

NEWS & LETTERS

Theory/Practice

'Human Power is its own end'—Marx

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GLOBALIZATION & DIALECTICS

'Solidarité' in Quebec

Editor's note: Four Northern Illinois University students traveled to Quebec City to take part in the massive demonstrations against the Summit of the Americas meeting, April 20-21. The purpose of the meeting was to launch formal discussions on the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas, a package of agreements covering goods, services and investments among the countries of the western hemisphere. The students discussed their experiences at a meeting of the NIU Marxist-Humanist Forum on April 24.

Michael: The oppression began before the protesters arrived. The mayor's brilliant scheme was a chain link fence the locals called the "wall of shame." The presence of the police was hardly noticeable because they were inside the perimeter of the fence.

C.J.: We had very little access to the wall. We also had difficulty getting away from the area when it was gassed.

Michelle: The local organizing was done by two groups CLAC (Convergence des luttes anti-capitalistes) and CASA (le Comité d'Accueil du Sommet des Amériques). There were thousands involved in these actions, which the media reported as only a dozen taking part. The fence area was divided into three color-coded zones based on the level of risk involved. The big march was enormous. One estimate was 60,000 people.

(Continued on page 11)

WORKSHOP TALKS

Workers pay price

by D. A. Sheldon

With the economic downturn in full force the labor market is taking a turn for the worse as more of the working class is being laid off, and less jobs are being offered. I see unemployment levels once again on the verge of rising really high, a complication of capitalism.

As a worker myself I saw this problem first-hand. I am personally affected by this downturn as a cable technician. I work for an employment agency that sells my labor out to companies seeking skilled labor in this field. The number of job openings for this type of work has decreased in the last six months due to the current downturn.

I feel it personally as I continue to look for work. My bills pile up on me as you can expect. I run the cycle of

(Continued on page 3)

BLACK/RED VIEW

Race and the census

by John Alan

The 2000 census created a great deal of discussion about the United States as a nation composed of diverse races and ethnic peoples. Some of the new celebrated facts are, for example, that in California, the largest state in the Union, Latinos are the largest ethnic group; African Americans are moving into suburbs and seven million of them have identified themselves as "bi-racial" people.

Such statistical analysis of the American society as multiethnic, implying that it is moving naturally and peacefully toward absolute social integration, is both false and an abstraction.

The mere numbers of the 2000 census say nothing about the antagonistic social divisions of race and class in American society. The Cincinnati revolt against the unconscionable killings of African-American youths by police officers has once again challenged the concept that there has been any radical shrinking of the Black-white divide. In other words, racial and ethnic diversity, by itself, can still be full of racism.

(Continued on page 8)

Cincinnati's Black rebellion exposes U.S. racial injustice

by Peter Hudis

Cincinnati, Ohio—"When I heard about the murder of Timothy Thomas I got together with a few friends in the park to talk about what happened. More and more people began showing up and in less than an hour a few hundred were gathered around, talking and arguing. It was incredible, out of nowhere people came out and wanted to do something. Everyone is fed up with the cops, the racial profiling, the abuse. I was amazed at how fast this thing grew. It was like a spark went off in people's minds, all at once. It was like, this is enough, no more, we're going to do something."

This is what a 20-year-old Black resident of the Walnut Hills neighborhood of Cincinnati told me about his participation in the protests which erupted after the murder of 19-year-old Timothy Thomas by a white cop on April 7. Thomas was the fifteenth man gunned down by Cincinnati police in the last six years. Every one was Black. Thomas,

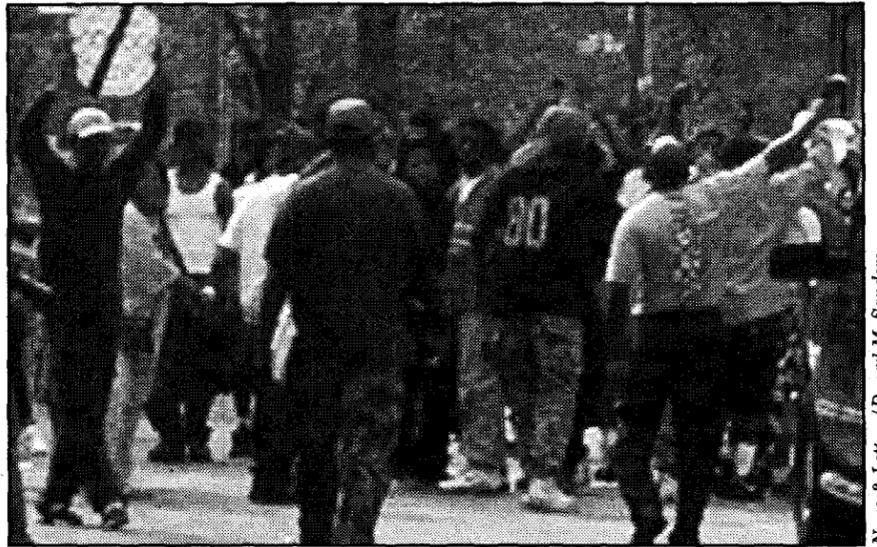
who was unarmed, was killed when Stephen Roach shot him through his chest. Roach was trying to arrest Thomas for having 14 outstanding warrants—all of them for misdemeanor offenses, 12 for traffic violations, five of those for not wearing a seat belt.

Though racial profiling, harassment, and murder of Blacks by the police has become an everyday fact of life in this country, Cincinnati included, the events which followed Thomas' death were anything but normal. The ensuing events represented one of those unusual moments when the everyday becomes extraordinary, when what is considered normal suddenly becomes the object of discussion, argument, and critique. In response to Thomas' death, Black Cincinnati

exploded in the most massive urban upheaval since the Los Angeles rebellion of 1992.

ANATOMY OF A REVOLT

Cincinnati is no newcomer to police abuse, racism, and disenfranchisement. It is one of the most segregated cities in America, and its mainly white police



Protest against police abuse, Cincinnati, April 2001

force is notorious for a long history of abuse against African Americans who make up 43% of the city's populace. Last November another Black man, Roger Owensby Jr., was strangled to death while in police custody. In mid-March the ACLU and Cincinnati Black United Front filed a lawsuit charging the police department with 30 years of illegally targeting and harassing Blacks on the basis of race. Still, no one anticipated the explosion which erupted after the killing of Timothy Thomas.

As news spread of his death, several hundred mainly Black protesters, including Thomas' mother, came to City Hall on Monday, April 9. It became a clash

(Continued on page 5)

NOW MORE THAN EVER, WE NEED YOUR HELP!

It did not take "100 days" for George W. Bush to establish what has distinguished his retrogressive reign—the unprecedented speed of his attacks on all the forces for freedom.

On his very first day in office, women's right to choose was in his gunsight as he outlawed funds for any international organizations that counsel women on family planning or abortion. The most blatant of his immediate attacks on labor came with the killing of OSHA's ergonomics regulations in face of serious job-related injuries, from back injuries to carpal tunnel syndrome, suffered every year by over half a million workers.

At the same time, so many potentially lethal environmental attacks were perpetrated against us in the first "100 days," it seems an endless list—ranging from the scrapping of new regulations to reduce cancer-causing arsenic in drinking water to withdrawing U.S. support for the international agreement to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that cause global warming.

Perhaps most potentially deadly of all was Bush's push for a massive missile defense system and a new generation of nuclear weapons.

It is not that this retrogressive onslaught was unexpected. The multidimensional protests against his selection for the presidency were likewise unprecedented. That opposition was the strongest on the part of the Black masses, who have always felt capitalism's oppression the most sharply, whether measured in poverty, unemployment and the prison warehousing of youth or the ever growing police brutality against the Black community.

The outrage that exploded in Cincinnati last month may well be seen as triggered by Black opposition to Bush's national policies as by the fifteenth killing of a Black man by the Cincinnati police in the last six years.

The voices of revolt were heard loud and clear as well at the protest in Quebec City, of tens of thousands of youth especially, against global capitalism's attempt

to drive us down to the most barbaric level of this degenerate system.

These voices from below are heard in every issue of *News & Letters*, unseparated from the articulation of the philosophy of revolution of Marxist-Humanism. Never was it more important to keep alive a paper like *N&L* as a crucial part of deepening the struggle against the retrogression that threatens us all. BUT WE CANNOT DO IT WITHOUT YOUR HELP.

Although we continue to have no paid staff, the costs for keeping us alive have kept rising. We have been hit hard this year with increased rent, increased postage costs, and increased printing prices. At the same time, we feel it crucial to bring out a new edition of *American Civilization on Trial: Black Masses as Vanguard*—which continues to prove itself in life with every new revolutionary development in America since the birth of the Civil Rights Movement. In addition, in conjunction with this we are planning to issue a new pamphlet on Black America in the 21st century as well as a collection of philosophic essays published in *News & Letters*.

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Woman as Reason

by Maya Jhansi

I went to the Socialist Scholars Conference in New York last month and was able to attend two sessions on the women's movement. The first session was called "The Political Economy of Gender," while the other took up the international women's movement. Although both panels were organized by the same person, it seemed that the former was more theoretical, with a lengthy talk by the German feminist Frigga Haug. The other panel turned into a heated debate about the role of the UN in the contemporary women's movement, with the panelists holding the UN responsible for the demobilization of women's liberation as a revolutionary and vocally political movement.

Both panels circled around the question of how to move beyond this and create an anti-capitalist feminism. However, neither tried to contextualize the women's movement within the Left. For example, while the critique of the UN at the second panel was necessary, nobody really asked why it is that the contemporary women's movement is having such a difficult time speaking in the language of revolution. This led to strange nostalgia for the bipolar world when, some in the audience argued, it was easier to figure out who was Left and who was not. It is just such failures of the Left that have led, I think, to the situation we are in today.

There is a book I found that actually addresses this problem, though the author doesn't see it as a problem. It's called *Marx@2000* by Ronaldo Munck (St. Martin's 2000). In it, Munck, like others, reasserts the importance and relevance of Marx for all the struggles of the new millennium, such as the environmental movements and the women's movement. But the Marx that he is calling for is very much in keeping with the temper of the times today—he calls for a "hybrid Marx," which would "be in keeping with the global postmodern era in which we live." The struggles of the next few decades, he writes, "will most definitely not be called socialist. As a provisional label to think the new democratic alternative to barbarism, postmodern socialism may be a convenient way of exploring the horizon of possibilities." This "discursive, hybrid, postmodern socialism," he says, "could learn a lot from feminism, especially its 'crossfertilization' with deconstruction and postmodernism.

Munck has a long chapter on the Women's Liberation Movement titled "Unhappy Marriage: Marxism and Women." "It is probably not coincidental," he writes revealingly in the opening of the chapter, "that when the 'crisis of marxism' was noted in the 1970s, feminism was increasing in theoretical stature and political influence. While marxism tried to incorporate, even domesticate, women under the 'woman question' label, feminism was setting its own agenda." The chapter goes on to discuss Engels, not Marx, as the source of the "marxist" engagement with gender. Quoting Michele Barret, he advocates the view that Marx's "treatment of the issue [of gender] is now widely regarded as scattered, scanty and unsatisfactory."

Although Munck is critical of Engels, he so distorts Marx that the criticisms of Engels remain pointless. At one point he says, for example, that "Marx simply assumed that the wage labourer was a male," though

Women's liberation and Marx@2000

there are "scattered" references to women's labor. Furthermore, he accuses Marx of "tacitly accept[ing] the precepts of sexist society." This is, of course, patently wrong. Not only did the early Marx make the transformation of Man/Woman relations (inside and outside the factory walls) central to his vision of freedom, he also spent considerable time analyzing the gender specificities of women's labor in the factory in *Capital*. Indeed, women workers are present and central to Marx's chapter on the Working Day. However, disproving Munck's veritable caricature of Marx's views on gender through textual evidence would probably not change his mind. It is clear that getting Marx right is not Munck's object.

This is related to Munck's larger agenda of grafting Marx's thought onto deconstruction. Quoting Susan Hekman's argument that Derrida is important to feminism to displace binary logic and deal with difference, Munck argues that deconstruction could help us "demonize capitalism." Where mainstream "marxism" presented capitalism as an all-consuming, totalizing system, discursive analysis could reveal capitalism to be a "paper tiger." With this new hybrid socialism, he

argues, we could challenge the phallogocentric logic of multinational corporations, deconstruct their power, in a word, deflate them. This view that "capitalism" could be deflated through discursive means is patently absurd. Capitalism is hardly a "paper tiger," as the havoc it wreaks on the earth and on people's lives and cultures shows. Besides, why is Munck appropriating old Maoist rhetoric to describe something that is supposed to be so "new"?

Munck is right that the historical emergence of the women's movement in the 1970s coincided with the decline of the Left. But, what Munck has failed to realize is that this problematic has become both a theoretical and practical barrier within the women's movement. Feminists need to rethink the relationship of women's liberation to Marx, so that we do not fall into the same blithe reiterations of post-Marx Marxism as Munck has. Ironically, the *Marx@2000* he presents to us, for all of the "innovative" hybridity he sees, is basically the same vulgar Marx put forward by post-Marx Marxism. Until the women's movement confronts Marx in and for himself, it will not be able to move "beyond" anything—let alone capitalism.

Emergency action for women's lives

Washington D.C.—Thousands of women gathered at Senate Park for the "Emergency Action for Women's Lives" to begin mobilizing to defend reproductive freedom and abortion rights now that it looks like Sandra Day O'Connor will retire from the Supreme Court as soon as this summer. With her retirement, the 5-4 majority in partial support of *Roe v. Wade* will no longer exist. NOW is calling for a campaign to ensure a filibuster when Bush nominates an anti-abortion judge to fill O'Connor's place. While the main focus was on abortion rights, it was also to protect birth control which is under attack on a variety of fronts.

The crowd was overwhelmingly young—and white. There were women from all over the country. Many painted their bodies with words like: "My body's a battle ground," "It's about sexism," "Bush vs. Bush." Others wore hand-painted T-shirts that said things like, "Proud to be a feminist," and "Another dyke for choice." There were signs that were critical like: "Reproductive rights mean nothing without economic rights," and "Reproductive freedom for ALL women and girls." Other signs said things like: "I'll be post-feminist when you're post-sexist," and "Keep your laws off of my body."

There were a number of speakers from liberal feminist organizations. Dr. James Pendegraft also spoke. He is an African-American abortion provider in Florida. He has been charged with federal extortion and conspiracy after filing a lawsuit against the city of

Ocala and Marion County, Fla. for refusing to establish a buffer zone between the anti-abortion protesters that attack the clinic daily and for being denied the right to hire off duty police officers at the clinic for security. Dr. Pendegraft wears a bullet-proof vest every day to work. (For more information contact: www.righttofight.org).

