and productive labor by saying that the latter is an instance, historically determined, of the former. Yet living labor *exceeds*, and *ontologically grounds*, productive labor. This is the only way in which a *mode* of production can be grasped in its historicity, that is, on the basis of a wider, transhistorical ground, which belongs to the dialectics of nature. That labor as it is in itself, in its immediate being, is *not productive* is not a new idea, but it is what Marx (whom I simply don't "accuse" of anything) says in both the *Grundrisse* and *Theories of Surplus Value*. I call this labor *neither-productive-nor-unproductive* to emphasize the structure of neutrality that it has in relation to any given mode of production. This does not mean that labor is a mere negative. Labor which is not productive is certainly not *nothing at all*, for labor, even when considered in its indeterminateness, is doing, making—a relation of nature. It is this that constitutes the ontological ground for the unfolding of dialectics and history. It is not history that determines labor, but the other way around, labor determines history. Without labor as an ontological category, that is, constitutive of the human world, there would be no history. And again, labor is not historical; labor makes history.

The second point relates to Kelch's conclusions, which are mainly based on Marx's passage on the realms of necessity and freedom in Volume 3 of *Capital*. Kelch says: "To get to a new society, we cannot skip over Marx's tracing the course of human development from value production to *when the productive power of labor is a human attribute instead of an attribute of capital*" (emphasis added). There are two things I need to notice here. One is that "productive" in "productive power of labor" is different from "productive" in "productive labor" as a category of capital. This is the very notion I wanted to disambiguate. Productive here is either used equivocally or in its original sense of a general bringing forth, or making. The second is that Kelch makes the usual mistake of overlooking the original *free* disposition of labor. This is the same as overlooking the truth that slaves were originally free and only because of this original freedom could be enslaved. Their freedom is also a return. Labor's liberation from value production is a regained freedom, a return. Kelch continues: "In *Capital* that future begins from a new relationship between freedom and necessity out of negating the commodity-form's inversion of social and material reality, an inversion which blocks living labor's ability to return to itself in an ongoing realized and recognized transformation of nature and human nature" (empha-

Election points to quest for full freedom

for Black teenagers. These official figures do not count the millions who have stopped looking for work or who have had to settle for part-time jobs, who would bring the overall figure up to 12.5%. In the year since November 2007, 3.2 million more people are unemployed, 2.8 million more are involuntarily working part-time, and 1.3 million more are not counted as part of the labor force. Many have lost health insurance. Dreams of retirement shattered, millions dread an old age of poverty.

HUMAN COST OF CAPITALISM'S FAILURE

After a decade of working people's incomes stagnating and temporary jobs proliferating, these new blows have meant a million bankruptcies this year alone and three million families losing their houses, with Moody's forecasting five million more foreclosures by 2010. Such anger has built up that some governors and sheriffs have had to declare moratoriums on foreclosures or evictions. The homeless have been building tent cities or, with the help of groups like Miami's Take Back the Land, taking over homes left vacant by foreclosures. From Republic Windows workers to Prop. 8 protesters (see pages 3, 9), "Yes, we can" has been given deeper content linking back to the slogan's origin in farmworker struggles.

With recession spreading to Europe and Japan, the International Monetary Fund has declared a "major downturn" for the world economy. Globally, the International Labor Organization projects that unemployment will rise by 20 million. Though food prices have retreated, the world food crisis has worsened, with the economic crisis pushing over 100 million people worldwide into poverty and farmers reducing production in the face of lower crop prices. Already children are starving from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. Two years of widespread strikes and revolts over high food prices and other economic troubles give a hint of how the global nature of the crisis also affects the international character of revolutionary impulses that are stirring.

What is most significant about Obama's quickly gathered economic team is that, like Bush's Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, all these economists have had to throw out their faith in the "free market."³ Instead they are tossing around proposals for massive state intervention in the economy through deficit-swelling public works programs to provide jobs, in

addition to stepping up the ongoing program of corporate bailouts and nationalization.

Ideologues from the Left and center, clamoring for a "new New Deal," too often forget how the history of the New Deal has been rewritten. First, it did not materialize out of the benevolence of Pres. Roosevelt. The context was strikes, organizing, revolt—the threat of revolution was in the air. That is exactly what the New Deal was supposed to save capitalism from. Today, millions want to change this society top to bottom—and that means a much deeper change than what Obama has in mind.

