

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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WORKSHOP TALKS

Strikes for health

by Htun Lin

In Los Angeles County, 15,000 grocery workers went on strike at Vons. Then Kroger and Albertsons locked out their 49,000 employees. At the same time, Los Angeles transit workers struck, like the grocery workers, primarily over health care. Last year another million American workers lost their health insurance, adding to the 43 million who already had no insurance.

"This battle is growing nationwide," said Greg Denier, director of communications for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the union that represents the grocery workers. "What's happening is that contracts are up across the country in different areas. The employers are dedicated to eliminating affordable health care for employees, so the national health care crisis is being played out on the picket line."

"Rick Icaza, president of UFCW Local 770, said, 'They're talking about cutting our benefits in half. This could mean the loss of vision coverage, dental, even pension benefits. That's how draconian this is.'"

The employers are also demanding a two-tier wage system. One UFCW member said this would be used to get rid of the old-timers. Well, he doesn't have to speculate. At Kaiser, the HMO where I work, the union allowed two-tier to come in after an eight-week strike. Gradually, the whole place was re-engineered to replace those on the first tier with newer second tier employees.

While Los Angeles workers are fighting the loss of health insurance, and dramatic increases in their co-pays and deductibles, for us health care workers that crisis and ongoing battle is also played out daily in the

(Continued on page 3)

BLACK/RED VIEW

Racism in California

by John Alan

Two events happened in California at approximately the same time. One was the recall of Governor Gray Davis and the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as Governor. This was nationally covered by the news media. The other was the failure of a jury, composed mostly of white suburbanites and no African Americans, to convict the "Riders," a trio of Oakland policemen charged with conspiracy to falsely arrest, file false police reports, plant evidence, assault and kidnap African Americans.

The jury did not outright exonerate them, but after deliberating 56 days, it deadlocked and failed to bring any convictions. This never came near to getting national media attention. After all, it was only another one of those conflicts between poor African Americans and an urban police force.

The Riders' trial was the longest and most costly in Oakland's history. It is estimated that it cost two to three million dollars. Jurors' lunches alone cost \$11,000 and they were paid \$30,000. Significantly, during the criminal trial, Oakland settled federal civil rights claims of 119 plaintiffs against the Riders for \$10.5 million.

Many African Americans in Oakland are bothered by the fact that there were no African Americans on the jury. At first, this appears to be incomprehensible. After all, the crimes that the Riders were charged with happened in areas where the African-American population is the majority.

According to prosecutor David Hollister, the length of the trial kept many working class minorities off the jury. He gave an example: "If you get a juror who is 27 years old from West Oakland who is working an hourly wage, his employer might give him a day off with pay, but he is not going to give him four months off with

(Continued on page 9)

Bush's deepening quagmire— the U.S. economy and Iraq

by Gerard Emmett

George W. Bush has troubles. He is facing a nasty quagmire of his own making in Iraq, with the steady loss of U.S. soldiers—at a rate of one death for every two days of the occupation of that country—that has become absolutely unacceptable to the public. The 28 soldiers who have failed to report back for duty in Iraq after domestic leaves are the tip of the iceberg of a growing resistance to Bush's Iraq adventure.

Further, he is also facing a new revolt of workers here in the U.S. in a nationwide wave of strikes, largely over health care and health insurance issues, that have implications that cut to the heart of the capitalist system and its current world order.

HEALTH CARE BATTLEFIELD

Many of the current strikes are the result of pressure by employers to foist rising costs of health care benefits onto workers. U.S. workers today are being forced to pay 50% more for health insurance than they were just three years ago. According to a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation, two-thirds of large employers increased what employees must pay for health insurance this year, and half plan such increases next year. Nearly one-third of the 44 million American workers without health insurance are employed by large companies, up from one-quarter in 1987.

Concessions over health care, plant closings, and other issues were pushed on auto workers by the big



Los Angeles, Cal.—UFCW picket outside Vons grocery store.

three automakers, and similar demands were made on Detroit newspaper workers. The new three-year contract with Detroit newspapers means that new employees will not be eligible for insurance after they retire, among other concessions.

Other union workers are fighting back against this trend. About 90,000 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union are now out on strike

(Continued on page 9)

Mass revolt topples Bolivia's ruler

Throughout the month of October the miners, peasants, farmers, students and teachers of Bolivia engaged in massive street protests and strikes that succeeded in bringing down the government of President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada on Oct. 17.

Over the past several years the Bolivian government has privatized the natural resources of the country, especially the natural gas and oil industry. Most recently the government has tried to permit foreign corporations to export Bolivia's natural gas through a Chilean port. The gas is to then go to Mexico for processing and will end up being consumed in the U.S., where it will benefit U.S. business interests. Bolivian workers insist that natural gas is a national patrimony and that it should instead be used to industrialize Bolivia and provide more jobs for the people.

For decades U.S. corporations have amassed huge profits from the natural resources of Bolivia—as seen in the exploitation of Bolivia's tin industry. While oil and natural gas long ago supplanted tin mining as Bolivia's major export, the overwhelming majority of its people continue to live in extreme poverty.

CHALLENGING NEO-LIBERALISM

In September Bolivian workers moved to take history into their own hands by insisting that the government reverse the privatization of the natural gas industry and end the entire neo-liberal policy that has been in effect since the mid-1980s. A main architect of that policy is Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada himself, who was a Finance Minister in the mid-1980s. From then until becoming president, he repeatedly declared there is no alternative to the "free" market and globalization.

In addition to demanding de Lozada's resignation, many other demands have been raised in the course of these largely spontaneous protests—from rolling back the fees imposed on water use to providing higher salaries for teachers and adequately funding schools to respecting the rights of the indigenous peoples.

Throughout October workers blocked highways around the country and the trade union confederation called for a general strike. The protests, which began in the capital, La Paz, soon spread to such key areas as Cochabamba and Santa Cruz.

Large numbers of people have also formed their own neighborhood committees and block associations. Almost all stores, businesses and schools have been

forced to close by the protests and the means of transportation have been largely shut down. Most important, many workers have begun to take control of factories, mines and farms during the upsurge.

Two-thirds of the nation has been paralyzed. The road leading to the presidential palace was blocked by protesters and de Lozada was forced to remain in his private residence under heavy armed guard.

The government sent military troops and the police to repress the protests. They have so far killed 87 protesters. The hospitals are filled with the injured and diplomatic attachés stationed in Bolivia have taken part in directing attacks against the protesters.

Despite the violent repression, the protests only increased in size. Several military officials from both the higher and lower ranks have refused to shoot into the crowds. Serious divisions are emerging between the military and government officials. This resulted in the resignation of President de Lozada on Oct. 17, whereupon he immediately caught a plane to the U.S.

De Lozada has been replaced for now by the Vice President, Carlos Mesa. Mesa says that he is willing to accept some of the demands of the people, but union leaders and progressive organizations—which includes the Movement for Socialism, led by Evo Morales, and Felipe Quispe, leader of the massive indigenous rights movement—say it is too late to negotiate. They are demanding that government officials resign and not be allowed to leave the country so that they can be tried for crimes against the people.

Luis Quispi stated on Oct. 18 in response to Mesa's calls for negotiations: "We are going to continue the blockades. We are not going to be with the executive, we are always going to be the opposition."

The revolt of the Bolivian masses has proven how powerful is the dialectic of the masses and how a mass movement can bring profound changes to society. They have shown that it is possible for working people to establish a different economic system through their own committees and forms of self-governance.

The counter-revolution is watching these events very closely. The U.S. embassy is giving full support to Mesa's government, just as it earlier fully supported de Lozada, and it has warned that it will not tolerate any kind of radical departure from government policies.

—Marcos

ON THE INSIDE

SPECIAL FEATURE:

New edition of 'American Civilization on

Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard'....pp. 6-7

Iranian feminist wins Nobel Peace Prize

By Sheila Sahar

In October 2003 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian human rights activist deeply committed to women's rights and to battling religious fundamentalism. The enthusiastic response to this award among women in the Muslim world, and especially in Iran, has once again revealed that supporting the struggle for women's liberation in the Muslim world is critical in any effort to battle the deep crises of our world.

Before the Nobel announcement was made, Iran's high court had called for the execution of Afsaneh Noroozi, a woman who had dared to stab her rapist, a police chief. The head of Iran's judiciary, Mortazavi, had also been directly involved in the prison murder of Zahra Kazemi, a woman photojournalist working for a Canadian newspaper, who died in police custody while covering the June student protests and sit-ins by families of political prisoners. The announcement of Ebadi's Nobel Prize was a sudden unexpected boost to the campaigns to protest these acts.

Ebadi is most deserving of this award. As a law professor at Tehran University and a practicing attorney, she has put her life on the line to defend women's rights. She founded the Association for Support of Children's Rights, and the Center for the Defenders of Human Rights, which provides free legal aid to the victims of human rights abuses.

Prior to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, she was appointed the first woman judge in Iran and yet remained critical of the Shah's regime. After the establishment of the Islamic Republic, she was removed from her position due to the imposition of Islamic Sharia laws. She was also denied the right to practice law for seven years.

Ebadi has defended the rights of women against domestic violence, "honor killings," arbitrary male initiated divorce, and for child custody and compensation after divorce. In a Sharia-based legal system the marriage age for a girl is 13 (it used to be 9) and a woman's testimony in a court is considered half the value of that of a man. Ebadi believes that an enlightened interpretation of the Quran based on modern circumstances can lead to major changes in all laws relating to women's rights and human rights. Furthermore, the abolition of judicial penalties, such as stoning and amputation of limbs, is top on her list of priorities. While she is a practicing Muslim, she is not an advocate of political Islam and believes in the separation of religion and state.

Ebadi was the first lawyer to investigate the 1998 government sponsored murders of the dissident couple, Dariush and Parvaneh Foruhar. In 1999 after student activists were beaten and murdered in a government sponsored attack on their dormitory at Tehran University, Ebadi threw herself into their defense. Her vigorous defense of students landed her in solitary confinement.

Prisoner Solidarity

Oakland, Cal.—About a dozen different organizations working with or on behalf of women prisoners got together on Oct. 18 to hold the first state-wide strategy session on our work. The organizations represented included California Coalition for Women Prisoners, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, Justice NOW, Critical Resistance, California Prison Focus, Stop Prison Rape and others. Many former prisoners and some family members of prisoners were there. People came from San Diego, LA, Bay Area, and from Eureka. It was a truly state-wide event.

Part of the day was spent on introductions and presenting the work of different groups. While we all work with or for women prisoners, the diversity was impressive: some offer direct legal help, some do community organizing, some offer a variety of services, including training and outreach. Most controversial was the presentation by Stop Prison Rape, which found some unlikely allies—religious groups—that are quite conservative in their outlook other than on this issue.

The event created a space for discussion. We talked about how our work fits into the larger "landscape" of activism. We talked about the barriers preventing the participation of others, especially former prisoners who face hardship. The highlight for me was a young woman from Arcadia who asked, "is revolution even possible?" She was the only one to raise that question in that forum. She was born while Reagan was the president and never experienced first hand a mass movement and the kinds of possibilities it opens. And she is still asking is revolution possible! It shows that the idea of revolution is not what you learn about it (from either the Right or the Left), but that it keeps emerging from opposition to this society.

—Ursula Wislanka

ment.

Upon hearing the news that she had won the Nobel peace prize, the elated and surprised Ebadi called for the release of all political prisoners in Iran. She appeared without a headscarf at an international press conference and emphasized that the prize belongs to all who are fighting for human rights in Iran. When asked about the Iranian government's nuclear ambitions and the upcoming Oct. 31 IAEA deadline to certify that Iran has no nuclear weapons capabilities, she stressed that she is against any nuclear weapons held by any country in the world. When asked about the U.S. invasion of Iraq, she emphasized that while people in the Middle East need international support to create democracies, "no country is allowed to invade another in the name of democracy, since human rights cannot be promoted through tanks and weapons but through the people of each country." She even courageously gave an interview to the Israeli newspaper, *Yediot Aharonot*.

The mouthpieces of the Islamic Republic have tried to downplay the significance of winning a Nobel prize, but tens of thousands of women and men gathered at Mehrabad airport to greet her return to Tehran with flowers and placards. A report sent by a woman participant captures the celebratory atmosphere of Ebadi's welcome: "Women were wearing white coats and scarves. Many men were wearing suits. They chanted: 'Welcome to the Lady of Peace,' 'Long Live Ebadi, Shame on Khatami,' 'Freedom for Political Prisoners,' 'The Murderer of Zahra Kazemi is Mortazavi,' 'Freedom for Afsaneh Noroozi,' 'Apartheid Must be Obliterated,' 'Freedom of Thought, Always.'"

Ebadi, at her first news conference in Tehran, announced that she has agreed to take on the case of the murdered journalist Zahra Kazemi. She also said: "I am proclaiming the Iranian people's message of peace and friendship to the world. We are a peace loving people. We hate violence. We condemn terror. We are not hostile toward other religions." The next day, a woman member of the parliament announced a delay in the planned execution of Afsaneh Noroozi, in order to allow for further investigation. Women's rights activists are continuing to fight for her complete exoneration and release.

This is not the first time that Iranian women have

Taking the humanism out of social work

Los Angeles, Cal.—I work with abused women. I was a battered woman myself and I care about other battered women. However, the way social services are being run, such human concern seems to be the last priority.

One woman told me she had an unusual home visit by a welfare worker. The worker said, "I don't believe you didn't get back together with your boyfriend." This was a stunning accusation, because it was not true. It is so hard already to break with battering and to make it on your own. The welfare workers were apparently told to tighten the screws. They are being told to accuse the women of getting back together with their batterers because there is an increased pressure to find fraud even where there is none.

In another case a woman's son was helping with her rent. The welfare worker knew it for a long time. The small sum her son was giving her does not indicate any attempt to defraud welfare, and the welfare worker knew it. But she got a letter that her welfare was being reduced or even totally cut off! Reducing welfare rolls seems more important than anyone's welfare.

Women who are not residents only get assistance for their children, not themselves. How are they supposed to live? Women who are residents are required to get a job. Even if they could find a job in this economy, how are they supposed to take care of their children?