There were also a variety of bands and musicians that played both folk and punk. Women had time to talk with each other on this beautiful sunny day about their experiences and ideas regarding what it will take to change the world. Many young women were not just open but eager to talk about revolutionary ideas.

After the rally, we marched past the Supreme Court and about two dozen anti-choicers who yelled at, cried and prayed for us while making their children hold up huge signs of ostensibly aborted fetuses. We chanted the old slogan: "Not the church, not the state, women will decide our fate" as we marched past them. We ended at the Washington Mall where there was more music and a reproductive health fair.

After this there was a brief organizing meeting at a near-by location to coordinate national actions for reproductive freedom. The House has already passed a bill "protecting" the so-called "right to life" of the fetus. This march was just the beginning of a long and hard fight ahead of us.

—Sonia Bergonzi



News & Letters

Women organize against sweatshops

New York—Ninety years after a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory killed 146 women workers and launched a wave of union organizing and protective labor laws, New Yorkers commemorated the event at the location of the former factory on March 27. Hundreds of elementary, high school and college students joined workers from the needle trades at a rally. Bells were rung and the names of the dead recited.

That evening, UNITE, the garment workers' union, held a meeting nearby the site. Union officials pledged to continue commemorations and to aid workers' rights struggles in the Third World—but said not a word about the continuing sweatshop conditions for immigrant workers right here.

The day's events featured two women from Bangladesh, Kohinoor and Saleha Begum, who survived a similar fire last November in the Chowdhury Knitwear Factory—52 people were killed, mostly young women, and five children under 12. Just like Triangle in 1911, the deaths were the result of the doors being locked—supposedly to prevent stealing, but really to keep out union organizers. The women described the terror of their narrow escapes from the fire, and the injuries they suffered in the stampede to get out of the factory.

Kohinoor and Saleha Begum also described their deplorable working conditions and wages, both before and after the fire. They work from 8 a.m. to 8 or 10 p.m., six or seven days a week. One earns about \$35 a month and the other \$22 (a living wage is \$100-125 a month); her 14-year old son works there too for about five cents an hour. After the fire, working conditions improved a little—they now have water and fire extinguishers and the doors are not locked—but wages are the same. They were not paid for the three months the plant was closed after the fire.

With the women was Z.M. Kamrul Anam, president of the Bangladesh Textile & Garment Workers league. The union lobbied parliament and the government

agencies that own the factory, finally winning an investigation and some compensation for the victims. The union campaign included distributing a poster all over the country asking, "How many more must die? We demand: gates should not be locked, women should not be forced to work at night, enforce minimum wage laws, no child labor, compensation for victims and families of the dead, prosecution of the owners." He explained that Bangladesh has many labor laws, but they are simply not enforced. The union not only organizes workers, but also provides health care and schools in impoverished communities where some children start working at the age of 4.

Neil Kearny, who organizes internationally for a British union, characterized the Chowdhury Knitwear Factory as a snapshot of factories around the world. There are 6,000 more like it in Bangladesh and a half million elsewhere.

Journalist and author William Greider also spoke at the meeting, describing a series of fatal fires in China that have killed hundreds of women workers in the past few years. He suggested the solution was to pass a law in the U.S. prohibiting the importation of goods without a certification that they were made in a fire-safe factory.

Such legal proposals seem odd after hearing about the enormity of the problem. When New York City and State lack the will to police sweatshops right here, why would anyone think the Bush government wants to or can police the world? Sweatshop conditions are the result of capital seeking to maximize its rate of profit wherever it invests, and cannot be legislated away. To me, much more interesting than legal proposals is the changing consciousness that is causing women to organize and resist their fates, raising the possibility of an international workers' movement that can tear up the capitalist mode of production and replace it with a human one.

—Anne Jaclard

Women Worldwide

by Mary Jo Grey

Several hundred women wearing black banded on pots and pans in time with their chants, April 13, in a demonstration in Tel Aviv, Israel. Black helium-filled balloons were printed with "End the Occupation, End the Closure—Coalition of Women for a Just Peace."

* * *

The anti-woman stance of the Catholic Church has reared its ugly head again, this time in Chile, as they publicly opposed that government's approval in March of the marketing and sale of the emergency contraceptive, morning after pill—including free availability to low income women. Women's groups reinforced the need for this medication to protect rape victims and reduce back-alley abortions, which skyrocketed when abortion was outlawed by the Pinochet regime in 1988. Graffiti along the main thoroughfares in Santiago express the feelings of many: "Mr. Cardinal: If you don't put it in, stay out of it!"

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'Hits' target day labor thievery

Chicago—The day labor "industry" in Chicago is feeling the pressure from organizing done by the Chicago Day Labor Organizing Committee and its supporters in the community. The largest concentration of day labor agencies in the U.S. is located in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood, where the Committee has focused its work. The work has gotten good press coverage, particularly in the Hispanic media. They have covered virtual slave conditions of immigrant workers at Chinese restaurants around the U.S.

The day labor "industry" hired a lobbyist to try to amend an Illinois Day Labor Standards Act that restricts agencies from deducting more than 3% of a person's daily pay for delivering the worker to a job site. Upon learning that this lobbyist had found Democratic State Senator James De Leo to introduce the amendment, the Committee mobilized with Jobs with Justice and its "watchdog" groups to prevent the amendment from even getting a hearing. This showed the agencies that they could not ignore the community.

On April 19, the Day Labor Organizing Committee, members of the community, and visitors from across the country did a "hit" on Ron's day labor agency to demand that they follow through with the promises of non-discrimination and a grievance procedure made at a "community accountability" session. Also, Ron's and three other agencies were audited by the Illinois Department of Labor (DOL) because of illegal deductions of more than 3% of workers' daily pay for delivery. From evidence delivered by the Committee, DOL found that over \$200,000 had been stolen from people already working at minimum wage.

Ron's was forced to pay back \$111,000 to affected day laborers. On Spanish language television, Dominic Vecchio, manager of Ron's, tried to weasel out of his obvious guilt by saying there are different "interpretations" of the law (the law is quite explicit) and that the money was being paid back (under duress).

Another agency in Chicago, Trojan, is being hit by the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission with solid accusations of discrimination by a former dispatcher. He was fired after he attempted to tell his corporate bosses that client companies were placing orders for and receiving "only Hispanic" workers for their worksites. Clearly this is to expose immigrant workers to sweatshop conditions that persons not threatened with deportation might resist.

The Committee also has received information that the chief dispatcher has extorted money from workers to place them on jobs. After the agency had already been paid for work done, she has reportedly stolen checks from people who she claimed did not have proper documentation. A source has said that this chief dispatcher has even sent drivers out to find "illegals" for jobs so that she could steal their money.

From faxes that the fired dispatcher turned over to the Committee, we found that at Trojan, people being

paid \$5.15 per hour were being offered to client companies for as little as \$6 per hour. At this rate, the agency would not even be able to pay its "legitimate" overhead expenses. Where does the agency get the money? They get the money through such things as "service charges" and "transportation" (delivery) charges made on the worker.

Labor is the only commodity that can pay for its own delivery. This super exploitive "industry" drives down this "cost" by extracting more money from wages. Larry Solomon, owner of Labor Temps, Inc. told the *Chicago Sun-Times* that the present Illinois law, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2000, has "cost" him \$500,000. To any other than a twisted bourgeois mind, it is obvious that labor created this wealth in the first place.

It has been suggested that Mr. Solomon should open a pizzeria and see if he can get the pizzas to pay for their own delivery. In the meantime, we'll consider doing another hit on him and see if this entrepreneur has the guts to come out and meet with us this time.

—Dennis Dixon

NYC transit rally



New York—On March 28, 10,000 members of the Transport Workers Union Local 100 and our supporters rallied outside Metropolitan Transit Authority headquarters at 44th Street in midtown Manhattan to say "No to cuts in medical benefits." The rally marked a turning point from the former leadership of Willie James, out to line his pockets while he sold out our health benefits, to new president Roger Toussaint from the "New Directions" caucus in the TWU.

In 1996 Willie James negotiated a contract with the city to use TWU reserve funds for funding health benefits. A deferred payment plan would kick in when the reserve fund, about \$40 million, was used up. The city really knew at the start of the contract that with inflating health care costs there wouldn't be enough money for the health care plan. The Union itself would be in danger of falling apart with its reserves eroded and debt piling up.

The health care trust was the icing on the cake that made most of us see that the old leadership team was not really taking care of the union and the rank and file. Now, there is a new spirit of openness in the meetings. For the first time, the union's financial statements are being presented. We are more willing to work together.

We are challenging dangerous practices, like operating normally after a gas leak was discovered at a bus garage. We never did this before. Management has been harassing some drivers like me. But we are fighting back and there "ain't no stoppin' us now."

—New shop steward

'Kids on Strike'

Kids on Strike!, Susan Campbell Bartoletti (Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1999)

Kids on Strike! is a small book for young people, but everyone can learn from it. In our present economy children are supported by parents (for the most part) but in our not so distant past children were a major part of the work force. This book talks about nine situations in which children or teenagers were major players in strikes.

There was Harriet Hanson, who at age 11 in about 1836 participated in a strike in a mill in Massachusetts. Harriet wrote in her autobiography that everyone in her room was scared to go out on strike. But she made up her mind and said she was going out whether anyone else did or not. She marched out the door and, once outside, realized there was a long line behind her. She wrote, "I was more proud than I have ever been since at any success I may have achieved."

The book discusses briefly the working conditions of the time, the economic conditions of the children and their families, and the role of girls and young women in these strikes. Other strikes covered include the Messenger, Bootblack and Newsboy Strike in New York in 1899; 16-year-old Pauline Newman and the New York City Rent Strike of 1907, and a strike in Kensington, Penn. in 1903 where children as young as 10 wanted to reduce their hours from 60 to 55 hours per week.

We no longer have children in the U.S. working under the conditions described in this book. But other children and young people all over the world work under very difficult conditions. Many young people today could benefit from knowing of our past history of child labor and studying current child labor conditions in many countries that produce goods for U.S. consumption.

—Pauline

SLAP at Sodexho

Chicago—To keep the ideas and struggle for freedom alive—particularly the bridge between labor and the Black freedom movement—that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. represented, the Student Labor Action Project (SLAP), Jobs with Justice, UNITE, Prison Moratorium Project and others held nationwide protests, teach-ins, sit-ins and forums on April 4. That was the date King was assassinated in Memphis in 1968 while supporting striking sanitation workers.

In Chicago, at a rally at DePaul's downtown campus, students from at least five Chicago area universities united, as did 80 other campuses across the country, to dump Sodexho as their university cafeteria food provider. Sodexho is the number one investor in the private prison industry. A DePaul student spoke about how DePaul prides itself on its Catholic "compassionate values," yet contracts with a company that violates human rights. "People are dying in these private prisons, and DePaul administrators are complicit in this."

She was outraged that DePaul officials deny that Sodexho violates human rights and refuse to even meet with students. Students are also outraged that they have no choice but to buy meal plans from Sodexho if they live in the dorms.

One student from Northwestern spotted Sodexho suits in a corner near the building and began a chant: "Sodexho makes me sick, Bla!" When the crowd quieted, he spoke against Sodexho using human beings as commodities, putting them in prison for profit. The group at Northwestern has enough support that they forced a meeting with Sodexho officials who said there was nothing they could do to de-invest from the prison industrial complex.

However, students have no intention of allowing Northwestern to keep Sodexho as its food provider. Sodexho is clearly aware that Northwestern students helped to win an overwhelming victory for janitors on that campus last year.

The students, while mostly white, seem to be reaching for a new way of life and labor. As one student expressed it: "The university can't push us around just because we have homework. We want dignity for ourselves, workers and the community." Another student and member of the Prison Moratorium Project said, "We're tired of being part of a system that doesn't respect its people and workers."

—S.B.

Workshop Talks

(Continued from page 1)

going from month to month to pay each and every bill to survive. There is no money extra to purchase extras. It's like a repeating cycle that will not go away!

Some workers in Iowa have been telling me about how, as jobs become scarcer and wages go down while the cost of living goes up, we are having a harder time paying the bills.

One woman who has two kids and has been out of work for two weeks told me that she is afraid of being kicked out in the streets if she does not pay the rent. She has no money, nor can she find a job in the area. I would hate to think that she and her kids, ages two and four, would be kicked out onto the streets without a place to stay!

Another worker at a manufacturing plant told me that if he were to get laid off this month, as is possible, he would end up losing his new house, purchased just 60 days ago. He told me he is actually scared. He feels betrayed by the company he worked for for over ten years, a company which had told him there would be jobs for "generations." He said I think they meant "an economic generation" which is based on the swings of the capitalist market. I totally agreed with him.

Bigger cities like Chicago and New York are being hit even harder with mass layoffs. A lot of people are going to be looking for the same jobs. At an employment agency I walked into in the Chicago area, I saw nearly 100 people lined up waiting for employment and this is out of the hundreds of employment agencies in the Chicago area! I talked to some of the people and was told it was harder than any time in recent years to find a job, not to mention a good paying job. With George W. Bush in office, we are revisiting the '80s all over again, and capitalism continues to follow in the same footsteps as usual!

Get into the spirit of
MAY DAY 2001

The Revolutionary Journalism
of Felix Martin (Isaac Woods)

"The worker who is still working sees his payday like a shower of rain on a very hot day. But for the worker, this rain is really his own sweat. In fact all of society is built by the sweat of the worker. That is why if this system is ever to be done away with, it will have to be the workers who do it."

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Japanese women's extra hours of work

Tokyo—We are indeed befriending the labor left here, especially a general union for women. Japanese women activists are fighting a lot of the same problems American workers face: temporary and contingent work, part-time work, layoffs, absurdly long work hours. Japanese workers are forced to give the company work after hours. This is such a common occurrence there is a full second rush hour on the trains every night around 11 p.m.

Women only make about half what men make; even those with a college degree are relegated to "fetch" jobs for men and are assigned to a second career track that keeps them trapped at low-level jobs throughout their working lives. In some places all women employees are required to clean the office after work.

Women employees have long been used to cushion "regular" employees from layoffs—one of the dirty secrets of lifetime employment is that it was only possible by forcing one segment of the labor force to remain permanently "temporary." The unions, mostly company-based, accepted this situation because it was a way to guarantee that men could keep their jobs. And after all, we have to care for the men first....