Second, the New Deal did not halt the Great Depression. It took World War II to cover over capitalism's decade-long crisis. Civilization can hardly survive a World War III, yet capitalism has no other solution to offer. At \$685 billion, the Pentagon's budget is 85% higher (after inflation) than in 2000—the highest since World War II. Even that is not all the military spending, yet it nearly equals the sum of all other countries' defense budgets combined.

STATE-CAPITALISM NO SOLUTION

No matter how "green" the new version of the New Deal is painted, it cannot save capitalism from the deep structural crisis into which it has been plunged by the development of the contradictions inherent in capital's very being. No matter who is appointed to the various posts, or how much cooperation Obama forges with Republicans, all their efforts are about searching for ways to keep capitalism alive. None of the answers proposed by the politicians, advisers or pundits even recognizes what the crisis stems from—capitalism's law of motion.

As the October-November 2008 Lead in *News & Letters* ("Bailout can't save capitalism from its own gravediggers") put it:

"Trying to steer opposition in their own direction, nearly all politicians expressed their 'outrage' while claiming there is no alternative to saving capitalism and showing 'bipartisan' solidarity with capitalists when the whole economy is at risk. This crisis revealed how rapidly objective events can call the whole capitalist system into question and generate a lot of action and new thinking about what is possible. Past failures surely show that the opposite of alienated labor is not to be found in statist intervention, political parties or trade unions, all of which broker on capitalist ground. At this crucial moment of capital's reorganization, it is important to engage that rethinking with Marx's concept of what it would take for humanity to break with being organized under the rule of capitalist production's alienated labor."

Capitalist rule can only be broken when the masses of working people take control of production and make decisions themselves, not letting anyone else do the thinking for them—whether that be managers, the labor bureaucracy, or planners touting a new New Deal. While that takes a revolution that can only be made by the masses, the history of the 20th century shows the urgency of the question of what happens after the revolution. Revolt and even revolution can be dragged back to the various forms of state-capitalism: the welfare state, fascism, or totalitarian "Communism." What is needed is unity not only of white labor with Black masses and undocumented immigrants, anti-war youth with Gay and women's liberationists, and unity across borders, but of theory and practice, rooted in a philosophy of revolution, in so new a relationship as to lay the foundations for a truly human society.

THEORY/PRACTICE

It is that concept of the unity of theory and practice on which News and Letters Committees was organized. *News & Letters* was created as its concretization in the only Marxist-Humanist journal in the U.S. That is why News and Letters Committees is starting the New Year with a series of classes in all the locals on "Confronting Today's Crises: The Marxist-Humanist return to Marx and the revolutionary abolition of capitalism." (See page 1 for announcement of classes.) Their aim is theoretic preparation for revolution, part of which is working out a new book of Marxist-Humanism on Marx. The classes cannot be a "how to" manual on breaking with capitalism and achieving a new society, but a **methodology**.

While no one can overlook the historic significance of this election, the deep crisis the world is in cannot be solved by Obama or any administration. What is needed is a totally new relationship of the movements from theory and from practice on the basis of a unifying philosophy of revolution. It is no easy task. We invite your participation in the classes and contributions to the discussion in the paper, and appeal for your help to keep *News & Letters* going.

¹ This new dimension's historic meaning is spelled out in *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*: "These New England Abolitionists added a new dimension to the word *intellectual*, for these were intellectuals whose intellectual, social and political creativity was the expression of precise social forces. They gloried in being 'the means' by which a direct social movement expressed itself, the movement of slaves and free Negroes for total freedom..." (p. 34).

² "New Day for U.S. Economic Policy," by Larry Mishel, http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/newsflash_081105_obama. Others simply called the latest figures "dismal" and "frightening"; see "Jobs Vanish—Quickly," 12/6/08 *Chicago Tribune*.

³ "Rubinomics Recalculated," by Jackie Calmes, 11/24/08 *New York Times*, points out the links between Obama's top economic advisers and Robert Rubin, and "the economic formula that came to be called Rubinomics: balanced budgets, free trade, and financial deregulation." Named to head the new "Economic Recovery Advisory Board" is Paul Volcker, whose "solution" to the 1970s crisis was to drive up interest rates, helping to push the U.S. into deep recession in the early 1980s and to precipitate the debt crisis in Africa, Latin America and Asia. See "Can Africa Survive Obama's Advisers?" by Patrick Bond in *Links*, Nov. 12, 2008 (<http://links.org.au/node/738>).

sis added). From what I have just said, but also from *Labor of Fire*, it should be clear that the return is not to a previous historical period, which would obviously be *blocked* in the way Kelch describes. Rather, it is a return to *the itself* of labor, that is, to its original disposition as the power constitutive of the human world, as well as to its freedom. Yet, as Marx says in the passage of Volume 3 of *Capital* I alluded to above, this freedom will always be grounded in necessity; for this return is not the end of history.