In order for my agency to survive at all we have to compete for grants, which are never enough to cover the need. So we have to do fundraising. We've had to hire professional fundraisers. Now we have an MBA as our new director! Our agency is transformed from abused-women run, to a "professional," which means corporate, structure. We are being told that we can't go to the women's and children's birthday parties because that is "unprofessional." Relating to abused women as human beings is, apparently, "unprofessional." Is it any wonder that women are feeling more uncomfortable dealing with the system, which treats them with suspicion and contempt?

—Long time shelter worker

been in the forefront of movements for social transformation. During the 1906-11 Iranian Constitutional Revolution, women formed the first committees (Anjuman) for women's rights in the Middle East. Many supported the Constitutional Movement's demand for reducing the clergy's powers. Seventy three years later, when Ayatollah Khomeini decreed compulsory veiling during the 1979 revolution, tens of thousands of women marched on International Women's Day to protest this counter-revolutionary direction and held sit-ins against the forced expulsion of women, like Ebadi, from the courts.

It remains to be seen what further impact Shirin Ebadi's Nobel Peace Prize will have on the anti-fundamentalist and feminist movements in Iran and in the Muslim world. There is no doubt that hundreds of thousands of women have been energized and encouraged by this recognition of their struggle.

Abortion rights crisis

After eight years of trying, the right-wing politicians in the U.S. Congress have voted to ban late term abortions—the most far-reaching limit on abortion since it was legalized by the Supreme Court in 1973. The House of Representatives passed the legislation, Oct. 2, by a vote of 281 to 142, while the Senate, with the help of 17 Democrats (some supposedly pro-choice), supported it 64-34 on Oct. 21. Their misogynist president George Bush has already said he would sign this travesty into law.

This is said to be the first time in history that Congress is banning a medical procedure considered medically necessary by physicians. The real goal of the law has nothing to do with health or fetuses but is to ultimately end all abortion. It's anti-woman nature can be seen in the fact that it prohibits several safe and common medical procedures, thereby, as one doctor put it, endangering the lives of countless women. Anyone violating the ban faces two years in prison and whatever fine they decide to mete out.

Many are calling the legislation unconstitutional because it contains no exception to use the procedure for the health of the mother. At least three groups say they will file suit to stop the law from taking effect: the Center for Reproductive Rights, Planned Parenthood and the National Abortion Federation, who will be represented by the American Civil Liberties Union.

While we hope the streets will soon be filled with demonstrators against this heinous bill, there is a march for choice being planned for April in Washington, D.C. to rally support for women's rights. According to Planned Parenthood President Gloria Feldt, "this is the first time that the White House and both Houses of Congress have been aligned in lockstep and ready to take away reproductive choice." And if we assume that the Supreme Court will support our rights this time, just remember who put Bush in the presidency when the voters didn't.

—Mary Jo Grey

Prisoners work together

Chowchilla, Cal.—I am very proud of the women at the prison here. I feel there is a new spirit of solidarity and cooperation among prisoners that can only help us. Here is what happened.

The prison decided to have their power system tested on a weekend. Something went wrong with the test and the telephones we can use were out of service. Of course, since it was the weekend, no one would come out to fix them until Monday. Many women, who were planning to call their families on the weekend, were now worried and frustrated.

Then on Monday, one particular guard decided to take offense at the rooming assignments. Displaying very homophobic behavior, he accused two women of being lovers and ordered one of them to move to another room. We all recognize that guards have the power to change rooming assignments. What it means is that the whole unit is on lock-down while the woman is gathering her things and being moved. So no calls could be placed Monday night either and the level of worry and frustration grew.

The following day the lieutenant decided that there was no reason for the order to move, the two women were not breaking any rules and he ordered the woman moved back. So all this worry and frustration kept being built up over nothing!

I thought we needed to do something. I wrote up a complaint against the guard, detailing the situation and how the guard's action was adding to the stress in our unit, creating morale problems and resentment, obviously for no reason. How the guards' in-fighting takes a toll on us!

The wonderful news is that 150 women signed this complaint! And while the prison has not yet responded officially, at least one other guard told me privately that the conduct of the guard ordering the move was not professional. It is so rare that guards will break rank with each other and take our side, that I feel just an acknowledgement that we are right and the guard's behavior was wrong feels like a victory. And we could only accomplish it together.

—Woman Prisoner
Central California Women's Facility

LA strikes defy grocers and MTA

Los Angeles—The workers of Ralphs (owned by Kroger), Vons (owned by Safeway), and Albertsons supermarkets are now on strike. United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) members went out on strike against Ralphs on Oct. 11. Albertsons and Safeway locked out their workers in retaliation.

A key issue in the strike is that workers who are given only up to 23 hours of work per week want their retirement to continue to kick in after 30 years, instead of 40 as management demands. Workers also reject management's demand for a \$750 yearly increase in health care co-payments. Management wants workers to pay 50% of the cost of health care even after the co-payment increase goes into effect.

Many residents of the community support the strikers. People are sounding their horns as they drive by. Local businesses have delivered pizza, tacos, and coffee to the strikers at a market in Eagle Rock. The County Federation of Labor has supported the strikers and is asking other unions to join in expressing solidarity. Teamster drivers are not crossing the picket lines, but the union is letting management drive the trucks to the dock—if they can get them in gear.

The workers claim that Safeway's CEO has transferred losses incurred in stores on the East Coast to those here on the West Coast. The CEO has stated he would be willing to lose \$200 million rather than agree to workers' demands—even though the entire cost of the benefits that the workers are asking for is only \$73 million. We need your support for the strike. Please boycott all of these stores!

—Marel

Everybody is on strike at Ralphs and Albertsons—from cashiers to meatpackers to stock people. Even the security guards have joined the strike. Most of the strikers at Albertsons are Latinos. They have so far been more active than others in organizing the strike, and they are raising slogans against the corporations.

Workers are asking customers not to shop at Ralphs or Albertsons, but to go to another unionized supermarket. They are asking people not to cross the picket line, but they are not blocking the entrances.

WORKSHOP TALKS

(Continued from page 1)

hospital wards and clinics. Where I work, collecting co-pays, called "revenue recovery rate," has become the criterion for judging a worker's performance.

We used to be able to bid on jobs at Kaiser based on seniority. Now seniority gets you considered as one of several candidates. Some with decades of experience get turned down based on co-payment collection. Employees are pressured daily to bring the numbers up, telling us that our jobs depend on this.

Reports of not meeting other criteria, some mandated by state and federal regulations, fall on deaf ears. Even after a recent warning, which came after a surprise inspection by the State Department of Health, they continue to neglect sorely needed improvements in areas related to patient care.

They bemoan how they are under so much pressure from outside competition. To our managers this is merely adjusting to reality—the economy out there.

What's out there for the grocery employer is Wal-Mart, the "big bad wolf" in this current labor conflict. The companies demanding concessions are pointing to most-unionized Wal-Mart. However, Wal-Mart imports most of its products from countries like China.

Hundreds of millions of uprooted peasantry now flock to the city slums of China, looking for work, any kind of work, forced to accept nearly brutal-labor wages and no labor rights under China's brutal state-capitalists. Every American manufacturer is now of the mind that they have to compete with China's totalitarian production system.

VANISHING BORDERS

The "new millennium's new economy" has eerie traces of the horrible conditions of the last century's production floor. The world of global production had always been divided into at least two tiers. Those in the upper tier were hi-tech industrial societies like ours with higher wages and salaries.

Those in the lower tier were impoverished developing nations. The two tiers had largely been separated by national borders, which have begun to vanish under the latest phase of capital's global restructuring.

Often our own unions accept our bosses' arguments, telling us our jobs and the company's survival depend on it. Our union contracts, and everything else we won previously through collective bargaining become undermined.

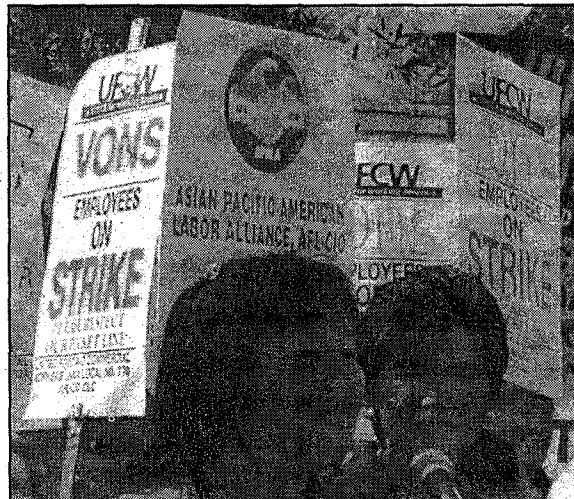
What binds American production to Chinese production, or Indian or Indonesian, in this new global production regimen is what ties all of them together—turning labor power into commodities and humans into mere cogs in the machine to be discarded when criteria set by machines compel it.

Grocery employers in LA are working together in this latest class war. Capitalists say whatever hit they take from these strikes it is worth it as an "investment in the future." It is time we workers, who know from our everyday working lives the insanity of this inverted thinking and whose labor makes everything possible, show the power of solidarity in this permanent war of capital on our hard won right to health care.

The store owners want new employees to be hired at a much lower pay scale, below the poverty level and far below what it costs to live in this area.

Workers are concerned that the corporations want all unionized grocery stores and supermarkets to be like Wal-Mart—to be without unions. Most Wal-Mart workers are part-timers who do not have fringe benefits and work for lower wages. They can be terminated from their job any time that management wants.

—Strike supporter



Independent Media Center / Los Angeles

Transit workers' strike

Los Angeles—The mechanics for the Metropolitan Authority (MTA) had been working for 18 months without a contract before going on strike on Oct. 11. We had been waiting and waiting but nothing happened. Finally, the MTA made a proposal. They insisted that we pay for our own fringe benefits, which would cost about \$270 more a month. The workers and the unions said no, we are not going to pay for our own benefits because our salaries are already so low.

Many drivers are supporting the mechanics. The union has said that if the drivers cross our picket lines the union will fine each one \$520. But that is not the main reason drivers aren't crossing the picket lines. The main reason is that we as workers must be united. If management can do this to one group of workers today, they will do the same to the rest of us later.

Another reason for the strike is that management wants to take control of our pension funds in order to invest the money and make profits from them. If management controls our pension funds, then they control us as workers.

—MTA Mechanic, Los Angeles

We are not supposed to cross the picket line because it is against our commitment to each other as union members. As a driver it is going to mean that I'll have to adjust my budget until the strike is over, but I am still not going to cross a picket line.

As a bus driver, I see people all the time sleeping at bus stations, on bus-stop benches, or living in cardboard tents. The so-called democracy and freedom that we have is fake. One group of people cannot claim that they are free while another group is not free.

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Hawaii farm strike

Kilauea, Hawaii—We are striking against Kilauea Agronomics (Guava Kai) over wages and benefits. Our ILWU Longshore Local 142 contract ended Jan. 1. Our bargaining unit covers harvesters, truck drivers, pruners, plant workers, and clerical workers.

Ever since the company got into the guava business in 1975, it has been profitable, but always had a reason not to afford a wage increase or benefits. The best we've ever done is 2%-2%-3% on a three-year contract.

The cost of living in Hawaii is higher than the mainland, but wages are a lot less. Even for Hawaii, the \$7.14 an hour that the seasonal worker gets is way below what the average full-time worker gets—\$9.00.

The company wants to change to an HMO and outside that we would pay the difference plus 20% of the primary plan. The 1% wage increase they offered doesn't even cover the increase in the medical.

Covered seasonals don't get family medical coverage. There are people who have been seasonals for up to ten years. There's no mechanism to move them to full-time, yet regular workers become seasonals and lose benefits if they don't get 1,500 hours in a year.

We work in the rain, we work in the heat. When we retire, we get nothing. We have workers past 70. There was a labor shortage, and they hired a lot of older people. Then they approached the union to try to get rid of the older workers! That's age discrimination, and it wasn't going to fly. This is the mentality they have.

In the past when there was no pruning work, pruners were offered harvesting work at the lower harvester wage. If you didn't want to harvest, you collected unemployment. Now they report that we refused work so we can't get unemployment. But our contract language is plain: if you want pruners to harvest, you pay the higher of the two rates.

In Hawaii we call them high makamaka, which means they think they're better than us because they make more. People should look at how we work. We are poor, and they want to get rich off of us.

—Striking guava workers

'Break the Bell!'

Memphis, Tenn.—Representatives from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) went on a South-eastern Truth Tour, Oct. 3-13, to promote their boycott of Taco Bell. CIW represents immigrant farm workers in Immokalee, Fla. who pick tomatoes for standard wages. In April 2001 CIW initiated a national boycott of Taco Bell, number one buyer of Florida tomatoes.

The tour included stops in Tallahassee, New Orleans, Houston, Austin, San Antonio, Dallas, Memphis, Birmingham, and Gainesville. The CIW addressed hundreds of students at Florida State, St. Edwards U., and the University of Texas. They protested at the Pizza Hut headquarters in Dallas—YUM Inc. owns Taco Bell and Pizza Hut.

In Memphis we celebrated the September closing of Taco Bell at the University of Memphis after two years of protests organized by the Women's Action Coalition.

One exciting development is supportive coverage by *National Geographic* and the *New Yorker*. The cover story for the September *National Geographic* is "21st Century Slaves." According to Andrew Cockburn, in six separate cases defendants in Florida have been found guilty of peonage and human-trafficking.

In the most dramatic case, more than 600 immigrants were being held as slaves. The CIW played a crucial role in bringing the slave camp to the attention of the FBI and gathering witnesses and evidence for the prosecution. After a two-year legal battle, the three ringleaders were sentenced to 34 years in jail.

In recognition of their extraordinary work fighting modern-day slavery and their leadership of the national Taco Bell Boycott, three CIW members, Julia Gabriel, Lucas Benitez, and Romeo Ramirez, have been awarded the 2003 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. In the words of the RFK Center for Human Rights: "They have shown the connection between the plight faced by migrant farmworkers in the U.S. and the universal struggle for human rights that is going on all over the world."

Be looking for a CIW caravan coming your way this spring. Spread the Word! Join the Boycott! Break the Bell! More information on the CIW and upcoming events is available at ciw-online.org.

