

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Deadly war recycling

by Htun Lin

Just when George W. Bush is hellbent on another war in Iraq, he gutted environmental protection of the air we breathe to reward his polluting friends in the energy business. The disastrous human and ecological consequences of massive quantities of depleted uranium dumped on Iraq in the 1991 war show how closely war and pollution go together.

Son of Bush now wants again to destroy Iraq as his father destroyed it over a decade ago, then kept that monster Saddam Hussein in power to liquidate Iraqi liberation forces.

MEMORIES OF HIROSHIMA

I began thinking about depleted uranium again when I recently heard a group of Japanese activists headed by a Japanese Diet member, Hosaka, on a speaking tour in the U.S. Japanese activists take special interest in depleted uranium with their memory of Hiroshima. In the words of Takashi Morizumi, a photojournalist who catalogued the devastation of the people and landscape after Desert Storm, depleted uranium as a weapon was really "a different nuclear war."

Depleted uranium is a perfect commodity for an expanding permanent war economy. It is a waste product of the enrichment of weapons-grade uranium. Methods of disposal would have been needed had it not been for capitalist ingenuity, in this case their idea of "recycling." Because of its unusually dense quality, depleted uranium has been reused for the hardened tips of missiles and ammunition.

In other words, the Iraqi landscape has become our nuclear dumping ground. Depleted uranium pulverizes
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BLACK/RED VIEW

Black life in Oakland

by John Alan

This fall national and local news carried daily reports on the wanton killings by a sniper in the suburbs of Washington, D.C. Television networks broadcast daily reports of the sheriff of Montgomery County, Md. on the hunt to find the mysterious sniper and how the Justice Department and the FBI were aiding local law enforcement agencies in their efforts to apprehend him.

In contrast to the intense coverage the media gave to the killing of ten people in the Washington, D.C. area, it has paid hardly any attention to the skyrocketing numbers of mostly African Americans who are being murdered on the streets of Oakland, Cal. Since the beginning of this year, 102 men and women have been murdered in Oakland predominately in two African-American communities. Neither the FBI nor the Justice Department offered help.

POLICE BRUTALITY AND BAFLEMENT

Oakland's police department has solved only a small number of those homicides and claims it is baffled, since many witnesses know the killers and won't inform on them. Whether or not one chooses to believe the Oakland police's claim that African Americans are not inclined to give them information, the police's perception of non-cooperation offered as a "reason" for not solving crimes expresses a great social division in Oakland.

African Americans in Oakland have been deeply aware of police brutality. Take for example the current trial of a group of Oakland police calling themselves "The Riders." It was uncovered in open court how those policemen, for a long time, systematically beat and terrorized innocent African Americans. Even this startling

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ON THE INSIDE

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Mass unrest inspires Lula's victory in Brazil

by Mitch Weerth

On the first day of 2003, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva takes over as Brazil's President, having won 61% (52.7 million votes) in the second round election on Oct. 27. Lula's victory is seen throughout Latin America as a huge advance for the Left, given the fact that Brazil, with 170 million people and by far the biggest economy south of the U.S., has never had an avowed "socialist" in power.

Nobody in Brazil has ever won so many votes. As 100,000 people came out into the streets of Sao Paulo to celebrate the night of his victory, Lula himself indicated the high stakes this move to the Left represents: "If at the end of my tenure all Brazilians can eat three times a day, my mission will have been completed."

This is not just hot air from the new man at the top. The Workers' Party (PT) that Lula founded in 1980



Jubilant crowds in Rio de Janeiro celebrate the election victory of Lula da Silva

under the military dictatorship was a truly mass party of the working class, and while in many respects it has moved away from its radical roots, it embodies today a

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Bush's drive to war imperils U.S.

As the Bush administration gears up for its war against Iraq—made easier by the failure of the Democrats to pose any pole of opposition in the recent elections and by the unanimous vote of the UN Security Council that Iraq comply with U.S. demands—a dangerous chapter has opened in the effort to restrict civil rights and political liberties inside the U.S.

The rightward shift in national and international policies started with the election of George W. Bush in 2000, but was moderated somewhat by the Democrat-controlled Senate. That change is now moving into high gear following the Republican midterm election victories and control of the House and Senate.

The most threatening of the administration's offensives is the one against individual rights and privacy. First came the U.S. PATRIOT act, steamrolled through Congress following the September 11, 2001 attacks. Then came the recent enactment of the Department of Homeland Security legislation and the Total Information Awareness plan. With them, the legal foundation for a full-blown police state is emerging with dictatorial power centered in the hands of one person: President Bush, the eager puppet of corporate America and the Christian Right.

TOTALITARIAN GRAB FOR INFORMATION

Most ominous by far is the Total(itarian) Information Awareness plan that will enable the administration to track virtually every activity an individual engages in. This includes credit card and money purchases, telephone calls, computer activity (including email), medical records, travel by land, sea or air at home or abroad, home purchases and mortgage payments, financial deposits and withdrawals, Social Security data, investments, interest and dividend payments, organizational memberships, educational records, and any encounter with a national, state or local legal agency.

Under the PATRIOT act, immigrants were stripped of many rights, military tribunals with secret testimony and no appeal were created, and "enemies" were defined so broadly as to include virtually anyone who did anything to "harm" the economy and endanger security. This definition can include strikers, anti-war and anti-capitalist globalization demonstrators, boycott participants as well as political radicals who could be labeled "enemies" and made subject to arrest and incarceration.

The PATRIOT act could have been used against the locked-out longshoremen who halted West Coast shipping for two weeks last month, but Bush did not need to expose this power in the act so soon—plenty of time for that in the future—since he could use the repres-

sive and more familiar Taft-Hartley slave labor act.

Another massive assault against organized labor will result from the unprecedented consolidation of 22 separate government agencies, with nearly 170,000 employees and a combined budget of more than \$355 billion, under the Department of Homeland Security.

DEMOCRATS ROLL OVER

Bush's demand to exercise total control over the department, which will mean the abolition of union and civil service protections, had been delayed until the election, after which the Democrats capitulated to give Bush a free hand to implement his anti-labor agenda. While the FBI and CIA maintain their autonomy and are not included in the reorganization, a separate intelligence unit will be created in the new department.

At the same time, the administration announced its intention to permit private corporations to compete for as many as 850,000 government jobs—a clear signal of its pro-corporate, anti-labor perspective. This signal will not be missed by state and local governments, which will try to emulate this to eliminate or weaken their own unionized employees.

When Ronald Reagan took office in 1980, he telegraphed his anti-labor convictions by firing the unionized air traffic controllers who went on strike, and followed this with eight years of pro-business programs and policies. Compared with Bush, however, Reagan was a piker. The danger President Dwight Eisenhower warned about, the military-industrial complex, has been realized and confronts America in its most naked and rapacious form in the Bush administration.

Bush's total support of the military is reflected in the \$354.8 billion approved for the military—the largest build-up in 20 years. Another request for \$10 billion more to fund secret programs is certain to be added that will be used as seen fit by the Pentagon with no Congressional oversight or accountability.

WARS TO COME AT HOME AND ABROAD

Not included in this are the unknown expenses of a war against Iraq, which could run to \$100 billion. Bush is determined to launch his war regardless of what Hussein does in response to UN inspections and in spite of worldwide opposition to unilateral U.S. military action.

Bush's ability to browbeat the Democrats into virtual silence on the issue of Iraq, on the grounds that any criticism of his policy represents a failure to oppose terrorism, will no doubt be used by him in the future to deflect opposition to his reactionary policies.

This situation makes it imperative for the forces opposed to war to make it clear that we oppose not

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WOMAN AS REASON *Rich's revolutionary arts*

by Terry Moon

Arts of the Possible by Adrienne Rich (W.W. Norton & Company, New York: 2001)

Arts of the Possible takes us on a journey of self-development unseparated from, indeed by necessity vitally connected to, the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary lived history of the past 30 years. In a Foreword and 12 essays arranged in chronological order from 1971 to 2000, we move from the early days of a creative, transformative Women's Liberation Movement through the retrogression that followed on its heels, to our reactionary present.

This is no "personal narrative." From beginning to end, Rich rails against "private solutions" as "devoid of political context or content." Not only does capitalism grab onto the personal and market it, but no personal retreat or expose will move us and literature forward. Rich insists that the answer has to be found in the social: "The relationship of the individual to a community, to social power, and to the great upheavals of collective human experience will always be the richest and most complex of questions."

It is Rich's complex questions that drive her self-development and give this work its universality. She asks "Must a radical social imagination clothe itself in a language worn thin by usage or debased by marketing, promotion, and the will to power?"; she questioned "the inevitable shortcomings" of the U.S. feminist movement; questioned how her own history of whiteness led to discovering "the history of the dispossessed...the only history on which, both as a woman and as a poet, I could find any grounding in at all"; she asked, where does the "obsession with origins lead us in the present?"

THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE

The subject of political or liberatory literature runs throughout the collection. To those of us not used to thinking of words and language the way poets must, *Arts* educates us in the politics of language—what it means when it is distorted by lies, misused, made meaningless; also the power of language, literature, poetry, when it reveals the truth, and when it is connected to a community fighting for social transformation.

Rich divides the essays into two groups, the first four essays being "background, indicating certain directions in my thinking." They bring to life the early Women's Liberation Movement in a way that took me back to that time of "awakening consciousness" when we believed that all things were possible and that our project and destiny was the creation of a new, truly human world. Included in these four essays is also Rich's and the Movement's hostility to Marx, seeing an unquestioned dogmatism in much leftist politics that often trampled honesty. "Such," Rich wrote in 1975, "is the deadenedness—for women—of Marxism in our time."

Rich's continuing awareness of the contradictions within the Women's Liberation Movement compelled her to think again about Marx. Two women who seemed to point her towards a different Marx were Raya Dunayevskaya, who developed the philosophy of Marxist-Humanism, and the socialist lesbian poet Muriel Rukeyser. Rich calls them the "stonecutter-architects I met," and they are the only women with essays devoted to them. "Raya Dunayevskaya's Marx" begins the second section of essays, and from then on, Marxism as a theory of liberation—in Dunayevskaya's sense—becomes integral to Rich's critique of society.

Rukeyser and Dunayevskaya have in common lives where thought and activity were not in two separate realms. With Rukeyser, Rich encountered a woman "who was a full actor and creator." A core theme of Dunayevskaya's writing and life was "the inseparability

Abortion in Peru

The following "proclamation" is being circulated by women's organizations in Peru—including women "artists, athletes, coalitions and soup kitchens"—who hope to win the right to legal abortion.

CONTRACEPTION IN ORDER NOT TO ABORT;
LEGAL ABORTION IN ORDER NOT TO DIE.

To penalize abortion constitutes violence and discrimination against women. Penalizing abortion does not eliminate nor diminish its practice; rather, it obliges women to endanger their lives, health, and well-being of their families. Underground and illegal abortions affect all women, especially the poorest, who put their health and life itself at risk. Legalization of abortion prevents deaths and eliminates the risks of underground abortions. Together with access to contraception, it protects the right to decide with dignity when and under what conditions to bring children into the world.

In order for democracy to be consolidated in society, it is essential that the state guarantee the exercise of human rights for men and women of all classes, races, ethnic groups and cultures having different religions. We demand respect for women's intellectual, emotional and ethical capabilities to decide autonomously and responsibly about their bodies and their lives. We are subjects with rights and not only reproductive vessels.

We demand that the Peruvian state carry out its national and international commitments to promote and protect the human rights of all persons. We will not permit retrogression or limitation on our human rights in the current process of constitutional reform.

ty of experience and revolutionary thinking, the falseness of the opposition between philosophy and 'actuality.'"

DUNAYEVSKAYA'S MARX: TURNING POINT

Dunayevskaya's mission, "to rescue Marx's Marxism from the theoretical and organizational systems attributed to him," was embraced by Rich. After reading Rich's critiques of the feminist movement, and the Left, it is as if Dunayevskaya helped answer some of Rich's, and the movement's, questions: how do we have a new unity of theory and practice? How do we discover the meaning of people's struggles for dignity, bread and freedom and make that part of theoretic preparation for revolution? What philosophy can help us with "the inevitable shortcomings"—what Dunayevskaya called "the unfinished tasks"—of the Women's Liberation Movement?

The most trenchant example of Marx's importance in Rich's thought is the last essay, "Arts of the Possible," a lecture given at Amherst College in 1997. Here Rich goes against the grain of so many today who dismiss Marx, and shows in passionate and deeply descriptive prose the decrepitude of U.S. capitalist society: "[C]apitalism represents itself as a law of history or, rather, a law beyond history, beneath which history now lies, corroding like the *Titanic*."

This essay mourns as it documents the "devaluation of language, this flattening of images...Language itself collapses into shallowness." She counterposes this to the vitality of the early Women's Liberation Movement. But even here the movement does not escape her critique: "the basic facts of inequality and power in North America cannot be addressed in gender terms only."

We must, she concludes, "become less afraid to ask the still-unanswered questions posed by Marxism, socialism and communism." Rich not only attacks the manifestations of capitalism, she attacks capital directly: "How can we move from a production system in which human labor is merely a disposable means to a process that depends on and expands connective relationships, mutual respect, the dignity of work, the fullest possible development of the human subject?" That question takes her to the practicality of revolution, to Marx's concept of "revolution in permanence."

In the end, despite a brutally realistic look at the inhumanity of the world we live in, the damage done to masses of people whom Rich insists that we see as individuals, she is adamant that "We are not caged within a narrowing corridor at 'the end of history'...we do have choices." In this book of profound questions she ends with one that points to what it means to be human: "For what are we, anyway, at our best, but one small, persistent cluster in a great ferment of human activity—still and forever turning toward, tuned for, the possible, the unrealized and irrepressible design?"

Stop the murders

Chicago—I joined an overflow crowd at the Latino Cultural Center, on Nov. 12, to see a new documentary, "Senorita Extraviada" ("Missing Young Woman") by Lourdes Tortillo. "Senorita Extraviada" documents a two-year search for the truth in the underbelly of the new global economy. The result is this shocking and brutal portrait of the human costs of globalization and violence against women in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

The opening scene of a woman talking about her escape from a would-be killer, sets the tone for this chilling look into the kidnapping, rape and murder of over 230 (now estimated to be over 300) women since 1993. Most worked for maquiladoras, businesses owned by Japanese, German and largely U.S. corporations.

This film unravels the demonization of these women by the frustrated authorities in their portrayal that the women's lifestyles caused their fate. Re-creation of the victims' faces by forensic workers and testimonies by the surviving family members give us the dignity these women deserve as members of their community who were loved by their family and friends.