Now women are fighting back. Workers who have been "downsized" are organizing. Minority unions are forming in opposition to company unions. That's the good news. The bad news is minority unions have very little leverage, and the companies and the company unions have a plethora of well-honed techniques for crushing dissenters. While Japanese labor law in many ways looks better on paper than American labor law, it's as full of holes and as lacking in teeth as American labor law is.

With the ongoing recession, dangerously low birth rate, and other cracks in the shell, Japan is clearly ripe for change. The question is, will it come from the Right or Left? Certainly there are rumblings from below, but how far they'll be able to take it, we shall see.

One thing they do want is more contact with activists in the west. Activism has been (essentially) absent from the scene for so long these workers are almost building a movement from whole cloth. The workers I've talked to aren't looking for a model to follow or someone to lead them.

But I think they desperately want a dialogue they can engage in and learn from.

—Anne Z-W

From the Writings of Raya Dunayevskaya
MARXIST-HUMANIST ARCHIVES

Editor's Note

In light of the Cincinnati rebellion last month, we reprint Raya Dunayevskaya's analysis of the 1965 uprising in the Watts section of Los Angeles. She originally presented it in her "Perspectives" report to the convention of News and Letters Committees, which was then developed and published in the August-September 1965 issue of *News & Letters*, reprinted here. Both the report and the article can be found in the *The Raya Dunayevskaya Collection*, 3630 and 6754, respectively.

From all sides we are hearing a great deal these days about just how "isolated" Watts was. What all the analysts fail to grasp is that the Negroes in Watts gained their strength, not because they were isolated, but because they acted collectively. It was a disciplined strength. Thus, despite all talk against "Whitey" (and some beatings) not a single white who happened into the area was shot at, excluding, of course, the cops, but then these are the most hated representatives of the exploitative, prejudiced, vicious power structure.



CLASS AND RACE

No, it was not the Negro who was isolated; it was the white power structure that was isolated. And within the Negro population, it was the middle class Negro, not the Negro mass, who stood isolated, even as it was the Negro leadership, who, precisely because they were outsiders, felt isolated.

There is good reason, however, to be suspicious of the word "class" when it becomes very nearly a cliché in an outpouring of analyses by bourgeois ideologists. One is compelled to question the sudden embrace of "class" analyses. It certainly was not the result of a conversion to Marxism. The very opposite is the case. The sudden discovery of "class not race" as the basic cause of Negro self-activity is only the latest manifestation of how the vanquished always try to worm their way back in. When Karl Marx, after the Paris Commune, was confronted with the situation that every conceivable political tendency wanted to become part of the first Workingmen's International Association, he wrote: "The old always tries to reconstitute itself inside the new forms." And so it is with the present misuse of the concept "class."

The Watts revolt was certainly and unmistakably a class question. It was equally a race question. It will not do to try to separate what the actual events have welded together.

It was not for purposes of releasing the creativity of the masses—class and race—that the class structure of

society was suddenly "discovered." Rather, it was an adventurist attempt to make the people who were in revolt forget what was new: the self-discovery of their own creativity; the confidence in mass power; the differentiation from all others—the Negro middle class as well as the absentee landlords, the absentee grocery owner as well as the self-appointed but equally absent leaders.

In a word, the new discoverers of the class basis of revolt aimed at nothing less than to stop the mass search for new beginnings in leadership, in action, in theory.

NEW BEGINNINGS IN THEORY

Yes, theory. Listen:

"We don't belong to any organization. We meet in the street and talk. When it happened, we knew what we wanted and we knew what we would do about it. We'll start all over again if we don't get it."

"We haven't lost a thing and now we know where it hurts Whitey."

"I would do it all over again even if my own house burns alongside Whitey's store; my house was no good nohow."

"We have the power to upset the city, break it wide open. We got the power."

The revolt was both spontaneous and conscious of itself. Moreover, where, in the revolt in Harlem, which likewise was spontaneous (although not as thoroughgoing), Maoists at least tried to claim credit, in Watts they were nowhere around. Nor were the Du Bois clubs. Nor, for that matter, were the established civil rights organizations, although these, at least, showed after the events.

Yes, the revolt was a stride toward theory. It ended one phase of activity and began a new one. The new stage is far more fundamental than a question of violence vs. non-violence as a method of struggle. The genuine leap was not in the tactics of struggle but in the achievement of consciousness of self, of being able to make generalizations like "we know now where Whitey hurts" and thus to take the first step in the construction of universals about a new society. But it is a first step only, and, though a gigantic stride, it is not the end but a beginning. The point at issue now is not so much what is next in activity, but what is next in thought. Without being able to make what philosophers call a category out of their experience, that is to say, to be able to conclude that it is not just an experience, but a stage in cognition, in ideas, the experience itself will not become part of an emerging revolution either in fact or in thought.

The experience otherwise can be taken over by others, by those who thirst to lead, or perhaps I should say

to "mislead," not because they are "bad men," but because they are moved by forces ready to substitute for the workers' accumulation of their historic experience, actions that have no relationship whatever to what the masses want, their quest for universality, i.e. for total freedom.

THE THIRST 'TO LEAD'

No doubt the established Negro leadership also wants to resume its role, and it too is moved by an ideology which may very well end in an apology for the status quo. But so long as the momentum of the struggle continues, the movement can easily replace this leadership. It is not easy to bypass the "radical" leaders, because they come out of the womb of one revolution and still use its language.

The overriding purpose of those who thirst to lead is to make sure that the masses are as much at the disposal of "the party" as the proletariat is at the disposal of capital.

Earlier I spoke of my opposition to absentee leaders. Let me assure you they are worse when they are present. And let me further assure you that, in my analysis of these leaders, I used the words "the Party" advisedly. This does not mean that all the intellectuals are Party men. I know very well that many of them never belonged. But what is of the essence is not whether one has a Party card, but whether one is firmly guided by its dogma that the masses are backward and it is therefore necessary "to lead them." Theory

remains a prerogative of the leadership. In that way these intellectuals bring into whatever organization they belong to, the capitalistic division between mental and manual labor.

Instead of this, what is of the essence if we are to realize freedom, not in a distant tomorrow, but in an approaching today, is an attitude that is adamant against being rent asunder between theory and practice, and is intent not only in demolishing the status quo, but in reconstructing society. It is this which motivated our refusal to be in any way diverted from participation in the Negro Revolution, why we state in our Perspectives:

Since the postwar strikes, that is to say, very nearly two decades, nothing has happened on the Ameri-

can scene that can in any way compare with the Negro Revolution that began in earnest with the 1960 sit-ins and has gained momentum ever since. This is the most important development not only for an American Revolution but also for world developments since it touches both the basic relationship of a proletarian West to the East and a black revolution's impact on, and relationship to, the Afro-Asian-Latin American world. Therefore, to divert in any way from this development is, Marxistically speaking, criminal.



VIEW FROM THE INSIDE OUT **Flag flies for Mississippi's racist present**

by Robert Taliaferro

Mississippi was the last state to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution abolishing slavery. The state legislature finally ratified the amendment in the 1990s, over a hundred years after it was adopted by the rest of the country. Now Mississippi owns another dubious distinction in this country's history of race relations. On April 17, 2001 the people of the state voted overwhelmingly to continue using the symbol of the Confederacy as a prominent part of its state flag.

In most other southern states, the legislatures decided to remove the Confederate battle flag from the symbolic representations of their states. Mississippi legislators, however, decided that this decision should be left to the people. The result was that Mississippi is now the only former Confederate slave state to retain as conspicuous a link to the Confederacy in its flag.

In news reports, the main defense of the flag from white supporters was its link to history and the legacy of the descendants of the Confederacy. They don't see that retaining the flag, and its legacy, has any negative impact on racial relationships in this country, noting "It's just a flag." But that flag is a visible symbol of the enslavement of African Americans over hundreds of years. It remains a visible symbol of "states' rights" that allowed this condition to exist, a reminder of the dangers of allowing the state too much autonomy when dealing with its citizens.

Though civil rights organizations around the country have vowed to continue the fight to remove the last public representation of the Confederacy, it's doubted that they will get much support from Mississippians, either white or, surprisingly, Black. Though one has to take news broadcasts with a grain of salt, it was surprising to see how many Black citizens of Mississippi simply didn't care, something also reflected in the polls.

Felix Martin once wrote of racism as it related to busing, "Why is it so hard to see that racism is the tool of capitalist society? One white worker in Louisville told me that the busing of Black and white children in

the working people's communities is only another way to keep the working people fighting each other.

"But it isn't the busing that divides the Blacks and whites. It is how the government, the capitalists, work to divide Black and white workers through racism. They are using busing as the issue to do it" (*The Revolutionary Journalism of Felix Martin*, p. 18).

The legislators of Mississippi, by shirking their responsibility for making a progressive change for their state, exacerbated the racial divide and, like busing, used the state's flag as the focal point to enhance that divisive condition.

Several points were made by some of the African-Americans interviewed. One noted that over a million dollars were spent for the special election, money that could have been used in other areas. In that aspect the individual was correct. Mississippi is considered to be one of the poorest states in the country, with an atrocious record when it comes to education and social services programs, and no end in sight to that distinction. It's not surprising, then, that Black voters would argue against such expenditures over what flag to fly.

But since the argument was joined, there is no excuse why Black voters had such a poor showing at the polls, allowing the symbol to represent the oppressive conditions that still apply to the Black population of Mississippi in its schools, living conditions, and working conditions within the shops of the Mississippi Delta that still reflect the plantation conditions of old.

Felix Martin once answered the question, what is racism, by responding "Racism is when a white worker blames the Black worker for his misery, and this keeps going around from white to Black to Yellow and then back to white—on and on. This is the history of working people, killing each other in wars or otherwise. The history of the privileged has seen them sitting on top of the workers' backs all the way" (p. 7).

In that regard, it is not the flag as much as it is the apathy of people who don't require some accountability from representatives to not pit citizen against citizen,

Black against white, unless that is the whole purpose of the exercise.

In Mississippi, the flag debate represented a psychology of oppression that manifested itself over a discussion about a piece of cloth, a battle that was refereed by privileged legislators supporting—by their silence—a symbol of oppression that recalls the glory days of the old South. Yet it is surprising how many southern Blacks do not equate the Confederate symbol with slavery. Perhaps flag opponents should have spent more time educating and less time promulgating emotional appeals that fell on deaf ears.

The State of Mississippi now retains its symbol of "heritage," acting as a constant reminder that this heritage was built in the cotton fields of the Delta, and garnered from the whip hand of slavery.

One African-American poll worker, after the election, expressed disgust at the lack of Black turnout at the polls, noting that it was a "sad day for the country." Perhaps it is a precursor for many more sad days ahead.

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759-C

Cincinnati's Black rebellion exposes U.S. racial injustice

(Continued from page 1)

between two different worlds. Police Chief Streicher refused to apologize for the killing, saying the police thought that Thomas was armed. Mayor Charlie Luken acknowledged the city's "racial problems" but denied that had anything to do with Thomas' death. City Council members said there was little they could do since the city charter limits their power to hire or fire police chiefs.

Angered at these responses, the crowd proceeded to take over City Hall. Windows were smashed, the American flag was removed from the flagpole and turned upside down, and the mayor was forced to leave via the back door. Hundreds more protesters arrived at City Hall that night. As the crowd swelled to 1,000, they marched to the central police station. At midnight the police fired tear gas and beanbags filled with metal pellets to disperse the crowd.

The next day 20 youth held a protest at the corner of Vine and 13th Streets. The crowd soon swelled into the hundreds. Many then marched to Findlay Market, throwing rocks at police, breaking into stores, clearing out shelves. By the evening a full scale urban revolt (dubbed "riot" by the press) was underway. Though merchants who gouged the community were a target, most of the anger was directed at the police. At 10 p.m. the police substation at Montgomery Road and Woodburn Avenue was set ablaze.

Byron Jones, 30, of Bond Hill, who joined protesters as they made their way through downtown and Over-the-Rhine (the neighborhood in which Thomas was shot) said what happened Tuesday was "the only way to get their attention. We've asked and we've asked and we've asked. We're not going to ask anymore."

A Black youth who took part in the revolt told me, "I decided to do something because what happened to Timothy Thomas could've happened to every Black I know. How many white 19-year-olds have been stopped and ticketed five times for not wearing a seat belt? How many whites have to worry about being shot by a cop on their way home from buying a pack of cigarettes? We've got to tell them we are not going to let this continue."

VICIOUS POLICE REPRESSION

The police responded with brute force. Enya Kirksey, a 23-year-old and three months pregnant, was shot by police with rubber bullets as she was trying to get to her home near Washington Park. Leroy Pearson, 52, was standing outside his Elm Street apartment with his three grandchildren when police told him to move. When he refused, saying this was his home, he was shot four times with rubber projectiles. Dozens more were injured and hundreds arrested.

Yet the unrest continued. On Wednesday, April 11, it spread from downtown and Over-the-Rhine to other Black areas like Evanston, Avondale, Walnut Hills, and the West End.

Faced with this, Mayor Luken imposed martial law and an 8 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew on April 12. He stated, "The situation has become unthinkable; it's like Beirut." It would have been more accurate to say the West Bank or Gaza Strip. Hundreds of youth in red and blue bandanas throwing rocks at police...stores and shops ablaze...cops firing off rubber bullets and beanbag projectiles at 11- and 12-year-olds...whole areas sealed off from the rest of the city by a wall of shotgun-toting cops...it could have been the Middle East.

Yet the situation was distinctively "American." It was a response to the constant racial profling by police that has affected virtually every man, woman and child in the Black community. It was a response to a social reality in which 40% are unemployed in Over-the-Rhine, compared to 4% in Cincinnati as a whole. It was a response to the gutting of public housing, education, and welfare. Only blocks from where Thomas was shot public housing is being torn down. Recently the state sent letters to Ohio's welfare recipients warning them that their benefits will be cut off in 36 months. This is the social context of the revolt which broke out in response to Thomas' murder.

While the imposition of martial law and the curfew got people off the streets, it did not silence the revolt. Meetings, forums, and protests continue to be held. They have exposed not only the chasm separating the African-American community from the white power structure, but also the division of the Black masses from Black political leadership.