—Memphis CIW supporter Steve Tammello

Borders showdown

Ann Arbor, Mich.—Employees at Borders Bookstore in downtown Ann Arbor, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) Local 876, voted on Oct. 19 to authorize a strike. The Ann Arbor store was the first in the nationwide chain which now has 425 locations. Ten days ago the employees had rejected a contract, which did not address full-time status, overtime, vacations, scheduling, or a "living wage." Minneapolis and Sterling Heights, Mich. are two other locations which have begun to strike.

Workers, teachers and student activists have been picketing the Ann Arbor store daily at noon and 6 p.m. and have received favorable responses from the public. Borders has received asking supporters not to shop at Borders Bookstore when the strike is called. Supporters can sign petitions, obtainable at <http://border-readersunited.blogspot.com>. For updates on the unionizing drive, see www.bordersunion.com.

—Supporter

EDITORIAL

Two states for two peoples

The conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians continues to grind onward with a relentless persistence. The level of animosity between the two peoples is at an unprecedented level. Since the provocative visit of Ariel Sharon to the Temple Mount in 2000, the rapid downward spiral of relations has virtually extinguished any memory of the conciliatory period of the Oslo Accords.

Events since those days have seemed to confirm the most dire fear of each side. The Palestinians now believe that the Israelis never intended to curtail the building of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, let alone dismantle and abandon the numerous and far-flung existing ones. For their part, many Israelis now believe that the Palestinians never relinquished the demand for the unconditional right of those who left or were forcibly removed from their homes in the war of 1948—and their descendants—to return.

The government of Ariel Sharon bears the lion's share of responsibility for the level of acrimony that has been reached. Far from having been given an incentive to seek a peace by the American overthrow of Saddam in Iraq, Sharon's government continues to press on with an extremely heavy-handed occupation.

The everyday humiliating tactics of the occupation include the curtailment of the freedom of movement from place to place, the collective punishment of home demolitions, and the destruction without compensation of vineyards and orchards that are deemed to be too close to strategic military checkpoints. More recent innovations in the conflict include assassination by air-to-ground missile—an action that regularly kills more than solely the targeted figure and often levels entire apartment buildings as well.

These oppressive measures have turned the villages and towns of the occupied territories into places where unemployment is the norm and resentment against the occupier smolders.

SHARON'S WALL

The newest and most devastating development of this period is the wall. Sharon has launched the construction of an enormous wall to divide the West Bank from Israel. Long resistant to such a move because of his concern that a wall would physically separate Israel proper from the settlements he supports so fervently, Sharon has overcome his reluctance by plotting a course for its construction that will take the wall deep into the West Bank to include many settlements on Israel's side. The wall will not only diverge from Israel's 1967 eastern border, but will also run far to the west of the Jordan River. The completion of this barrier will literally make prisoners of most of the Palestinian population of the West Bank.

This period of the second intifada is further marked by a retrogression on the Palestinian side. The abhorrent tactic of the suicide bombing against unsuspecting Israeli civilians, introduced by the Islamic fundamen-

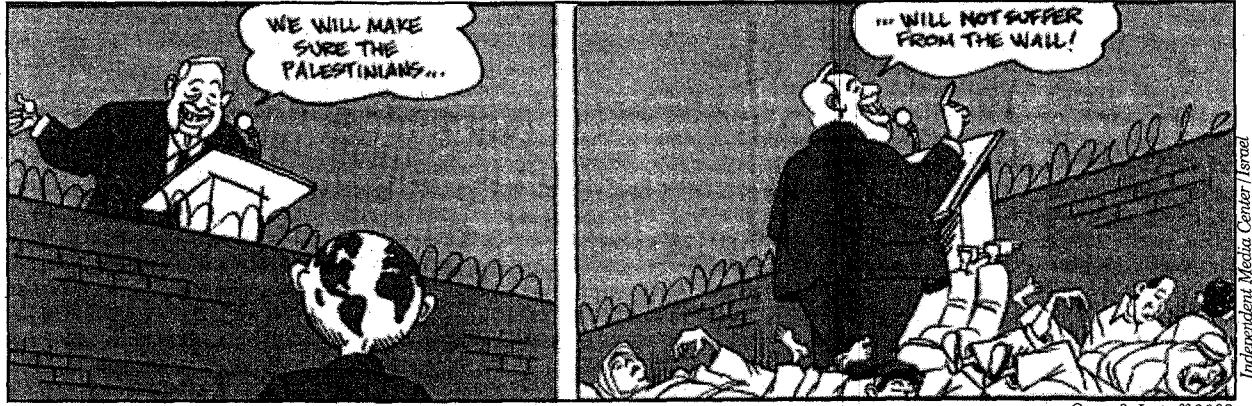
talists, has been adopted by the secular Palestinian nationalists. The Islamic fundamentalists and the secular groups have even carried out coordinated actions, blurring the distinction between them. Even secular women have perpetrated mass murder by bombing.

The degeneration of the conflict has also had ramifications among the international supporters of the Palestinians. Young people in the U.S. have taken up the Palestinian cause along with anti-war and anti-globalization efforts. Many have visited the West Bank and Gaza to see first-hand the effects of the occupation and to protest shoulder-to-shoulder with the Palestinians. One activist, Rachel Corrie, lost her life there.

Yet the language and arguments of the Palestinian solidarity movement here are marked by a lack of clar-

ments close to the Palestinian Authority and representatives of former members of Israel's Labor government and activists of the peace movement. The plan—referred to as the Geneva Accords—reportedly takes the end of the Barak government's negotiations as its point of departure. It is premature for any show of enthusiasm for a yet-unreleased plan that was developed entirely without the participation of an Israeli government that has considerable public support. Yet any such initiative should be received by international friends of the Palestinian people with an open mind.

Despite the turn that the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians has taken since 2000, two states for two peoples with no wall between continues to be the only political solution for the region.



ity about the nature of the conflict and the future of the region. For example, the official summation of the recent New Jersey Palestinian Solidarity conference that gained attention for being barred from its original location at Rutgers University, is typically overburdened with the repetitive use of the term "Zionism" as the object of its critique.

The reality is that the Zionist project was achieved in full with the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and the beginning of the occupation, the question has not been about the nature of Zionism or its aims, but instead the kind of state the citizens of Israel want it to become. Do Israelis want their country to continue as an oppressive occupier in which fundamentalist Judaism increasingly erodes the state's original democratic and secular character and further alienates its substantial Arab minority, or do they want a different path altogether? Does Israel want to become a state that walls up a whole country that needs work only to import labor-power from all over the world to cultivate its fields and build its houses?

POSSIBLE PEACE PLAN?

The only welcome development in the region has been word of a peace plan worked out between ele-

Why a PATRIOT Act?

The PATRIOT Act creates a new offense named "Domestic Terrorism." This is defined as "acts dangerous to human life" that are a violation of the criminal laws of the U.S. or of any state and that (among other things) "appear to be intended to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion." Providing lodging or assistance to "terrorists," as so defined, subjects a person to surveillance or prosecution.

This law is not needed to prosecute actual terrorists who conspire to commit murder; it could be used against strikers and those who support them.

The PATRIOT Act also expands the government's ability to compel a third party to disclose records that relate to an individual's activity. While bookstores and libraries are not specifically named, they are not excluded. While ostensibly the government can only obtain an order from a judge directed against the third party "to protect against international terrorism or clandestine intelligence activities" the judge is given little or no discretion once the government claims it is investigating these activities. The third party is prohibited from disclosing that it has turned over records.

The PATRIOT Act also allows searches to be conducted without notifying the target of the search and expands the use of "pen registers." Pen registers are a list of telephone numbers to and from a particular telephone number. The pen register concept could also apply to e-mail addresses and subject headings and website addresses visited by a particular computer. Website addresses often include far more than just the address, if, for example, a person fills in a form.

The PATRIOT Act is to be reviewed by Congress every six months. Considering that members of Congress are now complaining that they enacted it without reading it, this review will not be very effective.

It is very possible that if people become aware of how the PATRIOT Act can be misused, Congress can be pressured to repeal it.

—Dan B.

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE OUT

by Robert Taliaferro

From utilizing the convoluted and ill-defined powers given by the PATRIOT Act, to equating the mandated removal of a monument of the Ten Commandments to treason, we have seen a new and dangerous direction being taken by people who are allegedly sworn to protect the sanctity of the law and the integrity of the Constitution.

One of the most interesting aspects of this phenomenon was in the Ten Commandments monument event in Alabama. Judge Roy Moore, then Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court, decided to place a monument to Judeo-Christian religion within the lobby of the Alabama Supreme Court. After he refused an order by a federal court to remove it, he became the central focus of a nationwide debate.

Judge Moore felt that his disobedience was a "lawful response" because he felt that the federal court's order was unconstitutional, noting that the concept of "God" was the basis of the justice system in the U.S. What is disconcerting about such statements, and what Judge Moore and his supporters seem to not understand, is that such concepts belie equity and parity in a country whose laws are quickly changing to deny rights of non-white, non-Christian peoples of the U.S. Statements like Judge Moore's are much like the rhetoric of leaders of other countries who consider themselves to have some type of divine right to lead their particular governments.

Today great barriers are being erected towards judicial equality by those who make and enforce laws. And there is a push by John Ashcroft and George Bush to enhance the already controversial and highly invasive PATRIOT Act. Such changes include provisions to bypass the judiciary in order to obtain administrative subpoenas; the ability to hold alleged terrorists without bail; and defining a presumption of guilt for prospective detainees.

One of the most abusive aspects of the new laws is the risk-rating system that the government is working with airlines to enact in 2004. According to the plan this risk rating defined three categories of risk that will be assigned to prospective passengers. Though the

Laws get more abusive

plan is not completely outlined, if it is anything like the High, Medium, and Low risk ratings currently used in American prisons, then the opportunity to abuse such a system is phenomenal.

The problem with assigning risks to people is in who makes the assignments, and the criteria used for those judgments. One would have to presume that the people making the assignments based upon some obscurely defined criteria can be unbiased.

But this is a country involved in a self-defined war, and lack of bias is not something that American lawmakers, and sadly citizens, can easily claim. All we need to do is to look at the last attack on an American territory at Pearl Harbor, to see how prejudice and bias plays a part in the selective confinement and risk factors assigned to peoples of color, especially. One would presume that, based on that history, High and Medium risk subjects would be all immigrants — especially those of Arab origin (or who look like they may be of Arab origin) and other people of color.

There has to be a balance of ideas that equalize the balance of power that is swiftly moving towards the Right in this country. There is also a need for the people who are charged with enforcing the law to be held as accountable when "they" break the law, as they would expect for the average citizen to be.

Neither religious beliefs nor cultural and individual bias should be synonymous or precursors to the level of justice that one receives. We're quick to describe the mandates of a Constitutionally democratic government for others, yet we've been allowing the government to abuse those same mandates within our own country.

When it comes to equitable justice and laws that are both protective and fair, we cannot afford to lessen our watch over those who are charged with the enforcement of that justice, nor can we give such elements carte blanche, for once that happens, the result is governmental anarchy. If judges, Congresspersons or police cannot follow the mandates of the law, or lawful orders of a court, then why should we. The czars of Russia also once felt that they had a divine right to rule, and did not need to follow the dictates of a duly elected representative government of the people. Enter Lenin, and revolution!

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ESSAY

What is new in today's imperialism?

by Peter Hudis

Nothing is more hollow than the claim that today's drive for permanent war lacks an economic basis. If that were so, a total break with Marx's Marxism would be called for. As this year's Marxist-Humanist Perspectives argues: "Imperialism is not the product of a cabal of right-wing ideologues who have taken control of the Bush administration. Imperialism is the expression of a determinant stage of capitalist production. It can be stopped and uprooted only by abolishing the capitalist system as a whole."⁽¹⁾

What is the specific aspect of capitalism that gives rise to new stages of imperialism? It is the drive to concentrate and centralize capital in ever-fewer hands. Just as the rise of cartels, trusts, and monopolies in the late 19th to early 20th century put traditional laissez-faire capitalism to rest, so the rise of state-capitalist imperialism in the post-World War II era resulted from a new stage in the concentration and centralization of capital.

As Raya Dunayevskaya wrote in 1960: "The reason that the capitalistic world, from its division into five power blocs in World War I, came out of World War II with two, and only two, power blocs, nuclearly armed, is that there is just no room for more if this madhouse of 'production for production's sake,' where the dead labor of machines and not the living labor of human beings has the decisive word, is to continue. In fact, there is no room for two."⁽²⁾

The fact that the concentration and centralization of capital has advanced so far that by now "there is no room" for the even two superpowers underlines the present effort by the U.S. to achieve global domination through its drive for permanent war.

IS IMPERIALISM A STABILIZING FACTOR?

However, it is insufficient to point to the economic factors underlying imperialism. The key is how one conceives of the role played by these factors. That is, does the economic basis of imperialism enable capitalism to overcome its endemic contradictions, or does it bring them more sharply to the fore?

This was spoken to in a letter by Raya Dunayevskaya of 1951 that appeared in the July 2003 issue of *News & Letters* under the title: "Rudolf Hilferding and the 'Stability of Capitalism.'"

Hilferding's theory of finance capital was hugely influential. Lenin's theory of imperialism was in part indebted to it. Yet there was a key difference between Lenin and Hilferding. Whereas Hilferding saw the rise of imperialism from out of finance-and-monopoly capital as a stabilizing feature (in the 1920s he even argued that economic depressions were no longer possible), Lenin viewed it dialectically, as fomenting instability and "transformation into opposite."

As Dunayevskaya put it: "Hilferding sees the stage of capitalism in its 'Hilferding razzle-dazzle appearance and becomes enamored of its capacity to 'unify' commercial, industrial, and financial interests [instead of being] concretely aware of the greater contradictions and antagonisms of the new monopoly stage of capitalism.... That meant tacit acceptance of the capacity of capital to gain a certain 'stability,' to modify its anarchism as a 'constant' feature. [He] saw in [this] new stage not a transition to a higher form, but something in itself already higher, although 'bad.'"

This conceptual ground must serve as our vantage point for probing into today's realities. Is the greater concentration and centralization of capital that underlies the U.S. drive for permanent war a "stabilizing" feature, or it is fomenting greater instability and crisis? How we approach this issue will determine whether we project a liberating alternative to today's realities or pose instead a theory of retrogression.