A discussion followed the screening, led by Rosario Acosta, co-founder of Nuestras Hijas de Regreso a Casa (Let Our Daughters Come Home), an organization founded in Juarez and Chihuahua in 1998 by family members of the murdered women. They work to end the silence, by pressuring the authorities and demanding better working conditions and security at the maquiladoras. Upcoming events include a letter-writing campaign (www.chihuahua.gob.mx) as a way we can influence Congress and U.S. businesses with plants in Juarez.

In Mexico itself, a gathering of 1,000 women under the banner "Women in Black" marched through Mexico City on Nov. 25 calling for the murderers of hundreds of women in Ciudad Juarez to be brought to justice.

First Lady Martha Sahagun de Fox spoke, calling the killings the country's "most outrageous example of the violence against women." Rosario Robles, head of the opposition Democratic Revolution Party, blamed President Vicente Fox's government for not doing more.

The political pressure created by this video, the march, and another video, "City of Dreams: the Disappearing Women of Juarez," can only help end the dehumanization and murder of women and hopefully aid the movement that is uncovering Juarez's trade in human suffering.

—Sue S.

Alina Pienkowska

JAN. 12, 1952 - OCT. 17, 2002

She was a nurse working at the Gdansk shipyards, an activist, and a widowed young mother. Alina Pienkowska was crucial to the formation of Solidarity (Solidarnosc) in Poland in 1980.

The historic strike started over the firing of Anna Walentynowicz. At the time the workers did not think it would amount to much, perhaps an hour, maybe a day of occupation of the shipyards. But on the second day the whole coastal tri-city struck. The director agreed to take the fired workers back and grant wage raises. This was more than the original demand, so Lech Walesa signed off on the agreement and told people the strike is over, go home. As most of the 15,000 shipyard workers were flooding out of the gates, Alina Pienkowska and Anna Walentynowicz tried to stop them, and asked them to close the gates and continue the strike for the sake of those who had gone on strike in solidarity and whose grievances had not been addressed. (See January-February 1982 *N&L*)

Continuing the Gdansk shipyard strike in solidarity with other, smaller workplaces, gave the new trade union and the whole social movement its defining character. Solidarity. It was its very name and foundation of the movement. Pienkowska grew with the experience: "Here in the shipyard I stopped being afraid and became a real person."

She had an unparalleled insight into the struggle: "In August 1980 the women in Gdansk were very active in building Solidarity and in the strike. They fought for the rights of all human beings...But we have not been able to win our concrete demands that are important to us women. Taken all in all, I have come to the conclusion that we must struggle more for the women's cause."

When martial law was declared, she was detained for over a year. She continued her dedication to Solidarity for decades after.

Through her acts she expressed a universal spirit of solidarity. Through her words she expressed a critique from which we can still learn today. She will be missed.

—Urszula Wislanka



Alina Pienkowska

WOMEN WORLDWIDE

by Mary Jo Grey

At least 450 registered nurses went on strike in mid-November against the Doctors Medical Center in California, when Tenet Healthcare, Inc. refused to meet their concerns about safe staffing levels and a livable retirement package. Tenet plans to replace the nurses with scab workers. The nurses had made major concessions in 1997 to keep the hospital open. Yet today's annual pension package for the Tenet CEO is \$1,896,000, while for an RN with 29 years service it's \$3,000.

In the past few months many girls' schools in Afghanistan have been damaged or destroyed by rocket-propelled grenades and arson. Accompanying leaflets stated "it is un-Islamic to educate girls" and warned: "if you send your girls to school, you will be responsible for the consequences." But the attacks only strengthened the resolve of local people to defend their daughters' right to an education.

In the latest salvo in President Bush's war on women he decided to withhold \$34 million already approved by Congress for the UN Fund for Population Activities. These funds provide contraception, family planning, safe births, and work against the spread of HIV and female genital mutilation in the poorest countries of the world—where over 600,000 women (many children themselves) die every year from pregnancy and childbirths.

WAC demonstrates

Memphis, Tenn.—The Women's Action Coalition (WAC) held a demonstration on Oct. 26 against domestic violence against women. We dressed in black funeral attire, including veils, and stood on a busy street corner next to a makeshift wooden "coffin." We held signs with facts about domestic violence and with the YWCA's hotline phone number for women who are trying to escape abusive situations.

This year, four women and one man arrived at our usual street corner, but we found it was already being used by Democrats holding signs promoting candidates. We went to another busy intersection and stood on the median in the middle of the street. After a few minutes, a police officer drove up. He claimed that the police had received five phone calls complaining that we were blocking traffic. We explained we had not gone into traffic and that the sidewalk is regularly used for peace demonstrations. The officer then politely left. We continued to hold the Coffin Action for about an hour and received many positive responses from motorists.

—WACer

Cutbacks are killing transit workers

New York—On Nov. 21 and 22, two maintenance workers, Joy Anthony and Kurien Baby, were working on lighting and signal equipment on the NYC subways when they were struck by trains and killed. The problem was that the train operators did not have proper warning that the crews were working up ahead—the "flagging," or warning to the train operators, was inadequate.

This is a situation that TWU Local 100 had warned about, that is, it has happened before and not enough precautions were being taken to protect maintenance crews. Part of the problem is only three workers instead of five are assigned to signal crews.

This horrible accident comes at a time when the 34,000 transit workers who move seven million people 24/7 are locked in conflict with the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), Mayor Bloomberg, and Governor Pataki over contract negotiations. The current contract runs out on Dec. 15. Tensions are high and a lot is at stake for the city.

The MTA is set to raise fares. This is a move that transit workers and TWU Local 100 are also opposing. New Yorkers already pay 60% of transit costs through the fare box while other areas pay only 40%. An increased fare essentially forces working people to pay more taxes for getting themselves to work, giving the businesses a subsidy.

Workers are demanding pay increases, a return to solvency in the Health Benefits Trust Fund, an end to excessive and punitive disciplinary actions against transit workers, and provision for child care for workers in special situations.

Before the recent fatal accidents, TWU Local 100 had held a large rally of about 12,000 on Oct. 30 at the MTA Offices and later at Gov. Pataki's New York City office. According to a transit worker and shop steward: "We were confronted by riot police, wearing riot gear and riding horses. They had orders to arrest us, but we would not be intimidated, and we got that message across. Mayor Bloomberg had revoked our permit to march to Pataki's office one hour before the march and rally. We took to the sidewalks and marched anyway."

"We wanted to protest the Health Benefits Trust being \$30 million in the red, the unfair disciplinary actions against workers and being treated like second-class citizens. We wanted to be taken seriously and be heard in the upcoming negotiations. That is why so many turned out for the

rally.

"Sometimes foreign workers are asked to flag, to direct trains. They don't really know what to do but they are scared to speak up. One signal worker didn't hear the train coming in the opposite direction, stepped back, and got hit. The procedures have had to be changed for a long time but they haven't been.

"Safety is so important. Recently, 30 buses were found to have defective right-side mirrors that only allowed a partial view. They fastened on brackets that were too short for extended vision. Now many accidents will have to be reviewed. It may even be a wider system problem involving 50 more buses."

—Ted Rosmer and TWU Shop Steward

Assi market march

Los Angeles—Hundreds marched and demonstrated through Koreatown to support jointly the 60 Assi Supermarket workers and sweatshop laborers of Forever 21 Clothing. Fifty Latinos and 10 Korean workers



Forever 21, a young women's clothing retailer with nationwide distribution, operates six sweatshops in downtown Los Angeles. For more on this campaign, see www.sweatshopwatch.org.

were fired (placed on "non-disciplinary indefinite suspension") by Korean-owned Assi Supermarket when they had filed charges of discrimination and wage/hour violations, and attempted to self-organize a union, Immigrant Workers Union, to address their inhuman and exploitative working conditions.

The Assi and Forever 21 workers were supported by community people, mostly youths representing various student, labor support and community cultural organizations, including Korean Immigrant Worker Advocate. A preacher gave a strong speech, calling on owner Daniel Rhee to give back what he stole from the Assi workers and rights to a union. Betty Diaz spoke of having worked so hard for two years and being rewarded with termination along with her husband. Though their problems have multiplied, she is determined to win this battle for justice, which includes reinstatement, recoup of unpaid wages and an end to racism and exploitation.

Two of the signs held were "Pay the workers, not the lawyers" and "ASSI—Forever 21—shopping here supports exploitation." Meanwhile, 20 to 40 workers gather daily to picket Assi Market into the fourth month and weekly at Forever 21 at Beverly Center Mall. —Basho

Taiwanese farmers, fishermen protest

Taichung, Taiwan—The Nov. 23 demonstration of 120,000 farmers and fishermen almost took down the Chen Shui-bian administration. This was the biggest social protest in Taiwan's history. Surprisingly, it was held by farmers, the bottom of the Taiwanese social structure. The demonstrators' demands included saving Taiwan's agriculture and fishing industries by shoring up their credit unions and associations.

The massive protest prompted our premier, vice premier, a county government, and an agricultural official to take full responsibility by offering their resignations. Up to now, the premier has been willing to stay on and rebuild part of the cabinet.

Here is the paradox: both President Shui-bian and the premier come from farms. Logically, they should have taken good care of farmers. However, the social structure does not change although the government has been switched to ethnic Taiwanese from ethnic Chinese. Politically and economically, farmers and fishermen are in a very underprivileged situation. I don't think Shui-bian puts them out of his mind; however, I believe they are not among his first priorities.

Compared to the bloody farmers' demonstration in 1988, the main reason for the 2002 demonstration was to give farmers and fishermen a voice. They came from all over the island and showed their concern for themselves and their expectations for the Shui-bian government. During the demonstration, they took care of each other; therefore, what people watched on TV was a long march in good formation and with colorful banners. They did not ask for officials to resign; rather, they wanted to direct the government's attention to their basic life situation.

—Shu

Remembering Lynn

Our friend and comrade, Lynn Barrier, died on Oct. 24 at the age of 49, after suffering the past nine years through numerous painful surgeries, infections and other complications from a serious auto accident in 1993.

Lynn was born on June 22, 1953 in Uniontown, Pa., but lived her life in various parts of the country from Colorado, to Oklahoma, to Louisiana. As a working woman, she operated a punch press, worked as a grocery clerk and cashier, and during the tough times in her years as a single mom started her own "have bucket, will travel" home cleaning service.

Whether working or unemployed, Lynn remained a lifelong activist in the struggle for workers' rights. After meeting News and Letters Committees, she visited Chicago and participated in the Labor Day Parade in 1992. As she wrote then: "I marched with the displaced workers from Oscar Mayer because theirs was a grassroots freedom struggle separated from the policies of both the union bureaucrats and the company. They are being sold down the river by the company and their union alike." She also wrote of how "we workers are slaves to a system. If we are supposed to be one of the greatest nations, why do we see so many homeless, starving, lost people?"

Yet her indomitable faith that people could come together to overthrow that system came through often. In attacking the acquittal of the white cops who beat Rodney King, she said, "Why are these men above the law? We need to come together as human beings, not by our races, but by the oppression we all suffer. We little people aren't each others' enemies! We're all the same and it is a shame the fat cats can keep us apart, because together we could make them fall. And there are definitely more of us than those damn politicians."

As a resident of Oklahoma City at the time of the domestic terrorist bombing of the federal building there, Lynn shared these thoughts: "Everyone just pitched in, the minute the bomb exploded, to do whatever they could to help. Nobody had to organize anyone, they just organized themselves. It proved how different things could be in a different society. When you see something horrible like this hitting ordinary people, just like you and me, it hits home. I hope that all those people who didn't have any remorse when the U.S. bombed Baghdad (in the Persian Gulf war), killing a lot of innocent men and women and children who had never done anything to us, will have their eyes opened and begin to understand what those people were feeling."

Lynn's truly American working class voice which she shared with us in so many ways, including her words and her art, will be missed by everyone whose lives she touched. Our thoughts go out to Ned, her husband and colleague, as well as her children and grandchildren. Her spirit will live on in everyone working for a truly new, human society.

—News and Letters Committees comrades

Don't shop at Fred's!

Memphis, Tenn.—We workers and supporters were out there on Nov. 16 to get Fred's Warehouse to the negotiating table, six months after we voted to unionize with UNITE. The Ecumenical Task Force is calling for an "economic withdrawal": Don't shop at Fred's until Fred's negotiates a contract! We will continue to boycott these stores until they give us a contract.

They're continuing to fire people for no reason at all. Some of the 17 people fired came today. One young woman kept asking why they changed her job, so they sent her to door 20, the exit door when they want to get rid of you. They constantly watch us, which is unfair treatment. We're just trying to get respect and better treatment.

Fred's put in the paper that boss Mike Hayes is willing to negotiate, but he's not. He wants everyone to think he's protecting our rights, giving us respect. He's not doing it.

In the last couple of months, no one can take vacation days. One worker had asked for a vacation day for a death in the family but had to take that day with no pay. Another worker who was off for a death in the family was told they could take one day, but would still be marked absent. What's the use of having a day if you still get hassled?

The warehouse is like a petting zoo. We have bats flying around. There are cats, mice, birds. Until OSHA got a complaint, food was stored on the floor. They break OSHA and labor laws. We're trying to make it a safer and healthier workplace.

This week a girl's ankle was crushed in an accident. There weren't any brakes on the forklift. Lifts have been fixed for brakes and a couple days later the brakes are gone again. They only fix what breaks, they don't give the lifts a complete check. It endangers our lives.

They want to blame you when there's an accident. Then they want to send you for a drug test, try to get you fired for something they should have been on top of. The whole floor needs repairing. It has holes that make a forklift jump when it hits them.

I want more money, don't get me wrong—but it's a whole lot of things being done in the wrong way that we're trying to stop. If it takes being here every day, if we have to do shifts or whatever, we will, but we're not going to give up.

—Black women warehouse workers

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from page 1)

upon impact, creating a lasting dust carried by prevailing winds to be inhaled by the population. Morizumi reported that the cancer death rate in Basra, a city close to the battlefields, had increased seventeen-fold by 2000. Some suspect that depleted uranium may have something to do with Gulf War Syndrome, an "occupational" illness suffered by many soldiers who returned from Desert Storm.

ANYTHING CAN BE A COMMODITY

No one is able to calculate the long-term effects of this scourge. However, we suspect that long after the tyrannical regime of Saddam Hussein is gone, depleted uranium will continue to wreak havoc for many generations. Iraqi mothers no longer ask whether a newborn is a boy or a girl, but whether it is "normal."