TWO WORLDS OF MASSES VS. LEADERS

At Thomas' funeral on April 14, an array of Black political officials spoke of "restoring civil peace" in Cincinnati. Rev. Damon Lynch III of Cincinnati's Black United Front called on several city officials to be fired, adding, "There is enough violence in our city right now without us adding to it." Kweisi Mfume of the NAACP called for changes in the city's power structure but urged the youth to "remain calm." Jamal Muhammed of Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam said, "Don't get angry and tear up your neighborhood. Get angry and register to vote."

The youth who spearheaded the week of actions, however, had a decidedly different perspective. As one declared at a rally following the funeral, "These preachers and politicians are the same ones who a week ago were calling us undisciplined and shiftless. But if it weren't for what we did over the last few days,

no one would even be here to listen to them. We're the ones who did something by taking over the streets, but you don't hear about us now. I'm tired of all their talk."

Darryl, a Black man living in Over-the-Rhine, said, "The Black leadership and civil rights organizations are trying to quiet everything down, but it's not working. You can't quiet this down so easily. Many here don't have a job. Almost everyone has had some run-in with the law. After you get out of jail, it's almost impossible to get a good paying job. Then they turn it around and say because you have a record, it's all your fault. There needs to be a change, because if it doesn't change, things are going to get a lot scarier than what we saw this week."

The separation of the youth from Black political leadership was reflected in the virtual absence of any established political organization in the street protests.



News & Letters / Darryl M. Sanders

MAll of the posters and placards at the protests that I saw before and after Thomas' funeral were handmade, by local residents. They included: "If my son runs, will you kill him too?"; "Stop killing Blacks or else"; "No peace and no police"; "Bush is part of this too—he belongs with the cops."

The chasm between masses and leaders came out sharply at a forum held April 16 at New Friendship Baptist Church in Avondale, after the curfew was lifted. Dozens of Black teenagers, emboldened by their actions of the past week, said the established community leaders don't speak for them. "The older generation could have prevented this," said Derrick Blassingame, age 14, president of the newly formed Black Youth Coalition Against Civil Injustice. "Our leaders are not leading us. Some of our Black leaders just want their faces on TV. They are in this for four things only: reputation, power, politics and money."

The emergence of such voices gives the lie to those who claim that the "riots" were "disorganized," chaotic, without reason or direction. As in Los Angeles 1992, we are witnessing the emergence of new forms of revolt, resistance, and self-organization which point us beyond the parameters of existing political structures.

When people move to tear up a world that doesn't belong to them, that is hostile to them; when they come together in collective action on the streets; when they take commodities from the shelves without paying—why is this not recognized as an act of liberation, as a drive toward something new, as a refusal to accept what is? It is that reason which needs to be developed

Queer Notes

by Suzanne Rose

ILLINOIS: An 18-year-old gay, Black male was labeled a juvenile sex offender for having sex with older boys while living in a DCFS group home. Quentin Bullock admits that he is gay and sexually active. However, the older boys were ashamed of their actions and labeled him the aggressor. He was sent to a residential facility for juvenile sex offenders in Mundelein, where he lived with young boys with histories of sexual violence.

Bullock had no visitation rights and no contact with the outside world except for three five-minute phone calls a week. He was not allowed to visit his brother in the hospital or attend his grandmother's funeral. It took a year for DCFS officials to admit that he shouldn't have been sent there, but by then it was too late. "A year of my life was taken away for nothing," he said. "All of this could have been avoided if they'd known how to deal with gay kids. DCFS needs to update their services. I feel like we're being left behind."

—Information from *Windy City Times*

WISCONSIN: Madison's newly formed GLBT youth organization, StandOut, was part of a crowd of at least 500 who joined a rally in Madison to protest anti-gay bigot Rev. Fred Phelps. Phelps visit was, in part, to protest the hiring of a counselor to help GLBT students. "Fags make the decisions and fags kill," Phelps said while carrying a sign that showed the Wisconsin flag with the words "Fag Flag."

and discussed—not a condemnation of the masses' activity or a mere "solidarity" with it based on tactics.

Cincinnati shows that the struggle to be free is real, is as much a part of the actuality of this world as its opposite—the stifling oppression we all live under. The concrete content, the self-development gained through confrontation with oppressive conditions and internal contradictions, is the point of departure for any further meaningful development.

WHERE TO NOW?

The recent events in Cincinnati will not easily be forgotten. The power structure has been forced to at least pretend to listen to some complaints of the Black community, as seen in Mayor Luken's announcement on April 17 that he will form a race relations commission to explore problems in housing, employment, education, and police abuse.

Such commissions have been formed before, and it is very doubtful that much will come of it. But much can come from the new consciousness generated by the revolt. Its development can provide a new basis for opposing this oppressive system and projecting a genuine alternative to it.

In this sense, it is worthwhile to recall the last time major arrests of protesters occurred in Cincinnati. It was last November when 53 anti-globalization activists were arrested for "vandalism" at the Transatlantic Business Dialogue conference, a group which brought together 100 executives from the U.S. and West Europe to recommend lower trade barriers. That protest may seem a world away from the revolt in the Black community. And yet the revolt of Black masses is not so far from the globalization of capital as it may seem.

No sector of U.S. society has been more negatively affected by the globalization of capital than Black America. Capital's ability to migrate overseas in search of low wages goes hand in hand with deindustrialization and the mass displacement of Black labor at home. Capital's increased mobility has also led to the flight of industries from urban areas like Cincinnati to rural areas and the South. Moreover, the cutting of welfare and other social services in the U.S. is a form of "structural adjustment" long known to Third World countries.

Racism is an integral part of this logic of capitalist accumulation. The gutting of jobs, public housing, welfare, and the growth of homelessness, prison construction, and police abuse all flow from the specific strategy employed by U.S. capital for the past two decades.

In hitting out against these conditions, the Black masses of Cincinnati have challenged a central dynamic of capital itself. Their actions call upon us all to deepen our consciousness of the nature of capital and the alternative to it. In lieu of that, anger at existing conditions risks consuming itself in opposing the many forms of oppression, without ever getting to articulate what the revolt is for.

As Marx wrote long ago, "We do not tell the world, 'Cease your struggles, they are stupid; we want to give you the true watchword of the struggle.' We merely show the world why it actually struggles; and consciousness is something that the world must acquire even if it does not want to."

—April 18, 2001

Anti-Iraq sanctions

Memphis, Tenn.—April 7-10 was turned over to actions opposing the U.S. sanctions against Iraq. The date was chosen to coincide with the tour of the Omran Bus, named after an 8-year-old Iraqi youth who was minding his sheep, far from any military sites, when he was killed by U.S. fighter planes. The bus contains information about the harm the U.S. sanctions are doing to the people of Iraq.

On April 7 members of the Humanitarian Action Collective, Women's Action Coalition, News and Letters Committees, and the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center put on a skit and handed out flyers about the sanctions. The next day we did it again before a crowd of 150. We heard speakers including Dr. Nabil Bayakly, who told us of the history of Iraq, and Nesrene, who spoke on the oppression of the Palestinian people. Iraqi-American Yasmine read a poem on thousands of years of Iraqi culture.

On April 9 we sponsored a teach-in titled, "Iraq: Resistance to Genocide—The Struggle for Freedom in Iraq and the Fight Against U.S. Sanctions." It had a talk by Ceylon Mooney, who recently traveled to Iraq and told of the horrendous conditions in hospitals and the suffering of families helplessly watching their children die of diseases that would be easily treated if the embargo were lifted.

Ahlam, a Palestinian activist, told about what is happening to her people by telling the story of her family, which has lived on the West Bank for generations. Dr. Pete Gathje, with the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, spoke on "A Faith Perspective on Iraq and the Sanctions," urging all to oppose the demonization of people of other religions and nationalities.

Franklin Dmitryev, writer for *News & Letters*, spoke on: "Ten Years of the Movement to Stop the War Against Iraq: Where Do We Go From Here?" After stressing the 1991 anti-war movement's massiveness, he pointed to the need to face why it so quickly collapsed. The lack of projection of a vision of the future totally opposite to that of the rulers had real, practical effects. It shows that activity alone is not enough.

CAPITAL AND LABOR IN COMBAT AS WE GREET MAY DAY 2001

The lead in the April issue of *N&L* on "Layoffs piling up" as the "reality of global capitalism sets in" was very sobering. I appreciated the parallels drawn between U.S. and Japan, the thoughtful assessment of the state of the U.S. economy, the plain statement of what 401(k) really means. I also appreciated the way A. Anielewicz pointed out this was not engineered by the Fed, the political analysis of the Bush administration as "a government tailor-made for capitalism in a time of crisis," and especially the conclusion that the capitalist system needs a reactionary, exploitative agenda like Bush's, but humanity doesn't need this system.

**Technical worker
Memphis**

I read recently that *The Wall Street Journal* had reported that corporate America was rethinking its opposition to inclusion of labor and environmental accords as part of the new trade agreements now being negotiated on a global basis. I can think of at least two reasons why the establishment might be willing to discuss inclusion of "social clauses" and "workers rights" in those trade agreements. One is called "divide and conquer." The other is "distract and divert."

**Activist for a socialist world
Chicago**

The recent month-long bus drivers strike in L.A. was settled, but the basic working conditions have not improved. They include a two-tier wage system and split shifts. That means drivers' days are 12 or more hours long, but four hours in mid-shift are considered non-work, non-paid time. The drivers have to deal with everything from passengers with language barriers to others trying to catch a free ride while they face the possibility of a spying supervisor on board. Yet, despite congested traffic and whatever else confronts them, they have to meet a strict schedule and keep a "rosy outlook." They earn every bit of their pay—and then some.

**Bus rider
Los Angeles**

The day before Christmas the *Vancouver Sun* announced that 3,500 people were going to lose their jobs—not a large number among the tens of thousands daily becoming "obsolete" and unemployed, but the timing was stunning in showing the total inhumanity of management today. Soon after that headline came the announcement that the stock market had lost 800 billion U.S. dollars of its value. It made me wonder if we were not seeing some kind of Kamikaze pilots trying to hasten the final sinking of a doomed "Titanic"—while we are also passengers on the same ship.

**Georgio
British Columbia**

The driving personnel of the Dutch railroads have been bargaining with their bosses for two years about their labor conditions. At issue is the privatization of the railroads and the consequences for the workers and the travellers. After some small strikes in the past two years, the patience of the workers was exhausted and they went on strike on April 5. There was no train traffic at all for two full days. Only one week later, they came out on strike again. There is still no resolution as of today (April 14), but it is clear the workers are firmly determined not to give up.

**Supporter
Amsterdam**

It is good to read your pages and see the re-rising militancy of workers, but it follows the pattern of more than a century of struggles against capitalism. The positive political struggles have also failed to produce a successful movement for socialism. What we desperately need today is to show how the current struggles can lead forward away from capitalism. The socialist movement must study alternative ways of living in a way it has not been prepared to do in the past. The long-standing condemnation of such studies as "utopian" needs to be aban-

doned if we are to do more in the coming century than repeat the failures of the previous one.

**R. Price
Australia**

I am taking off work on May Day, the international working peoples' holiday that celebrates the march in 1886 by the workers of Chicago calling for the 8-hour day. The agitation at that time led to the infamous Haymarket Affair in which four of the eight innocent men accused of terrorism were executed. Many other people have also died defending human rights. The rights for which the working people organized then are still unrealized. The rights we have won are being eroded by local political policies and global corporate agendas. We will not give up our hard-fought victories for public education, minimum wage laws, overtime pay, paid holidays, the 40-hour workweek and public health services. We want these hard-won benefits extended for all people of our world. We refuse to accept a world in which the highest profit margin is the final judge of all value.

**Publius
Chicago**



**PROTESTING
THE
FTAA**

Because they were wary of the deep opposition to their secret meeting, the "Summit of the Americas for Free Trade" ended with a declaration cloaked in high-sounding "democratic" rhetoric. Explaining that the so-called "democracy clause" would exclude any country that ceases to be a democracy from participation in future summits, host Premier Jean Chretien added, at one news conference: "Democracies in certain countries continue to be fragile." I was certain that he must have been talking about the recent electoral fraud in Florida and the stolen election in the U.S. Then I found out he was only snobbishly patronizing against Haiti.

**American voter
California**

A protest in conjunction with the protests in Quebec City was planned at the Peace Arch Park, 20 miles north of Bellingham at the U.S./Canadian border. The question of the FTAA meeting in Quebec is a hot topic in this college town. There is an awesome Collective Library here and the people who run it do an amazing job of using the space as a community center, free school, show space, library, food not bombs kitchen and more. Recently they were visited by local cops who wanted to know what kind of "terrorism" was planned for the Peace Arch event on April 21! There was a lot of paranoia among the local law enforcers because of the WTO. The cops on both sides of the border were really worked up about the event and people expected the worst in terms of police brutality.

**Correspondent
Bellingham, Washington**

Various lawsuits are now in process in Canada, grounded in our constitutional rights. They charge that a 10 foot high fence cutting off the area of the summit meetings isn't security but "decontamination." Some called it the political equivalent of ethnic-cleansing, sweeping away anyone who dares to criticize the complicity of governments in corporate globalization. The way I see it, where there once was a Divine Right of Kings, we now live under the Divine Right of Corporations.

**L.G.
Canada**

FREE SPEECH MOVEMENT AND HISTORIC MEMORY

The article in the April *N&L* "Workshop Talks" column on how the demand for affirmative action came out of the

READERS' VIEWS



**ISRAEL
AND
PALESTINE**

Some months ago the world saw the horrible pictures of two Israeli soldiers being lynched in Ramala. Israel then kidnapped two people from Palestinian territory and accused them of taking part in the lynching. Since then there was the attempted lynching of a Palestinian worker in the town of Netania. He is still alive but cannot walk or stand, can hardly speak and cannot open one eye. Lots of people watched, some 20 hit and kicked him. It was photographed but the Israeli police are unable to find even one of them. Today 10 of us went to the hospital again to visit the wounded Palestinian. But we are few. So many others want war.

**Naomi Eden
Israel**

During the initial weeks of violent confrontation which began in September 2000, the General Staff of the Israeli army avoided calling up reservists. As the confrontation lengthened the call-up of reservists increased but it is not across the board so the Israeli economy could hold its own without pressuring the country's political and military leadership to put an end to the confrontation. The Ha'aretz website is now reporting that the first bitter voices are already being heard and will grow louder if not heeded. It is causing serious harm to Israeli society and if not fixed soon, the damage may turn out to be irreversible.