—Bruno Gulli

RON KELCH RESPONDS

Bruno Gulli rightly says that his "ontological critique does not deny dialectics." However, Marx's new dialectic of labor always remains external to Gulli's conception of a pure being of labor. "Becoming" only "nears being." Indeed, "labor makes history" and not the other way around. Why then even though *Labor of Fire* calls labor a "process" does it deny the way Marx specifies that process as "negation of the negation"? Marx calls it "the only true act and spontaneous activity of all being" and "the real history of humanity as a given subject."

This, I hold, is Marx's "original *free* disposition of labor" which Gulli says I "overlook." Freedom is not just labor's power to negate the existing material and social world. Negation of the negation **is** labor's return to self, a negative **self**-relation, in which labor recognizes the material and social externalization of human capacities as the process of its own becoming. This process is always socially determined, always mediated, says Marx, by the "power of abstraction" that shapes human relations. That's why Marx's concept of labor as a universal, which is not fixed in any determined form, includes determination within it, that is, **presupposes** movement **through** its social determinations.

Gulli's ontological critique largely ignores *Capital*, where this dialectic, in which labor determines history, is most concrete for the capitalist epoch. Nothing could be timelier in today's economic crisis than a call for a clear comprehension of Marx's labor theory of value with abstract, alienated labor as its value-producing substance. Instead, Gulli introduces ambiguity into Marx's "'productive labor' as a category of capital" when he clouds the clear distinction Marx makes between how productive labor is socially determined under capitalism and productive labor *per se*: the distinction between socially necessary labor time and actual time, between the alien, blind necessity of socially necessary labor time "in" things, commodities and capital, and actual material necessity.

Living labor that is "*neither-productive-nor-unproductive*" becomes concrete **only** when material limits appear as what they really are through freely associated labor's negation of productive labor under capitalism. Only then does the "development of human energy which is an end in itself, the true realm of freedom," emerge with transparent material necessity as its basis. Labor, infused with the negative and immanent drive to transcend its externalization, would finally end what Marx called "pre-history."

Youth speak on crisis in Oakland

OAKLAND, CAL.—The banks failing may be new, but African-American people have been going through a permanent recession for years. I'm intelligent, I have what it takes, but because of my color and my back-



Diamond (right) and D.Nok at the meeting where they addressed how they see the crisis.

ground of generations of poverty, I'm not going to be able to get the capital to start the small business that I want. I have bad credit because I lived off credit cards when there was no money. Now I'm in debt like \$10,000.

I would like to see more meetings like this News and Letters meeting, more dialogues about the crisis in capitalism and how it's affecting us in our neighborhoods down here. You know, we're walking down the street trying to sell our Silence the Violence CDs and it's a Friday night and the kids are hungry. And it's like, "No, sorry, can't help you." It's getting later and later so what you going to do? You call your partner and say let me get some dope so I can go sell it real quick and get this \$20 to feed my kids.

Or this man, he thinks I'm pretty cute so he wants to give me \$100 to spend time with him. And that's what I see in my community, I see little girls walking down the street saying: "Can you pimp me?" cuz they mamma is in the house smoking crack and they got eight other siblings and they're not eating. That's what I see in my neighborhood.

I know we can make it. Obama's president. We got Condoleezza Rice, Oprah Winfrey, or Michael Jordan. I see that, I know that is possible. But when you're down here, the teacher is throwing chalk at you telling you you're hella stupid, you're never going to be nothing. And it's really bad in the house, there's no food, and you're raped by your big brother and you're trained by the dudes in the neighborhood. "Trained" means literally one after another rapes you and there's nothing you can do about it. If you tell, they get their sister to beat you up. That's what we live with. If you're smart and you're raising your hand to answer a question in class, then after school someone wants to see you because, "You think you're better than me now."

Carbon trading: No!