This capitalist recycling, creating a new deadly commodity within their permanent war economy, reminded me of the argument Marx had with those who felt capitalist crises come from underconsumption by ordinary consumers. Marx demonstrated that, contrary to conventional wisdom, capital's problem is not that the average consumer isn't buying enough.

We are merely incidental as consumers, appendages as workers to capital's production machine. Some of us now enjoy the wonders of wireless communication and the information superhighway, but the internet was originally created by computer scientists to satisfy just one customer, the Pentagon. The benefits some of us receive as consumers are merely accidental to the original military application and capital's primary mission, its own self-expansion.

MILITARY NEEDS SAME AS CAPITAL'S

Under capitalism even health care is reduced to a commodity. We health care workers have seen a decade of restructuring where capital has sucked out health care resources for its own enlargement.

The war machine is part of capital's production for the sake of the perpetuation and expansion of capital's domination. Some capitalists have only other capitalists to buy their products as the raw material for still other capitalists. Raw steel can end up in plates and cables in a corporate headquarters or in millions of land mines.

Depleted uranium has become another commodity to satisfy this one customer, the Pentagon. But this time, the incidentals are not "collateral benefits" but rather devastating "collateral damage" to the health of the producers, the users and the especially unfortunate inhabitants of targeted areas. Capital's self-expansion and permanent war economy are threatening the planet and humanity in so total a way that we workers have to finally put an end to capital's deadly grip on our minds and our bodies.

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

The coming year will see a new edition of Raya Dunayevskaya's work, *Philosophy and Revolution: from Hegel to Sartre and from Marx to Mao*, first published in 1973, and many times and in many languages since then.

From the large collection of her writings and notes in preparation of *Philosophy and Revolution*, we have selected excerpts from her letter of Oct. 20, 1960, to Joseph Buttinger. Buttinger was an Austrian resistance fighter against Nazism, a Marxist thinker, and renowned author on the liberation struggle of Vietnam. Her letter delves into Hegel's "Absolutes," presented in his *Phenomenology of Mind*, *Science of Logic*, and *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*.

In 2003 News and Letters Committees will host a series of meetings on both *Philosophy and Revolution* and *Power of Negativity*. This letter can be found in *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 12327. Notes are by the editors.

Oct. 20, 1960

Dear JB:

...Though it must be very briefly, I do wish to take in all three major written works of Hegel: the *Phenomenology of Mind*, the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*. As is obvious from the title of his first great work [the *Phenomenology*], Hegel is dealing with **appearances**, knowledge as it appears in life, in history, in nations, in religion, in philosophic systems. (Later they will get worked out in his Lectures on Aesthetics, on the Philosophy of History, on the History of Philosophy, on Religion, on Law but they will lack the sweep, the thrill of the "voyage of discovery" when he saw all fields as one unified field of Absolute Reason and Freedom.)

Some detractors have been so foolish as to call the *Phenomenology* a "psychology of sorts," but the **experiences** [which] consciousness struggles through here (the subtitle of the work was, you know, "The Science of the Experience of Consciousness") [are of] the human spirit through some 4,000 years of civilization. The center of all six principal stages of consciousness is the **practical activity** of Reason to the point where the world and [Reason] are not two separate worlds, but unite, and each stage of unity brings with it new contradictions until Absolute Knowledge is reached. The point is he reaches that stage in **opposition** to all previous idealisms from Aristotle to Schelling for [Hegel] breaks both with slavery and introversion. The whole, the entire reality, including elements of the future or "divine," pull at the present and bring it into the **forward movement** of history. Of course, it is still the history of mind, but the **universal mind** as opposed to the individual, the self-development of which is, in truth, "the people."

Now if even we did not know the early works [of his] first system, which Hegel put away never to return to again, where he openly said, "The absolute moral totality is nothing else than a people" (and Marx didn't know these works and yet grasped the revolutionary impact from the dialectic in the *Phenomenology*), one couldn't possibly miss that this **activist spirit** is the human spirit and therefore has **today's** freedom struggles in it.

You might say: but if it is phenomenal knowledge, then it must be what Marx would have designated as "superstructure." Yes and no. Yes, if you mean appearance at **creative moments** in history when the class struggles have not yet so sharpened as to bring the whole system down, as Art in the time of Greek city-states, classical political economy at the time of the industrial revolution, German idealist philosophy following the French revolution, etc. No, if it means the superstructure at the point of the social structure's breakdown when, as Marx put it, the ideologists became "prize fighters for the bourgeoisie" like Senior's defense of the eleventh hour(1) or the present "end of ideology" philistines(2).

Now with the *Science of Logic*, Hegel becomes more abstract still, even in relationship to thought because

now he cannot deal with how it appears in consciousness, nor even the separate disciplines, whether they be the social sciences or the natural sciences, mathematics or art, religion or biology, ethics or physics. Each has its individual categories and they all must be broken down into one single, whole-embracing one that covers them all, not to mention keeping history in mind as well.

At the risk of sounding like the most idealistic of idealists, let me say that it is good for our age that he was compelled to be that abstract, as the categories of being, essence, notion and the dozens of categories each [are] in turn subdivided as [they go] through the process of negativity. Otherwise 1. it would have been impossible to work through to the logical end the development of each stage—that is one reason Hegel insists that [the] principle of all rational knowledge is through the syllogism (*schlusse*)—and 2. if the concrete and epochal development had been analyzed, then it couldn't have comprised further developments beyond his time.

Of course, Hegel lived in "a birth-time of history," when three revolutions opened our machine age.(3) These not only contained in germ the contradictions of our age, but allowed that great genius the scope needed to work out these stages of self-development. Only one world of caution, if I may quote my *Marxism and Freedom*: Let's not ever forget that there is nothing in the mind of man, not even that of a genius, that has not previously been in the activity of common man. In a word, man's actual struggles for freedom long preceded Hegel's working out of the **Idea** of freedom, and will follow until freedom is not an idea, but the reality.

Another word of caution: Marx could and did save the Hegelian dialectic from its idealistic trap when Hegel couldn't work through the negativity of labor, and not just of thought. Marx had to break from arguing with intellectuals and thus moved from the history of thought (political economy in his case) to the history of **production relations**. But he didn't throw [the history of thought] "to the winds," not even bourgeois thought; he merely moved it over, to the end of all volumes of *Capital*, instead of at the center of *Capital*.(4) As for proletarian thought, there is never any sharp division between action and thought. When he said that philosophers had interpreted the world, but what was needed was to change it, he certainly didn't exclude thought.(5)

But to return to Hegel, and his **contemporaneity**—the process of becoming and passing away, of negation and yet retention of all previous systems of philosophy as the truth of their day as well as error as a dynamic of the forward movement of mind...[contains a] pregnant sense of **relativity** of all fields of knowledge as well as all historic periods of man's actual development that has anticipated Einstein's theory of relativity.

'Philosophic foundations of the struggles for freedom'

This, despite the fact that the actual sciences Hegel dealt with have long since been proven wrong. In that respect I certainly agree with Haldane who, in his Preface to the *Science of Logic*, writes:

"It is a mistake to suppose that Hegel deduces nature from his categories. Thought for him does not make a thing. It is exemplified in Nature in the form of externality. But mind in this abstract form is not yet actual. It only becomes so in a logical development later when both Logic and its other, Nature, become actual for the first time....It is the same single process throughout. Nature and thought imply each other, but neither creates the other"(6).

As you see, I've plunged into the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences* which consists of what is known as the "Smaller Logic," *Philosophy of Nature*, and *Philosophy of Mind*. Now the "Smaller Logic" is an abbreviated *Science of Logic* (using "abbreviate" in the

Hegelian tradition of abbreviating a whole span of historic development into a single category), with something new added. That something new is [the chapters on] the Three Attitudes to Objectivity, which are not present in the *Science of Logic*. Here he again "abbreviates" all systems of philosophy into but three different relations to the objective world.

When he reaches *Philosophy of Mind*, he again summarizes, this time very badly, his own *Phenomenology* as well as *Philosophy of Right*. But it doesn't matter, not only because you have these worked out in full in

separate volumes, but because they are taken only as forms of appearance before you come to the real objective, Absolute Mind, which, if you recall my letters on the Absolutes(7), was equated by me with the new society.

Now it is this self-developing subject as real—the masses who can and do change the world—which creates the philosophic foundations for dealing with the underdeveloped countries in our era: 1. both because the problems there and the problems underlying Hegel's thought at the beginning of the machine age have **similarities** in [the] development of consciousness, and 2. because of the great **dissimilarities** because our age is the age of absolutes, which Hegel only reached at the end [of his works].

How Hegel labored so patiently through all stages of self-development, alienation, negation, fulfillment, realization—so that he reached that stage that has become such good sport for our empiricist philistines and pragmatic opportunists—I'll never "really" know.

But what seems to me obvious, as I look at the American worker confronted with the absolute of Automation and compelled to raise the questions about the breakdown of the division between manual and mental [labor]; or as I sense the Vietnamese peasant recognizing the totalitarian Plan, even when garbed in Marxist phraseology; or see the African and the Hungarian, **very nearly simultaneously**, raising the question of the Humanism of Marxism in opposition to the Russian [Communist Party] stand [against] "idealistic Hegelianist tone" as "inadequate for our age"—what seems to me obvious, I repeat, is that the self-development of mind is so close to the self-development of freedom as destiny of man that the future begins to pull on the present so strongly that it propels it forward. In that way, the ideal becomes real and in that way, and that way only, was Hegel impelled to an Absolute.

If it had not been the "pull," there could not have been a dialectic method which still has the "answers." Or so it appears to me...

NOTES

- (1) Nassau Senior, a 19th century economist who argued against shortening the working day on the grounds that profit was generated in the eleventh hour of work.
- (2) A reference to Daniel Bell's *The End of Ideology*.
- (3) The Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, and the American Revolution.
- (4) A reference to Vol. IV of *Capital*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, which Marx had originally envisioned (in the 1863 draft) as being part of Vol. I of that work.
- (5) Marx's phrase (in the *Theses on Feuerbach*) was: "Philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it."
- (6) See J.B.S. Haldane's Preface to the *Science of Logic*, translated by Johnston and Struthers, 1929.
- (7) See Dunayevskaya's "Letters on Hegel's Absolutes" of May 1953, in *The Power of Negativity*.



Are you ready for a new beginning?

"Today we live in an age of absolutes, that is to say, in an age where the contradictions are so total that the counter-revolution is in the very innards of the revolution. In seeking to overcome this total, this absolute contradiction, we are on the threshold of true freedom and therefore can understand better than any previous age Hegel's most abstract concepts."



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PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

by Kevin Anderson

Author of *Lenin, Hegel, and Western Marxism*

Karl Marx published *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* in 1852 in the aftermath of the Dec. 2, 1851 Bonapartist coup in France that brought to an end the whole period of ferment that had begun with the 1848 revolutions.

In France it ushered in nearly two decades of authoritarian rule, as the Bonapartist state became a precursor of twentieth century fascism, setting up the first modern police state. All the while the regime also claimed to oppose slavery and to be acting in the name of the masses against the various monarchies of Europe. Among Bonaparte's most reactionary adventures was the attempt to install a puppet ruler, Maximilian, in Mexico.

REORGANIZATION AND RETROGRESSION

The 1851 coup came suddenly, like a "bolt from the blue," Marx wrote (MECW 11, p. 107—I am referencing the version in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, but here and elsewhere, sometimes altered in consultation with Terrell Carver in the 1996 Cambridge edition of Marx, *Later Political Writings*).

One indication of the defensive posture that revolutionaries across Europe had been forced into was shown in how the *Eighteenth Brumaire* was published. No European publisher was able to print it and the pamphlet came out in the U.S. in a very small printing, under the auspices of the German immigrant Marxist and future Union Army officer Joseph Weydemeyer. In this work, Marx predicted correctly that a long wave of reaction would now blanket Europe. The *Eighteenth Brumaire* was one place where Marx developed his theory of the state, something he had planned to complete in a major work that was to follow *Capital*.

In the *Eighteenth Brumaire*, Marx showed how the road to the Bonapartist coup of December 1851 had been paved by the deep contradictions that had emerged in 1848, on the one hand, between the bourgeois democrats and the proletariat, and on the other, among the bourgeois democrats themselves. The result was a deeply retrogressive situation, wherein, "it seems that the state only returned to its oldest form, to the shamelessly simple domination of the sword and the cross" (MECW 11, p. 106).

However, Marx insisted, this was not a return to the premodern era, but a form of dictatorship that was very new. Up through 1852, Marx noted, "all revolutions perfected the state machine instead of breaking it," helping to create a "huge state edifice" (MECW 11, p. 186). He also dealt with the class basis of the new state—its roots in parts of the disunited French peasantry and its connection to the army.

At the same time, he wished to disabuse the proletariat and all those in the revolutionary camp of the notion that any immediate turnabout lay on the hori-

Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire today

zon. There were simply too many objective obstacles: "Human beings make their own history," he wrote. "But," he warned, "they do not make it just as they please, in circumstances chosen by themselves, but under present circumstances, given and inherited from the past" (MECW 11, p. 103).

At the same time, Marx sketched the positive motion that he saw in the trajectory of the movement, even in defeat. Despite setbacks, there had been a lot of learning and the growth of proletarian self-consciousness. In language that evoked Hegel's "labor, patience, and suffering of the negative," Marx wrote of how, as against bourgeois revolutions and their strengthening of the state, proletarian revolutions "engage in perpetual self-criticism" and "deride with savage brutality the inadequacies, weak points, and pitiful aspects of their first attempts" (MECW 11, p. 106).

This self-critical attitude was not due to weakness, Marx wrote, but to the "prodigious" scope of their aims, which, as he was to write later, include not just the overthrow of a particular ruler or system, but the "abolition" of "class-rule itself" (in 1871 in *The Civil War in France*). However, to get there, constant self-critique and self-reorganization on the part of the revolutionary movement was an absolute necessity.

ALLEGED DISMISSAL OF THE PEASANTRY

Some critics of Marx have seen the *Eighteenth Brumaire* as a flawed work because of a supposedly elitist dismissal of the peasantry. They hang their argument on the passages where Marx wrote that, in a way, the Bonapartist regime represented the French peasantry, a class that he considered to be an unformed mass, "much as potatoes in a sack form a sack of potatoes." He added that "they do not form a class" and since "they cannot represent themselves, they need to be represented," and in this case that vacuum had been unfortunately filled by Bonaparte (MECW 11, p. 187).

If in fact Marx dismissed the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, here or more generally, that would indeed constitute a serious flaw in his thinking, especially given the history of 20th century revolutionary movements, from China to the Zapatistas.