**Correspondent
Canada**

Today, April 14, was a great day for peace in the Middle East. Palestinian, Israeli, and international activists for peace managed to break through the barriers separating us, push through cordon after cordon of Israeli soldiers and meet together to pledge ourselves to end the occupation and make a just peace between our peoples. The event was initiated and sponsored by the Centre for Rapprochement, a Palestinian peace organization based in the town of Beit Sahour not far from Bethlehem where there is a checkpoint separating Bethlehem from Jerusalem. When we interlocked arms and began to push through, the soldiers fortunately did not draw their weapons but locked their arms against us. We pushed and they pushed back until we pushed through their entire cordon. It was as inspired as a moment can be.

**Gila Svirsky
Jerusalem**

WHAT IS DIALECTICS?

Fred Bustillo's essay "Beyond materialism, beyond post-Marx Marxism" (April *N&L*), raises some interesting issues about why Lenin never published his Philosophic Notebooks on Hegel or revealed to his followers his break from vulgar materialism. But I'm not convinced by his discussion as to why this was so. Lenin surely faced a lot of problems after 1917 — civil war, famine, growing bureaucratization in the Bolshevik Party, etc. But when is dialectics more important than at such moments of crisis? We can't use such conditions to excuse his failure to make clear his break from vulgar materialism. Those conditions should have imparted to him the necessity of doing so.

**Anti-vanguardist
Illinois**

It would have been a good idea to alert your readers that Fred Bustillo is a political prisoner at the ADX unit in Florence, Colorado, one of the most notorious prison hell-holes in America. That he manages to turn out such high-quality theoretical material in such surroundings is a testament to the power of the human spirit.

**P.W.
Chicago**

Raya Dunayevskaya's April Archives column gives one pause. You may be a revolutionary, she says, and yet when a new situation comes along, if you don't work out your relationship to it from the vantage point of dialectics, you can go off the rails. What that means to me is that when some on the Left capitulated to the narrow nationalism and male chauvinism of the Million Man March, it wasn't because they were reactionaries but because they left the concept of "new beginnings" as an abstraction and narrowed it in the concrete to something that had nothing to do with revolution. Dialectics is not rhetoric but the lifeblood of all freedom movements, without which they quickly putrefy.

**Revolutionary
Memphis**

HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY

John Alan's column in the April issue raised an important question: how the "facts" of history are subject to today's ideology. The rewriting of the history of the Civil War for ideological purposes is nothing new to someone who grew up under a totalitarian regime, as I did in Poland. The recent publication of Jan Gross' *Neighbors: the Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*, has raised a similar question of how history is told. She documents how in 1941 the Polish half of the town of Jedwabne murdered the Jewish half, killing approximately 1,600. The official version attributing the murders to Nazis was chisled into a monument commemorating the event. As a result of current discussion, that monument has been removed and a new one will be put in place during the summer. The truth is that anti-Semitism is still alive in Poland which no longer has a Jewish presence to challenge it. We are seeing the first signs that perhaps Poland will be able to look at its own history objectively.

**Urszula Wislanka
California**

Mississippi's Gov. Musgrove is the perfect example of a New Democrat. He feints to the left by suggesting a flag representing Jim Crow be put aside. As soon as he has given the reactionaries something to rally around, he surrenders and declares himself ready to move on, as the rulers gaze contentedly at the spectacle of white workers cutting their own throats by buying the racist rhetoric at the cost of making class solidarity with Black workers that much harder.

Descendant of Mississippi whites Tennessee

Given that Southern Christian bigots such as Bush and Ashcroft have their hands firmly on the reins of the government I found the following quote from Frederick Douglass very much "today" even though it was written over 150 years ago: "I assert most unhesitatingly, that the religion of the south is a mere covering for the most horrid crimes, a justifier of the most appalling barbarity, a sanctifier of the most hateful frauds, and a dark shelter under which the darkest, foulest, grossest, and most infernal deeds of slave-holders find the strongest protection....I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies which everywhere surround me." His blast at how "the slave prison and the church stand near each other" make it even more "today." I recommend everyone read it in full. It can be found in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, written in 1845.

American observer Ecuador

NO CHANGE IN AMERICA'S RACISM

On the 33rd anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I found myself asking whether the powers that be would have killed him again today. I would have to say that those powers could not allow him to live, especially in Chicago, where African-American men and women can take a firefighter examination and pass it, yet cannot continue on to the firefighter academy. Why? Because this city has a racist

mayor, Richard M. Daley, who is following in the footsteps of his racist daddy, Richard J. Daley, who was the one who set the atmosphere that made Dr. King call Chicago "the most racist city" he had ever been in. When U.S. citizens allow a selected president like George W. Bush and his kissing-cousin "I can barely speak coherent English" Mayor Daley to hold power, we have come to the day when our children can no longer say "I have a dream" but only that we are having a nightmare. Yes, I have to say to America's shame that Dr. King would be killed again, 33 years later.

George Wilfred Smith, Jr. Chicago



WOMEN'S LIBERATION SPEAKS IN MANY VOICES

For years, women in New York have been trying to get the state to pass the Women's Health and Wellness Act which would require insurance companies and employers to cover the costs of contraceptives. The State Senate finally passed a version of the bill, but it includes a religious non-compliance clause that would allow employers or insurers to refuse contraceptive coverage based on their religious objection. They call this a "conscience clause" as if businesses have consciences! It is women who have the consciences and should be allowed choice. If this version passes, it will leave hundreds of thousands of women still facing major financial barriers to quality health care.

Angry woman New York

This Mother's Day thousands of children in Illinois who love and miss their mothers will not be able to celebrate with them. About 80% of the more than 3,000 women incarcerated in Illinois are mothers and most were the primary caretakers. Their children serve a sentence too. The majority of these women are locked up for nonviolent offenses. On Friday,

May 11 at 4 p.m. at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago, we will hold our annual rally to call for more sensible sentencing practices. We are asking support for legislation (House Bill 1961) that is currently pending in the Illinois Senate. We urge your readers to join us and make their voices heard.

Joanne Archibald Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers 205 W. Randolph, Suite 830 Chicago, IL 60606

You recently carried a quote from Marx in *N&L* that began "History does nothing...." Yet history doesn't just happen. While we are bound in our genetic prisons and limits, we do possess brains and can create a new level of human civilization.

I have learned of a group of women in Milwaukee who have received public assistance in the past or are receiving it now. They are not based on revolutionary Marxism but they are challenging the corruption of "welfare reform" and Tommy Thompson. As usual under this system, women with children are expected to conform to draconian rules and regulations to receive a pittance, while the greedy rulers at the top get away with robbery. Their work needs wide dissemination. They can be reached at Welfare Mothers Voice, 2711 W. Michigan, Milwaukee, WI 53208 or by phone at (414) 342-6662.

Frank Wisconsin

THE BALKAN WARS

Readers might be interested to know that the great revolutionary Leon Trotsky reported in his *The Balkan Wars* on the way the komitadjis (Chetniks) "massacred peaceful Turks and Albanians in order to correct the ethnographical statistics of the population" in 1912-13. Such forces were bankrolled by Tsarist Russia as part of its policy of Pan-Slavism. All that was overthrown by the 1917 Revolution. Unfortunately, today even much of "democratic" Serbia regards those Chetniks of 1912-3 as national heroes. This narrow national-

ism is one legacy of the collapse of Communism as elements of the old apparatus played the nationalist and racist card.

Milosevic opponent Chicago

The conflict in Macedonia between armed Albanian rebels and the government reminds us that political balance in the region is delicate and somewhat complex. At least the Serbian government does not seem to be directly to blame this time. It does seem that the NATO intervention in Kosova may have had an unintended consequence. I am troubled by accounts of repression against Gypsy people as well as Serbs in Kosova, despite the presence of KFOR. It may be timely to reconsider whether "self-determination for Kosova" is attractive-sounding any more. Independence for Tibet and Taiwan (from China) are far more supportable demands.

Concerned Oklahoma



A VOICE FROM WITHIN

I've been enlightened over the years by the thought-provoking articles and letters in each issue of *N&L* and thank the donor who has made it possible. My incarceration has caused me to take a closer and critical look at the whole system of government in America. I don't see the one I was taught about as a child. As someone who is of Native American (Cheyenne) and African descent, my people have been catching hell in America. Your paper has helped me put into proper perspective the various obstacles and seemingly unsurmountable circumstances that have plagued my people's progress and development. Hopefully, the time will come when I'm able to contribute to your advancement besides being a reader and distributor of my copies to others.

Prisoner Texas

READERS: See our Appeal on the front page.... Can you help by contributing to our donor fund?

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Community struggle wins Workman stay of execution

Professor Margaret Vandiver is associate professor in the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Memphis and has been fighting to keep the State of Tennessee from executing Philip Workman.—Editor

Philip Workman was convicted in 1982 of the murder of Memphis police officer Lt. Oliver. His lawyers accepted the state's theory of the crime, and did not do basic investigation of the case. When Philip finally got a good appellate counselor in 1990, he realized that there was good reason to think that Oliver had been killed by friendly fire (See January-February *News & Letters*).

In 1999 the key eyewitness recanted his testimony; in the spring of 2000, it was learned that the state had suppressed an x-ray which supported ballistics evidence showing Workman didn't fire the fatal shot. Philip came within 36 hours of execution in April 2000. The Sixth Circuit Court finally heard arguments about whether they were going to let anybody look at this new evidence and split six to six, against Philip. Every judge appointed by a Republican voted against Philip, and every judge appointed by a Democrat voted for him. The Tennessee Supreme Court set an execution date for January and Philip came within 12 hours of being executed before the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a previous stay.

The clemency hearing in January 2001 was worse than a farce. A Clemency Board member who had recused himself was consulting with the prosecution about how to present the case to fellow board members. The attorney general of the state had presented himself as a neutral adviser to the board and the governor, but he was deeply involved in planning pro-

secution strategy against Philip. The attorney general's office, the prison warden, the Clemency Board chairman, and high-ranking advisers to the governor, met to discuss the case and clemency, and did not notify the defense. The defense lawyers asked, again, for a stay. This time Philip came within 42 minutes of execution on March 30 before the Tennessee Supreme Court finally stopped it.

That afternoon I joined Philip's family, friends, and his minister, in a hotel a few miles from the prison. As the time got closer, Philip's brother and minister went to the prison to witness the execution, scheduled for 1 a.m. At a little after midnight, Joe Ingle, Philip's minister, called from the prison. We promised that if Philip was executed we were going to continue fighting, and make this into the Sacco and Vanzetti case of Tennessee.

Then the phone rang again. The news was: there is a stay. But no one could tell us what court granted the stay, on what grounds, how long it was going to last. We all remembered how last year in Tennessee, Robert Glen Coe had a stay of execution half an hour before he was killed.

We were stunned until Joe came back and he was ecstatic. He told us that we actually had an evidentiary hearing. That's all Philip had ever asked for, the chance to go into court, lay out this new evidence, and let an impartial judge decide if it meant that his conviction couldn't stand.

After the stay, the Tennessee Supreme Court sent Philip's case to a local court in Memphis. It went before the same judge, John Colton, who had denied the petition for the stay earlier that day. Colton set a hearing date in two weeks which did not give Philip's lawyers time to prepare. They appealed to the Court of Criminal Appeals who indefinitely stayed the proceedings. If the judge rules against Philip, his lawyers will have the record to appeal from.

When a death penalty case gets towards the end of its appeals, there's a horrible momentum that builds

up to execute. There are political benefits to the people who act in that capacity. That was taken to the last limits of grossness in Florida and Texas where people ran for governor based on how many inmates they had executed as attorney general. In Philip's case there's an extra impetus: if Philip didn't kill Oliver, it had to be friendly fire. That is something no one wants to consider. But we have a man who has come within a few hours of being executed three times in the last year for something that the evidence indicates he did not do.

I don't think that I have ever seen a community effort like this one. I believe that made it politically possible for the court to do what it did. We were not going to let them get away with this quietly. It was done by people writing letters to the editor, by handing out clemency cards, by going to churches, by standing on the corner with signs week after week after week, by using every opportunity to talk about the case publicly and privately.

Workman's case helped change minds about the death penalty. We are going to lose some cases, but this is never going to be Texas, Florida, Virginia, or Oklahoma. There is a real sense of resistance here. Tennessee is not going to become a slaughterhouse the way other states have.

—Margaret Vandiver

Chicago gas crisis

Chicago—"I wouldn't want your job for anything in the world," a disgruntled customer told me as I tried to explain the high gas prices. He was not buying the company line that the increase was due to higher prices charged to Peoples Energy from its suppliers or the fact that this was an extremely cold winter that required more gas usage. He was righteously upset. The company was trying to pull one on him and like many Chicago customers, he was mad.

His monthly winter bill went from about \$150 last year to close to \$400. His gas bill increased 100% instead of the 50% figure projected by the company.

If he only knew that he was not the only person being abused. Peoples Energy clerical employees are not in a union. We have experienced many problems that the labor movement has fought, such as the fact that we do not receive two 15-minute breaks and have forced Saturday overtime for Monday through Friday employees. Even employees who work on Saturdays do not receive the three-day off time when holidays fall on Monday because they are already off. The company does not provide any compensation in the form of a day off or pay.

To make matters worse due to the increase of calls, which we are required to take at least 59 calls a day, the company asks employees to give up their 45 minute lunch break and take a 15 minute break, with 30 minutes overtime paid as compensation for the loss of lunch period. Production is valued over the rights of the employees.

The new monitoring system aids supervisors who listen in on calls. Supervisors can see what you are doing through your computer. Additionally you can be fired for anything that the supervisor finds offensive. You are not allowed to say "bye-bye" to the customer because the supervisor calls this unprofessional language. Saying "bye-bye" will result in a one point deduction out of ten if your call is monitored. Too many low points not only result in not receiving raises, but you can be fired for too many in the long run.

We are not a part of the company, contrary to popular belief. We pay full price for gas just like you do. We cheered consumers when they demanded a decrease in gas prices and delayed shut offs. We hope customers blockade the company's service shops.

As a matter of fact the service men and women have a union, the Chicago Gas Workers Union 18007. They may strike because the company made \$36 million despite the fact that as of April 2001, there were 14,800 customers who did not pay a cent on their gas bill since December 2000. The service workers want compensation received from the company's gas increase, but Peoples Energy only wants to give them a 22 cent raise even though most customers are paying double for gas.

The clerical employees have not joined the union because the company offers us perks for not joining. Sometimes we even receive movie passes and time off. This sell out is not worth it. We must look at the bigger picture and set an example to stop this corporate machine.