IMPERIALISM'S NEW FORM

To explore this, we need to take a closer look at what distinguishes today's imperialism from that of previous periods. The Marxist-Humanist Perspectives Thesis for 2003-2004 mentions several differences:

1) The U.S. today does not seem interested in direct territorial control of the rest of the world, in contrast to the classic stage of imperialist-colonialism of the late 19th and early 20th century. Ever since the rise of neo-colonialism in the post World War II era, it has preferred more indirect methods of domination, by relying on local surrogates and economic compulsion.

2) Whereas a century ago imperialism hid the tendency of the rate of profit to decline through the extraction of super-profits from exploited lands overseas, today the decline in the rate of profit openly drives capitalist imperialism expansion.

There is another difference, noted by Dunayevskaya in 1951, when she stated that whereas Lenin emphasized the export of capital as a prime motive for imperialist expansion, the present period is quite different:

The bankruptcy of capitalist production compels not the export of capital for surplus profit; it compels the dominant capitals to seek to incorporate and submit to their domination the total national capital of other nations. The smaller national capitals, such as Britain and France, continue to resist, but they are steadily being forced into a situation where their capital, manpower, scientific knowledge, etc. are being incorporated into the services of the U.S. The same process is being followed by Russia. This is the process of

statification of production and centralization of capital on a gigantic national and international scale.⁽³⁾

This shift in the nature of imperialism was not obvious at the time. The U.S. came out of World War II as the world's biggest exporter of capital. As Dunayevskaya noted in *Nationalism, Communism, Marxist-Humanism and the Afro-Asian Revolutions* (1959), whereas after World War II Russia "looted everything in sight, from East Germany to Manchuria, the U.S....found it had to give rather than take," as seen in the Marshall Plan for Europe and Truman's Point 4 Program of aid to the Third World. It was by no means easy to see in 1951 that imperialism had shifted from the export of capital to the incorporation of other national capitals. But by being rooted in Marx's *Capital* and in ongoing reality, Dunayevskaya grasped what eluded many others.

This remains pivotal for today. In the Korean War the U.S. shifted from a creditor to a debtor nation, largely due to military expenditures. The situation became permanent with the Vietnam War. Since the 1980s, the U.S.'s debtor status as a net importer of surplus capital has been a central feature of the world economy. U.S. indebtedness has by now reached phenomenal levels. This year's U.S. trade deficit is \$450 billion. The federal budget deficit is \$455 billion. The two add up to 11% of U.S. GDP. This is no sign of strength. It is a sign of weakness.

To finance these enormous deficits the U.S. is forced to tap the resources of foreign capitalists by getting them to buy U.S. treasury bonds and various securities. The U.S. is importing far more than it is exporting and it's going deeper and deeper into debt. The U.S. is now more dependent on foreign capital than at any time in the past 50 years. Foreign capitalists now own 46% of all U.S. treasury bonds!

U.S. STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS

As any student of economic history knows, foreign indebtedness is no recipe for world dominance. From the Hellenic city-states in the post-Alexandrian period to the crisis besetting Rome in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, and from the more recent examples of the USSR after the latter fell into a massive debt crisis in the 1980s, the list of empires that came apart under the impact of foreign indebtedness is a long one indeed. So how can the U.S. sustain such massive foreign debts and still claim to rule the world economy?

Of course, many contingencies define the size of the trade deficit. This year the dollar has fallen in value by 25% against the euro, and a weaker dollar tends to reduce the size of the trade deficit. There's nothing that says the size of the trade deficit will forever expand, though shortly after the Iraq war Bush declared that he's committed to strengthening the value of the dollar.

Whatever impact this may have, one thing is clear: instead of dumping its surplus capital abroad, as was true in Lenin's day, the U.S. continues to draw in massive amounts of foreign capital. Its "dominance" of the

world is based on a profound dependence.

The bulk of this imported surplus capital comes from Europe and Asia. Yet while the U.S. imports far less capital from the Third World than from Europe or Japan, the human impact is so much more devastating on the Third World since it has far more less capital to begin with. The lack of flow of investment capital to the technologically underdeveloped countries continues to devastate Africa especially.

Why does foreign capital continue to invest in the U.S., since factories in West Europe and Japan are more automated than those in the U.S. and U.S. labor productivity is lower than in many countries? The introduction of new technologies is spread around

the world and many countries have invested more per capita in high tech than has the U.S. One major industry in which the U.S. enjoys a competitive advantage over its rivals is military production (aside from agriculture, which is heavily state subsidized). So why don't European and Asian capitalists just invest their surplus capital at home?

Recent reports on the U.S. economy provide a clue. Since 1970 productivity growth in the U.S.

has lagged behind most European countries—1.4% a year, while Europe grew in excess of 2%. But since 1995 U.S. productivity growth has increased vis a vis Europe. Why?

The answer is indicated in figures which show that labor productivity in the U.S. grew in the first quarter of 2003 by 5.7%. What explains such a massive growth in productivity? Have U.S. capitalists invented a new machine that has radically boosted labor productivity? Have U.S. workers decided to work harder for their bosses? Hardly. The reason is that U.S. companies are laying off workers and cutting health benefits even as they force out ever-more production. As one report puts it: "Output has been growing while employment has been shrinking, producing the explosion of productivity growth that we observe in the U.S. data."⁽⁴⁾

Here is part of the reason why foreign capital floods into the U.S.—because wages and benefits are so low. Keeping wages and benefits as low as possible is a key part of U.S. capital's strategy to attract foreign capital.

Yet this is not the only factor. No less key is U.S. military might. Capitalists like to avoid risk. They feel there is no safer haven for their capital than the land which aims to rule the world through military power.

It is here, far more than on the issue of oil, that we can locate the economic basis of the U.S. drive for permanent war. Permanent militarization projects an all-powerful image which acts as a magnet to attract foreign capital. Unlike the Gulf War of 1991, foreign capital has not agreed to directly pay for today's Iraq war. However, foreign capital is footing much of the bill through a more circuitous route. The U.S. deficits place added pressure on foreign capitalists to invest their surplus dollars in U.S. treasury bonds, thereby transferring much of war's cost to countries overseas—including those which opposed the war!

Militarization is a function of state power. The anti-globalization movement has focused on attacking "free trade" and "neoliberalism" because they allow multinational corporations to buy up the assets of formerly-public enterprises. But the movement tends to overlook the fact that global capital obtains the dollars needed to buy up such newly-privatized assets through the acts of state powers, the U.S. especially. By directing surplus capital to the U.S. through its government deficits (induced largely by its military expenditures), the state plays a key role in enabling U.S.-based multinationals to buy up the world's economic assets.

As Michael Hudson writes, "What is novel about the new state capitalist form of imperialism is that it is the state itself that is siphoning off economic surpluses.... What turns this financial key-currency imperialism into a veritable super imperialism is that the privilege of running free deficits belongs to one nation alone."⁽⁵⁾

Yet does this "super imperialism" which fuses industrial, financial and military interests provide the U.S. with "stability"? Hardly! Military production is inherently wasteful, as the surplus value soaked up by it does not lead to real growth. As Dunayevskaya wrote in *Philosophy and Revolution* (p. 234), "Militarization of the economy, gargantuan as it has become in a nuclear world, further intensifies the general crisis."

The U.S. drive for permanent war may help it fund its massive deficits by tapping the resources of foreign capitalists, but that hasn't enabled it to overcome the problem it has openly faced since the mid-70s—the decline in the rate of profit.

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(Continued on page 11)

New 40th anniversary edition: *American Civilization On Trial* as basis for follow-up studies

Editor's note

The following Political Letter, originally entitled "American Civilization on Trial as Statement of our Views and as Basis for Follow-up Studies and Articles" was written by Raya Dunayevskaya on April 15, 1963 on the occasion of the first publication of *American Civilization on Trial*. As part of our publication of a new fifth edition of this classic work in American Marxism, which was authored by Dunayevskaya in consultation with the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees, we reproduce the full text of this letter here. The challenge discussed in it is also directly addressed in our other new publication being published in conjunction with *American Civilization on Trial*, *Dialectics of Black Freedom Struggles: Race, Philosophy, and the Needed American Revolution*, by John Alan. To order these new works, see the literature ad on page 10.

It is seldom that any of our Political Letters deal with internal rather than external events. This one will do so for two basic reasons, which are of the utmost importance for our organizational growth: 1) it is imperative that each and every one of us internalize *American Civilization on Trial* so that we can, at a moment's notice, make a comprehensive presentation of these views to outside groups and individuals; 2) it is equally important that we do not consider this pamphlet as a "finished work," but that we constantly expand it, reinterpret it, and bring it up to date.

For example, on the day—Friday, April 12 [1963]—when I was to make a presentation of it to the Detroit Local [of News and Letters Committees], news dispatches announced that Switzerland had expelled one Erich Rajakovic, Adolph Eichmann's right-hand man, who had been responsible for the murder of 110,000 Dutch Jews, including Anne Frank. Despite all the tears that had been shed over *The Diary of Anne Frank* as a book, as a play, as a movie—which may have equaled the tears shed over little Eva trying to escape over the ice as she was pursued by the hound dogs of Simon Legree—the Storm Trooper Rajakovic easily melted into the crowd at Munich and made good his escape; while, at the same time, in our South, the savage use of dogs against the Freedom Fighters of today made it impossible for any of them to escape that dragnet.

In a word, not only does the todayness of history make possible the presentation of *American Civilization on Trial* as a living document, but the one-world-ness of today allows for its application on an international scale.

Toward both these ends, I wish, first, to present the title and contents page of the pamphlet in its final form as it is now going to press:

100 Years After the Emancipation Proclamation: **AMERICAN CIVILIZATION ON TRIAL** The Negro As Touchstone of History

Introduction:

- 1) Of Patriots, Scoundrels and Slave Masters
- 2) Compelling Issues at Stake

Part I: From the First Through the Second American Revolution

- 1) Abolitionism, First Phase: From "Moral Suasion" to Harpers Ferry
- 2) Abolitionism, Second Phase: The Unfinished Revolution

Part II: The Still Unfinished Revolution

- 1) Northern Labor Struggles to Break Capital's Stranglehold, 1877-97
- 2) One and a Half Million Forgotten Negro Populists
- 3) Populism and Intellectual Ferment

Part III: Imperialism And Racism

- 1) Rise of Monopoly Capital
- 2) Racism and Plunge into Imperialism
- 3) A New Awakening of Labor: The IWW

Part IV: Nationalism and Internationalism

- 1) The Negro Moves North
- 2) Garveyism
- 3) Marxism

Part V: From the Depression Through World War II

- 1) The CIO Changes the Face of the Nation and Makes a Break in Negro "Nationalism"
- 2) The March on Washington
- 3) The Communists Oppose Independent Negro Movements

Part VI: The Negro as Touchstone of History

- 1) Urbanization of Negroes
- 2) The Two-Way Road to African Revolutions

Part VII: Facing the Challenge, 1941-1963

- 1) The Self-Determination of People and of Ideas
- 2) The New Voices We Heard
- 3) What We Stand For—Who We Are

Please note Part VI. Instead of being a sub-section

under "What Now?" "The Negro as Touchstone" has not only become a full part, but it is no longer restricted to the American scene. That is to say, by including the section on the African Revolutions here, we are able to present

the international role of the Negro. I hope many friends will wish to expand this section by various articles in *News & Letters*.

The main points of expansion, however, will come on the American scene. In this respect, I would like to single out one of the additions I made in order to encourage others to take advantage of the condensed form of the pamphlet to elaborate on other phases of American development that we couldn't possibly go into, in tracing the dialectic of history that has never before been traced from a Marxist-Humanist viewpoint. I am referring to Part II, "The Still Unfinished Revolution"—where it was necessary to take note both of the economic determinist view of the Civil War as an "economic revolution," and to argue against the attitude that the Jefferson-Jackson-Lincoln tradition is fundamentally different from the "other" traditions.

The new phase of Northern capitalist development had, of course, been a motivating force for the Civil War. But the economic determinist view notwithstanding, it was not the propellant. The Second American Revolution was more than an "economic revolution." Much as the industrialists wished to break the monopoly of com-

mercial over industrial capital, of American slavishness to British textile manufacture, "cash and compromise" was too ingrained an element of American capitalism for the industrialists to venture forth into civil war. Only the most prodigious revolutionary exertions by slaves, Abolitionists, and, in many of its stages, labor, could tear apart the powerful link of cash and compromise that bound together cotton and textiles, cotton shippers and financiers.

"If Lincoln has grown," wrote Wendell Phillips, "it is quite natural. We watered him!" Yet it was no accident that Lincoln chose Andrew Johnson as his running mate for the second term, in place of retaining the Vice-President, Hannibal Hamlin, who was a friend of the Abolitionists. The objective compulsion of capitalist industrialization won over the freedom forces. The Civil War brought to a climax and summed up the whole paradox of the Jefferson-Jackson-liberal tradition.

In office, Jefferson and the Jeffersonians were full of Hamiltonians. In office, Jacksonian democracy turned out to be something very different than the rule of the farmer and the mechanic as against Eastern finance capital. In the same manner, Lincoln, in office, developed the "Ameri-

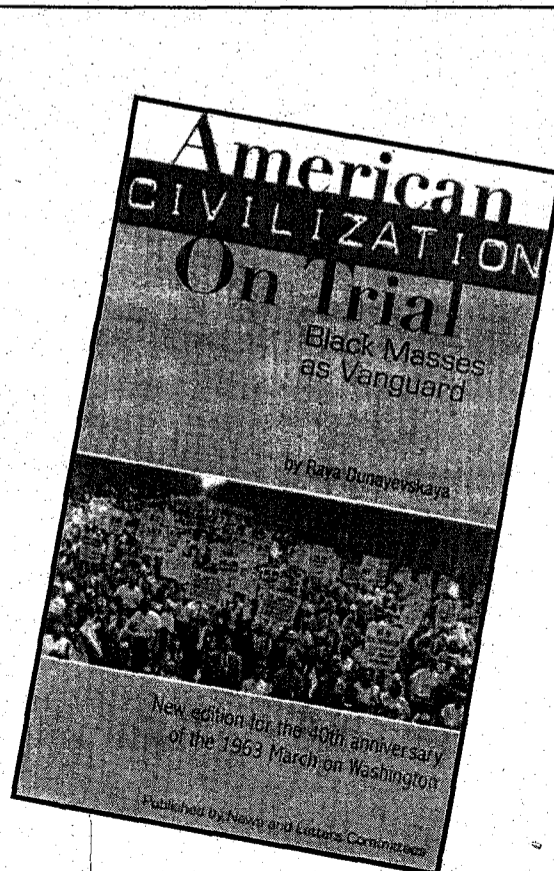
can System" more in line with the concept of the "Great Compromiser," Henry Clay, than in the spirit of the Second American Revolution.