Instead, however, what Marx was saying was that at that particular juncture, 1851-52, the French peasantry lacked cohesion and therefore fell into the trap of Bonapartism, as had the liberal democrats as well. What

Marx was talking about was the emergence of different tendencies among the French peasants, based on their specific class position and the uneven development of their revolutionary consciousness:

"But let there be no misunderstanding. The Bonaparte dynasty represents not the revolutionary, but the conservative peasant; not the peasant that strikes out beyond the condition of his social existence, the small-holding, but rather the peasant who wants to consolidate this holding; not the country folk who, linked up with the towns, want to overthrow the old order

through their own energies in conjunction with the towns....It represents not the enlightenment, but the superstition of the peasant; not his judgment, but his prejudice; not his future, but his past..." (MECW 11, p. 188).

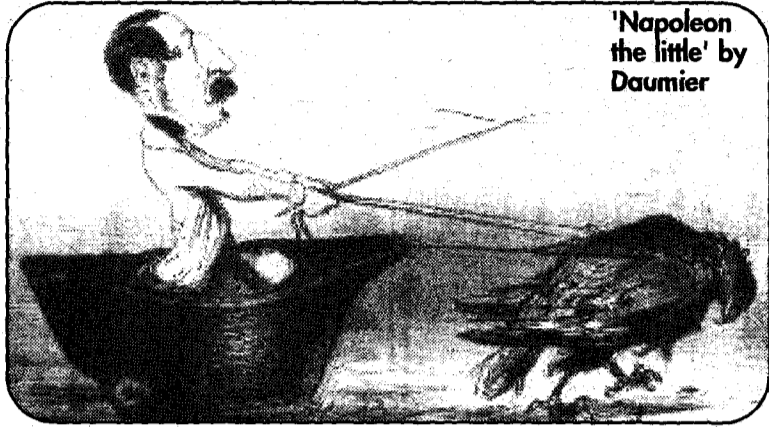
The above passage is in keeping with many others by Marx, where he vehemently opposed those

who argued that the pro-

letariat alone was revolutionary, such as in the *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875), where he polemicized against the Lassallean view of the backwardness of the peasantry.

Marx expressed this point more affirmatively in his letter to Engels of April 11, 1856, where he wrote of the dialectical relationship between peasant and proletarian struggles, going back to the 16th century peasant uprising in Germany on which Engels had written one of his best books, *The Peasant War in Germany* (published only two years before the *Eighteenth Brumaire*). Marx wrote: "The whole thing in Germany will depend upon the possibility of backing the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasant War. Then the affair will be splendid..."

The *Eighteenth Brumaire* has relevance today on its 150th anniversary for many reasons. One of them lies in how, as against Marx's anarchist critics, it shows his preoccupation with, and opposition not only to capital, but also to the modern state, and gives some flavor of the never-written book on the state that was to have followed *Capital*. A second point to ponder for today is how the Bonapartist coup of 1851, while not an exact parallel to what happened after September 11, showed the drive for total domination by the modern bourgeois state, one that reached its fullest development in the twentieth century with state-capitalist totalitarianism. Today, that is a danger that lurks more than ever under the surface of bourgeois democracy.



'Napoleon the little' by Daumier

The political, religious and ethnic conflict in Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast—What seems to have been a military mutiny has now become an organized attempt to overthrow the government of President Laurent Gbagbo. About 750 military men who were recruited into the army by former military dictator General Guei are said to be resisting demobilization and are at the core of the rebel forces demanding Gbagbo's resignation.

BACKGROUND TO CRISIS

To understand the crisis in Ivory Coast one has to start from the beginning. Ivory Coast, until recently a relatively peaceful country under the one-party neo-colonial and brutal regime of President Houphouët-Boigny (who ruled from independence in the 1960s until his death in 1993), witnessed serious economic problems in the 1980s. The 1980s saw the birth of a pro-democracy movement, which saw the masses challenge the neocolonial forces in the Ivorian cities.

The corruption and misadministration deepened to such an extent by the 1990s that political reform became inevitable. Yet political reform by itself proved unable to resolve the crisis.

Alassane Ouattara, who was an official of the World Bank and the IMF, was brought into the government and later made prime minister to put the economy into shape. He then became involved in a battle with Kone Bedie, who took over after the death of President Boigny in 1993. The economy, however, never regained its strength and poverty deepened as a result of a military coup in 1999, led by General Guei. Since Guei was confronted with mass resistance in the streets, he had no other choice but to call another general election.

At this time the preferred candidate of western imperialism, Ouattara, was disqualified from the elections on the grounds of his alleged Burkinabi citizenship. Ouattara then took political power into his hands and tolerated very little opposition to his IMF-dictated economic reforms. This brought him into conflict with Laurent Gbagbo, who came from the Ivorian radical left.

Ouattara began his IMF-dictated privatization program with French companies as his primary clients. But these reforms quickly cost him his political power. Guei, who had called an election which he then lost to Gbagbo, was forced out of power by the Ivorian masses after he insisted that his party had won the election.

Gbagbo won the election with the firm promise that

he would throw out all IMF programs and refuse to pay the foreign debt, which he insisted has never served the interests of the Ivorian people. Both France and the international financial institutions saw that their interests were at stake. Within two days of the start of the recent crisis on Sept. 19 of this year, when an uprising against President Gbagbo occurred, General Guei was murdered by government forces and Ouattara sought refuge at the French embassy. Burkinabi citizens in the country were brutally attacked and their homes and property put on fire and destroyed. The crisis became framed as one between the Muslim North and the Christian South.

The French, who sent military forces, claim to be there to save their citizens and other foreign nationals. They say this is an internal crisis in which they have no mandate to intervene, but French forces have intervened in many internal conflicts in the continent, including in Ivory Coast. The most open and brutal example was when they helped overthrow the elected government in Congo-Brazzaville of Pascal Lissouba, after he insisted on revising and/or annulling agreements that the former government had made with French companies as part of an IMF-dictated privatization program, which would have handed over government-controlled companies to French interests at giveaway prices. It is no accident France is being accused of having a hand in this rebellion.

Burkina Faso, under the reactionary leadership of President Blaise Compaore (who in the 1980s murdered one of the most able leaders in the postcolonial history of the continent, Thomas Sankara) also has an interest in fomenting this crisis, in part because of Compaore's close ties with Ouattara.

ETHNICITY AND POLITICS

We know that Laurent Gbagbo, who came to power not only by winning a general election but also through popular mass resistance against military dictatorship on an anti-imperialist program, never grounded this victory with the masses. He could have done better than further escalating the Ivorian internal crisis along ethnic and regional lines.

The ethnicity card has divided the country into two parts, with the religious division as the contributing factor. This has changed the nature of the state, which

from the start had tried to bring together the different forces in the country. The northern part of the country is mainly inhabited by Muslims, who are accused by the government of harboring the rebels. This is why the mainly Muslim Burkinabis have been accused of playing a role in the fighting. This has left many Muslims vulnerable to brutal attacks from not only ordinary Ivorians but also from the military. Statist fascism has so far been the only response from the government to the crisis. Contrary to the disinformation that part of the international press is consciously spreading, this rebellion has been well organized and is not only due to some military men angry about being demobilized. The fact that the rebels are unwilling to reveal their leadership also indicates that foreign interests may be at play.

ECONOMIC REALITIES

The economic crisis since the end of the 1980s is at the core of the political crisis. The price of the main cash crop, cacao, has since been falling and is responsible for much distress in the national economy (the majority of the population are farmers). The UN is saying that food shortages will become severe within six months. This will produce more atrocities in the struggle for survival.

Knowing that this could become a protracted conflict, rebel forces have been demanding the resignation of Gbagbo as a precondition for ending the conflict. This is unlikely, since government forces are consolidating their ranks with more arms and external military support. Some African countries are also contemplating a military intervention in support of Gbagbo.

Now that we are getting a clearer picture of the rebel forces, we are of the opinion that their program is no better than that of Gbagbo's. It is believed that there are now three different rebel forces, who have also been fighting with each other. This has caused the rebels to lose ground. The peace process is in total disarray and the fighting remains serious. The war seems to be destined to last for some time.

The question that should now be asked is how Gbagbo and his government will handle the internal crisis after the end of the conflict. If he chooses to confront the crisis on ethnic and regional lines, instead of confronting the forces that are against the interests of the Ivorian people, he is bound to fail sooner than later.

—Ba Karang

FIGHTING WAR AND TERRORISM AT HOME AND ABROAD

All along, *N&L* has been bringing out how bizarre is the mirror image of someone like bin Laden declaring jihad and someone like Bush declaring a new crusade, each one invoking a national myth of unsullied goodness and decrying the other as the evil to be annihilated. What needs to be remembered is that Hussein and his henchmen no more speak for the people of Iraq than Bush and his minions represent the people of the U.S. Even the president's own United Methodist Church has informed its congregation that a preemptive strike against Iraq cannot meet the criteria of the just war theory.

**Tom More
Spokane**

The Left is back to "no blood for oil" as though we are back to the last Gulf War. Some don't get it when we talk of the drive for permanent war as being the administration's prime motivation, even though the administration is talking constantly about it and practicing it. Reducing our response to only trying to find a "logic" to the war misses the point of the depth of the crisis as well as the depth of the passion for freedom.

**M.W.
Oakland, Cal.**

As Bush is getting ready for a new Gulf War, we need to be aware of the horrors the U.S. government has been unleashing with its radioactive depleted uranium weapons. It left two to three times more depleted uranium in Afghanistan than what it used in the 1991 Gulf War. A web site at <http://www.globalalternatives.org/911> warns of the severe health and environmental effects that will soon be registered.

**Anti-war activist
New York**

Whether or not one believes war is justified should Hussein refuse to allow U.S. inspections, the resentment boiling up in the Middle East against the U.S.'s bellicose policies will not stem the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism in that area. The Bush administration gives no consideration to what the people who live there think and creates fertile ground for more terrorist groups. I'm glad *N&L* is abreast of these issues since the major media reports very little about the opposition to Bush's foreign policies in the Middle East.

**D.T.
Louisiana**

While it may seem like a small event to some, I wanted you to know that there was an anti-war demonstration in Springfield that was attended by about 60 people. As small as that seems, it was the largest anti-war demonstration here since President Carter reinstated the selective service in 1980.

**Union organizer
Springfield, Ill.**

President Bush saw the sniper killing and wounding of all those people in Virginia as an act of terrorism and said whoever shoots innocent people and kills them has a sick mind. Isn't that the same behavior the U.S. military will carry out in Iraq if it follows the command of Mr. Bush?

**Iranian exile
Los Angeles**

Noam Chomsky in his book, *9/11*, never distinguishes between the two worlds that exist within the U.S. and within the Muslim world. He views it as a clash between two civilizations. It

makes the headline of the front page editorial in the November *N&L* stand out over all other analyses I've read: "Stop Bush's war on Iraq, support the Iraqi people." That's exactly what needs to be done.

**Radical lawyer
Flint**

Raya Dunayevskaya's commentary on the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis (November *N&L*) is contemporary because in it she rails against the Left not only for not following through on their own issue, opposition to the bomb, when it comes to Russia, but failing to see that revolution itself is at stake because Russia had become the greatest exporter of counter-revolution. This is precisely the myopic view of many in today's anti-war movement, personified by Chomsky, who fails to single out fundamentalism and its terror as the face of counter-revolution.

**Activist-thinker
California**

When I read in the November "From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya" about Kennedy and Khrushchev accusing each other of being "aggressor" and "deceiver" during the Cuban Missile Crisis, I was reminded of Bush and bin Laden arguing over who's really the terrorist. Answer: all of the above.

**Revolutionary youth
Memphis**

THE NEED FOR A FAIR MEDIA



I wonder how many know anything about the protest in front of the *Washington Post* that was part of a campaign for fairness in the media, launched by Black Voices for Peace in November. They are targeting the *Washington Post* and other media outlets who have not been balanced and accurate in their reporting on the participation of Black and other people of color in anti-war activities.

**Supporter
Chicago**

A vital handmaiden in the Bush administration's march to power is the media. Freedom of the press, written and electronic, is in serious jeopardy following the assimilation of the new media into conglomerate empires such as Time-Warner and Disney, who have much more interest in profits than in news reporting. Much of the media openly supports the administration and censors unfavorable government criticism. Examples abound but one of the clearest examples is the failure of the media to widely report the anti-war demonstration by more than 100,000 in Washington, D.C. in October.

**Retired journalist
Detroit**

To paraphrase Lenin, newspapers like *N&L* are like giant bellows that will transform the "sparks" produced by the corrupt, decrepit capitalist system into a fiery conflagration that will consume capitalism.

**Ex-postal worker
Battle Creek**

ECUADOR'S NEW PRESIDENT

Lucio Gutierrez's campaign for the runoff election which he won in November was a disappointment for many on the Left. His first act was to travel to Miami and Washington to assure the business and banking communities they had nothing to fear from his presidency. He has distanced himself from the two activist grassroots parties that officially endorsed him and, instead of proposing concrete programs, has spoken only in abstractions, saying he is against corruption and for democracy. The mere attempt to eliminate the more blatant corrupt practices of government and industry that are rampant here will speak neither to the basic causes of poverty nor to the

masses' passion for an end to their misery and exploitation.

**Correspondent
Ecuador**

ON FUNDAMENTALISM

When the Islamic fundamentalists won elections in certain areas of Pakistan, the first thing they did was sexually segregate the educational system. Within all fundamentalisms is the idea that women are less than human. Yet they are terrified that these less-than-human people will prove the opposite. It reminds me of the way slaves were considered so inferior that they couldn't learn, yet the South had laws forbidding them from learning to read and punished whites who helped them.

**Feminist historian
Tennessee**

The fundamentalist Right is saying men's masculinity is being threatened, but never explains what that means. They are also threatened by lesbian mothers who, according to them, can't teach a boy what it means to be a man. The way this "masculinity thing" is being paraded around by the Right needs to be analyzed.

**Artemis
Memphis**

U.S. actions are fueling the popularity of fundamentalism from Southeast Asia to Africa. It was the same during the Iranian Revolution in 1979 when the U.S. attacked Iranians in general, making it hard for some to be against Khomeini. At that time many leftists, even in Iran, were slow to condemn Khomeini and that hesitation helped him to consolidate his power and turn against them.

**Iranian exile
Hayward, Cal.**

The Christian Right has been going all out to support the Israeli Right. The idea that the two ultra-conservative groups are serious about their ideas is not to be laughed at. Jerry Falwell does have Bush's ear and can mobilize his supporters to promote their agenda. Their ideas have a huge impact on domestic and foreign policy, especially Israel's policy.