The latest UN conference on Climate Change opened in Poznan, Poland, on Dec. 1 with low expectations for results, as most countries wait out still-President Bush. A coalition of 49 "Least Developed Countries," however, insisted on a target of keeping atmospheric carbon dioxide to no more than 350 parts per million, a scientifically justified goal, and yet much more ambitious than what the industrialized countries are saying.

Still, the whole UN process is fatally flawed by resting on "carbon trading"—a market for carbon emission permits. Opposition is building. This year, 50 groups issued a "Declaration Against the Use of Carbon Trading Schemes to Address Climate Change." Dozens of protests took place during the UN conference on Dec. 6 as a Global Day of Action on climate change.

DEC. 1 SAW A TAKEOVER OF the offices of Environmental Defense, one of the Big Ten mainstream U.S. organizations, by climate justice activists denouncing ED's role in promoting carbon trading. Dr. Rachel Smolker, daughter of one of ED's founders, read a moving statement including that ED has become:

"the darling of the corporate world: advocating for 'market incentives' to 'encourage' corporations to stop their destructive practices, provided they do not cause 'economic hardship.' Like the corporations you have befriended, you too have become entirely beholden to the gods of endless economic growth...Carbon emissions trading is now formally enshrined within the Kyoto Protocol, and within almost every state, federal and international initiative for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It has in fact become pretty much the only game in town....I can hear my father rolling over in his grave!...I have now come to see [ED] as a primary obstacle to averting planetary crisis: the architects and powerful advocates of extraordinarily dangerous and distracting policy advice."

An indigenous activist from Rising Tide Ecuador, Leo Cerda, said, "ED wants to turn the atmosphere and forests into private property, and then give it away to the most polluting industries in the form of pollution allowances that can be bought and sold. Not only is this an ineffective way to control emissions, it is also a disaster for the poor and indigenous peoples who are not party to these markets and are most impacted by climate change."

Market-based "solutions" are now the fault line within the environmental movement. —F.D.

I had the opportunity to go to [community college] in Hayward, so I've had the opportunity to experience some diversity. I know a lot of youth in Oakland don't get that opportunity. Growing up, this caused a lot of conflict. I looked like everybody looked, and I lived where everybody lived, but my experiences were different. That made my outlook on life different, so a lot of times I would clash with my peers over thinking and philosophy. A lot of times I felt isolated and alone, looking for friends, because I still wanted to have friends that were like me, from the hood, and understood what it meant to be from the hood but were also intellectual and knew that we had to get out the hood so we could come back and make changes.

Through my music I was able to get involved in the Turf Unity Project and Silence the Violence campaign, to teach peace and show our peers that there are alternatives to violence and there are other ways to live productively. My passion for the last few years is to go out into the community and teach people strategies to bring themselves out of poverty and a whole bunch of violence.

—Diamond

Workers, students rally

URBANA, ILL.—Student and campus workers united on the quad at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign Wednesday, October 29 for a "Quality in Education" rally. The rally was organized by local chapters of the SEIU (Service Employees International Union) and the GEO (Graduate Employees Organization) and brought out not only members of these unions, but students, faculty, and members of the community.

Over 200 people converged to voice their concern over three recent announcements by the administration: wage cuts, tuition hikes, and attacks on free speech. The university announced early this semester that faculty and staff would only receive a 1.5% raise instead of the 3% raise promised even though the state provided funds for the 3% raise. With inflation at 6% this "raise" is actually a cut. Tuition goes up 9% this year for incoming freshman but the tuition of already matriculated students will remain the same. The rally also spoke out against the recent announcement by the ethics office that no university employee would be allowed to wear any buttons or other political items, nor have political bumper stickers on their car on campus property. Campus employees would not stand for this blatant violation of the first amendment.

In the opinion of many rally organizers, it could not have come at a better time. This week the university community received emails from both the chancellor Richard Hermann and the president B. Joseph White about the looming economic crisis that the university faces. A hiring freeze is in effect and the administrators warn of further cuts and layoffs. Campus workers will continue to put pressure on administrators to get their priorities straight. In times of economic crisis, the administrators should not be getting 20% raises while the cafeteria workers get a measly 1.5%. Employees should not be laid off while campus construction and expansion projects continue. As can be seen by the large turnout of workers and supporters, the university will be forced to consider the needs of those who keep the university running, its faculty, staff, and student employees.