It would be excellent if someone could develop the differences between the Abolitionists—wholly devoted to an idea, the idea of freedom, without wanting anything for themselves—and the Populists who fought for limited rights and could produce so contradictory a character as Tom Watson. But, above all, where expansion is needed is in Part VII: "Facing the Challenge, 1943-1963," especially the final section on "What We Stand For—Who We Are."

In this way, *American Civilization on Trial* will bring to organizational consciousness the underlying philosophy of both the movement of history and its today-ness.



Black youth demanding freedom in Birmingham, Alabama in 1963.



REVOLUTIONARY BLACK STRUGGLES AND IDEAS

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ization on Trial, Black Masses as Vanguard

Excerpts from the new edition

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE NEW EDITION BY THE RESIDENT EDITORIAL BOARD

This fifth expanded edition of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard* appears on the 40th anniversary of the historic August 1963 Civil Rights March on Washington, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered what became his world-famous "I Have a Dream" speech. That year marked the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation; yet Black America, he said, was "still badly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination, still living on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity."

Forty years later, the June 2003 rebellion against police abuse that broke out in Benton Harbor, Mich. proves how little has been changed since King's description of Black America and exposes the permanence of the racism deeply embedded in U.S. capitalism. Black youth today continue to be warehoused in prisons at a rate far exceeding their percentage of the population, and their unemployment rate, always twice that of white America, is rising at a faster pace than whites. The scenes of Benton Harbor in flames recalled Cincinnati in 2000, and Los Angeles in 1992. The fact that this explosion occurred in a city of 12,000 reflects the depth of anger in African-American communities across the U.S.

American Civilization on Trial shows that the contradictions in the movements for freedom cannot be overcome without working out a unity of the movement from practice and the movement from theory as the foundation for an overall philosophy that can form the foundation of a new human social order. In short, ever since the 1960s it has become clear that even the greatest actions need the direction from a total philosophy of freedom. When the struggle has reached such a multidimensional intensity that it encompasses all the forces for revolution from the Black dimension to women to youth to rank and file labor, what is needed is to concretize such a philosophy for our age...

Raya Dunayevskaya had intended to issue in 1963 a statement on the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. It became *American Civilization on Trial* when the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 made it clear that what had to be raised—against the threat of a nuclear war that could annihilate all of humanity—was the call for a totally new society. That task was to find the social forces that represented that kind of revolution. The work she authored was signed by the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees and its organizational stamp was made clear in its final section, which was called "What We



Mass protest in Cincinnati against police abuse, April 2000.

Stand For—and Who We Are." This edition will make clear her authorship for the first time...

FROM RAYA DUNAYEVSKAYA'S "A 1980S VIEW OF THE TWO-WAY ROAD BETWEEN THE U.S. AND AFRICA"

What *American Civilization on Trial* reveals is both Marx's deep American roots and his Promethean vision. Take the succinct way in which Marx pinpointed the situation in the Civil War at its darkest moment, as the war dragged on and the Southern generals were winning so decisively as to produce a

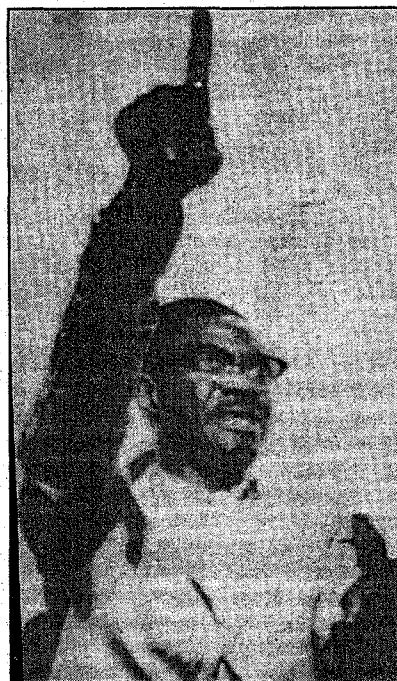
defeatist attitude in the North. Marx looked at the forces of revolution: "A single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves... a war of this kind must be conducted along revolutionary lines" (Letter from Marx to Engels, Aug. 7, 1862)...

In his last decade [1872-83] Marx discovered still newer paths to revolution... his projection of the possibility of a revolution coming first in technologically underdeveloped lands achieved a new meaning for our age with the emergence of a whole new Third World, as well as new mass struggles and the birth of new revolutionary forces as in Africa. The Black dimension in the U.S. as well as in Africa showed that we had, indeed, reached a totally new movement from practice to theory that was itself a new form of theory. It was this new movement from practice those new voices from below—which we heard, recorded, and dialectically developed. Those voices demanded that a new movement from theory be rooted in that movement from practice and become developed to the point of philosophy—a philosophy of world revolution....

FROM PART I: FROM THE FIRST THROUGH THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Nothing since [the Abolitionist movement] has superseded this merger of the white intellectual with the Negro masses with the same intense devotion to principle, the same intimacy of relations of white and Black, the same unflinching propaganda in face of mob persecution—and even death—the same greatness of character which never bent during three long decades of struggle until the irreversible conflict occurred, and even then did not give up the fight but sought to transform it—and succeeded—from a war of mere supremacy of Northern industry over Southern cotton culture to one of emancipation of slaves.

The movement renounced all traditional politics, considering all political parties of the day as "corrupt." They were inter-racial and in a slave society preached and practiced Negro equality. They were distinguished as well for inspiring, aligning with and fighting for equality of women in an age when women had neither



Patrice Lumumba, a leader of the African independence movement.

This new fifth edition of *American Civilization on Trial* contains the following new features:

- 1) New 2003 Preface from the National Editorial Board of News and Letters Committees
- 2) Three Added Writings from Charles Denby, author *Indignant Heart: A Black Workers' Journal*:
 - *Black Masses Alighting Fought Militarism*
 - *25 Years of editing 'News & Letters'*
 - *On 'American Civilization on Trial'*
- 3) "To the People of the United States," Letter of Karl Marx of September 1865 on the outcome of the U.S. Civil War

the right to the ballot nor to property nor to divorce. They were internationalist, covering Europe with their message, and bringing back to this country the message of the Irish Freedom Fighters.

They sought no rewards of any kind, fighting for the pure idea, though that meant facing the hostility of the national government, the state, the local police, and the best citizens who became the most unruly mobs. They were beaten, mobbed and stoned...

FROM PART 3: IMPERIALISM AND RACISM

It is no historic secret that the later the bourgeois revolution against feudalism or slavery takes place, the less complete it is, due to the lateness of class opposition between capital and labor. The lateness in the abolition of slavery in the U.S. accounts for the tenacious economic survivals of slavery which still exist in the U.S.

Nevertheless, as the strength of Populism and the solidarity of Black and white that it forged showed, the economic survival of slavery couldn't have persisted, much less dominated the life of the Negroes North as well as South, if they hadn't been reinforced by the "new" Northern capital. It was not the "psychology of Jim Crowism" that did the reinforcing. The "psychology of Jim Crowism" is itself the result, not the cause, of monopoly capital extending its tentacles into the Caribbean and the Pacific as it became transformed into imperialism, with the Spanish-American War...

FROM PART 6: THE NEGRO AS TOUCHSTONE OF HISTORY

The most exciting chapter in human affairs since World War II was written in the African revolutions. The first All-African People's Conference, in 1958 when Ghana was the only independent state, disclosed not just Pan-Africanism but the making of a Negro International.

Tiny Guinea's "No!" to France won her freedom and thereby reaffirmed that the greatest force for remaking the world remains the human being. In less than a decade no fewer than 22 African nations won their independence. The banner under which this freedom from colonialism has been achieved—Pan-Africanism—is not a purely African phenomenon. It has had the American birth and development in which the American contribution is important. Where standard history texts, in their vulgar materialistic way, still dwell in detail on the long-dead triangular trade of rum, molasses and slaves—between Africa, the West Indies and the U.S.—it is the ever-live triangular development of internationalism, masses in action and ideas which is the dominant force today...

FROM PART 7: FACING THE CHALLENGE, 1941-63

The truth is old radicals are forever blind to the positive, the subjective new dimensions of any spontaneous struggle. Each struggle is fought out in separate struggle, and remains isolated. While the way to hell may be paved with Little Rocks, the way to a new society must have totally new foundations not alone in action but in thought...

The very people who played down the East European revolts, from Stalin's death, in 1953, through the Hungarian Revolution, in 1956, also played down the Negro struggles from the Montgomery Bus Boycott, in 1956, through the Freedom Rides, in 1961, to the current struggles in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi. We, on the other hand, do not

divide the underlying philosophy from participation in all these struggles.

Above all, we hold fast to the one-worldedness and the new Humanist thinking of all oppressed from the East German worker to the West Virginia miner; from the Hungarian revolutionary to the Montgomery Bus Boycotter; as well as from the North Carolina Sit-Inner to the African Freedom Fighter. The elements of the new society, submerged the world over by the might of capital, are emerging in all sorts of unexpected and unrelated places. What is missing is the unity of these movements from practice with the movement of theory into an overall philosophy that can form the foundation of a totally new social order.



BLACK LATIN AMERICA

John Alan's column in the October *N&L* on race in Latin America raises questions about places like Brazil, where race has come up in a new way. On the one hand, Lula has appointed the first Black supreme court justice and appointed more Blacks than anyone. On the other, they are having difficulty initiating quotas because of Brazil's racial make-up. While the U.S. was developing racist "scientific" theories about the superiority of the white race, Brazil developed a big mulatto population mostly through intermarriage. They had a concept of "whitening" Brazil. I understand that one of the ways Brazil pursued that was to encourage European emigration to the south of Brazil rather than use the Black labor already there. It is a very serious issue and I appreciate the way John Alan is sparking that discussion.

Mitch Weerth
California

When politicians talk about Latin America they tend to refer to a continent or islands where everybody speaks Spanish and everybody is of European descent. But that is not the historical reality. As John Alan showed, Black and African slaves were already members of Columbus' crews. The struggles carried on by the Blacks in the U.S. are the same struggles carried on by Black Latin America. The ideas they spread influenced the whole continent.

Racism has been used as an instrument of exploitation and the divisions between classes is reflected in the color of skin. Racism has been reflected also in the exploitation of the Haitian peoples used by the American corporations to work in the sugar plantations with inhuman conditions. Religions have also been an instrument of exploitation and class division. Many Blacks and indigenous peoples were used to extract gold and silver from the mines, working 12 and 16 hour days, while the Catholic churches forced them to build missions and monasteries and try to make them

READERS' VIEWS

believe it was their destiny to live like animals.

Dominican-American
California



WOMEN'S LIBERATION AS MEASURE OF FREEDOM

At the Labor Notes Biannual Conference on "Troublemaking in Troubled Times—Organizing to Win!" Joseph Akinlaya, General Secretary of the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers of the Nigerian Labor Congress spoke in the final session of the strategies that helped them oppose Big Oil in Nigeria. The tanker truck drivers had been organized into the same union, and supported their strike. What was to me an especially important part of his report was that when the women spontaneously occupied Chevron, the union supported them and continued to work closely with them without trying to dictate what form of organization they would develop.

Susan Van Gelder
Detroit

The article on "Women are Human" in the October *N&L* made me ask why we still have to say that in our times. It is relatively recently that women and children started being considered victims of homicide and acts of violence against them began to be considered a crime. The quote from the Iraqi women's statement that "women's freedom is the measure of freedom and humanity in society" sounded very much like something

Marx said in 1844. It is still accurate.

David
Oakland, CA

WHAT MAKES A SAINT?

As the world press focuses on the Vatican's efforts to make Mother Theresa a saint I couldn't help thinking that while she did help some people—especially the sick poor nobody else would touch, like the lepers—what she did to women and children is debatable. Her strong, vocal opposition to abortion and birth control—even among the poor who could not afford physically or financially to have any, much less unlimited children—contributed greatly to the existence of that sea of suffering babies and dying mothers she is credited with helping. The real saints are those who do whatever they can to keep that from happening.

Mary Jo Grey
Chicago

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE WOMEN'S MARCH



Please think seriously about joining our women's International Human Rights March in Israel and Palestine this winter, from Dec. 20 to Jan. 11. During this three-week period we will hold a daily march to advocate peace and human rights, walking through Israel and Palestine, splitting the days evenly between them. There will also be cultural and musical exchanges. To get more information on the itinerary and contact information about the committees organizing groups where you live, visit the international website at <http://humanrightsmarch.org>.

Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem

COUNTERING ETHNIC FRICTION

An old radical who worked in the mines in northern West Virginia in the '30s told me this story about countering discrimination in the mines. There is a long-standing tradition in the coal mines that if a miner is killed in the mines, all others walk out in respect. In one mine, most of the miners, including Irish, Russians, Italians, Poles and Slavs walked out, but several did not. The miners who walked out got together and met the men who had stayed in and beat the hell out of them. But to avoid ethnic frictions, the Irish beat the Irish, the Russians beat the Russians, the Italians beat the Italians, and so on. That was the way, he said, that they kept unity in the rank-and-file.

Ex-miner
Detroit

CONTRADICTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

The mass movement in Bolivia proves how correct are the ideas of *N&L* when a people with rocks and determination were able to overthrow a giant supported by a big empire, and a poor nation of peasants, mine workers and farmers took destiny in their hands without the need of a vanguard party or the rhetoric of famous intellectuals. It proves how strong are the voices from below.

This is only the beginning of many victories that are going to follow in Latin America and in the world. If Engels said when Marx died that he was a genius, what can we call Raya Dunayevskaya who visualized these passions and dimensions in our world?