Activism in Chicago delayed shut off of 186 customers. Also there is a five cent decrease in gas prices due to complaints at Peoples Energy. If the service men go on strike, this will also aid consumers and delay shut offs. All that is needed is a united front between workers and consumers, and we can make a difference, a revolution. We could break utility companies like the Montgomery Bus Boycott ended segregation. We can have affordable utilities if we unite.

—Akili

Harvard sit-in grows



Over 1,000 students and faculty members demonstrated their support for Harvard University employees on April 30. The campus workers have been struggling for a livable minimum hourly wage of \$10.25. Forty students seized Massachusetts Hall two weeks earlier and supporters have built a tent city in Harvard Yard to back staff.

Black/Red View

(Continued from page 1)

Hector St. Jean Crevecoeur, a Frenchman who lived in America in 1782 when racial diversity was very obvious, posed the famous question: "What then is the American, the new man?" He answered: "a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, German and Swede... He is either a European or a descendant of a European." Crevecoeur wrote this racist observation when African slaves were one-fifth of the population.

John Hope Franklin, the African-American historian, in his book *Race and History*, considered the ethnic composition of the U.S. as "one of the salient features" of American civilization. If we closely examine American civilization, we find that the actual origin of that "salient feature" is rooted in slave labor and not in its ideological concept of freedom and diversity. The truth is: there could hardly have been a successful development of capitalism in America without African slave labor. There was no other available abundant source of labor power to cultivate the sugar, rice, tobacco and cotton. Thus, American capitalism, at that moment in its history, grafted the barbarism of slave labor onto the production of commodities for the world market which essentially made American slave masters the new capitalists.

Moreover, American capitalism did not end its exploitation of Black labor in the post Civil War era. It was inherently driven to accumulate an unprecedented amount of capital and to create the technology to accomplish that accumulation. Therefore, the American 19th-century industrial revolution and economic expansion to the Pacific coast during the post Civil War

Reverse conviction of Khalfani X. Khaldun!

A terrible miscarriage of justice occurred last month when New Afrikan political prisoner Khalfani X. Khaldun was found guilty of murdering an Indiana prison guard. The state of Indiana had delayed bringing Khalfani to trial for the alleged misdeed for years because of its failure to provide sufficient evidence. Yet the all-white jury bought the state's argument, despite the fact that several prisoners and one prison investigator testified that Khalfani was elsewhere at the time of the crime.

The prosecution argued that the victim's blood was found on Khalfani's clothes. In fact, the guard's blood (he was killed during a fight) was strewn about the entire area of the prison that Khalfani was in at the time. The prosecution argued that there was a "recent" small cut on Khalfani's right middle finger. In fact, Khalfani got the cut from opening a tuna can at lunch. And it argued that the slain officer made a dying declaration accusing Khalfani of the deed. In fact, no one else heard this declaration.

The jury deliberated for nine hours. Khalfani was essentially convicted on the basis of testimony supplied by prison guards who have long had it out for him because of his political activism and his eloquent defense of the rights of prisoners.

The judge imposed the maximum sentence—60 years. Khalfani has until May 20 to file an appeal. Given the many discrepancies in the prosecution's handling of the case, chances of an appeal are good. However, Khalfani is in urgent need of financial assistance to cover the cost of the appeal.

We urge our readers to send whatever they can to The Khalfani Justice Campaign. Contributions can be made out to Joining Hands Ministries, and sent to T. Rhodes/Khalfani's Defense, 101 Main St., P.O. Box 337, Tallulah Falls, GA 30573.

Race and the U.S. census

period opened the door for working class immigrants from Europe and China to come to America to build railroads, bridges, to work in the factories, the mines and the mills.

This "uprooting" of European and Asian labor from their original homes began in the latter decades of the 19th century and became a torrent by the first decade of the 20th century when upwards of 1.4 million immigrants came to America each year. This is one of the reasons why America appears today as a nation of diverse races and ethnic peoples.

We should note that the "diversity," as it is present in the 2000 census, is simply a reflection of capitalism's exploitation of labor and has nothing to do with the ideal of a human unity in diversity. American diversity emerged out of and continues to contain contradictions and strifes. For example, the Mexican laborer is only welcome in California as long as she is working hard in the fields of the growers, but if she gets sick or seeks to go on relief, the political cry becomes, send her back across the border.

The African-American people have been around on the North American continent since the first Europeans colonized it. Then as now, the socialization of labor is structured according to the needs of American capital, which means new immigrant labor without any rights and the unleashing of the criminal (in)justice system against the rebellious African-American population. There can be a new beginning in the very meaning of diversity when the different groups find a commonality in their opposition to the inhuman capitalist accumulation.

EDITORIAL

Milosevic's arrest, tensions in Macedonia

It is no small thing that Slobodan Milosevic—whose wars from 1991 to 1999 caused 200,000 deaths, almost all of them non-Serb civilians, whose paramilitaries gave the world a horrific new term, “ethnic cleansing,” and whose forces also set up rape camps on a large scale—now sits in a prison cell. He remains there rather than the luxurious presidential palace where he had been allowed to remain since October by Serbia's not so different new leaders.

SERBIA BEGINS FACING MILOSEVIC LEGACY

Milosevic's arrest had a comic opera feel to it, as the butcher of the Balkans opined that he would never allow himself to be taken alive. That, however, was while the Yugoslav Army men guarding him were still refusing to give way to the police, in what may have been a last-ditch effort to shield him by President Vojislav Kostunica.

What kind of deal was struck prior to his surrender is not known. But its outlines seem obvious enough: trial for crimes committed inside Serbia only, before Serbian nationalist courts, many of whose personnel still view Serbia, not the nations its forces pillaged and raped, as the true victim of the Balkan Wars.

Kostunica exemplifies such an attitude: “Each week evoking the thousand Serbs killed during the Western bombings, he in this way forgets the 200,000 deaths from the wars in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosova....He defends the Yugoslav Army, an institution that is among those most culpable for the terror and carnage in the Balkans, continuing to support its commanders from the 1990s” (*Le Monde* April 6, 2001).

On the one hand, major war criminals like Ratko Mladic, the commander during the massacre of 7,000 Bosnians at Srebrenica in 1995, walk around freely because they are not guilty of crimes inside Serbia. Yet some Albanian political prisoners still rot in prison while Kostunica “considers their fate.”

Seska Stanojlovic of Serbia's Helsinki Committee on Human Rights notes acidly: “It is hypocritical to investigate whether Milosevic cheated in his construction contracts or bank accounts. This man is indicted for ‘crimes against humanity.’ We need to say that Serbia is first of all responsible for crimes against Croats, Bosnians, and Albanians, even if the Serbs also suffered” (*Le Monde* March 16, 2001). While such views are those of a tiny minority inside Serbia, there is evidence that the majority of Serbs would now accept Milosevic's extradition to the War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague.

Israeli settlements

Los Angeles—Dr. Amiram Goldblum, a longtime member of the Israeli Peace Now central committee and the founder and head of Peace Now's Settlements Watch Committee, spoke on “Is a Peace Settlement Possible with the Settlements?” at the University Synagogue in Los Angeles, April 3. Goldblum emphasized that in the Oslo Peace Agreement in 1993, the Israeli government had not committed itself to dismantling its settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In fact, since 1993, the number of settlements in both areas increased with the government's actively planned financial and military encouragement.

The West Bank contains approximately two million Palestinians living in 650 towns, and approximately 196,500 Israeli settlers living in about 150 settlements. The Gaza Strip contains approximately one million Palestinians living in some 40 towns, and approximately 6,500 Israeli settlers living in about 130 settlements.

Goldblum demonstrated on a map that, when Ehud Barak offered to give 95% of the West Bank to the Palestinian Authority in September 2000, the 5% that Barak was keeping was enough to cover all the settlements and more. By keeping even 3% of the territory, Barak was cancelling the idea of a viable Palestinian state. That is because the settlements are tiny needle holes spread across the entire West Bank and the Gaza Strip. So long as they exist, the Israeli military presence and road blocks established to protect the settlers negate the very idea of a Palestinian state.

Goldblum did not think that it would be impossible to move the settlers. In his opinion even the most religious fanatic settlers would be willing to relocate to Israel if the Israeli government offered to purchase their homes in the settlements and paid for their relocation.

He stressed emphatically that the source of Palestinian anger is the continuing occupation of its three million people by Israel. “Israel is the only country in the world that occupies a large population without giving them any civil rights.”

Goldblum argued that if a referendum were to be held in Israel today on the status of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, 70% of the population would vote against them. According to a recent poll conducted in Israel, 85% of Israelis have never visited the occupied territories. To Goldblum that proves de facto that Israelis consider the 1967 Green Line their border.

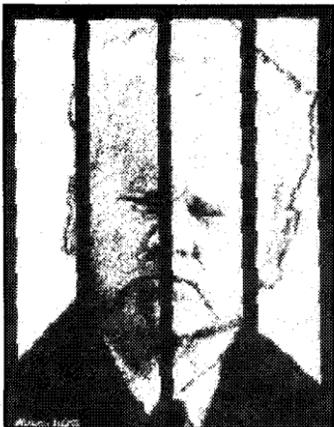
—Sheila Fuller

At an international level, the unfortunate truth is that today as in the 1990s, the U.S. and its NATO allies regard a strong and dominant Serbia as the key to “stability” in the Balkans. That is why they offered only token opposition to Milosevic in Bosnia, forcing it to accept the humiliating and oppressive 1995 Dayton Accords. That is why they didn't even discuss Kosova at Dayton and intervened there only in 1999 after Milosevic had openly defied NATO, on the eve of its official expansion into Eastern Europe, by deporting under the eyes of the world media hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians whom NATO had vowed to protect. That is why it was not NATO, but the dogged and heroic resistance of the Bosnians and the Kosovars that was the most decisive element in defeating Milosevic and in setting the ground for his overthrow last October. And that is why NATO has strongly opposed the small-scale rebellion among the Albanian minority in neighboring Macedonia.

MACEDONIA CHALLENGED FROM BELOW

The case of Macedonia is quite different from that of Serbia, Kosova, Croatia, or Bosnia. “Ethnic cleansing” was not carried out here in the 1990s, nor was a neo-fascist regime set up. Instead, a bourgeois democracy has begun to form, one that, like so many others, unfortunately oppresses an ethnic minority, the Albanian Macedonians.

In March, after a decade of demands for greater civil and human rights, young Albanians, some of whom had crossed the border to join the fight to liberate

**Acehnese face threat of mass slaughter**

Aceh, a province in northern Sumatra that is struggling for independence from Indonesia, is in a state of war. Clashes between the military and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM), combined with government terrorism against the civil population, have resulted in more than 100 deaths each month so far this year. There are now more than 30,000 military plus police and paramilitary groups in a province of 4.3 million people. Declaring a “state of civil order,” the government is paving the way for mass slaughter like in East Timor in 1999. Demonstrations against the move have taken place in Jakarta as well as Aceh.

N&L met with Muhammad Saleh of the Central Information for Referendum Aceh (SIRA) while he was in the U.S. asking the international community to pressure Indonesia to stop its human rights abuses and allow a referendum. Here is some of his statement:

SIRA was formed in 1998 with the aim to resolve the conflict in Aceh in a peaceful and comprehensive manner, through a referendum, so the people of Aceh can determine their own future.

We hold as truth that democratic mass civil actions are a right for any society to achieve its lawful aspirations, and we regard acts by those in power against such actions as a political ploy to deny our rights. There have been suppressive actions of the neo-colonialist regime of Indonesia against SIRA activists: arrests, detention, intimidation, kidnapping and murder. The latest raid occurred March 21, when plainclothes police ransacked the office, seized banners and took away eight activists, later released.

Two of us were kidnapped and tortured by the BRIMOB (special para-military mobile police) last September. Thirteen burly men beat us with chairs, pipes, boards, and rifle butts, and slashed us with knives. Then we were taken to police headquarters, where more police punched and kicked us. After 24 hours of interrogation, we were released, due to pressure from many sectors of Aceh and from international human rights NGOs. But we had to stay in the hospital for a week for treatment of our injuries, the pains of which we are still suffering.

SIRA organized a mass rally for all of Aceh, called SIRA RAKAN, last November. Dozens of ordinary people were arrested, detained and tortured during the rally. For days before the rally, soldiers ransacked our office and those of other human rights and referendum activists. They came to capture Muhammad Nazar, chairman of SIRA and coordinator of SIRA RAKAN. The charge was displaying a banner at a mass rally last August that referred to the Indonesian government as “occupying” Aceh.

In order to prevent more violence, Nazar turned himself in. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to ten months in jail.

Shooting without provocation and burning houses and shops as retaliation for attacks by GAM have resulted in 1,113 civilians killed; 10,230 houses and shops were burnt, all located near military or police bases. Military command posts have been set up in almost every village. Plainclothes military units carry out covert actions and “sweepings” everywhere, every day.

Many people leave their villages as soon as soldiers set up a base or there is an armed clash due to the practice of the police and military of going against the villagers whenever they are attacked by GAM. The

Kosova from Milosevic in 1998-99, staged a brief uprising. It centered on Tetovo, the country's second largest city, located in a region that has a strong Albanian majority. The insurgents, who called themselves the National Liberation Army, the acronym of which in Albanian (UCK) is the same as the Kosova Liberation Army, made demands that were essentially the same as those of more established Albanian political parties since 1991.

They pointed to the fact that Albanians are vastly underrepresented in the government and the police, although they are at least 35% of the population. They noted that the government still refuses to recognize the University of Tetovo, where courses are given in Albanian, while the two other universities offer courses only in Macedonian, a Slavic language. They also pointed to police repression, especially of Albanian youth, and to the fact that the constitution refers to Macedonians and “others,” that is, Albanians.

There have been hysterical reports in the Western press about Macedonia. Top Dayton negotiator Richard Holbrooke pontificated that “a fifth Balkan war has begun in Macedonia” (*The New York Times* April 8, 2001). The British journalist Jonathan Steele ridiculed such attitudes as rooted in stereotypes exemplified by the “gloomy determination that every Balkan conflict is about ethnicity... [that] the ethnic genie will always race off to mass murder” (*The Guardian* March 19, 2001).

In fact, with the defeat, overthrow, and arrest of Milosevic, there has been a move throughout the region away from narrow nationalism, as can be seen in the latest elections in Bosnia and Croatia. Even in Serbia, serious questions are being raised about Milosevic and his legacy, despite efforts by the new leadership to evade them.

number of displaced persons has reached over 100,000. Facilities, food and sanitation in displaced persons camps are very inadequate; the state has no programs for them, and their only help comes from private charities gathered by local NGOs. International NGOs left after the torture and execution of several of their workers.