**Anti-all-fundamentalisms
Chicago**

WOMEN'S LIBERATION AS A LIFE AND DEATH QUESTION



We have always known that women's control over our own bodies is a life-and-death issue. But it has been framed as a peripheral pleasure issue—sexual freedom or choice—when it is really about life and death. The question of AIDS emphasizes that, as your column on rape and AIDS during war (November *N&L*) makes clear.

**Black Christian feminist
Tennessee**

I found the articles about RAWA and the use of rape by the military to be disturbing and absolutely necessary to know about. This information should be more widely circulated among the public. Thank you for what you are doing on that.

**Women's Liberationist
Chicago**

The women's movement was able to make sexism ideologically unacceptable in most circles for a while. You had to at least pretend not to be sexist. Now an awful backward step is showing up. Sexism is so much with us again that Bush can make jokes about how he makes his wife sweep the porch and it's considered acceptable ideology.

**Disgusted male
Mid-South**

THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS

Some of us here in Maine are giving serious consideration to secession, either forming a separate nation or hooking up with Quebec or New Brunswick. However, we are still part of the U.S. where Jonathan Carter ran as a Green for Governor and garnered almost 10% of the vote. His was the first candidacy under Maine's "Clean Election" law; that is, the voters paid for it. He had run before without any money but always got only about 1%.

**Observer
Maine**

It was a shock when two Michigan counties (including Detroit) failed to pass a proposal on "Arts, Parks and Kids" that would have provided funds for museums, parks and cultural institutions. Perhaps enough people did not vote; some said they felt the election would make very little difference. Or maybe homeowners were reacting to the doubling of home insurance rates, said to be a result of the huge drain on insurance companies after September 11, by refusing to vote for funding.

**Susan Van Gelder
Detroit**

"POPULAR FRONT"

Some young people have a "popular front" stance, where they think it is OK to forget about history and philosophy as long as they can get everyone to unite against globalization. I saw one example of this at a slide show by a radical artist named Eric Drooker. In the discussion one young woman asked him how the anti-globalization movement could go forward. He suggested taking the "best aspects" of Trotsky, Mao, and Stalin—without mentioning the problems with any of them. He thought you could forget about actual history and just unite.

People are becoming more pragmatic. They make an abstraction of theory and don't deal with their own experiences at work, at home, or in their daily lives.

**Young radical
Chicago**

HOW TO FIGHT?

What we're up against in this country today is really intense. Those who struggled in the '60s and '70s are either dead or in prison. The police are getting so bad I feel they're going to either shoot me or put me in prison. Young folks and people of color know what we have to fight but don't know how to do it.

**Tiger
Oakland, Cal.**

SUPPORT ACHEH!

Readers who have been following the independence struggle in Aceh, Indonesia, are urged to send letters to the U.S. and Indonesian governments at this crucial time. Indonesia has stepped up its killing of civilians and is bombing suspected rebel areas. It now threatens to "close down" the entire province if the guerrilla resistance (GAM) does not agree to a "peace agreement" by Dec. 9. GAM celebrated its 26th anniversary Dec. 4, and vowed to keep up the struggle for independence. Jakarta has offered only "special autonomy." GAM is in contact with other separatist movements in Indonesia such as the Free Papua Movement and rebels calling for a South Moluccan Republic.

In Aceh the body of Musliadi, age 26, leader of the West Aceh Student and Youth Action Coalition, was found on Dec. 4, killed like so many others because of his activities against human rights violations in Aceh. An economics student, he had been detained by security forces on Nov. 30. To send letters of protest, contact Aceh Center at internationalaffairs@siraaceh.org, or IHRN at Kurt@indonesianetwork.org.

**Acheh Supporter
New York**

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Capitalism is an irrational, anti-human system. There are many ways that have been put forward to meet its challenge—not just state socialism but anarcho-socialism and other forms that explore how to meet our needs. We deserve to have our needs met in a rational way. Just imagine how the questions of technology would change in a humanist society. Just imagine what we could do with our time if it were more rational.

**Eco-socialist
California**

In my job as an accountant, I see the system as a kind of psychotic who every three months has to meet certain numerical goals. The corporations work for their own survival based on those numbers. Nothing else matters. The quarter system is maddeningly crazy.

**Accountant
California**

I am fed up with Bush's complaints and disagreements about Kyoto. If he thinks those accords will destroy the business economy, he is sadly mistaken. If Kyoto is not agreed to, it is the effects of global warming that will destroy most business opportunities. Maybe the Canadian dollar will exceed the U.S.'s if Kyoto is ratified here and not in the U.S. It's up to Bush whether America the "beautiful" survives global warming.

**Fed up
Canada**

**IMPEACH BUSH
AND CHENEY**

I would like to see a movement to impeach President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney, along with our entire Senate and House for not upholding their oaths of office to protect our Constitution. What else would you call it when such a subversive act as the PATRIOT act—that actively attacks at least five of our constitutional amendments—was passed without most of our representatives even

reading it? I call it high treason when a political agenda is put above our constitutional rights.

**M.T.C.
Lincoln, Neb.**

We all knew the Bush administration didn't want to have any independent inquiry into the "failures of intelligence" that led to the September 11 disaster. But it really took more than gall to appoint a war criminal like Henry Kissinger to do the investigating! This is a man known for massive deceptions about everything from the "secret bombing" of Cambodia and Laos to his role in Chile, and on and on. There are so many places that would like to put him on trial that he is known to get legal advice before he travels anywhere these days. His appointment by Bush adds one more "crime" to Bush's record.

**Outraged
Pennsylvania**

FREING JOSE SOLIS

It was great to learn from *ProLibertad* that Professor Jose Solis Jordan completed his sentence on Nov. 21 and is no longer a political prisoner. He should never have served a day.



What is little known is that it was the 51 month sentence given to Prof. Solis that gave President Clinton a standard by which to offer clemency to the 16 Puerto Rican independentistas who had been given even more outrageously long sentences. Solis also went to prison in a different era. The Bush administration is now creating conditions by which many more innocent people could end up in prison for their political opinions as Solis was. We should honor him for the way he faced injustice with dignity and courage.

**Gerard Emmett
Chicago**

WHO OWNS THE WATER?

I read the article on "Who owns water in 'new' South Africa" (October *N&L*) with great interest. It recalled my days growing up in Mississippi with no running water. People often saved rain water from the gutter, which resulted in an epidemic of rheumatic fever and irregular t-cell counts. You know what others are going through when you have gone through it yourself. Ours is truly one world.

**Black working woman
Los Angeles**

BELAFONTE VS. POWELL

Harry Belafonte said publicly what is taken as a given in the African-American community, when he called Colin Powell "a house slave," although others might have used a different word.

Belafonte was born in 1927 in Harlem but spent most of his young life in Jamaica. Powell was born in New York City too, of Jamaican descent. Both men served in the armed forces—Belafonte in the Navy and Powell in the Army. But it was not the rivalry that exists between those two branches, or the difference in their ages that accounts for Belafonte's view of Powell. It could be because they were both of Jamaican descent. I think big brother Belafonte was calling on little brother Powell to stop being used by George W. and his cabinet. Too much disrespect has been brought to bear by them on the Black male already. I side with Harry Belafonte.

**Nouveau Toussaint
Chicago**

PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

The review of Joel Kovel's book, *The Enemy of Nature: The End of Capitalism or the End of the World* (November *N&L*) was one of the most intriguing contributions to *Philosophic Dialogue* that *N&L* has printed. Joe Swoboda's view of the book is from two directions: 1) his belief that Marx's works are ripe for an ecological interpretation and 2) his hope that this book might provide a needed philosophic vision for the green movement of which he is a part. He concludes that Kovel's vision is grounded in Marx's humanist philosophy but is

weak in developing Marx's dialectical vision of subjects of revolt fighting for freedom. What I liked best was Swoboda's call for a dialogue between Kovel, *N&L*, and social ecologists.

**Mary Jo Grey
Chicago**

I thought the reviewer gave Kovel's book *The Enemy of Nature* more credit than he deserves when he says that Kovel projects a need for a philosophy of revolution. I don't think that was central to his vision of eco-socialism.

**Critic
Oakland, Cal**

Only through new human relations can philosophy fully uncover the power of mediation and open up an objective view of nature. Kovel's new book opens many avenues for discussion of the dialectic as central to liberation.

**R.B.
California**

**TECHNOLOGY AND THE
DOCKWORKERS**

The discussion of technology in the November *N&L* Lead gets to the crux of the problem when it says capital increasingly endows material forces with intellectual powers while reducing human beings to a material force. That's not an issue the dockworkers have addressed so far. They are concerned about who is going to get the remaining jobs. Meanwhile, technology is redefining the mind as something that computes and crunches numbers. The people who are displaced need to ask what that means.

**Concerned
Bay Area**

Some people, like my dad, whose brother is a boss on the docks, look at the dockworkers' union and workers in general as greedy people trying to get more and more money for less and less work. Actually, that sounds more to me like the bosses. But money isn't even the issue for these workers. The issue is having control over their own labor.

**Youth activist
Memphis**

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America's courts are the machinery of injustice!

Chicago—Recently the Campaign to End the Death Penalty (CEDP) held its national conference here; Northwestern University Law School hosted a celebration of Death Row exonerations and a Center on Wrongful Convictions (CWC) benefit dinner featuring wrongfully arrested Brenton Butler; and "Resistance to Repression" took place at Kent College of Law. These expositions of the clay feet of American justice were aided by the 85 recommendations of Illinois Gov. George Ryan's Commission on Capital Punishment. Stephen Bright, director of the Southern Center for Human Rights and keynote speaker at the CEDP conference and Ryan, speaking at NU, referred to the recommendations, which apply to all criminal cases.

The first, the "tunnel vision" recommendation, reads, "After a suspect has been identified, the police should continue to pursue all reasonable lines of inquiry, whether these point towards or away from the suspect." Once prosecutors get a theory of a case, they fail to follow other leads. Rolando Cruz, the Ford Heights Four, Anthony Porter, suspects in the Central Park Jogger case, Butler and the West Memphis 3 satisfied theories that blinded law enforcement to other possibilities.

Prosecutors work hard to support their theories, withholding as much (or more) from the defense as the law allows. Our culture requires this adversarial mindset. But it had a heart-rending result in Chicago during Death Row clemency hearings when victims' families re-exposed grief and sadness. However, justice administered during the anguish of loss might as well be frontier justice—swift and unsure. Instead, criminal justice should be dispassionate in order to arrive at the truth.

Rob Warden of CWC says, "This has been the year of the false confession." Confessions coerced by psychological and/or physical torture, or even fabricated by law enforcement were a factor in some convictions. The Commission devoted 12% of its recommendations to interrogation, taping, funding and training to improve suspect interrogation and how it is legally interpreted. Butler's case stands out. He is a 15-year-old whom police brutalized when a grieving husband identified him. The Academy-Award winning documentary, "Murder on a Sunday Morning," tells the story.

And impeachable witnesses, such as jailhouse snitches or people whose charges and sentences were mitigated in return for lying in court, can convince juries. Some eyewitnesses are sincere, but human fallibility impeaches them. Gary Wells of Iowa State University, an expert in this field insists on two basic techniques:

- 1) Double-blind testing, that is, the person asking the questions does not know which is the suspect.
- 2) The witness must be presented with suspects one by one. To each individual he must say "yes" or "no" before going to the next, because in a "lineup" the witness feels compelled to choose and will finger the individual who looks most like the person he saw commit

BLACK/RED VIEW

(Continued from page 1)

revelation is old history for many African Americans. It was precisely this type of police brutality that caused Huey Newton and Bobby Seale in 1966 to organize the Black Panthers as a means of self defense.

The history of Oakland police's racist relationship with African Americans lingers on, while Jerry Brown, the present mayor of Oakland, is under pressure to end the rising rate of unsolved homicides. Brown moved to relieve this pressure by placing two propositions on the November ballot. The first would let Oakland hire a hundred more police officers and the second would let the city pay them by new tax assessments, such as an increase in parking fees, a surcharge on utilities and an increase in hotel taxes. Voters accepted the first proposition and rejected the others.

RACE AND CLASS IN OAKLAND

Mayor Brown got his police officers, but not the money to pay them. His dilemma is not an accident, but a manifestation of race and class divisions in Oakland. According to the voting record, the majority of whites, living in upscale neighborhoods in the Oakland hills, voted for the employment of more police officers and against the taxes to pay them. African-American voters living in the flatlands voted against both hiring more police officers and creating new taxes to pay them.

Mayor Brown has attempted to shift his political dilemma away from the race and class antagonisms in Oakland by saying that most of the recent homicides are committed by parolees. He claims that California's Parole Board has a policy of giving parolees a few hundred dollars and a bus ticket to Oakland. Therefore, he convinced his friends in the State Legislature to send more parole officers to Oakland. By doing this, Brown appears to be humane and rational. In reality he does the opposite. Parole officers don't solve homicide cases. They are given the power to arbitrarily arrest parolees without any "interference" from courts or lawyers.

Some say the murders are connected to the sale of drugs, others say gang warfare, or a family feud. The police say nothing. Whatever the reason, they're inescapably related to the alienating conditions in Oakland's two African-American communities. The present economic downturn comes after the social safety net of the welfare state has been removed. When hard times come the problems of the poor are invisible and the only solution politicians propose is putting more African Americans under the criminal justice system.

the crime.

Law enforcement often rejects scientific methods because the prosecutor simply has to convince the jury that the witness is telling the truth to get a conviction.

We wouldn't tolerate the error rate in other aspects of life that we tolerate in Criminal Justice, Bright said. But the public is partially responsible for the extraordinary mistakes made by law enforcement. The culture of the prosecutor's office demands convictions, not truth. The "public" expects this and elects this.

Musician, songwriter, playwright and novelist, Steve Earle spelled it out in a recent interview at Salon.com. Said Earle, "[It's] the politics of fear. People go to law school in order to become prosecutors...to become district attorneys...to become attorney general...to become governor. First you scare the f... out of everybody...then offer them a solution...No one's ever been able to prove...any correlation between the Death Penalty and any deterrence of violent crime."

According to Bright, Justice is the branch of govern-

New attacks on Angola 3, and new support

Angola, La.—State Penitentiary administrators are tightening the screws on former Black Panthers Albert Woodfox and Herman Wallace, two of the Angola 3, who will be entering their 31st year of solitary confinement. Guards recently raided the cells of Woodfox, Wallace and their friend Kenny Zulu Whitmore. It is not clear what was being sought, but some legal papers, historical photos relevant to their case, and Angola 3 information were taken on the basis of being racist and gang-related.