—UIUC Grad Student

Greek youth spark international revolt

Masses of Greek youth, incensed at the police murder of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos on Dec. 6, spearheaded a movement that threatens to bring down the conservative government of Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis. For six days riots and occupations spread throughout the country. The revolt broadened its concerns from hatred of the state and its police to unemployment, poor pay and global capitalism.

The youth revolt persisted through Dec. 10, when a planned labor protest against Karamanlis' economic policies turned into a general strike, shutting down most of the country. Students continue to occupy over a hundred high schools and fifteen universities. Students have played a special role in Greece since they were instrumental in bringing down the hated fascist junta that ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974.

This revolt involving many elements of Greek society comes on the heels of a successful 18-day hunger strike by 7,000 prisoners, which also elicited widespread support. The movement won many concessions from the Ministry of Justice, including a promise to reduce the prison population by half, from 12,315 to 6,815 by April 2009.

Many, including some left parties, dismiss the youth as anarchists. The opposition leader in parliament, Socialist George Papandreou, criticized the government for its failure to protect society. Demonstrations in solidarity with the Greek youth have spread throughout Europe among those who hope the intensity of the youth opposition, new stirrings among workers and the persistence of the economic crisis can bring together different forces in Greek society in a total challenge to capitalism and the state that enforces its rule. —R.K.

Left split in Ecuador

ECUADOR—Amidst ominous signs of rightward drift, the government of Ecuador is poised to take on the world banking establishment in a way that could reverberate throughout the debt-ridden Third World.

A Commission to audit the public debt incurred between 1976 and 2006, appointed by President Rafael Correa, has released a report that alleges that a large part of the nation's external debt was entered into in either an illegal or illegitimate manner. It gives evidence of "odious debts" incurred by the military dictatorship (1970-1979), usurious debts, and corrupt debts (contracted under conditions that do not conform to the legal norms of the lender or debtor or international norms). It goes on to cite instances of illicit and hidden clauses, uncontrolled and disproportionate expenses and commissions, excessive arms sales, capitalization of interest, and fraudulent collusion between lending institutions and government officials that served individual interests at the expense of the Ecuadorian nation.

THE REPORT PROVIDES grounds for renegotiating or defaulting on certain loans, and it names several past Ecuadorian presidents and their functionaries of being in collusion with representatives of world banking institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank to defraud the country for personal or ideological gain.

This could result in charges being laid against those Ecuadorians who are implicated; and the government already is using a 30-day grace period to determine whether it will make a payment on a bond issue that was due Nov. 15. A default could have enormous implications for the country's credit rating. If it is perceived as legitimate, it could send ripples throughout Latin America where center-left governments deeply in debt are keeping an eye on how Ecuador fares.

At the same time as the Correa government is standing up to the big lenders of the Northern Hemisphere, internally there are unmistakable signs of a serious rift between Correa and his Alianza País party on one side, and the environmental movement, the Indigenous community, and large segments of labor and social movements on the other. The issues have been largely over the exploitation of natural resources: oil, minerals, and water, with the government being accused of allowing mega-projects and continuing the neoliberal "extractivist" strategy of previous governments (i.e. providing the world markets with raw materials and energy, supporting monoculture). The Left has also been stung by the president's characterization of their movements as being extremist and infantile and by the Alianza País influence over the Party's members in the Constituent Assembly, where the Indigenous community's demand for veto over mining projects in their lands was replaced by "consultation."

TWO OF CORREA'S MOST important early supporters, Alberto Acosta, the President of the Constituent Assembly until he resigned over differences with Correa, and Mónica Chují, an Amazonian Kichwa activist who served as the President's communications secretary until she resigned to run successfully for the Constituent Assembly, have openly broken with Correa. Chují has accused Correa of usurping the historic social and political demands of the Indigenous and environmental movements to achieve power and then moving to the right. Because of his enormous personal popularity, the left is arguing that Correa feels that he no longer needs the support of the activist movements who catapulted him to power.

This split on the Ecuadorian Left complicates the political picture in Ecuador in that the Correa government is now under pressure from both sides of the political spectrum. His ace in the hole, however, is the enormous personal popularity he has achieved throughout the country. It appears to me that Correa's idea of "socialism for the 21st Century" is looking more and more like a nationalized top-down state capitalism; another example of an avowed "socialist" taking state power and substituting personal charisma and a strong disciplined and centralized party for grassroots activism against the destructive forces of multinational corporate capitalism.