The authorities closely monitor local and international media, and intimidate journalists. Those who speak against government policies are branded as criminals.

The courts in Aceh no longer function because the majority of the offenders are those who are supposed to be enforcing law and order. Judges and prosecutors have simply abandoned their posts. The judicial and administrative branches of government in Aceh have practically all closed down, most of them replaced by GAM. In fact, much of the daily life of the people, from justice, to marriage, trading, property transfer, is being handled by GAM with appropriate taxes paid to its coffers.

We call on Indonesia to withdraw all non-organic security forces from Aceh; to strengthen the Humanitarian Pause (cease-fire) agreements; to accept the United Nations offer to open an office in Aceh; to protect human rights and democracy in accordance with the Indonesian constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; to bring to justice all violators of human rights in an internationally recognized court; and to find a comprehensive, democratic and peaceful solution to the conflict, or let the people of Aceh decide their own future.

We call on the international community and the United Nations to send an investigation team to Aceh; strengthen mediation efforts by assigning an enforcement power; open an office to monitor conditions; pressure Indonesia to stop all violence and charge violators and to implement its commitment to international conventions; provide humanitarian aid; allow the right to self-determination for Aceh.

These points need to be carried out as soon as possible in order to save the Acehnese people from the crisis of humanity that is taking place everywhere in Indonesia.

Contact SIRA at sira_jaringan2000@yahoo.com, muhsals@yahoo.com, or sirareferendum@hotmail.com.

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page 7



GLOBALIZATION & DIALECTICS

Education against capital today

EDITOR'S NOTE: Peter McLaren is a major voice in the world of critical pedagogy and one of North America's leading exponents of the work of the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. He is author/editor of 35 books on the sociology of education, critical theory, and critical pedagogy. His latest book, *Che Guevara, Paulo Freire, and the Pedagogy of Revolution* (Rowman & Littlefield), was reviewed in *News & Letters* (October 2000). McLaren is currently working on *The Critical Pedagogy Manifesto* and a book on globalization and imperialism (with Ramin Farahmandpur). The following consists of excerpts of a dialogue with Glenn Rikowski, author of *The Battle in Seattle*.

Peter McLaren: Is philosophy really an Archimedean lever that can be used to bring about human liberation? It's a question that has been posed to me often by those who remain skeptical of philosophy and see it primarily as an academic enterprise. Raya Dunayevskaya would, I believe, answer in the affirmative.

Glenn Rikowski: In what sense?

Peter: In the sense that philosophy can bring us closer to grasping the specificity of the concrete within the totality of the universal—for instance, the laws of motion of capital as it operates out of view of our common-sense understanding.

Furthermore, philosophy plays a key role in enabling our understanding of history as a process in which human beings make their own society, although in

conditions most often not of their own choosing. And further, the practice of double negation can help us understand the movement of both thought and action by means of praxis, or what Dunayevskaya called the philosophy of history.

The philosophy of history proceeds from social reality and not from abstract concepts (the latter is the bourgeois mode of thought). Here it is necessary that critical educators seek to help students go through the labor of the negative in order to see human development from the perspective of the wider social totality. By examining Marx's specific appropriation of the Hegelian dialectic, Dunayevskaya shows us how we can comprehend more clearly how the positive is always contained in the negative. It makes clear how every new society is the negation of the preceding one, conditioned by the forces of production—which gives us an opportunity for a new beginning.

While it is true that ideas are conditioned and correspond to the economic structure of society, this in no way makes history unconditional. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx wrote that circumstances are changed by human beings, and not by abstract categories, and that the educator herself must be educated. Economic structures constitute the drive-wheel of history; but that doesn't mean that everything can be reduced to the sum of economic conditions....

Dialectical movement is a characteristic not only of thought but also of life and history itself. But today it appears that history has overtaken us, that the educational left is running a losing race with history. The idea of freedom wobbles precariously on shaking foundations, on the scaffold of empty bourgeois dreams. Haven't we entered that monopoly stage of capitalism that Lenin called imperialism—in which nearly the whole world has been drawn into the capitalist system?

Marx noted that, in the words of philosopher Georg Lukács, that "the commodity-form penetrates every corner of the social world." Aren't we very close to this monstrous eventuality at the current historical moment? Isn't the neoliberalism that has emerged with the collapse of state demand-management and the Keynesian welfare state a particular species of imperialism, one in which the inner contradictions have become exacerbated beyond imagination?....

Glenn: What kind of pedagogy is needed in response to this?

Peter: We require a pedagogy that meets the conditions of the current times. We need to understand that diversity and difference are allowed to proliferate and flourish provided that they remain within the prevailing forms of capitalist social arrangements.

Once anti-racism and anti-sexism begins to contest the hierarchical imperatives of advanced capitalism, then such struggles are resisted by all the power the state can muster. My own work has been to support anti-racist and anti-sexist pedagogies, but to recast them within a larger project of class struggle, particularly the struggle against the globalization of capital. I have emphasized the need for educators to revisit the works and lives of Freire and Che.

Furthermore, I believe that critical pedagogy could greatly benefit from exploring the work of Raya Dunayevskaya, and other Marxist-Humanists such as Peter Hudis and Kevin Anderson. Dunayevskaya was critical of both U.S. capitalist democracy and the state-capitalism of the Soviet Union—and for good reasons. Both were concerned with the extraction of surplus labor from workers, although in different ways.

Current conditions in both the U.S. and Russia are growing similar, as both are experiencing variations of tycoon, or gangster capitalism. Because at the present historical juncture, the contradictions of capitalism are pushed to such unbearable extremes, Dunayevskaya felt it was important that history and consciousness be examined from the perspective of the development of labor. Her work on double negation captures the continuous process of becoming. Her philosophy of absolute negativity as a self-moving, self-active, and self-transcending method has a lot to offer....

Glenn: So [we] need to understand how we, as human subjects, have been capitalized—the human as capital; thus the struggle for humanism is necessarily a struggle against capital, and against a specific form of social being as capitalized life-form. That places the struggle to be human, the de-capitalization of our existence, at the center of contemporary anti-capitalist struggles. In turn, that situates Marxist-Humanism at the core of any project to implode capital's social universe, as a vital resource for de-capitalizing our individual and collective social existences and the value-form of labor on which all this rests.

Peter: The Marxist-Humanist educator recognizes that because the logic of capitalist work has invaded all forms of human sociability, society can be considered to be a totality of different types of labor. What is important is to examine the particular forms that labor takes within capitalism. Labor should not be taken as a given category, but interrogated as an object of critique, and examined as an abstract social structure.

As you have pointed out in your own work, Glenn, value constitutes the very matter and anti-matter of Marx's social universe. Educators like yourself and Paula Allman have argued that the real problem is the internal or dialectical relation that exists between capital and labor within the capitalist production process itself—a social relation in which capitalism is intrinsically rooted.

This social relation—essential or fundamental to the production of abstract labor—

deals with how already existing value is preserved and new value (surplus value) is created. It is this internal dialectical relationship that is mainly responsible for the inequitable and unjust distribution of use-values, and the accumulation of capital that ensures that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. It is this relation between capital and labor that sets in perilous motion the conditions that make possible the rule of capital by designating production for the market, fostering market relations and competitiveness, and producing the historically specific laws and tendencies of capital.

Glenn: We need to remember that the production of value is not the same as the production of wealth.

Peter: Correct. The production of value is historically specific and emerges whenever labor assumes its dual character as both use-value and exchange-value. This dual character is not simply the distinction between use-value and exchange-value but within value itself, in the distinction between value and exchange-value. In order to see value, we have to abstract from exchange-value. This enables us to emphasize the particular social character of labor that produces commodities....

This is most clearly explicated in Marx's discussion of the contradictory nature of the commodity form and the expansive capacity of the commodity known as labor-power. In this sense, labor power becomes the supreme commodity, the source of all value. For Marx, the commodity is highly unstable, and non-identical. Its concrete particularity (use value) is subsumed by its existence as value-in-motion, or by what we have come to know as capital. (Value is always in motion because of the increase in capital's productivity that is required to maintain expansion.)

Dunayevskaya notes in *Marx's Capital and Today's Global Crisis* that "the commodity in embryo contains all the contradictions of capitalism precisely because of the contradictory nature of labor." What kind of labor creates value? Abstract universal labor linked to a certain organization of society, under capitalism. The dual aspect of labor within the commodity (use value and exchange value) enables one commodity—money—to act as the value measure of the commodity. Money becomes, as Dunayevskaya notes, the representative of labor in its abstract form. Thus, the commodity must not be considered a thing, but a social relationship....

The question is: What kind of labor should a human being do?...Capital, as Marx pointed out, is a social relation of labor; it constitutes objectified, abstract, undifferentiated—hence alienated—labor. Capital cannot be controlled or abolished without dispensing with value production and creating new forms of non-alienated labor. Creating these new forms of non-alie-

nated labor is the hope and promise of the future.

Let's consider for a moment the harsh reality of permanent mass unemployment, contingent workforces, and the long history of strikes and revolts of the unemployed. It is relatively clear from examining this history that the trajectory of capitalism in no way subsumes class struggle or the subjectivity of the workers.

What separates Marxist educators from liberals is that Marxists are not content with advocating for better wages and working conditions, although that is certainly an important goal. Of course, Marxist educators advocate for a fairer distribution of wealth, arguing that the current inequitable distribution that characterizes contemporary capitalist societies results from property relations, in particular, the private ownership of the means of production. However, to suggest that Marxism merely seeks elimination of economic exploitation is to underestimate it. It pushes a great deal further than the call for a fairer redistribution of wealth. As Dunayevskaya teaches us, Marxism is profoundly humanistic; it works not only for a more equitable redistribution of economic resources but also for the liberation of humanity from the rule of capital.

Glenn: Perhaps Dunayevskaya's greatest contribution is her reanimation of the Hegelian dialectic and her breakthrough work on negation of the negation.

Peter: Dunayevskaya rethought Marx's relations to Hegelian dialectics in a profound way.... Dunayevskaya notes how Marx was able to put a living, breathing, and thinking subject of history at the center of the Hegelian dialectic. She also pointed out that what for Hegel is Absolute Knowledge (the realm of realized transcendence), Marx referred to as the new society. While Hegel's self-referential, all-embracing, totalizing Absolute is greatly admired by Marx, it is, nevertheless, greatly modified by him.

For Marx, Absolute knowledge (or the self-movement of pure thought) did not absorb objective reality or objects of thought but provided a ground from which objective reality could be transcended. By reinserting the human subject into the dialectic, and by defining the subject as corporeal being (rather than pure thought or abstract self-consciousness), Marx appropriates Hegel's self-movement of subjectivity as an act of transcendence and transforms it into a critical humanism.

In her rethinking of Marx's relationship to the Hegelian dialectic, Dunayevskaya parts company with Derrida, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, Negri, Deleuze, Mészáros, and others. She has given absolute negativity a new urgency, linking it not only to the negation of today's economic and political realities but also to developing new human relations. Second negation constitutes drawing out the positive within the negative, expressing the desire of the oppressed for freedom.

Glenn: This shall be a form of praxis that takes us outside the social universe of capital?

Peter: Yes. Abstract, alienated labor can be challenged by freely associated labor and concrete, human sensuousness. The answer is in envisioning a non-capitalist future that can be achieved by means of subjective self-movement through absolute negativity so that a new relation between theory and practice can connect us to the realization of freedom.

Glenn: A freedom, surely, that is incompatible with private property.

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GLOBALIZATION & DIALECTICS

Tom Rainey delivered this talk at The Anti-Capitalist Forum in Washington DC, "What Are We fighting for? Where is the movement going?"

The questions which make up the title of this forum are questions that face all activists at some point. I was a high school student in the '80s. I didn't really understand the machinations behind the Sabra-Shatila massacre at a refugee camp in Lebanon at the time, though it had a profound impact on me. It wasn't long before I sought out and joined the first movement I could find. I became very active in an anti-nuclear weapons group in Chicago.

I decided I was a pacifist. I made a career out of civil disobedience and then direct action for five years. Then I began to identify with the revolutionaries in El Salvador and Nicaragua. I left my pacifism behind.

I expected that all the organizing and demonstrations and direct action would naturally lead to more and more people joining until there were so many people in the streets that the government would be forced to change and we would win.

But as time went on I saw movements come and go. They didn't get bigger in direct relation to how much work my fellow organizers and I put in. I started to recognize the pattern.

I heard the same things in every movement as it was being born: "We need to just organize around what we are against and not have debates about history, or philosophy. We need to organize now and then we can talk about that later."

The ideas of Marxist-Humanism began to mean something to me. In 1990, in face of the coming war in the Persian Gulf, I helped organize some of the largest mass meetings I had ever seen. Hundreds of students who had never been activists wanted to stop the war. I spoke out often to challenge my fellow anti-war youth to deepen their activism and challenge the very nature of our society which values oil over human life; to make the goal a new society that doesn't go to war for oil. That movement grew faster and collapsed around the nation more quickly than anything I had seen. It could

Against capital

(Continued from page 10)

Peter: Yes, but we need to remember that the abolition of private property does not necessarily lead to the abolition of capital. We need to examine the direct relation between the worker and production. Here, our sole emphasis should not be on the abolition of private property, which is the product of alienated labor; it must be on the abolition of alienated labor itself.

Marx gave us some clues as to how transcend alienation, ideas that he developed from Hegel's concept of second or absolute negativity, or "the negation of the negation." Marx engaged in a materialist rereading of Hegel. In his work, the abolition of private property constitutes the first negation. The second is the negation of the negation of private property. This refers to a self-reflected negativity, the basis for a positive humanism.

Glenn: Absolute negativity in this sense is a creative force.

Peter: Yes. Marx rejects Hegel's idealization and dehumanization of self-movement through double negation because this leaves untouched alienation in the world of labor-capital relations. Marx sees this absolute negativity as objective movement and the creative force of history. Absolute negativity in this instance becomes a constitutive feature of a self-critical social revolution that, in turn, forms the basis of permanent revolution.

Hudis raises a number of difficult questions with respect to developing a project that moves beyond controlling the labor process. It is a project that is directed at abolishing capital through the creation of freely associated labor: the creation of a social universe not parallel to the universe of capital (whose substance is value) is the challenge here. The form that this society will take is that which has been suppressed within the social universe of capital: socialism, a society based not on value but on the fulfillment of human need.

For Dunayevskaya, absolute negativity entails more than economic struggle but the liberation of humanity from class society. This is necessarily a political and a revolutionary struggle and not only an economic one.