Revolutionary
Los Angeles

RHETORIC VS. REALITY

You hear more and more people asking how our leaders can talk about needing to rebuild another people's country (after they have destroyed it) when our own country is in such a mess. I keep remembering that Bush's campaign slogan before he became president was "we should not try to be the world's policeman or intervene in every hot spot in the world." Unfortunately, Bush may be left hanging in the wind in Iraq, but it's the American people that are paying the price for his folly.

Observer
California

A packed house crammed into the small auditorium at Christian Brothers University here to hear Kathy Kelly, the three time Nobel Peace Prize nominee who helped initiate Voices in the Wilderness. She cut past the rhetoric of war to the reality of the lived experience of war in Iraq. She told a moving story of the director of the musical conservatory in Baghdad who described the destruction of one of the most important cultural assets in the Middle East and directed students in a Sibelius song in Arabic. The song describes the people's affinity with humanity in overcoming the divisions between us and Kelly sang the song to the audience in Arabic.

Anti-war activist
Memphis

REPARATIONS RUN-AROUND

A first hearing on the Reparations Class Action Lawsuit here was on Feb. 26 before Judge Charles R. Norgle in a courtroom too small to accommodate everyone. The plaintiffs were pitting descendants of Africans who were enslaved in the U.S. against 13 domestic corporations and one foreign corporation (Lloyds of London). The defendants want a dismissal of all counts. After both sides made their introduction, Judge Norgle set May 7 for the next hearing. At that second hearing Judge Norgle listened to a total of eight minutes of testimony from all the attorneys. The attorney for Lloyds said he didn't know if the main office in London had been served with the papers.

The plaintiffs' attorneys wanted to get depositions because of the age and health of the direct descendants. By the time of the third hearing on July 21, one of the main plaintiffs had died. The defendants' attorneys came with three motions to dismiss the case. The plaintiffs' attorneys said they had not received any of the judge's recent ruling "in writing." The judge seems to be leaning toward doing what the defendants want—namely, to throw out the case.

George
Chicago

SUPPORT STRUGGLES OF IRAQI FEMINISTS

Regarding Anne Jaclard's article in the October issue of *N&L*, "Challenge from Iraqi Feminists," about the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq which I co-founded: I was very pleased to see a North American Leftist trying to reach out to oppressed women under political Islamists and recognizing their cause without giving priority to the Islamists, who were the favorite allies of the Western Left due solely to their being anti-American. You need to know that I was banned from many Leftist anti-war gatherings in Toronto because I did not compromise women's issues and spoke forcefully against the abuse of women's rights in Iraq, which are becoming much more obvious in the post-war Iraq.

Many in my group (I'm sure) breathed a sigh of relief that finally, somebody cares about women's issues without blinding themselves voluntarily to the facts. I am very pleased to be acquainted with free thinkers and real Marxists like yourself.

Yanar Mohammed
Baghdad, Iraq

Editor's note: For more information about the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq, visit their website www.equalityiniraq.com.

WAR, RESISTANCE, AND THE NEED FOR A NEW ALTERNATIVE—A REPRISE

In the Perspectives Thesis which was first published in the July *N&L* and then developed and adopted at the National Gathering over Labor Day, the concern was to confront the impasse the movement against global capital faces when the immediate facts in the cycle of war and terror dominate discussion.

It is imperative, first of all, to comprehend the nature of the objective stage we are fighting. To say the latest stage of imperialism is a determinate stage of capitalist development and not a conspiracy hatched by a few neo-conservatives in the White House doesn't mean there aren't a lot of contingencies and conspiratorial plots. After all, we just learned that Bush's pre-September 2001 energy task force focused primarily on how to divvy up oil contracts in a post-war Iraq. It means that the general tendency was there even under Clinton, who started us on this road to permanent war.

It also doesn't mean there aren't differences among capitalists over how to carry out this permanent war. Wesley Clark may have a very different view of how to conduct this war than Bush, but it is from the same point of view of better serving the needs of global capital. Once you see that imperialism is organic to capitalist development, your opposition to it focuses on the problem of transcending capitalism.

Ron Brockmeyer
California

The Perspectives Thesis explicitly rejects "a one-sided opposition to U.S. imperialism" and I absolutely agree with that. But I find a tendency to assume "imperialism" is the root of world problems without adequately considering other factors. For instance, it states "This has not stopped global capital from continuing to strip the continent (Africa) of raw materials and natural resources—often through the mediation of local capitalist, regional states and domestic elites—as most tragically seen in Congo, where over three million

have perished since 1998."

Despite the title "War, resistance and the need for a new alternative," the deadliest war on the planet is not directly mentioned. The sentence quoted implies more than it says, but gives the impression that three million or more have perished because of exploitation by "global capital," while forces within Congo and within Africa are reduced to "mediation." While there is a damning historical critique of the West's responsibility for underdevelopment, poverty and dictatorship in Congo, much less clear is the role of Western governments and corporations since the fall of Mobutu. Did they light the fire, fan the flames, or just not do enough to put it out? Have they intervened too much or too little?

What can Marxist-Humanists and other internationalists do to help the people of Congo get out of this hellish mess? In posing the questions I don't mean to imply that I have any answers. We need to research and debate all these questions.

Richard Bunting
England

It may seem overwhelming to call for breaking with the production of surplus value. But it must have seemed just as overwhelming in the 1840s to call for the end of slavery. Yet there were not just slaves and free Blacks, but also white Abolitionists who would not compromise with slavery. They together were the ones who brought on the Civil War that ended slavery.

Black writer
California

Much of the Left is preoccupied with throwing out the present administration in the next elections. It's not that I am not for that, but it is wishful thinking to believe that if we only had more benign leaders we'd solve our problems. *N&L*'s distinctive contribution is its indictment of the capitalist system in its entirety.

Supporter
New York

Bush's deepening quagmire—the U.S. economy and Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

against grocery stores in California (see story on p. 3), West Virginia and Missouri. Other states' unionized workers will follow them out soon.

The ever-increasing cost of health care is one aspect of an ever-increasing pressure on workers. The pressure to increase productivity results in new technology and speed up. One worker at United Parcel Services' plant in Hodgkins, Illinois—where workers' bodies are pushed to match the speed of computer signals—said: "I can only keep working because I'm in small shorts now. Everybody's body breaks down in this place, sooner or later." Accidents become commonplace, and turnover is so ferocious there that many workers never make it into the union to gain health coverage.

Health care is a logical place for workers to draw the line against the logic of capital which gets played out in the bodies of the working class, even in their very cells. This logic is seen at its most vicious in the attack on the unemployed army, on myriad warehoused prisoners of the "war on drugs," and in the denial of health care to them which helps spread diseases like AIDS and hepatitis C. It is seen as well in the warehousing of the sick and the elderly in nursing homes, especially wretched, crowded inner-city ones where the Black poor are shelved, where people may go for weeks without a hot meal. There the only "crime" being "paid for" is human mortality itself.

Cuts and restrictions in the AIDS Drug Assistance Program (ADAP), which has greatly aided the working poor, is a case in point. Despite Bush's words on fighting AIDS, the budgetary crisis in state governments has meant that funds for ADAP are being cut or capped, that requirements for assistance under it have been tightened, and that people have begun to die needlessly. This is the class struggle in its most brutal form, **murder, passed off as economic "reason."**

This logic gets played out internationally in the human devastation of Africa, by poverty and diseases like AIDS, in the threatened devastation of India and China by AIDS, in the fallen life expectancies for Russian workers and the spread of AIDS in Eastern Europe, and in the struggle over obtaining affordable AIDS drugs in poorer countries. The logic of capital ends up being not so far removed from the insane "logic" of the Taliban which, in the name of religion, helped to give Afghanistan the lowest life expectancies in the world.

The struggle of American workers for health care now has to be seen to be opening new international perspectives and possibilities.

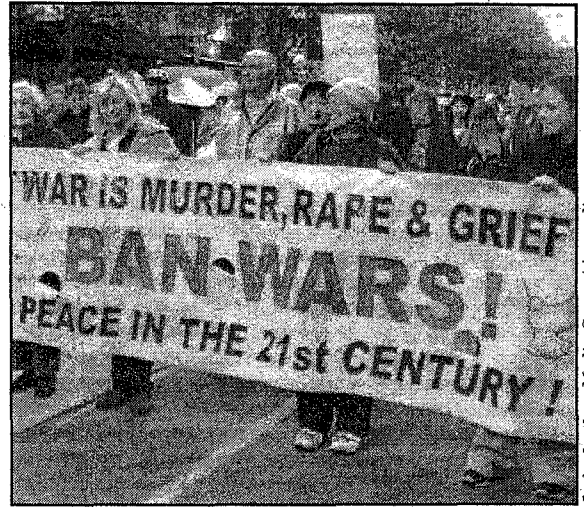
ACTUALLY CARING ABOUT IRAQ

Those who have been proven to be right about the war in Iraq are the many who attended anti-war rallies saying things like, "Yes, Saddam is evil and should go, but I don't trust Bush to remove him."

As during the Vietnam War, opposition has begun to emerge from the mainstream. Two mothers of military families recently spoke out in Chicago. Stacy: "I got a call from my son and he didn't sound like himself. Two soldiers he knew committed suicide. The despair in his

voice was unbelievably terrible. I don't think the numbers of deaths they [the military] are reporting are accurate." She sent a letter from her son: "The past month I've been sick twice, once from sand [the past month, once from the water]." Her son said, "What's the purpose? They [the Iraqis] don't want us here."

Another mother, Fran: "I believe the only way to support the troops was to speak out. My son is attending group therapy at Camp Pendleton [for stress]. Half



Melbourne, Australia—Thousands demonstrated on Oct. 22 against Bush's visit here.

of the young men in his platoon just graduated from high school. Combat pay is \$250 a month. My son wishes he did not join."

A survey in *Armed Forces* magazine reported that

The logic of freedom

by Tom More

As much as the Bush administration would like people to believe that only the Fedayeen Saddam is hostile to the U.S. military occupation of Iraq, signs are everywhere that the season of discontent is nearly universal. It's not just the myth of liberation purveyed by the Bush Doctrine that blinds certain people to the brutal reality and naked contradictions of military occupation. Considered on a world scale, these people are few in the first place—more than 70% of the public around the world opposes the U.S.-led war.

Rather, a certain logic is afoot that impoverishes our understanding of the second Iraq, an Iraq that wants neither Ba'athist rule, nor Halliburton, nor theocracy, but freedom. The binary logic of first negation and its corollary—a politics of comparison and "lesser-evilism"—permanently inhibits the capacity to conceive a history of a freedom alternative to Bush/Halliburton (what Marx called "free-trader vulgarism") on the one hand and ayatollahs and Stalinists on the other.

"No to Saddam, No to Bush!" is the expression of a struggle from below that demands a better logic of explanation and a new philosophy of freedom. There is no easy answer to Lenin's question, "What is to be done?" But we cannot so much as pose this question until we ask the prior ones: done about what, and for the sake of what?

Intelligence has no choice but to conceive an idea. Since theocracy murders questions, it is also the death of ideas; it issues a *fatwa* instead. This is the characteristic that fundamentalism shares with totalitarianism, the purge and the death squad.

Likewise, the regime of the Bush Doctrine is the anti-idea. First come the requirements of capital; afterwards, the rationalization—be it whacky born-again Christianity, the debauched, Strauss-inspired ravings of a Wolfowitz and the Plan for a New American Century, or the anti-intellectual jingoism of the war-monger's inheritance of the White Man's Burden, on which Blair and Rumsfeld are indistinguishable.

"No to Saddam, No to Bush!" is a **second** negation: the negation of the negation is not the return to the same, not the dog chasing its tail. Rather, "No to Saddam, No to Bush!" is the positive, creative, irrepressible idea of freedom itself. The second Iraq is talking to the second America. The first step in knowing what is to be done is to listen to these voices. To hear them well we need a different logic, beyond the weird triangulation of Bush, Ba'athism, and bin Laden.

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one-third of the U.S. forces in Iraq are suffering from low morale and don't intend to re-enlist.

These aren't people who sympathize with any dictator who says they oppose the U.S., nor are they agitators for Al Qaeda. They represent that large majority of Americans who opposed unilateral U.S. action against Iraq, and were genuinely concerned about Iraqis.

The opposition to Bush and Ashcroft's USA PATRIOT Act is another expression of this mainstream dissent. A recent Chicago City Council resolution states: "The USA PATRIOT Act signed by George W. Bush, in the opinion of many Americans, contains a number of provisions that...fundamentally alter our civil liberties without increasing our security...the City of Chicago joins the almost 200 other U.S. cities and affirms its strong opposition to terrorism, and also affirms that any efforts to end terrorism not be waged at the expense of the fundamental civil rights and liberties of the people of Chicago, the United States and the World..." The Resolution passed by a 37 to 7 vote in the Council, with 6 abstentions.

A Chicago activist who worked to build support for this resolution, said, "The idea behind passing it was to alert the public to the danger of the Act to civil liberties in general, to immigrants, labor, and general privacy issues. The U.S. State's Attorney was spurred into coming to the hearings and making ludicrous statements about how harmless its provisions really were. This led one Alderman to ask, then why do you need to have this Act at all?"

Indeed, as another Chicago activist said, even many on the Right have come to the conclusion that Ashcroft's efforts are a threat to civil liberties.

TOWARD INTERNATIONALISM

The situation of women is a measure of the state of occupied Iraq. Baghdad native Zainab Salbi, founder of Women for Women International said: "Food distribution...was occurring mostly through the mosque...There are now a lot of women who are required to dress in specific ways, women who had not previously worn the veil and now have to so they can get food packages. And because of the security risk, every time they leave the home to get to food or whatever they may need, they risk their safety." (*off our backs*, July-August 2003)

The Iraqi Left has presented more serious proposals and analyses than have so far been expressed from the large anti-war coalitions' platforms. The Worker-Communist Party of Iraq calls for an end to the U.S. occupation but holds out no illusions in the Ba'athist or Islamist "resistance": "The resistance by the remnants of the Ba'ath regime, nationalist, and Islamic groups...not only have nothing to do with the rights and future of the Iraqi people, but they are completely against the interests of the masses. To achieve their own reactionary objectives, these groups victimize people and sacrifice the basis of life in the society."