It is hard to see how anything good in the short term can emerge from Correa's having alienated Ecuador's two largest and most important progressive and potentially revolutionary social forces: the Indigenous and environmental movements. In the long run it could serve to create a genuine socialist movement in opposition to what appears to be an emergent state capitalism.

—Participant/observer, Ecuador

NEWS & LETTERS

VOL.53/NO.6 December 2008-January 2009

News & Letters (ISSN 0028-8969) is published bi-monthly. Subscriptions are \$5 a year (bulk order of 5 or more, 25¢ each) from News & Letters, 36 South Wabash, Suite 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Telephone (312) 236-0799. Fax (312) 236-0725. Periodical postage paid at Chicago, Illinois. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to News & Letters, 36 South Wabash, Suite 1440, Chicago, IL 60603. Articles may be reprinted verbatim if credited to "News & Letters."

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News & Letters is printed in a union shop.



News & Letters is indexed by Alternative Press Index.

WORLD VIEW

Mumbai massacre

The horrific massacre in Mumbai, India, on Nov. 26-28 killed at least 173 people and wounded many hundreds more. The lone surviving terrorist (of 10) has stated that their goal was to kill 5000 people in India's financial and cultural center. In this effort they attacked train stations, hotels and hospitals, firing indiscriminately at men, women and children.

They would have come closer to that goal if not for the heroism of the workers at places like the Taj Mahal and Trident/Oberoi Hotels. Many of these hotel staff persons risked their lives to lead guests away from the terrorists, tend to the wounded, and barricade rooms against attack. In some cases they laid down their lives. There could hardly be a starker contrast between the workers' humanity and the dehumanization of the gunmen.

THIS DEHUMANIZATION ALSO showed itself in the vile antisemitic attack upon the Mumbai Chabad House. Rabbi Gavriel and Rivka Holtzberg and their colleagues were singled out to be tortured and killed only for being Jewish.

The surviving killer claims to have been involved with the group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is based in Pakistan near Peshawar and operates training camps in Kashmir. The group was originally formed to fight the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, with funding from the CIA and Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence (ISI). They have since been outlawed in Pakistan, under pressure from the U. S., but continued to receive some support from elements of the ISI. The brutality of the Mumbai attacks would fit the pattern of previous

attacks by Lashkar-e-Taiba.

It would hardly be a surprise to find that terrorism can be a shadow of state power. In this case part of the plan may have been to provoke a crisis between India and Pakistan. That this kind of crisis could escalate to a nuclear exchange would hardly be beyond the level of nihilism on display in Mumbai. It could only serve such dehumanized purposes.

THE REAL CRISIS in Pakistan has always stemmed from the deep contradictions in the society. Repeated military governments have seized power claiming to fight corruption, and using the ISI and its fundamentalist religious allies as tools of domestic control. This has been an unmitigated disaster for Pakistan, especially when the process has been taken across its borders as in the debacle of Taliban rule in Afghanistan which has now blown back as low level civil war in the North West Frontier Provinces.

It has also fueled the growth of domestic strife and terrorism as seen in incidents like the siege of the Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) in Islamabad last year, where over 100 people were killed, or the recent bombing in Peshawar which killed 29.

Under pressure from the U.S., India and Afghanistan, the current civilian government of Pakistan may be making some effort to purge the ISI. They have recently disbanded its political wing. But as the long term problem stems from the contradictions within civil society in Pakistan, it is not likely to disappear without revolutionary developments there.

—Gerry Emmett

Colombia: challenges to Uribe

Tens of thousands of Colombians—sugar cane cutters (*Los Corteros*), Indigenous groups (*Paez*, *Guambiana* and *Embra-Chami* among others), judicial workers and other trade unionists, masses of students in Cali and Bogota, as well as women's groups—made September, October and November months of challenge to the militaristic government of Alvaro Uribe.

As Raul Zibechi put it, "Social conflict has overtaken the center of the political stage, displacing President Alvaro Uribe, who merely repeats the script that brought him so much success in the war: the Indians, sugarcane workers, teachers, government workers, truckers, and anyone else who protests and mobilizes is being manipulated by the FARC guerrillas."

The Bush administration has chosen to stand by its "friend" in Colombia despite assassinations as well as horrendous Colombian military kidnapping and murder of innocent youths, who are then clothed in guerrilla dress and proclaimed to be killed terrorists.