Prison officials seem intent on sabotaging the ACLU civil rights lawsuit filed against them by using false charges to make the two appear to be dangerous men who must be kept in solitary forever. However, Wallace has no record of these kinds of offenses and it seems highly suspicious that suddenly, at age 61, with a federal lawsuit pending that threatens prison officials, they are finding contraband in his cell, while he is living in the highest security part of the prison where such material is practically inaccessible.

This harassment comes at a time of stepped up activity by the Angola 3 legal team on two fronts. The first is a civil suit based on the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eighth Amendment, filed by the ACLU of Louisiana, which is working its way up through the courts. The second is a challenge to the wrongful conviction of Woodfox and Wallace for the 1972 murder of prison guard Brent Miller. Woodfox's new post conviction appeal, which includes substantial new exculpatory information, was filed last month.

ment least affected by the Civil Rights Movement. In some southern states when the court opens it "looks like a slave ship just came in," with so many Black defendants. In Greene County, Ga. Bright saw a court that heard 114 cases in one day. The public ("poor") lawyer defended 95 men whose cases he didn't know.

Illinois prosecutors extracted tears from crime victims' families to put pressure on Ryan not to commute death sentences to "life," as though killing the innocent—or the guilty—helps those who lost loved ones. Once the guilty are caught, said Bright, the public safety is served—no need to kill. Capturing the Washington area snipers removed their threat, he said.

The Governor's Commission dealt with most of the factors that compromise justice. But people require a new kind of relationship to government. Otherwise, our culture will deny prosecutorial mistakes; innocent people will be incarcerated and killed on tax-bought gunneys "in our name."

—January

Among the evidence are signed statements by two of the three living prosecution witnesses, recanting their testimony. Before Miller's death, the two men were successfully challenging the wretched conditions at Angola, which was one of the most notoriously violent prisons in the world. Prison officials falsely accused Woodfox and Wallace in order to stop their prisoner organizing.

Since Woodfox's second trial and re-conviction in 1998, in Brent Miller's hometown, public attention to the case has increased. The National Coalition to Free the Angola 3 formed, with chapters in several cities across the U.S., and one in Europe. A pro bono legal and investigative team led by Oakland, California-based attorney Scott Fleming, took on Woodfox and Wallace's case. Anita Roddick, the founder of the British cosmetics giant The Body Shop, recently visited Woodfox and Wallace at Angola and sponsored the publication of full back-page advertisements about the Angola 3 in *Mother Jones* and *The Nation*.

Meanwhile the third and only free member of the Angola 3, Robert King Wilkerson, continues his tireless crusade across the United States and Europe, speaking out on behalf of his two comrades. He was released in February, 2001 after an appeals court found that the sole evidence used to convict him, the eyewitness testimony of another inmate, was not credible.

For more information, visit www.angola3.org and www.anitaroddick.org.

—Scott Fleming and Beth Shaw

Plan Colombia, human rights and death squads

The Colombian government and armed forces have failed to meet any of the human rights conditions imposed by U.S. law in order to obtain military aid, and have seriously undermined crucial investigations of major human rights cases, according to a Human Rights Watch report released on Nov. 8.

The report titled "A Wrong Turn: The Record of the Colombian Attorney General's Office," documents the failure of progress on critical human rights cases by the Colombian Attorney General Luis Camilo Osorio. During his 15 months as Attorney General, at least nine prosecutors and investigators working on important human rights cases were fired and 15 others were forced to resign or pressured to do so.

"Colombia's struggle to uphold the rule of law begins with its Attorney General," said José Miguel Vivanco, Executive Director of the America's Division at Human Rights Watch. Since July 2001, when Attorney General Osorio took office, "five Colombian prosecutors and investigators have been killed in the line of duty," Vivanco continued. "Colombian prosecutors risk their lives to uphold the rule of law, they shouldn't have to risk their jobs too."

"To claim that Colombia has met human rights conditions makes a mockery of the law," said Eric Olson, the Americas Advocacy Director of Amnesty International. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the Washington Office on Latin America all denounced the human rights certification made on Sept. 9 by U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage. The certification released another \$70 million to the Colombian military, which has one of the worst human rights records in the Western hemisphere.

Serious shifts in U.S. involvement under Plan Colombia have taken place since the U.S. declared its international War on Terrorism. On Feb. 20, 2002, under pressure from the U.S., then President Andres Pastrana declared an end to peace negotiations with the FARC and ordered an invasion of the 16,000 square mile area in Colombia's South that had been given to the FARC as part of the peace dialogues. Rather than give the 48 hours agreed upon by the government and the FARC, Pastrana on Feb. 21 gave guerrillas and innocent civilians less than three hours to evacuate.

Soon after, Bush signed an anti-terrorist package allowing military aid under Plan Colombia to be used directly against the Colombian insurgents. This shift was strongly supported by then President-Elect Uribe.

In August, President Uribe declared a state of emer-

gency, allowing the government to impose extended curfews, censoring the news media and proposing a million-strong civilian police force and bounties for the capturing of FARC and ELN leaders. The Colombian government formally entered the International Criminal Court allowing for atrocities by guerrillas, paramilitaries, drug traffickers or military personnel to be judged and punished by this independent tribunal. Only days after, U.S. Undersecretary of State for Public Affairs Marc Grossman asked Uribe to sign a document shielding U.S. military trainers from prosecution by the court for human rights abuses.

Uribe was obliged to sign, or U.S. military aid would have been cut off according to the legislation signed by Bush. The U.S. government is participating in the escalating conflict in Colombia. Turning a blind eye will result in increased violence and undermine those who have dedicated themselves to peace and justice.

—Raquel

Chicago—Luis Adolpho Cardona, a Colombian trade unionist seeking refuge in the U.S. because of an attempt on his life in his home country, visited Chicago in November. Luis is enrolled in an AFL-CIO program to train international union activists and came to Chicago as part of a campaign to draw attention to the Coca-Cola Company's use of paramilitary forces as private security in its Colombian operations.

Luis told the story of management's harassing the union at the Coca-Cola bottling plant at which he was a worker and union member. This climaxed in December of last year with paramilitary death squads assassinating the plant's union leader. Luis escaped after being kidnapped and fled the country amid death threats. He was forced to leave his family behind in Colombia.

"Companies are carrying out a policy of exterminating trade union leadership and leaders of social movements," Luis said. "It's well known that the paramilitaries are another arm of the government."

Luis described efforts to publicize the collusion between Coca-Cola and the paramilitaries, including an international series of public hearings to shed light on the relationship. He was also enthusiastic about a decision made at the University of California Berkeley under pressure from student activists to stop serving Coke on the campus until the problem is solved.

—Kevin Michaels

Activists support Shoshone at Yucca Mountain

Las Vegas—About 5,000 activists camped out near Yucca Mountain between Oct. 5 and 15 for the Action for Nuclear Abolition Nonviolent Direct Action Camp, including anti-war, anti-nuke and environmental justice activists. Participants included Shoshone and other Native Americans, Chicanos, African-Americans and Asians. They oppose plans to store nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain.

The campsite was the Nevada Test Site Peace Camp.

Environmental justice peace demonstration

Memphis, Tenn.—Over 35 people participated in a demonstration last month in front of the Memphis Defense Depot. Activists from several states gathered in a peace rally to link the hazards of weapons of mass destruction used in foreign wars to environmental health concerns of the community of South Memphis. Special attention was given to the relationship between a possible U.S. attack on Iraq and the domestic terrorism by the U.S. government fostered on American communities near federal military facilities.

Many people think that the effects of a war only start when the bomb is dropped. But the toll of weapons of mass destruction has been adding up for over 50 years along the nuclear chain within the U.S. Earlier this year at a "Bands against Bombs" rally, the theme of a speech I gave was "Follow That Bomb." Shortly after, Voices in the Wilderness formed partnerships with communities affected by pollution generated by military facilities to start a peace tour that actually followed that bomb. They visited sites throughout the U.S. to follow up on the health effects of the mining operations, laboratory facilities, storage and distribution, and testing at federal facilities and federally contracted corporations.

Many people drove by our demonstration, most showing approval and some disgust. One driver slowed down to carefully read the signs of the protesters. As he came to the end of the line of people he shook his head, shouted obscenities, and put up his middle finger. Shortly after, another car passed. This time a passenger about eight years old read the signs, and threw up his fist in the sign of Black liberation with his mother smiling approval.

At the end of the demonstration, people gathered to hear speakers from Defense Depot Memphis, Tenn.—Concerned Citizens Committee, Youth Terminating Pollution, and the Mirror of Truth Tour, whose words connected all communities. I spoke about the nuclear fallout that starts long before the bomb is dropped. There were leaking nuclear warhead missiles stored at the Defense Depot. In the process of cleanup, one of those missiles was misplaced, but the Department of Defense and Department of Energy signed off that all the weapons were accounted for.

I spoke of how the contaminated air in South Memphis rolls on. The contaminated water table is seeping into the Memphis Sands Aquifer, the source of our drinking water. There are not any invisible walls to separate socio-economic classes, races, ethnicity, or gender when pollution enters the atmosphere. It simply does not discriminate. Being a vegetarian won't keep you safe because the food chain, the soil and water are connected.

Think about my community. Take a deep breath. Just think that could be the breath of death. That is the type of terror that this community has been living with for over 50 years. War does not start where the bomb drops. It starts somewhere close to where you are.

—Marquita

Yucca Mountain used to be part of the Western Shoshone Native Americans' land and was taken from them for nuclear waste disposal. We want someone to listen to this community and understand that the mountain can't hold this kind of waste while sitting on an earthquake fault.

Shoshone tribes are dying out. About 90 people live in the area and the government claims no one lives where they test the bombs. That is an insignificant number of people to the U.S. government. They have destroyed the native plants that the people use.

The transportation route for the nuclear fuel rods will mean that all of us will be affected. They will come on trains and highways throughout the U.S.

Environmental activists representing the four colors of humanity traveled from the four directions of the continent to stand together against the nuclear policies that have terrorized our communities and threatened the lives of our children and families. We made the point that nuclear facilities in South Carolina, Washington, New Mexico and Nevada, a chemical plant in Mississippi, and the Defense Depot in Memphis, Tenn., have caused cancer, birth defects, reproductive illnesses, and skin disorders in the surrounding communities.

From Aug. 9 to Oct. 11, a group of 25 took part in the Family Spirit Walk. They walked over 800 miles from near Los Alamos, N.M., through dozens of indigenous communities affected by the nuclear chain, to the

Nevada nuclear test site. As they were walking, people joined in each day, so hundreds participated. On Oct. 12, thousands of people walked through the gate of the Test Site, ground belonging to the Shoshone people, where 828 full-scale nuclear bombs have been exploded. We were walking on highly contaminated ground. It's not chained off because they want us to think it's OK.

Ninety people were arrested for going up on Yucca Mountain. The jail only holds 30 people, so they couldn't hold them for too long. As people continued to demonstrate, they put them in open pens. If you didn't tell them your name and where you live, they held you even though it is against the law to do so.

There was constant harassment at the camp from the Sheriff's Department, and the Health Department kept coming to check the kitchen and the food.

One night there was a concert with different groups from San Francisco. Youth came from all over for the concert and to support the Shoshone people. It reminded me of the 1960s, when civil rights movement people joined hands. Here we were about health, from all over the country, showing we all had the same problems if we don't do something about the nuclear chain.

It was the first time I was involved in a demonstration that large since the 1960s and I was so pleased to see the youth involved. Some were college students, and some had worked on nuclear issues for years.

—Doris Bradshaw



News & Letters / Kenneth Branagh

EDITORIAL Bush's war drive imperils U.S.

(Continued from page 1)

only the Bush administration, but also reactionaries like Saddam Hussein and the terrorist threat posed by religious fundamentalism. Unless the anti-war movement openly addresses the continuing threat posed by forces like Al Qaeda, it will not be able to convince people in this country that Bush's policies are not geared to protect us.

Just as the administration failed to anticipate the attacks of September 11—in large part because it spent more time spying on domestic opponents than seriously pursuing Osama bin Laden—so the rulers cannot be entrusted with the job of protecting us from further terrorist attacks. The truth is that Bush's national security state is aimed not so much against overseas terrorists as against potential forces of opposition inside the U.S.

Despite the present grim outlook, forces are emerging to challenge the administration's plans. The revolutionary spirit of Blacks and women in America, tempered in mass actions to gain rights through both the Women's Liberation and Civil Rights movements, is sure to forcefully resist efforts to roll back the rights won with much determination. They will be allied with youth, whose natural idealism is reflected in their organizing to elim-

inate sweatshops, to protest the drive to war on Iraq, to support union drives, and to demonstrate against the drive for capitalist globalization.

Youth have also been in the forefront of environmental protection actions, which are sure to be assailed after the midterm elections as the administration moves to expand forest logging, reduce restrictions on utility industry pollution and permit oil drilling off the coast of Florida and in the Alaskan Arctic.

Most crucial will be the opposition to regimentation by labor. This is demonstrated in actions by workers against exploitation, unsafe conditions, the dehumanization of the production line and the betrayals by their labor bureaucracies. Worker responses to further oppression planned by the administration can possibly unleash their creative potentials to remove the chains of bondage planned for them.

SNOOPING NOT TAKEN LIGHTLY

In this process workers can develop the kind of thinking that will inspire them to go beyond what they are against to what they are for, which of necessity will include the elements for the creation of a new human society. Evidence of the fear and revulsion by the American people of police-state trappings was reflected in widespread opposition to the earlier effort to create a federal snoop force of postal employees and other government workers. This opposition quickly forced the administration to abandon its plan.

However, the Total Information Awareness Agency, appropriately headed by convicted criminal John Pointdexter who consistently lied to Congress about his activity in the illegal Iran-contra conspiracy, makes such crude and elementary surveillance unnecessary and obsolete.

In this regard, it should be noted, as Martin Luther King Jr. declared two generations ago, that "everything Hitler did was 'legal,' while everything the Hungarian freedom fighters did in 1956 [in combating Russian totalitarianism] was 'illegal.'" The Bush administration will try to justify its restrictions on privacy and civil rights by evoking the need for "law and order" in the war against terrorism, but we must not allow it to get away with its effort to subjugate our most basic rights and liberties.

'Rabbit-Proof Fence'

This Australian film directed by Philip Noyce is set in Western Australia, 1931. Three young mixed-race Aborigine girls, Molly, Gracie and Daisy, (Everlyn Sampi, Laura Monaghan, Tianna Sansbury) are taken away by force from their people, the Jigalong mob, and transported 1,200 miles to a government camp at Moore River. Mr. Neville (Kenneth Branagh), Chief Protector of Aborigines, has legal powers to remove "half-caste" children from their Aborigine families.