This particular insight is what, for me, signals the fecundating power of Dunayevskaya's Marxist-Humanism—the recognition that Marx isn't talking about class relations only but human relations.

Critical pedagogy is too preoccupied with making changes within civil society or the bourgeois public sphere, where students are reduced to test scores and their behavior is codified in relation to civic norms. Marx urged us to push beyond this crude type of materialism that fails to comprehend humanity's sensuous nature and regards humans only as statistics or averaged out modes of behavior.

We need to move towards a new social humanity. This takes us well beyond civil society. We need to work towards the goal of becoming associated producers, working under conditions that will advance human nature, where the measure of wealth is not labor-time but solidarity, creativity, and the full development of human capacities. This can only occur outside the social universe of capital.

'We ignore ideas at our own risk'

not survive the simple ideological assault of yellow ribbons and "support our troops."

Most people come to the movement with a big concept, with great idealism. Usually this idealism is channeled into "organizing"—which generally means pragmatism, which sees people as numbers to be accumulated as in "we need to get as many people out at the demonstration as possible." Pragmatism is the dominant ideology of current society to such an extent that people see it as natural or "common sense." It can be a dead end if it is not challenged. This is an element of what dialectics is: movement through contradiction.

The goal I've chosen is a totally new society. Blueprints by intellectuals don't work, whether it's a vanguard party, decentralized federated communities, or bio-regionalism. If it comes out of the heads of just a few, then it is not true creativity, and it won't elicit the creativity of the masses of people. The very act of masses taking control of their lives and creating a new social organization in free association is what revolution is. The form in which this will happen cannot be confined within the plans of a small group.

I'm working for the concept of full freedom. Yes, it's a tall order, but if we're going to fight, why not go for the whole thing? All these little "baby step" reforms, and "we've got to start somewhere" approaches just don't capture people's imagination. This is often confused with apathy. What is full freedom? That's what activists should be discussing in the same meetings where strategy and tactics usually dominate.

The new generation inherits a world shaped by revolutions that turned into their opposite and failed movements. It's a heavy ideological weight that can be seen in apathy, self-limiting ideas, and lack of patience seen in the speed with which elements of the anti-globalization movement went to adventurist confrontations with police.

The activist movement always comes back for many good reasons, both objective and subjective. People want something better, but often there is no continuity—or learning from the past to break out of the cycle. There is a hidden history and a battle for its meaning. At the same time, I see a progression and maturity in the new movement that in many ways is far ahead of where the '80s movement hit a dead end. There is a global perspective; the student battle against sweatshop labor has led to relationships between students and workers. There are hundreds of militant anti-

racist organizations, targeting police brutality and the prison system. There is a search for new forms of organization and self-critique. I hear youth with a very developed sense of the contradictions they face. Throughout is an open confrontation with capitalism itself which was very rare in the '80s.

The critique of capitalism is often watered down and confused with a collection of symptoms or phenomena. To see through them is to see the sweatshop workers and prisoners as subjects of their own liberation, not victims. The Kensington Welfare Rights Union in Philadelphia is a working example of this kind of subjectivity in the relationship between intellectuals and workers organizing together.

I'm trying to make the case for projecting an absolute idea. To elicit the great creativity of the "people out there" we need to go big. Reform is so old and people know deep down that it doesn't work. It's time to challenge ourselves to choose between human power or capital power. Conservatives believe people can't organize themselves, so they need a central controlling institution. Idealists recognize the potential for freely associated labor and self organization to rip up capitalism at the root and create something better. But this doesn't mean that intellectuals or organizers just sit around and wait and then jump on for the ride. They have the responsibility to challenge people to deepen their opposition, to get to the meaning in thought and in history. Intellectuals can help a movement speak to itself.

You say we already know what ends we want. Are you sure? Philosophy is a question of life and death. Many anarchists who joined revolutionary forces to fight a common enemy also thought theory wasn't necessary. They ended up dead at the hands of their "comrades" once the common enemy was defeated. You should look into how many anarchists were killed by Mao or Castro or in Spain during the Civil War by Stalinists whom they united with for pragmatic reasons.

Do you ever wonder where all the people who were your age ten years ago are? They burned out. What makes you think you won't burn out on activism alone, too? You say no to just talking about philosophy as if it's bringing down the movement. Philosophy is not the problem in today's movement. Relying on activity alone is. What we're doing is not working. The quality of life, labor, the environment has plummeted. Capitalism has been kicking our ass for 30 years. You ignore ideas at your own risk.

'Solidarité' in Quebec City

(Continued from page 1)

Kim: The first big action was a torch light parade on Thursday evening. I've never seen that many anti-capitalist activists. I'd look back and all I could see was people. It was really amazing to see that many radical activists.

C.J.: This was an education you could not, and should not, get in a classroom.

Michelle: Friday was the first big major action, the "Carnival Against Capitalism." This was the first time I saw the wall come down. Everybody on the march was cheering and screaming when the wall came down. People were getting gassed repeatedly. It was an act of defiance just standing there.

Kim: I went to bed Saturday night hearing the [tear gas] guns in my head. It was a great blow to the cops because we didn't act like a mob.

Michael: On Saturday there was a big concern about people getting stampeded. But the control and the discipline shown by the activists were amazing.

C.J.: The tear gas was so thick the cops had to bring in these giant industrial fans to blow the gas away from the heads of state. The reality was that the people of the city overwhelmingly supported the militancy of the protest. People opened their stores for us in the middle of a tear gas-filled intersection. I believe very strongly in non-violent direct action, but I've never felt

so much rage before. I saw cops fire tear gas canisters at close range, then gas the medics who ran up to assist. They were not interested in arresting us. They were interested in physically and mentally demoralizing us.

Kim: I can't describe to you how much the gas hurts. You never knew where it was coming from. One of the things that was great was the community that was there. Complete strangers were coming up to you and asking "how can I help?"

Michael: The tear gas was able to flood the entire area. Twelve hours later it was still lingering. It became unbearable to many of the protesters. There were 450 arrests over the weekend. That is unbelievably small compared to the number of the participants.

C.J.: The number one chant was "so-so-solidarité." There was a lot of local organizing. The solidarity was amazing. There was not a division among the protesters.

Mike: There's been a real growth in these large groups of people being able to organize on this level. The most shocking thing was the community response. This was on such a large scale that it was a culture shock.

Kim: I was surprised by the activist community itself. It was massive. I wondered if there was going to be a connection between all of the groups. There turned out to be a massive union of all the activists.



Runaway shop protest

Chicago—At noon on April 21, 700 noisy, enthusiastic people rallied at 48th and Western Avenue on Chicago's southwest side in solidarity with the protesters in Quebec City against the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. The large puppets that have become characteristic of these events since the Battle in Seattle added to the festive feeling. An ad hoc committee organized the demonstration. Members of Jobs With Justice, the Campaign for Labor Rights and the Steelworkers Union participated in a major way.

The rally's location was chosen because it is the site of Hendrickson Spring, an automotive parts company whose owners have decided to relocate 80% of its operation to Mexico and 20% to Canada. The workers had given concessions, yet they couldn't prevent the move.

According to Jack Ailey of Steelworkers Local 1053,

the spirited demonstrators feel that the FTAA will "intensify something that is already hurting them."

Leo Gerard, president of the Steelworkers Union, deplored the fact that workers can't participate while oligarchs plan the future in secret meetings. The delegates to the FTAA value their own power and wealth higher than workers' families and human lives. He emphasized that workers do have power and that time and economic trends are on our side. We will win, but not without intelligence and sacrifice, he said.

Honking horns and other indications of approval from passing motorists accompanied the festive march as it proceeded to McKinley Park at Western Avenue and Pershing Road. A program of music, speeches and a skit portraying a "Race to the Bottom" of social and economic conditions filled out the demonstration.

—January

Our Life and Times

Sharon escalates Middle East conflict

by Kevin A. Barry and Mary Holmes

Since his election as Israeli prime minister under the slogan "Only Sharon can bring peace," Ariel Sharon has lost little time in harnessing state power to crush the Palestinian intifada. The situation became more ominous when Sharon ordered retaliatory air strikes on April 16 against Syrian radar installations inside Lebanon. The Israeli Defense Minister described the raids as a signal that "the rules of the game have changed."

Since Sharon became prime minister, he has launched these events:

March 28: Sharon ordered a retaliatory air strike on the headquarters of Yasser Arafat. Israeli officials called the raid the first in a series of "pinpoint attacks."

April 5: Sharon's housing minister authorized construction of 700 new homes, expanding two Israeli West Bank settlements. During the same week, the Israeli government ordered the demolition of 30 Palestinian houses, built in West Bank areas under Israeli control, because they were constructed without permits.

April 11-21: Israeli tanks and bulldozers mounted three separate invasions into Palestinian-controlled Gaza, demolishing homes, commercial buildings, gov-

Ethiopian massacre

Copying a page from the manual of the old Stalinist military dictatorship, the Ethiopian government has responded to student protests with gunfire, killing at least 58 youths and wounding 250 during the night of April 17-18.

For ten days, more than 3,000 students had gone on strike to demand 1) the reopening of a suppressed student newspaper, 2) student representation on decision-making bodies, and 3) an end to the presence of armed police on campus.

On April 11, soon after the strike began, police launched an attack during which 45 students were wounded. Afterwards, government officials announced that they had agreed to most of the students' demands. However, students refused to end their strike because the government gave no firm timetable for implementing the changes.

At this point, the government issued an ultimatum threatening force if the students did not end the strike. As police moved in a second time, thousands gathered to back the strikers, by this time not only university students, but also high school and working youth.

They refused to back down, resisting attempts to disperse them. It was these youth whom police massacred. Afterwards, the government shut down the university for an indefinite period.

Dutch gay marriage

The Netherlands became the first nation in modern history to legalize lesbian and gay marriage, April 1. At midnight, Helen Faasen and Anne Marie Thus took their vows at Amsterdam's City Hall. Other couples soon followed, including two elderly men who had lived together for 36 years.

The fight to legalize lesbian and gay marriage spanned two decades. Earlier, in 1998, civil unions were legalized. Finally, in September 2000, parliament voted by a three to one margin for the new law placing lesbian and gay couples on the same legal footing as heterosexual ones.

ernment structures and orchards.

April 20: Israeli police massed against Palestinians throwing stones in the Temple Mount area, the largest police turnout inside the old part of Jerusalem since the intifada began. On the same day, Sharon termed the Israeli state's campaign to crush the intifada a "prolonged struggle."

The thus-far "limited interest" in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict expressed by the U.S.-Bush administration has given tacit support to Sharon. He was invited to Washington to meet with Bush in March. At that time, Secretary of State (also a former general, like



Protesters face Israeli soldiers during a demonstration of Palestinians, Israelis and supporters near Bethlehem, April 14.

Zapatistas' address

After their caravan to Mexico City, days of rallies and negotiations, and stated support from Mexican President Vicente Fox, the Zapatista delegation from Chiapas addressed the Mexican Congress on March 28 and presented their demands for a constitutional amendment guaranteeing autonomy for indigenous peoples. Half the legislators boycotted the session.

Commandante Ester spoke for the delegation: "There are those who say that this proposal will create Indian reservations, but they forget that Indians already live separated from other Mexicans and that we are at risk of extinction...They say that this law will promote a backward legal system, but they forget that the current laws only promote confrontation, punish the poor, give impunity for the rich, condemn the color of our skin and make our language a crime."

The EZLN has demanded passage of the indigenous rights legislation, removal of military bases, and release of all political prisoners before peace talks can resume.

It remains to be seen how the struggle in Chiapas will now develop to achieve its demands and expand its vision against moves to co-opt it by Fox, who spoke at the "free trade" summit in Quebec of plans for capitalist expansion in Mexico: building highways, railroads and ports from Chiapas, across Central America, to the Panama Canal and Colombian border.

Sharon) Colin Powell stated the U.S. would honor its "complete commitment" to Israel's security. The U.S. also vetoed the Palestinian request for a UN-sponsored international observer force.

The Arab summit held in March again pledged additional financial aid for maintaining social services, but Palestinians have seen few results from the multi-billion dollar support fund, much of it being siphoned off by corrupt officials.

Saddam Hussein, whom Palestinian leaders were alone in supporting during the Gulf War, has threatened to send thousands of volunteers to join the intifada, although Iraq has demonstrably been more of a threat to Arab rulers than to Israel.

In a recent interview in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, Sharon openly stated what he alluded to during the election campaign: he will not return any more land, from settlements in Gaza to the Golan Heights, regardless of whether Palestinians meet his government's demands. He said he would consider allowing Palestinians to control 42% of their own territory, what *Ha'aretz* termed "truncated enclaves of humiliatingly circumscribed independence." As far as the Israeli people's desire for an end to the conflict, Sharon declared "A normal people does not ask questions like 'will we always live by the sword'...the sword is part of life."

There is still a core of committed, principled peace activists and leftists within Israel who continue to struggle. One of the newer oppositions emerging is among reservists who are refusing military service.

April 22, 2001

U.S.-China faceoff

George W. Bush substituted warmed-over campaign rhetoric for foreign policy when he declared that the U.S. had an obligation to defend Taiwan if it was attacked by Beijing. This divergence from existing policy, providing help to Taiwan to defend itself, inflamed an already tense month-long confrontation whether it was Bush's foot-in-mouth disease talking or a bone deliberately tossed to the lunatic right.

The U. S. had just finished approving a package of arms sales to Taiwan that actually undermines security on the island. The non-nuclear submarines and hi-tech missile launching destroyers would confront no invasion armada from the mainland, not when Taiwan represents critical capital investment. However, escalating militarization in the Straits of Formosa risks incidents even uglier than the U.S. spy plane that crashlanded on Hainan Island.

While the spy plane crew was still detained the U.S. loudly asserted the right to surveillance on the Chinese border, later threatening fighter escorts, claiming as justification that China was a rogue state destabilizing Asia with arms sales such as cruise missiles to Iran.

When did the U.S. ever act to interfere with China's arms sales? In the 30 years since Nixon recognized Beijing, the U.S. has frequently tilted toward rogue states that China supported, even the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

Nor has it interfered with detentions of visiting Chinese-born scholars, U.S. citizens or residents, who have even been charged with espionage for opinions Beijing feels threatened by. Unlike military rights, human rights of Americans or Chinese take second place to trade agreements that guarantee U.S. capitalists' access to the wealth of China, its labor power.

—Bob McGuire

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*.