In early September over 10,000 cane cutters, almost all Afro-Colombians, began a strike in the Valle del Cauca. The *corteros* often do not earn the minimum wage and end up receiving about \$5 for a 12 (or more) hour workday, seven days a week with no paid holidays or vacation days. They demanded wages for days lost due to mill shut-downs, for time getting medical treatment because of accidents at work, and fair scales for weighing their work. Tens of thousands of judicial workers also walked out on strike.

Facing deep racism, dismissal of their human rights and culture, robbery of their lands, (some 400,000 Indigenous Colombians are landless), tens of thousands have participated in a series of marches and protests after assassinations of 15 Indigenous activists.

Facing further repression against their protests, they organized the National *Minga* of Indigenous Resistance. (*Minga* is a rich Indigenous term signifying union, solidarity, meeting, collective communal work,

reciprocity.) Their demands include: respect for human rights; canceling laws which are breaking up their territorial integrity, work and culture; cessation of violence against their leaders; challenging any implementation of the free trade agreement between Colombia and the U.S. Thousands of Indigenous and their sup-



porters began marching toward Cali demanding a meeting with Uribe and government officials.

The Indigenous protesters arrived in Cali 40,000 strong and were met by thousands of students of the *Universidad del Valle*. Uribe first proclaimed he would meet with them, but then refused, citing security concerns.

The Bush Administration, undeterred by the protests, continued to push the U.S. Congress to pass the free trade agreement with Colombia. That action now appears to be on hold until the new Congress and administration take office. It remains to be seen whether the Democratic Congress and the Obama administration will stop the trade agreement and demand labor and human rights guarantees.

—Eugene Walker

Zimbabwe cholera

The deadly outbreak of cholera in Zimbabwe, which has killed at least 600 people (possibly thousands) and spread to South Africa, Zambia and Botswana, illustrates both the depth of the social crisis in Zimbabwe and how inseparable it is from the whole region. Oxfam's Zimbabwe director stated, "More than 300,000 people seriously weakened by lack of food are in grave danger."

This epidemic is only the latest result of the total collapse of Zimbabwe's society under the Mugabe government. There is a lack of water treatment as supplies of needed chemicals have run out even in urban areas. In other cases, houses were built on land where the urban poor, mostly supporters of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, had been "cleaned out." These houses were built without sewage, however, and the lack of sanitation has helped spread cholera.

Doctors and nurses in Harare have demonstrated against lack of funding and poor working conditions. They face shortages of drugs, basic equipment and even food. Their demonstration was broken up by heavily armed riot police.

A planned nationwide demonstration by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions was also broken up by police, with 69 activists being arrested. This action was to be directed at the limits on cash withdrawals from banks, a major problem when people are going hungry and can't take out enough of their own money to eat. (Inflation has reached a surreal 231 million percent annually.) Those arrested included leaders of the ZCTU, Progressive Teachers Union, Construction Union and civil groups.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise and other civic groups have called for a depoliticization of the crisis and designating it as a national disaster. This makes more sense than the idea of sharing power with Mugabe, who already represents a terrible, tragic caricature of the revolution.

Of course the most powerful and effective solidarity of all could come from the working class in South Africa. A small taste of this came last year when the South African Transport and Allied Workers Union refused to unload a shipload of armaments bound for Mugabe's regime.

—G.E.

Mexico teachers protest

Teachers by the tens of thousands in a number of states in Mexico—including Morelos, Oaxaca and Guerrero—have organized massive protests against the plans of the federal as well as the state governments to dismantle the education system known as the Normal schools. These teacher training schools, which are based primarily in rural areas, are a key educational support for rural populations. While students in the cities often have a number of choices where to go to school, in the rural areas, the Normals are often the only choice for those who want to become teachers and still live in their communities while studying. This state system of rural education has a decades-long history in Mexico.

The federal government and corrupt leaders of the teachers union—without consultation and negotiation with the teachers themselves—have come up with a program, Alliance for Quality Education, to "reform" the Normals. Reforms are needed to train teachers in an improved manner, and to end the practice of teachers selling their jobs or giving them to their children. The major thrust of the so-called "reform" is to implement a neo-liberal policy in rural education: to close the state Normal schools and create privatization of this educational system. There is no intent to institute authentic reform with input from teachers and students. Many students from the Normals have joined the protests.

—E.W.

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.