The children are selected by skin color: lighter ones will be sent to regular schools; darker ones, like these three, will remain at the camp, where their language and culture will be suppressed as they are trained in the ways of white Australian capitalist society, and prepared for a future as domestic servants.

Molly, aged 14, is determined to escape, taking her younger sister and cousin with her. To reach home, they must trek across an immense expanse of outback, following the rabbit-proof fence that stretches right across Australia.

Neville is convinced that he is helping the girls by bringing them into the modern world, whether they like it or not. He believes that their Aboriginal traits can be "bred out" in three generations, so that they will be absorbed into white society, culturally and genetically. The idea that they should have a say in their own lives never enters his thinking. The Aborigines, who resist this social engineering, call him "Mr. Devil."


This is a real-life escape story, told in a film of sparse dialog and vast open landscapes. At the end, the real Molly and Daisy appear, and we learn that they did succeed in keeping their identity and culture. The policy under which they were taken away continued until 1970. The children who were taken away are known as the "lost generation."

—Richard Bunting

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Masses inspire Lula's victory in Brazil

(Continued from page 1)

vision that over 52 million Brazilians have rallied around.

Lula's challenge to end hunger in four years is an honest reflection of what brought him to power. Some 54 million people are classified as "poor" in Brazil, and another 30 million are "indigent" or destitute. Basic services that have been privatized since the early 1990s under neo-liberal restructuring have had a devastating impact on workers' struggles to merely survive. The cost of electricity is up 368%, telephone service 3,700%, water 420%, and urban transportation in urban areas, where 80% of Brazilians live, 300%.

Unemployment is up 50% in the past decade, but this figure only gives part of the story. In the cities fully 32% of Brazilians do not have a so-called real job. It's estimated that the informal sector now employs as many people as private industry and government combined. In the greater Sao Paulo area 20% of able bodied workers have no job whatsoever.

This last number should ring a bell: it's where Argentina's unemployment rate stood right before the crash of December last year. Upwards of 70% of the population is now struggling by in the informal sector; goods change hands mainly by barter. The suffering has reached horrific proportions, and it is this that has to be understood if one is to grasp what is happening in Brazil.

Nothing has been able to prevent the latest disaster: up to 14 children dying each week from hunger. The problem is worst in the north-east of the country, but the scope of it is not yet known. Teams of emergency workers are just beginning to make door-to-door searches in every neighborhood to find out how many there are who are too weak to get to a hospital or even to call for help.

BRAZIL TO FOLLOW ARGENTINA?

While Argentina's economy has crumbled, Brazil stands on the precipice. And while the misery of the past decade in both countries is well enough known, there are still those who persist in denying that Lula's election was in any way a result of it. Consider the erudite, well-paid scholar Kenneth Maxwell (Director of Latin American Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and *Foreign Affairs* magazine) who wrote in *The New York Review of Books* (12/5/02) that "it is an exaggeration to say that the elections were a rejection of the 'Washington Consensus' on economic development and the so-called 'neo-liberal' model, as many outsiders claim."

Far from it being an "exaggeration" of "outsiders," this is what nearly every Brazilian, whether lower class, middle class, or the sector of the ruling class that supports Lula, has been saying for the past six months about what the election represents.

A worker in the city of Caixas, where all the textile plants have been closed down over the past eight years, put it this way:

"They have massacred our jobs and our communities. The few who still have jobs are left to shoulder too heavy a burden. Wages must be increased immediately, and public funds must go to creating a massive public works program. The bosses and their international banker friends can wait to be repaid. It's our turn now. We the people have spoken. If they don't like it, well, that's just too bad."

This statement reveals very clearly that Lula was elected not just because of the "fear" of contagion from Argentina that investors and economists talk about. It's rather because of a very hard, lived reality: Brazil has already gone too far down the same road. Is there time to pull back? Is there a way out?

The answer to this question requires a careful look at three things: 1) Just what is the "vision" that Lula projects today? 2) How seriously do the Brazilian masses believe in it? 3) What is the possibility of Lula actually succeeding?

It must first be understood that the PT is not alone on the political landscape. While Lula won in 25 of 26 states, PT governors won in only three of them. The outgoing ruling party (PSDB) won seven, including two key states, Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais. Though the terrain is different in Venezuela under Hugo Chavez, Brazilians can look north and see an opportunist dragging a

polarized country to the brink of civil war.

Within the PT, while approximately 30% of the party is composed of established tendencies that do not agree with much of the platform Lula ran on, he did put out a clear message. It was carefully scripted by himself, the president of the party Jose Dirceu, and his running mate, textile tycoon Jose Alencar.

In Lula's own words, it goes like this:

"The state of our economy does not depend on us alone, but on the whole world, and we're seeing the problems afflicting all nations, problems that show the failure of cruel economic models. We see the problems in the U.S. economy, and the growing threat of war. But we're open to a mutually respectful relationship. Unfortunately we depend on that volatile global capital, but this fact alone cannot immobilize us."

Thus you have the new Lula: we accept the demands placed on us by the IMF (whose current scheme for Brazil extends to 2005, the third of Lula's four years), yet we reject the notion that a more just distribution of wealth is not possible.

Jose Alencar (from the rightist Liberal Party, PL), who represents that sector of the bourgeoisie who wants to reclaim a portion of the national wealth sold off to foreign investors, today refers to himself (only half jokingly) as being "to the Left" of Lula.

He makes this claim because his party too is opposed to Brazil's deep indebtedness to foreign investors.

How did this play out in the campaign? Alencar was not quietly accepted. He was booed loudly at the few rallies he appeared at with Lula, including the victory rally, and it was common to see campaign stickers posted with his name cut out of them.

PATIENCE, FOR NOW

As for Lula, a consensus emerged that nothing would be done in the months prior to the election to jeopardize his victory. This included calling a truce with the outgoing President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. The extent to which this truce was carried out, either explicitly or implicitly, is remarkable.

The Landless Workers' Movement (MST), for example, practically called a moratorium on land seizures in the past year. And when a piece of Cardoso's son's property was occupied in May of this year, Lula declared no illegal land takeovers would be permitted under his administration. Land reform must be pursued through a "positive, constructive" process, he said. So far, the MST has gone along with him. The university youth, too, have so far followed this path.

The opposition within the PT let its displeasure with Lula be known, and yet also refrained from sowing too much discord within the ranks. A few lines from a statement from the *O Trabalho* current reads:

"Working people made clear that they want an end to this 'economic model' dictated by the IMF,

which provokes the bleeding of the nation in order to pay the foreign debt...It's impossible to accept that those who were defeated Oct. 6 (in the first round) would still push the country into disaster and chaos. They were defeated exactly for having concocted, in 20 years, 13 accords with the IMF, all of which have led Brazil to its current dire situation...It's impossible to accept their dictates!"

This is not the voice of a fanatical few. Nearly a third of the PT candidates elected to Congress Oct. 6 are from the left wing of the party. Nevertheless, as these new representatives threatened to meet a week prior to the Oct. 27 vote to decide how to move Lula leftward again, they relented under pressure from Dirceu who asked them to not place obstacles in the way of Lula's victory.

None of this story should be taken to suggest that the Left in Brazil will continue to toe Lula's line; it was specifically followed only to insure his victory. There was even a popular refrain used to explain it: "Lulala, e depois luta ca," or roughly, "Lula there (in power), and afterwards struggle here."

That struggle, both as it will be waged against Lula as he moves to calm the ongoing rage against poverty, and with him as he attempts to enact an effective campaign against hunger and start land reform, faces huge obstacles.

ECONOMIC REALITIES

To begin with, the hammering that international investors meted out to Brazil in the months prior to the election, driven by their fear of an ex-lathe operator with no college degree rising to the highest office, puts Lula's movement behind the eight ball. Due to foreign investors' actions, Brazil's currency, the *real*, has lost 43% of its value against the dollar.

Lula proposes to immediately form a new "Secretariat of Social Emergency" to lead the effort to end hunger, but 95% of the budget for 2003 is already decided. The budget for this new department will thus have to come from donations.

He proposes to offer tax breaks to small businesses to stimulate job growth.

What the IMF plan calls for, however, are tax increases, coupled with cuts in social programs. Guido Mantega, an economic advisor to Lula, states in no uncertain terms that: "There is not the slightest possibility of restructuring the debt." Lula also stated this innumerable times in the campaign.

Nor is it clear where the tax increases to pay debt servicing will come from: the more workers are thrust into the "informal sector," the less they can be taxed. In addition, the tax burden in Brazil is already equivalent to about 30% of gross domestic product, a high value in comparison to other countries with similar

output.

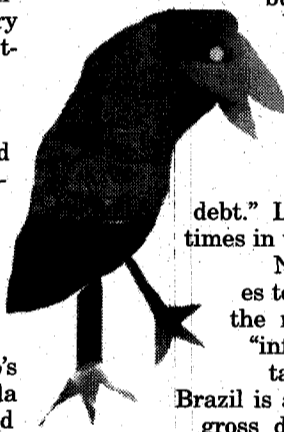
On the other hand, the agrarian reform that Lula calls for would go a long way to fighting poverty. The problem is that unless land expropriations are carried out in the course of a revolution, landowners must be compensated, which costs a lot of money. There are an estimated 100,000 families camped out on illegally occupied land today, a result of 15 years of struggle by the MST. A common figure thrown around for the cost of the kind of reform Lula wants is \$40 billion.

Throughout the campaign Lula indicated relief might come from placing more emphasis on Mercosul, the common market between Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. This could presumably serve as a counterbalance to the U.S. and Europe. His first foreign visit will be to Argentina, the second biggest of the four countries.

The problem here is not alone the dire straits Argentina is in, but the fact that Brazil's foreign trade with these countries at present only accounts for 15% of its total. It's unknown how a substantial increase could be achieved.

Lula is in a straightjacket. He knows this, and to his credit has not promised anyone, such as the Caixas textile worker quoted above, a "massive public works program." He will get a wage increase soon, though it won't be as much as he needs.

The key question is therefore whether the next four years will be only about a struggle for higher wages, or about the need to restructure production and life in accordance with the goal of human self-development rather than the self-expansion of capital.



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YOUTH

Iraqi's view of war drive

If one learns anything from living under a totalitarian system it is how to decipher the news and surf through official propaganda. When I was in Iraq, my parents always got our news from other sources than those fed to us by the Iraqi regime. Later when we lived in the U.S., we knew that what we heard on the news regarding Iraq was not true. Contact with our family revealed to us what was actually happening.

I was born in Iraq in 1981. The majority of my childhood involved the Iran-Iraq war. It was a war Iraq fought until 1988 and more than one million young men perished along with many civilians. Iraq had a dictator for a president. We were the game pieces he played with and terrorized. At that time, to the West, to the U.S., Iraq's leader was called the moderate man who was going to lead the most promising nation in the Arab world. But we went on living our lives with this man, and with this war that was in many ways supported by America.

In 1990, my life changed completely. My father was invited by the international company he worked for to come for one month to the states. My family was to join him. It was my first time out of Iraq. We arrived in Boston, on Aug. 1, 1990. It was on Aug. 2, 1990 that Iraq invaded Kuwait.

My parents had no choice but to stay. After all, we were all used to instability and wars. I had at that time known only one year of my life war free. I do not think my parents anticipated what happened next. The Gulf War, one of the most uneven wars ever fought, a big massacre, where Iraq was bombed back to the pre-industrial age, did not really end in 1991. Iraq then faced sanctions. For my parents, it meant unemployment. My mother is an architect and artist. A country completely devastated was not going to be buying art and building new homes. Our one month trip has lasted until now.

We left everything in Iraq. Our home, our clothes, our memories, and the most precious thing of all—our family. My grandparents, my aunts, my uncles and cousins. I never got to say goodbye to that country and the people I loved. My teenage years were different from anyone else's because this longing burned so deep in me.

We are thousands of miles away from our family who live in Baghdad, but the troubles of Iraq are what I live. Our family still telephones Baghdad every week. The only time we stopped, was during the Gulf War, when the telecommunications in Iraq were destroyed and we waited for weeks for word of whether or not our family was alive.

The majority of those in my family, doctors, engineers, architects were unemployed along with 50% of Iraq's 23 million people. Our family asked us for books and medicines for 12 years: items difficult to find due to sanctions.

We heard stories of the breakdown of Iraq's social fabric, children dropping out of school, beggars on the streets, crime and prostitution. What can one expect? A country that was at war for eight years, facing another war where its entire infrastructure was targeted and destroyed, was plagued with economic sanctions which hit only the people. My family, which is fortunate enough to live in the good side of Baghdad, does not receive 24 hours of electricity a day. Imagine this in Iraq's 126 degree weather. Imagine how the elderly like my grandfather can deal with this. In 2001, when I went to Iraq, all the images that I had heard about over the phone, in letters and emails were a shocking reality. I would not wish on anyone the pain of seeing one's

homeland in such a devastated state.

Now there is talk of another war. Oh god! My one dream in life is that one day Iraq can wipe this thing called war from its memory. I do not want an Iraqi child to go to sleep in fear or to think that life under sanctions and fear of an attack has become normal.

I speak of my family and they are terrified of what is going to happen: In 1991, they were the ones who suffered. It is clear, they will be the ones who will suffer this time. Children do not know whether to study for an exam or worry about being killed. I find it disgusting that they have been living each day waiting. Sometimes they write saying they wish that this inevitable thing would happen. It is the waiting and worrying that seems maddening to them.

Now many people claim that this war will be fought to liberate the Iraqis and democracy will come and this terrible man will be gone. While we, as Iraqis and Iraqis who are in the diaspora, have all been yearning for Saddam's demise (since we are the ones who have tasted the fear and terror of Saddam Hussein), most of us are aware that our liberty and a democratic future are not at the top of the U.S. wish list for Iraq. We have seen and heard too much to fall for this line.

If a war is waged, let's be honest and say that it will be for oil and U.S. dominion in the Middle East, and not to liberate us Iraqis. The list of the men who will be Iraq's leaders are criminals. They make Saddam Hussein look good! We see the gap between words and deeds among those who proclaim to be our champions and potential liberators.

—Young Iraqi woman

Kyoto peace action



Kyoto, Japan—Activists from various groups in Kyoto and Osaka gathered on Sept. 26 to speak out against the war in Iraq. Some kind of action or discussion against the war takes place here on a monthly basis. While I feel it is not a popular war here, the media speaks for the U.S. and most Japanese do not speak out against the war. But if you talk to average Japanese people, they will usually tell you that they are uncomfortable with this war.