The moment is ripe for a rebirth of genuine internationalism. This has not been the gist of the debate that has flowered in today's fertile crescent of unreason, with imperialist Bush as one horn, terrorist bin Laden as the other, passing through their **mutual** friends and allies in the totalitarian Wahhabist Saudi Arabia, encompassing **their** friends the Muslim Brotherhood, and **their** allies, the British Socialist Workers Party and U.S. International Action Center.

"Nevertheless," as Marx wrote, "in human history reason does conquer." Just as the human logic of the American workers' struggle opens international perspectives, so the human logic of the struggles of workers, women, gays, youth, and others in Iraq opens new possibilities for solidarity.

BLACK/RED VIEW

(Continued from page 1)

pay, that would eliminate him. And that eliminated hundreds of the Rider trials." After this elimination of hundreds of African Americans from jury service, Hollister said: "What we were left with was a predominantly white middle class, well-established jury." (*The San Francisco Chronicle*, Oct. 3, 2003.)

Hollister has given us a picture of new class justice is practiced in Oakland. But there is more. Oakland's alleged justice contains a degenerate racist ideology that sees African Americans as potential or lying criminals. This racist concept was in the minds of the jurors, who advanced the idea that the tactics of the Riders were necessary in their fight against drug dealers. The idea that the end justified the means, and that Riders who were clearly guilty of abuse were justified in their tactics, was projected until the jury became hopelessly deadlocked.

According to jurors interviewed by the *Oakland Tribune* after the deadlocked jury was dismissed, "their 56 days of deliberation [was] polarized from the outset, with the foreman proclaiming on day one there was too much reasonable doubt to convict on any of the 35 charges. The divided camps were described as 'conservative' and 'liberal,' with one inclined to trust police and the other being skeptical of the integrity of cops."

Police have a history of mistreating African Americans and not being condemned for it by most white Americans. African Americans in Los Angeles, Newark, Detroit and Cincinnati have revolted against the consensus that gave police blanket impunity to beat up or kill them. The Riders in Oakland didn't do anything quite as bad as the police in those cities, but they did send innocent African Americans to prison.

The Riders' trial revealed that a jury without African Americans makes it possible for racist policemen to terrorize African Americans without fear of punishment. Racism still exists in California decades after the Civil Rights Movement and the enactment of federal legislation making African Americans "free and equal." Oakland's African Americans will organize to oppose every form of regenerated racism as they have in the past.

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PHILOSOPHIC DIALOGUE

Dialectics as a way of life

Editor's note: These excerpts of a review of The Power of Negativity: Selected Writings on the Dialectic in Hegel and Marx, by Raya Dunayevskaya (ed. Peter Hudis and Kevin B. Anderson, Lexington Books, 2002), was recently published in The International Journal of Philosophy (Vol. 32, No. 2, 2003) in The Philippines.

In examining the Hegelian underpinnings of Marx's writings, Raya Dunayevskaya developed the philosophical perspective of Marxist-Humanism traced in her book *The Power of Negativity*. It is based upon the idea of assessing mental and physical work at equal value and focuses upon the self-actualization of every person without distinctions of gender, class, and race.

Marxist-Humanism is a philosophy of revolution and the negation of the negative is central to her dialectics. In "Toward philosophical new beginnings in Marxist-Humanism," which appeared in the 1989 *Quarterly Journal of Ideology* (Vol. 13), Hudis remarks:

Dunayevskaya first donated much of her published and unpublished writings to Wayne State University Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs in 1969, with the addition of several volumes of new material in 1981. She named the collection *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection—Marxist-Humanism: A Half Century of its World Development*...Dunayevskaya's unique concept of "living Archives" was rooted in her view of the importance of sharing not only the results, but also the process of her philosophical development of Marxist-Humanism. Thus, she insisted that these Archives be donated, organized and expanded by the living founder of the body of ideas, and that the *Collection* be made available to all those interested, both scholars and archivists alike.

While the above passage was written by one of the editors 13 years before the publication of Dunayevskaya's book, it forewarns the reader of the importance of the process, in addition to the product.

The organization of the book follows the same form by presenting in the first chapter Dunayevskaya's last major discussion of dialectics before her death...The remainder of the book chronicles the process through her correspondence and other writings.

It is through the correspondence that the reader gains a more personal glimpse of the inquiring nature of the author. She encourages others to share their thoughts and engage in dialectics with her about the meaning, usage, and implication of Marx's work.

Dunayevskaya plumbs the work of Hegel and Marx for an understanding of their use of dialectics; however, she is not writing to clarify dialectics for the uninitiated. As stated above, she seeks to share the process of her philosophical development and her own understand-

ing of dialectics. The editors choose selections, that help the reader trace the development of her understanding and application of dialectics.

The strength of the book lies in the craft of editing. The editors are meticulous in footnoting the changes between the original and subsequent copies of her work. They add the historical and personal perspectives of the author to create a context for understanding the writings and her process of development. The reader will receive the grounding to read her work with greater understanding because of the editors' synthesis and explanations.

It is easiest to understand Dunayevskaya's work from a critical theorist framework. She moves towards change by concretizing dialectics in the realities of the day. Her development can be understood only through her study of dialectics. It is her application of dialectics to the realities of life that allows her such growth.



G.W.F. HEGEL

PHILOSOPHIC MOMENTS

The first chapter...walks the reader through Marx's philosophical moment in 1844 when he praises Hegel for discovering the "negation of negation" and criticizes him for shrouding it in mysticism or the esoteric. It is her application that distinguishes her writing, and the reader is able to

share her concretization of the philosophical perspective of Marxist-Humanism:

In Hegelian dialectics, the philosophic moment is a determinant: even if the person who is driven to articulate the Idea of that "moment" was very nearly unconscious as to its depth and its ramifications, it remained the element that governed the concretization that follows the laborious birth that poured forth in a torrent nevertheless. (p. 5)

The editors identify Dunayevskaya's philosophic moment in the second chapter of the book, writing:

In the 1980s, when Dunayevskaya was reviewing the 50-year development of the philosophy that she had termed Marxist-Humanism in 1957, she discovered that her 1953 letters [on Hegel's Absolutes] represented nothing less than its philosophical moment. Each stage of her development of this body of ideas constituted a further

fleshing out and concretization of the new points of departure contained in the 1953 letters. But all of their ramifications were not evident from the start, even to herself. It took repeated returns to them on her part, in response to objective world events and developments in Marxist-Humanism, for the full meaning of these letters to show itself.

This is part of the beauty and intellectual challenge of reading the book. There are no concrete definitions but there are rich discussions and works in progress as she returns to the same issues in a different context and reshapes her ideas. New readers will shape their ideas as a post-structuralist by defining what something is not rather than what it is or by what it has been as they are being concretized by the author. There is confusion in tracking the changes and it is best to focus on the ideological changes of the author herself.

Dunayevskaya's mantra—that "most of the post-Marx-Marxists did not go far enough"—is explained in the first chapter by quoting from the final chapter of her *Rosa Luxemburg, Women's Liberation, and Marx's Philosophy of Revolution*:

It isn't because we are any "smarter" that we can see so much more than other post-Marx Marxists. Rather, it is because of the maturity of our age. It is true that other post-Marx Marxists have rested on a truncated Marxism; it is equally true that no other generation could have seen the problematic of our age, much less solve our problems. Only live human beings can recreate the revolutionary dialectic forever anew. And these live human beings must do so in theory as well as in practice. It is not a question of only meeting the challenge from practice, but of being able to meet the challenge from the self-development of the Idea, and the deepening theory to the point where it reaches Marx's concept of the philosophy of "revolution in permanence." (p. 8)

DIALECTICS OF PHILOSOPHY

Dunayevskaya uses the dialectics of philosophy to analyze the dialectics of organization. When she and C.L.R. James were leading the Johnson-Forest Tendency, James found that Hegel's *Philosophy of Mind* held nothing more for their organization. Dunayevskaya pushed on with her studies to find what she called "the new society" where there would be an end to the division between mental and manual labor. This was a philosophical moment for Marxist-Humanism.

The dialectic means development through contradiction, not only as the first negation—when you say no and overthrow what is—but on through second negativity, the establishment of something new. While the first negativity is only general negativity, the second is a concrete absolute negativity. It is important to distinguish them. The positivity of a double negative does not bring you to the starting point nor is it intended to.

For a simplistic example, one can think of students observing a teacher. A student sitting close to the window at the back of the room will have a different perspective of the teacher than one sitting near the door on the opposite side of the room. In simple terms this represents the general negativity. The absolute negativity (negation of the negative) would place its opposite directly behind the teacher within a different proximity. Instead of being far away, the absolute negative students would be in closer proximity to the teacher. This is closer to its absolute than the original student on the opposite side of the room. This does not address dialectics as the tendency of a notion to pass over into its own negation as the result of conflict with its inherent contradictory aspects, as Hegel identified it.

This example does not help me to understand the original concept which the Greeks were trying to find, i.e., a common understanding when there was a difference of opinion that resulted in a totally different position than either initially had. Dialectics is more than ideas that bump in the night. Dialectics is the development of ideas through contradictions reaching a common view of what is correct for both sides. It has moved from polemics to understanding and working together for a common good. It is the language of revolution...

The book repeatedly returns to Marx's use of Hegelian dialectics, the importance of absolute negativity, and that Lenin was the first post-Marxist to appreciate Marx's use of Hegel's dialectics. While Dunayevskaya returns to these frequently she does so to share new insights she has gained. The chapters of the book are in chronological order with the exception of the first chapter. Each chapter is a vignette of what Dunayevskaya was thinking and her current development of thought. Her insights get sharper and more focused as she turns to current affairs; however, there is no intention to leave dialectics.

If we listen to what the Idea is, and we know that there is no difference between Idea and freedom, then it will be equally the nature of the fact and the nature of cognition itself. That is one of the forms of getting to the transformation of reality—what Marx called the realization of freedom. That's why Marx stuck so much to the dialectic. We're not going to throw philosophy out, we have to realize it; that is, instead of an idea of freedom, it has to become the reality. (p. 207)

—John Jenckes, De La Salle University

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New Yorkers protest Bush's war

New York, NY—The student anti-war and anti-occupation movement drew 300-400 people, young and old, to a meeting here Oct. 14 called "Speaking Truth to Empire: End the Occupation." Held under Columbia University, it was part of a tour being conducted by the Campus Anti-War Network. The first three speakers were more interesting than the superstars.

The first speaker, from the Columbia Anti-War Coalition, began by describing the 1968 Columbia campus occupation, engendered by the war in Vietnam and racism at home. He thought the difference between students now and the more activist ones then was "the clarity of connections between their lives and the military-industrial complex." He said this spring, after the anti-war movement failed to prevent war in Iraq, it was important that it began to discuss that the war isn't over for U.S. soldiers and Iraqi civilians.

The next speaker, from the Campus Anti-War Network, said that students' opposition to the occupation of Iraq comes out of "a belief in self-determination, people's right to choose their own government." She said, "Our demonstrations give strength to oppressed people all over the world, and to other protesters too. When you go out to a demonstration, you suddenly see that you're not crazy, or if you are, at least you're not the only one. We're fighting for the future, for five or 50 years from now, for pre-emptive peace." She ended, "We're called the Ritalin generation, but some of us are paying the price."

Another speaker was from Military Families Speak Out, a group of 800 families. She said that resistance to the occupation within the military includes dozens of covered-up suicides, and troops signing petitions to come home and petitions to remove Rumsfeld. A group of Hispanic mothers has threatened to go on hunger strike until their sons come home. She also warned that veterans' benefits have been cut so much that troops coming home, often ill from poisoning agents, will have to wait even longer than the current six months to visit a hospital. She ended, "The families ask you to keep up the fight, bring the troops home!"

Amy Goodman of Democracy Now on Pacific radio, TV and internet, said people all over are asking, "what was this invasion for?" and are outraged. Thirty million people around the world demonstrated against the war on Feb. 15. Even conservatives are concerned about the onslaught against our civil liberties; "librarians have become freedom fighters" for refusing to cooperate with government snooping.

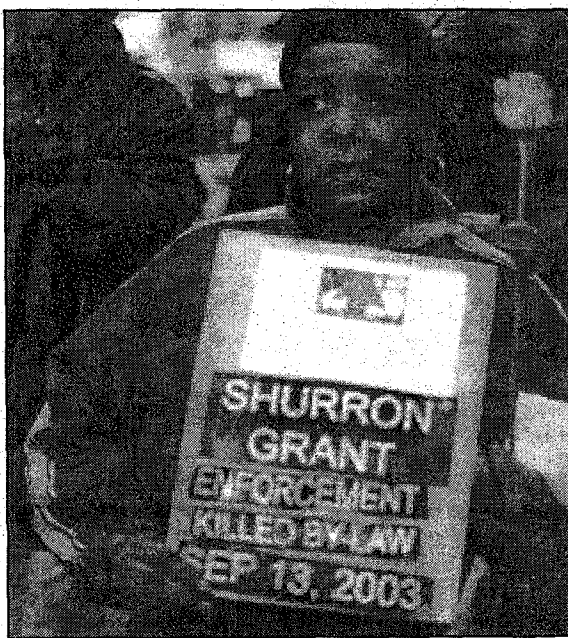
The main speaker was Tariq Ali, author of *The Clash of Fundamentalisms* and *Bush in Babylon*. He praised ongoing resistance to the U.S. occupation within Iraq, but made no mention of the Islamist opposition that wants to impose a government like Iran's. He also never mentioned what conditions are like for women in

Iraq today due to these Islamists, who beat and rape women for going out of their houses. He claimed there are 44 resistance organizations, but he didn't describe them or even say whether they are secular or Islamist. I was appalled at these omissions, as well as some serious misrepresentations of history, and was glad I was distributing a flyer and article about an organization of Iraqi women who are struggling against both the occupation and the Islamists.

Ali's presentation reflects the thinking of a large part of the anti-war movement, the part that talks only about U.S. imperialism and not the contradictory forces within each country. This failure to see beyond existing claimants to power to the possibility of real social transformation, this willingness to side with anyone who is "the enemy of my enemy," no matter how barbaric, has been a straightjacket on the anti-war movement. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity to challenge this view at this meeting.

—Former Columbia student

Oct. 22 march against police brutality



Chicago—Activists and family members of victims of police abuse rallied on Oct. 22 as part of an annual nationwide day of protest against police brutality.