—Jen and K.

Iranian students defend condemned professor

Iran has been the site of continuous student demonstrations against the Islamic Republic during the months of November and December. The latest wave of protests started after the Nov. 7th announcement of a death sentence for the history professor Hashem Aghajari. Aghajari who has been an Islamic Republic insider for many years, had declared in a recent speech, that each individual should accept the teachings of religion with a questioning attitude.

The student demonstrations however have gone beyond Aghajari's standpoint. For ten days during the month of November, demonstrations took place at Tehran University and Amir Kabir University in Tehran as well as other universities in Hamadan, Isfahan, Tabriz and other cities.

The slogans included "free political prisoners" and "No Al Qaeda, not in Kabul, not in Tehran." Many called on president Khatami to resign for not having challenged the ruling clergy.

On Dec. 7, the anniversary of a student protest dating back to the time of prime minister Mossadegh, two thousand students held a rally at Tehran University. This time however they were joined by 10,000 supporters who stood outside the gates of the university on the street to express their solidarity. Faced with this unprecedented show of support from ordinary people, the police and Basiji goons brutally attacked men and women, old and young on the streets with their sticks, sprayed them with pepper gas and arrested 300 people.

Two days later 1500 students at Amir Kabir university held a rally which was also attacked by Basiji goons. The rally was broken soon after a student made the following statement in his speech: "Our main enemies are ignorance, fear and injustice. In the revolution, people knew that they didn't want the Shah and his unjust rule, but they didn't know what they wanted. And now we have to pay the price for our parents' ignorance."

In the meantime, a group of writers and translators have issued a statement reminding the world that the perpetrators of the brutal murders of several prominent intellectuals in 1999 have not been brought to justice. Instead their families' lawyer has been arrested.

It remains to be seen whether student demonstrations and support from the public will coalesce with the many workers' strikes and sit ins that have taken place in Iran during the past year. Workers have faced extreme hardships from non-payment of wages and inhuman working conditions.

Aghajari has appealed his death sentence and will most likely not be executed. Two thirds of the parliament has called for reversing this verdict "before we pay a heavier price for it." The protests however are not going away.

—Shelia

Dec. 30, 2002

NY students march against the war

New York—2,000 New York University and New York City public and parochial school students, community activists and residents of Greenwich Village marched through the streets of Manhattan on Nov. 20 against the looming U.S.-led war against Iraq.

The march was planned by NYU students as an outgrowth of a student walkout to protest the war. At about 12:30 p.m., students began assembling in front of the shining, multi-million dollar Stern Business School Building at W. 4th and Mercer Streets on NYU's campus in Greenwich Village. By about 1 p.m. a large crowd of several hundred excited students had gathered. Soon after students spontaneously took to the street and started marching up University Place towards Union Square. The protest became a kind of moving street carnival with many people on sidewalks giving the peace sign in support of the anti-war message.

At Union Square, a hub of New York City radical activity throughout much of the last century, the march seemed to sputter. Police, who had been conspicuously absent up to that point, began arriving in droves. They ordered people out of the major intersection. Marchers, however, regained their momentum, and began heading back towards NYU via Broadway. Initially police had kept the marchers on the sidewalks. But within minutes, students spontaneously spilled into the streets, some locking arms as they walked jubilantly down New York's most famous street on this warm, late-fall day. Protesters then marched into Washington Square park, where anti-war organizers had set up a stage for a speaking program.

Without question, the demonstration injected anti-war militancy into the NYU student body and the neighboring community. Several hundred high school and even middle school students as well as downtown residents joined in as the demonstration moved through the Village.

A twenty something African-American graduate student noted, "It was good to see so many people out, especially people of color." One young Black woman asserted, "I didn't feel as alienated as I have at some anti-globalization events." Perhaps Ramon Alejandro Suarez, a NYU history graduate student, put it best: "The march brought together diverse elements of the student body against the unjust foreign policy of our current administration."

—Erik S. McDuffie, NYU graduate student

'Mirror of Truth' tour

Memphis, Tenn.—The Mirror of Truth bus tour began Sept. 12 in New York City and concluded in Columbus, Georgia, at the School of the Americas protest on Nov. 17. The tour was a project of Voices in the Wilderness (VIW), a Chicago-based group of non-violent war resisters dedicated to ending the economic sanctions and continuing war against the people of Iraq.

The Mirror of Truth Tour visited schools, universities, churches, and peace groups to speak out against a new war against Iraq. Members of the tour came from all across the country.

The tour also challenged Americans to acknowledge the weapons of mass destruction that are here in the U.S. If our government is going to attack Iraq preemptively because of weapons of mass destruction, we as Americans should "look in the mirror" and question why we have so many of these destructive weapons.

The tour visited sites where the U.S. produces, stores, and researches weapons of mass destruction, and participated in vigils and protests with the communities of people who are resisting these weapons that are in their backyards. About 50 people participated in a protest at Picatinny Arsenal in Morristown, N.J. Picatinny Arsenal developed depleted uranium for use on the battlefield in the first Gulf War.

In Memphis 40 people protested the former Defense Depot, where chemical weapons were stored for decades. The former Depot remains a superfund site, and an activity center is going to be built for children here. Local groups (Youth Terminating Pollution, Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee-Concerned Citizens Committee, News and Letters Committees and Peace Action) organized the event, which drew an enthusiastic crowd of young and old, Black and white.

We in the tour met hundreds of people involved in working against the war while building safe and healthy communities at home. In Carlisle, Pa. (home of the Army War College) 30 people signed the Iraq Pledge of Resistance—to engage in civil disobedience should the U.S. begin an invasion of Iraq—on the steps of the court house and explained their convictions to people on the street.

A presentation at Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., drew over 200 students. Over 100 New York University students attended the presentation and split into small groups to talk about what forms of action to take. Two weeks later, a group of NYU students took over a live broadcast at MTV, speaking truth about why the war is a bad idea, and wearing shirts that said "No war against Iraq."

Plans are in the making for continuing the tour by taking it southwest, and continuing up the west coast. For more information, check the Voices in the Wilderness website www.vitw.org.

—Young woman peace activist

Confronting Permanent War & Terrorism:

Why the Anti-War Movement Needs a Dialectical Perspective

A statement from the Resident Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees

The full text of this important challenge to today's movement against the permanent war drive of the Bush administration is available from News & Letters. See directory on page 10.

OUR LIFE AND TIMES

UN paves the way for U.S. invasion of Iraq

by Kevin A. Barry

The Bush administration got what it wanted from the United Nations on Nov. 8, a unanimous vote in the Security Council for a resolution designed to open the way to a U.S. invasion of Iraq. There were not even any abstentions, not from Iraq's erstwhile ally, Russia, nor from Syria, the sole Arab representative on the Council, nor from France, which has often claimed to distance itself from U.S. imperialism.

While France claimed that it had succeeded in watering down the resolution, the truth is that the world's sole superpower had managed to cajole or force the smaller powers into giving it an official UN resolution that will facilitate its war drive. Only one European power, Germany, continues openly to oppose the war, but the purely verbal nature of that opposition was shown in the fact that it has no plans to deny the U.S. use of its numerous military bases in the event of war.

A day after the UN resolution passed, half a million people demonstrated for peace in Florence, Italy. Many marchers had attended an anti-globalization conference in that city and among them were large numbers of workers and youth. For its part, the Bush administration did not even deign to respond to the peace demonstrations, instead continuing its military

Attacks continue in Middle East, Kenya

Al Qaeda has now taken responsibility for the Nov. 28 suicide bombing at a hotel in Mombasa, Kenya which killed ten Kenyans and three Israelis, as well as the missile attack which narrowly missed an Israeli passenger plane carrying 271 people over Mombasa.

Amidst Ariel Sharon's call for retaliation, the Bush administration has hurriedly warned Sharon not to take retaliatory action because it doesn't want any action to interfere with its imminent war on Iraq.

In the meantime, Palestinian and Israeli civilians continue to suffer from the suicide bombings within Israel and the murderous policies of the Israeli government. During the month of November, two suicide bombings took place at a mall near Tel Aviv, and in a bus full of school children in Jerusalem. On Nov. 10, Kibbutz Metzger, known as a fortress of Arab-Jewish cooperation, was the target of an Al Qaeda Brigade member who shot two children and their mother as they were sleeping in their bed.

These bombings and attacks once again allowed the Israeli army to intensify its attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Life for Palestinians under siege has been characterized by endless arrests, deaths of youth fired at by Israeli troops, inability to go to school, work or get medical care or even water. The murder of a UN aid official, Iain Hook, by a trigger-happy Israeli soldier at the Jenin refugee camp, and the army's refusal to let an ambulance take him to the hospital before his death, reflects what happens to Palestinians every day.

The Oct. 30 breakup of the Labor-Likud coalition in Israel has now set the stage for new elections on Jan. 28, 2003. Sharon, who won the Likud candidacy against Benjamin Netanyahu, has for now appointed Netanyahu and Shaul Mofaz as his foreign minister and defense minister respectively. The Labor Party has chosen Amram Mitzna as its candidate for prime minister. Mitzna advocates unilateral Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and only half the West Bank. He also supports the idea of Jerusalem as an open city. Mitzna has his own checkered past as an Israeli army general during the 1987 Intifada.

—Sheila Sahar

buildup. It admits to having already brought 62,000 military personnel into the area surrounding Iraq, with three more aircraft carriers on the way.

El Salvador protest



Independent Media Center/Portland

Riot police in El Salvador attacked a peaceful rally of more than 1,000 protesters in front of the maternity hospital, Nov. 27, including hospital patients, children and retirees. As demonstrators ran for cover, riot police blocked off the street and fired into the crowd with rubber bullets, shotgun pellets, teargas grenades and a water cannon. More than 35 were seriously injured by rubber bullets. Hospital personnel said over 100 infants suffered from teargas inhalation. The protest was part of ongoing support for striking healthcare workers and opposition to privatization of health care.

Nigerian rampage

The retrogressive nature of our era is shown in the fact that the most dramatic opposition to the Miss World contest in Nigeria this year came not from feminists, but from religious fanatics opposed to any display of the female body.

This occurred in Kaduna, Nigeria. Some Muslim residents of that city, fired up by their imams, went on a rampage, burning three Christian churches and killing dozens of non-Muslim civilians. By the time Christian mobs had retaliated by burning a mosque and killing Muslim civilians, the total death toll was 200, with thousands more wounded or driven from their homes.

What was the great offense that caused such carnage? Isioma Daniel, a fashion reporter from predominantly Christian southern Nigeria, had written an article ridiculing Muslim claims that the Miss World contest was an affront to their religion. Referring to Muhammad's several wives, she suggested that, were he around today, he might have picked one from among the contestants.

This "insult" to the Prophet was what sparked the rioting. After the smoke cleared, far from apologizing for the violence, a group of Muslim clerics went on to pronounce a "fatwa." They called upon Muslims to kill Daniel, whom they termed a "blasphemer" and "another Salman Rushdie." She has had to flee the country.

The noted writer Salman Rushdie, for many years under a similar fatwa from Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, responded: "A couple of months ago I said that I detested the sloganization of my name by Islamists around the world. I'm beginning to rethink that position. Maybe it's not so bad to be a Rushdie among other 'Rushdies'.... If the moderate voices of Islam cannot or will not insist on the modernization of their culture—and of their faith as well—then it may be these so-called 'Rushdies' have to do it for them" (*New York Times*, Nov. 27).

Few observers believe that the Saddam Hussein regime can put up much resistance to a U.S. attack. Twelve years of economic sanctions, while mainly hurting innocent civilians, have also weakened Iraq's military infrastructure, despite paranoid claims about weapons of mass destruction from U.S. experts.

It would be hard to find, anywhere in the world, a regime of greater brutality or with a narrower base of support. Over the years, Saddam Hussein has committed acts of genocide against the nation's Shi'ite majority and its Kurdish minority; he has sacrificed hundreds of thousands of its citizens in wars against its neighbors; he has imprisoned, tortured, raped, and killed thousands of real or imagined political opponents.

This is what makes the task of the anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist Left so difficult today. So far, neither the broader grassroots anti-globalization movement nor the more top-down anti-war groups have found a way to articulate an opposition to all forces of oppression. Here I refer not only to U.S. imperialism and global capitalism, but also to those whose opposition to the U.S. is on a reactionary basis, whether Islamic fundamentalists or nationalist dictators like Saddam Hussein.

This failure to present a liberatory alternative has given U.S. imperialism, in addition to its immense economic and military power, a major ideological weapon. It has allowed the Bush administration to claim that it supports both democracy and women's rights in the Middle East and the Muslim world. This has immeasurably strengthened Bush's hand as he prepares to go into Iraq.

For its part, the Bush administration is under the grand illusion that by militarily defeating Saddam Hussein, it can open a new era of peace on its terms in the entire region. It seems to believe that a victory in Iraq—especially if, as is not unlikely, the people of Baghdad initially welcome U.S. troops as liberators—will so undermine Arab nationalism that the Arab world will make peace with Israel on Sharon's terms. The administration also seems to believe that it would gain a pro-U.S. regime in Iraq, a country whose proven oil reserves are second only to those of Saudi Arabia.

Siege in Moscow

On Oct. 27, Chechen commandos seized 700 civilian hostages at a Moscow theater, demanding an end to Russia's brutal colonial war against their country. Since 1999, when Russian President Vladimir Putin renewed the war, it has claimed the lives of up to 10,000 Russian soldiers and over 100,000 Chechens, mainly civilians.

During the siege, Chechen fighters, half of them women veiled from head to toe, stated they were on a "martyrdom operation." They threatened to blow up themselves and their 700 hostages if demands were not met. After a few days, Russian forces pumped a sleep-inducing gas into the theater, before storming it. The gas killed 128 hostages and all 41 Chechen terrorists also died, many executed on the spot.

Despite the deaths of so many hostages, Putin claimed that he had scored a big victory, a claim bolstered by the congratulations he received from Bush and Israel's hawkish Benjamin Netanyahu. Putin used the occasion to put his suppression of the entire Chechen nation in the context of the "global war on terrorism." He also suggested links between the Chechen fighters and Al Qaeda.

In the weeks that followed, Russia staged a noisy campaign for the extradition of Akhmed Zakayev, the Chechens' international representative and the first major Chechen leader to condemn the Moscow attack. At the same time, the increasingly Islamist character of the Chechen movement and its resort to terrorism against innocent civilians have isolated it from many of its former supporters, especially human rights activists.

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.