Retirees blow whistle on Congressman

Bakersfield, Calif.—Oct. 10 turned into a red-letter day for Bakersfield and Congressman Bill Wilson, who has represented that conservative congressional district for longer than anyone can remember. Wilson, who has spent his congressional career trying to get rid of Medicare, had an office visit by a delegation of 254 people from the Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA), a new organization of retirees now being set up on a national basis by the AFL-CIO.

The theme was "Blow the Whistle on Bill Wilson" for his mission against Medicare, and there was a tasteful white plastic whistle on a gala red ribbon hanging around every neck. Television cameras were on hand for what may well have been the first ever grassroots visit to Wilson's office. The congressman was in Washington despite prior notification of the visit, and nobody in his office appeared to defend his stance on Medicare. Undismayed, the visitors sang songs, blew their whistles, paraded with their "save Medicare" banners and posed politely for the media cameras. Their point was well made.

ARA people in Bakersfield had their ranks augmented by busloads of concerned seniors from Los Angeles, Fresno, San Jose, Sacramento and the East Bay. Although picket lines and mass political protests are routine in Northern California venues, for Bakersfield, long an agribusiness bastion, this visit was an event.

The ARA is urging that Congress not pass a Medicare bill this session. One Medicare bill from the House and one from the Senate are now in conference committee charged with the task of reconciling them. Because the effect of this legislation would be to begin the process of privatizing Medicare, progressive members of Congress are working to defeat it.

—Retiree, Oakland, Calif.

Today's imperialism

(Continued from page 5)

That the rate of profit has fallen even as productivity has risen confirms Marx's argument that "The rate of profit does not fall because labor becomes less productive, but because it becomes more productive." (6)

Marx's point was that capitalism is not only about the production of material wealth, but also about the production of value. The magnitude of value is determined by the amount of socially necessary labor time that it takes to produce commodities. There is always a contradiction between producing for material wealth and producing for value. As productivity rises, more goods are produced in the same unit of time, and so the value of each commodity falls. The increase in material wealth corresponds with a decline in the magnitude of value. Costs of production fall and prices (and profits) tend to fall as a result.

In response, capitalists try to boost productivity, since the greater the output, the easier it is to realize the value of their investment. Productivity is generally increased by introducing labor saving devices. The resulting growth in productivity, however, reproduces the problem, since the growth in material wealth leads to a further decrease in the value of each commodity. Capitalism is based on a treadmill effect, in which the system is driven toward constant technological innovation at the expense of living labor to resolve a problem that only gets reproduced on an ever-higher level.

In sum, though the U.S. rules the world economy, its dominance rests on shaky foundations. It may try to turn its debtor status into an asset by borrowing all this foreign capital, but that still puts it deeper into debt, and debts eventually have to be repaid.

So how can the U.S. still claim to rule the roost? It's due not just to economics. It's also due to the failure of the revolutions of the past century to create a new society and the refusal of much of today's Left to support genuine struggles for freedom and democracy. This has enabled the U.S. to appropriate the fruits of popular struggles against tyranny for its own false purposes. There are many examples of this, such as the way the U.S. has coopted the Kurdish leadership in Iraq.

Yet we must not overstate U.S. strength even on this level. For the lies and miscalculations that have characterized the U.S. war in Iraq, along with the deteriorating economy at home, is leading to growing anger against the system by workers and youth around the U.S.—including by many who are in the military. We can't speak to this growing ferment unless we project a comprehensive alternative to the present system. It's a task which defines the reason for being of an organization like News and Letters Committees.

NOTES

1. See "Draft for Marxist-Humanist Perspectives, 2003-2004: War, Resistance, and the Need for a New Alternative," *News & Letters*, July 2003.
2. "War and Peace," *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 2789.
3. "The Internal Situation in the Fourth International" [May 1951], *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, no. 1413.
4. "America in the prize with a supermarket sweep," by Robert Gordon, *Financial Times* [London], August 20, 2003.
5. *Super Imperialism*, by Michael Hudson (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p. 30.
6. Marx's *Capital*, Vol. III (New York: Vintage, 1981), p. 347.

Asian-Americans protest Bush visit to Manila

San Francisco—Seventy Asian Americans, led by Filipinos for Global Justice Not War, marched to and picketed the Philippine Consulate in San Francisco on Oct. 17 to protest George W. Bush's Oct. 18 meeting with Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. Suspecting there were plans not only to deploy Philippine troops to Iraq but also to expand U.S. military presence in the land of their roots, Filipino youth carried signs bearing exhortations like, "Kalayaan Ipag Laban!" (Fight For Freedom) and "Get The Hell Off Our Islands!" as they chanted, "Move, Bush, get out the way, get out the way, Bush, get out the way!"

During the rally at Powell and Market Streets before the march, a young man representing the League of Filipino Students, based in San Francisco State Uni-

versity, spoke about the separation between the people and these two presidents. He pointed out that neither were elected (Arroyo was installed by government officials after scandal forced Joseph Estrada out), and that both come from the wealthiest 5% of their countries.

The class divide is showing its destructive consequences on the ground in Manila. According to an Oct. 17 *San Francisco Chronicle* article houses in shantytowns along Bush's tour route have been razed by government bulldozers. A middle-aged father of three, whose house was leveled merely because it was visible from the building where Bush is to address the Philippine Congress, said, "Nobody from the outside is going to believe this—that people had their homes demolished for so short a visit by this guy, Bush."

Atley Chock of the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition Against War sees such acts as "no different than what is going on in other Asian countries such as Japan and India where their governments have so readily bought into American imperialism." He quoted Edward Said's comment on Arab leaders giving in to U.S. political pressure: "This is a truly colossal failure of nerve, dignity and self-solidarity."

I was reminded of a passage in *The Wretched of the Earth* where Frantz Fanon said of the educated classes that "the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps."

—David Mizuno'Oto

Medicaid cuts

Detroit, Mich.—Effective Oct. 1, there were severe cuts in Michigan's Medicaid program. Medicaid will no longer fund dental care, hearing aids and batteries, podiatrist procedures, and chiropractic procedures. The only way that these procedures will still be funded is under extreme emergency conditions, or if the procedure was begun before Oct. 1.

These procedures will affect people in many ways. Everyone needs dental coverage and most people on Medicaid cannot afford regular dental insurance. We don't know how much or if Medicare will pick up what was cut from Medicaid. I know people that have foot problems from Medicaid. I know people that have foot problems just had back surgery. Right now she is seeing a doctor, but she may need chiropractic care later and Medicaid will not cover that. I myself use a hearing aid and have to have batteries. The expense right now isn't too bad but who knows what will come along eventually. If I were to need a new hearing aid the cost would be quite high.

The Republicans have waged cutbacks against the poor many times before and there seems to be no end. Jennifer Granholm, who is Michigan's Governor, has issued these cuts and is a Democrat—which goes to show that the Democrats are not helping the poor either. I've tried to explain to many people before that this is just another way the capitalists have reared their ugly heads. We need to overthrow the capitalist system in a total revolution—that is, a Marxist-Humanist revolution.

—Dan, Michigan

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OUR LIFE AND TIMES

What's behind China's space mission?

by Kevin A. Barry

At the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Bangkok, China strode forth with greater claims to global power than ever before. While still a long way behind the U.S. militarily, and both the U.S. and Japan economically, China's dramatic dispatch of an astronaut into orbit the week before created a sense of awe among the other nations at the summit.

With its space feat, China became only the third nation to put a human being into space. While many downplayed its importance, since Russia and the U.S. had done so 40 years ago, these observers did not usually note the fact that, like the U.S. and Russian space programs, China's has important military purposes. Thus, the astronaut Yang Liwei returned to earth, but he left behind an orbital module capable of monitoring the U.S. military from space. As the Pentagon warned last summer, China is likely to develop "improved military space systems in the 2010-2020 time frame."

Back on earth, China's economic growth rate, 8.5% for the first nine months of 2003, may really be closer to 11-12%, the *Financial Times* reported on Oct. 18-19. This is the highest rate of economic expansion in the

world.

While President Hu Jintao encouraged the Chinese masses to bask in the nationalistic glow of their conquest of space, he has also sought to dampen class tensions in other ways as well. These include speaking publicly about "the excessive widening of the income gap." Here Hu was certainly not exaggerating, for there is widespread fear that China's rapid growth carries with it deep social cleavages, which could be exacerbated by the coming economic slowdown that many predict. There is also the danger of a meltdown of the banking system, if China accedes to U.S. pressure to allow the value of its currency to climb.

Over 100 million migrant workers, who are treated like foreigners in their own country, form the lowest-paid and most desperate part of the urban proletariat. Most of them young, with some actually locked up like slaves in their factories, these workers often toil for a pittance for subcontractors of the multinationals. A corrupt Communist Party and government bureaucracy connives in these practices, ignoring even the mini-

mal existing labor laws.

In rural areas, the source of these forced migrants, new peasant movements have sprung up. In an article on "Organized Peasant Struggles and Their Political Risks" that appeared this summer in the journal, *Zhanlue yu guanli* (*Strategy and Management*), Yu Jianrong of the Academy of Social Sciences pointed to growing unrest, especially in Hunan Province. (No Chinese would need to be reminded that it was concerning Hunan that Mao Zedong wrote his famous 1927 "Report" extolling the revolutionary potential of the peasantry.) A new generation of peasant activists has emerged to oppose local mafias, which, in league with corrupt officials, are cheating peasants of their land. Some of these activists have characterized their situation as "a modern serfdom."

Religious intolerance

In mid-October, it came to light that a U.S. army general, William Boykin, has been speaking in uniform at Christian fundamentalist gatherings, where he has stated that Muslims worship "an idol" rather than a "real God." Bush administration officials refused to criticize Boykin, who helps coordinate their "war on terrorism" from the Pentagon.

During the same week, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed told a gathering of the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference, "Today the Jews rule the world by proxy." His speech was greeted by thunderous applause and supported in public statements by officials from Egypt and Yemen, as well as President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Also during this period, there were howls of indignation from conservatives over the fact that Pope John Paul II was "passed over" for the Nobel Peace Prize. While the Pope speaks abstractly of peace often enough, few leaders have done more by their actions to undermine peace and human rights.

- In the 1980s, the Pope attacked the Central American democratic and revolutionary movements, as well as theology of liberation, giving ideological cover to Ronald Reagan's vicious Contra War against Nicaragua.

- During the same period, he formed a triumvirate with Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, as they sought to roll back the gains of the 1960s on the rights of women, gays, and lesbians.

- To this day, the Pope opposes all forms of abortion and contraception, even the use of condoms to prevent AIDS. As Polly Toynbee wrote in the *Manchester Guardian* of Oct. 17: "No one can compute how many people have died" as a result of his pressure on governments and NGOs, "but it is reasonable to suppose that these unseen, uncounted deaths at his hand would match those of any self-respecting tyrant or dictator."

- Even when the Pope has done something positive, like apologizing for the Church's anti-Semitism, he has combined this with efforts to beatify some of the worst anti-Semites, like Pope Pius IX (who kidnapped a Jewish child in 1858), or Pius XII, who remained silent (or worse) in the face of Nazism.

- Even when the Pope has supported liberatory movements, like Poland's Solidarnosc in the 1980s, he has favored the most fanatically religious tendencies in those movements.

Protests in Bolivia



Protesters blockading the roads in El Alto, Bolivia in opposition to the sale of natural gas to multinational corporations. (See story, page 1.)

Chechnya elections

Russia staged sham elections in October in an attempt to give a veneer of legality to its genocidal occupation of Chechnya. Since 2000, when Russia relaunched its war of conquest against this predominantly Muslim and linguistically distinct people that has long sought an independent state, it is estimated that up to 100,000 Chechens have been killed, out of a population of only one million.

The elections gave official sanction to the rule of Akhmad Kadyrov, a widely hated Chechen turncoat. Russian authorities boosted the sparse turnout for this essentially one-candidate election by allowing members of their 100,000-strong occupation army to vote for Kadyrov.

Over the past year, as Russian President Vladimir Putin has justified his Chechen War as part of the global "war against terrorism," both the U.S. and the European Union, which used to raise mild questions about Chechnya, have grown silent. Their silence has been abetted by the tragic resort to suicide attacks on Russian civilians by desperate Chechen fighters.

Proof of Serbia role in Srebrenica massacre

New evidence of Serbian genocide keeps surfacing at the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague. The most recent example was the October testimony by Dragan Obrenovic, a Bosnian Serb brigade commander, and Momir Nikolic, an intelligence officer. Their testimony concerned the July 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 7,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys that was carried out under the orders of General Ratko Mladic, who reported directly to Milosevic. Mladic, an indicted war criminal who is still considered a hero in Serbia, remains in hiding.

Nikolic testified in October about how he received a direct order from Mladic to kill all the Bosnian Muslim men who had fallen into their hands after Serbian forces overran Srebrenica. Nikolic transmitted those orders down the line to men like Obrenovic, who carried them out. Nikolic also supervised subsequent efforts to dig up the bodies and hide them, in an effort to thwart any future war crimes prosecutions.

Both Nikolic and Obrenovic have pleaded guilty to crimes against humanity and have testified in hopes of mitigating their sentences. This and other new testimony has come despite years of stonewalling by the Serbian military and government, abetted ideologically by the International Committee to Defend Slobodan Milosevic, headed in the U.S. by the neo-Stalinist writer Michael Parenti. Unfortunately, the overly scrupulous judges at Milosevic's trial have rarely allowed direct testimony by Serbian war criminals who have already pleaded guilty, not even from former Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic, who received her orders directly from Milosevic.

Brazil's homeless

In recent months, the urban Movement of Homeless Workers (MTST), a smaller counterpart to the rural Movement of the Landless (MST), has been on the move. In Sao Bernardo do Campo, a suburb of Sao Paulo, MTST members took over vacant land. The now-governing Workers' Party was born in Sao Bernardo in the 1980s, out of struggles by Luis Ignacio da Silva (Lula), now Brazil's president.

Over the summer, 1,500 families occupied land owned by Volkswagen in Sao Bernardo, before being evicted by court order. "The media accuse us of endangering democracy by our actions. The opposite is true. It is precisely this that the social movements want to re-establish by giving the poor the full status of citizens. Lula should hold to his election promises" to aid the homeless and landless, stated Flavio Francisco, an 18-year-old MTST leader.

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*.